

North Christian Church -

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5/19/16 - The Gospel, Salvation, and Sanctification - Part 88

Trust In the Process

In particular, trust in the supernatural God of the Universe. For example, when it comes to God's sovereignty vs. your free will, in many ways, it's actually better that we don't understand it fully because it demands faith!..."without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb 11:6).

- **Php 2:12b-13** work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

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- **1Pe 2:2** like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

"does not bear"

from me pheron [not + bearing]; is in the present tense, active voice, implying a lifestyle; for example, a tree in hibernation "does not bear" fruit, as it's out of season; if that tree never bears fruit, then it is dead

"He takes away"

"He takes away" - from airei - means to raise, to take up, to lift; is in the present tense, active voice, indicative mood (dogmatic statement of fact); in context, can mean one of three things: God lifts up a believer to bearing fruit; or God lifts up a believer to Heaven (the sin unto death); or God throws the unbeliever into Hell (eg. an apostate). In all possibilities, God actively MAKES something happen.

Fruit-Bearing

True believers will produce fruit, because God says so; and if they don't for a time, He'll rectify it, because He says He will; and if they never come back, they were never His child in the first place, because they are what scripture calls apostates.

"cast them into the fire"

Scripture depicts the burning by fire as ultimate judgement, as that reserved for unbelievers (Mt 7:19; 13:40-42).

Experiential Sanctification

By grace, God changes us. By grace, He's made us new creatures "in Christ". We have new natures that are perfect, therefore can only do His good will. The new "us" is "willingly humble" and supernaturally fellowships with God, making our fruit-bearing a collaborative, joint-labor.

Experiential Sanctification

To avoid assigning any creature credit in the production of divine good fruit in our lives, we simply refer back to scripture, which says, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1Co 15:10). God has qualified us to work with Him, "in Christ".

Experiential Sanctification

We are not somehow passive robots, whose free will is merely an academic construct that God invented to appease our flesh's desire for independence. At salvation, He literally changed us. It's because of that grace activity that we are able to join Him in accomplishing His will in time. We desire obedience!

Is God a Puppeteer, or...?

Your theology will have to either suggest that YOU can do good things, e.g. your "new creature"; or, you will have to propose that God is an eternal puppeteer (just consider Heaven for clarity).

Considering Ro 7:15-25:

Do you believe that you are "in Christ", in union with Him? If yes, then ask yourself, do you believe that Jesus Christ, Himself, is able to produce good fruit on His own? If "yes", then why doubt that YOU can??? Are you not a "partaker of grace"? (Php 1:7; Jn 1:14; 2Jn 3)

The Book of Ephesians

There wasn't any primary point of contention in view, therefore, Paul was free to expand upon the glories of the Gospel in the lives of believers! It's a magnificent treatise on what living the Gospel looks like in a church that hasn't been overrun by the flesh.

The Book of Ephesians

In his "confirmation of the gospel" (ala Php 1:7), Paul refers to grace a LOT in the Book of Ephesians. This makes total sense, given the "stewardship of God's grace" was given to him to teach. Grace is the lynchpin of the Gospel, hence it was frequently extolled and defended by Paul and others.

Grace Offends the Flesh

If it's by God's grace, then it is simple. Salvation is simple, as is sanctification. Man is responsible for complicating things.

Striving for So-Called "Spiritual Maturity"

If one's pursuit of so-called "spiritual maturity" is the cause for anxiety, angst, increasing confusion, etc., it is fair to say that it is ungodly by nature (fruit of the wrong nature, aka OSN).

Maturity

Maturity in Jesus' mind was opposite from His disciples' mind. There are multiple

examples of Jesus having to readjust His disciples (e.g., Mk 10:13-16; Lk 9:46-48; 22:24-30; etc.).

Maturity

The most mature people in any church are the greatest servants (Mark 10:45). Look at your own heart and your desire to serve others rather than self; consider your deeds, even. (Lk 21:1-4; 2Co 8:12)

Immaturity

If you have nothing to give because you've given in to all of your own wants (not needs), then your "readiness" isn't pure. From the blog titled, "I'd love to help, but...", Charity has been stymied by irresponsibility.

Maturity

The most mature people in any church are the greatest servants (Mark 10:45). Look at your own heart and your desire to serve others rather than self; consider your deeds, even. (Lk 21:1-4; 2Co 8:12)