

North Christian Church -

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5/10/16 - The Gospel, Salvation, and Sanctification - Part 84

PTEJC

I used to think that spiritual maturity was about me growing up, but now I know that it's about the Gospel growing up in me, unfettered, unhidden, fully bloomed, brilliant Light, as of Jesus Christ, Himself.

PTEJC

I used to perceive that my salvation was a historical event, something to be grateful for, of course, but now I know that my salvation is my sanctification, that my sanctification is my salvation.

Perspective Matters

When reading theology, we must tap into the new creature's perspective - the one that never has a problem with the plainly stated things in the Bible.

Big-Picture Reading

If we read the Bible with the Gospel lens, we clearly see God's doctrines, the mind of Christ (1Co 2:16). However, if we read it with a doctrinal lens, we run the risk of losing sight of the Gospel (e.g., 1Co 13).

The Nature of the Early Church

Jesus' ministry was focused on salvation. Being Jewish, and given the Jews part in the Gospel, He often spoke keenly on topics at the forefront of their minds (e.g., the "kingdom of Heaven/God"). The keystone of His message was salvation (not so-called "spiritual maturity").

The Early Church Wasn't Hyper-Categorical

Hyper-categorization runs the risk of disjointed doctrines, which ultimately ruins one's vision of the Gospel in its purest, fullest sense.

Acts 20:21 NIV

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

Lk 19:10

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Jesus' Commission From the Father

Fishing implies catching. The focus is not on fisheries, where fish are matured, it is on catching souls (saving them), hence, the great commission He gives His disciples in Mt 28:18-20.

The Life of Jesus

Jesus was born to die. He came to save sinners. His audience was in shambles, a disoriented mess. His focus was to call His sheep to Himself (it was not to somehow mature them). Given the vastness of His ministry, the physicality of it, even, He had much to do regarding the simplicity of the Gospel.

Mature Reading

The central theme in the Bible is the Gospel. The central Person is Jesus Christ. The more "mature" you are, the more you'll read every passage of scripture in light of these two truths, and every passage will amplify them.

"Spiritual Maturity"

Spiritual maturity is an issue of faith, as a function of humility. The Pharisees example proves that intellect has nothing to do with maturity. God's righteousness is only satisfied by faith given to us as believers.

Get Your Focus Right

The idea of "spiritual maturity" has been blown WAY out of proportion, with some teaching against divine wisdom, even (e.g., Ecc 12:12). Jesus' ministry (and His Great Commission for believers) was NOT focused on so-called maturity, but rather saving souls! "[Making] disciples" (Mt 28:19) means making believers!

1 Peter 2:1-3

Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

"In the know" Garbage

Historically, the flesh has hijacked the simple, pure things of the Gospel for the purpose of self-elevation/-separation/-righteousness. The Pharisees and the Gnostics are examples of this. Today, we have other elitist ideologies that hyper-focus on spiritual maturity in the absence of having even the Gospel full/accurate.

"love is perfected with us"

This doesn't mean that at salvation we become perfect lovers; it means that perfect love is now "with us", providing us with a definite hope and confidence regarding eternal life.

The Great Litmus Test

The hallmark of true love is a base desire to live for others. "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). The Spirit will assure you of your faith by revealing to you His love in you (1Jn 3:14,19-20; 4:13).

One or the Other

We can't have the simplicity and purity of the Gospel Truth while complicating

and intellectualizing the Word.