

North Christian Church -

Pastor Ed Collins

www.nccdighton.org

5/22/16 - The Gospel, Salvation, and Sanctification - Part 89

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).

Determining Truth

Whatever theology is clearly stated in the scriptures is the truth about a matter. Experiences can only complement, or be interpreted by, the correct theology.

Spiritual "Paradoxes"

There are things that we simply cannot comprehend, though these things are fundamental to our faith! "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1).

Theology vs. Application

Theology lays out principles. Life is where those principles are applied. The Bible gives us insight into both. The common error is to make theology out of human experiences recorded in scripture. (e.g., Job's wife, the Corinthian's failures, etc.)

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.

"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.

Parable Branches

Just because scripture calls out a "branch", it doesn't always refer strictly to believers; rather it establishes a certain relationship to the vine/tree/root. (*Jn 15:2; Ro 11:16-24) - *under one interpretation.

Parables

Man has a tendency to impose his own restrictions on the parables in the Bible. Parables are predominantly meant to drive a single point or two home. They are NOT meant to be plucked apart and forced to shed light on things outside of their primary scope of revelation.

Parables

If a parable doesn't allow for certain specifics, then we can't impose them, even though we desire to draw certain conclusions. Parables aren't meant to be dissected ad nauseam; they are meant to be consumed whole so a general rule or theme may be understood.

2Pe 2:22

It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

Parable Branches

Just because scripture calls out a "branch", it doesn't always refer strictly to believers; rather it establishes a certain relationship to the vine/tree/root. (*Jn 15:2; Ro 11:16-24) - *under one interpretation.

Parables

Man has a tendency to impose his own restrictions on the parables in the Bible. Parables are predominantly meant to drive a single point or two home. They are NOT meant to be plucked apart and forced to shed light on things outside of their primary scope of revelation.

Parables

If a parable doesn't allow for certain specifics, then we can't impose them, even though we desire to draw certain conclusions. Parables aren't meant to be dissected ad nauseam; they are meant to be consumed whole so a general rule or theme may be understood.

"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).

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.

Ro 8:28

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God [believers], to those who are called according to His purpose.

Ro 8:28 [Amplified]

And we know [with great confidence] that God [who is deeply concerned about us] causes all things to work together [as a plan] for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His plan and purpose.

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).