



LIVING GRACE
COMMUNITY CHURCH

“The Right Recipe for Godliness”

Sermon Date: January 9th, 2022

Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon

Below is a reference to the section of the New City Catechism that we went over on Sunday:

The New City Catechism—Lord’s Day 2

What is God?

God is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. He is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in his power and perfection, goodness and glory, wisdom, justice, and truth. Nothing happens except through him and by his will.

Prayer

Before digging into the idea that the gospel message, understood and trusted, leads us to heartfelt obedience, consider making this prayer your own before God. (This prayer was taken from Prone to Wander by Barbara Duguid and Wayne Houk).

Holy Spirit, thank you for conviction of sin and for the grand and beautiful gospel to which we may run when we see our sin. Help us to see clearly the ways in which we do not love each other or you, not so that we will be discouraged, but so that we might also clearly see the power and depth of Jesus’ love for us. Subdue our remaining sin, we pray.

Help us to want to see each other. Cause us to be humble and gentle with one another, help us to be patient, and enable us to bear with one another in love. May we seek help and seek to give it. But, most of all, cause us to remember how our Father sees us: radiantly beautiful, dressed in the righteousness of Jesus. In his name we pray, amen.

Scripture

Titus 1:1-3 (ESV)

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness,² in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began³ and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior.

Handling the Word

To better understand Paul's introduction, let's break it down:

1. Who is Paul (v. 1)?
2. Why is Paul a servant of God and an apostle of Christ Jesus (v. 1)?
3. For the believer, what two things lead to godly living (v. 1)?
4. What is the goal of godliness (v. 2)?
5. What did God promise before time began (v. 2)?

Legalism: a *relationship* or ethical system that is governed primarily by obedience to prescribed laws or rules (Donald McKim). In essence, God's love for us hinges on our obedience to His commands.

Antinomianism: the view that there is no need for the Law of God in the Christian life (Donald McKim). In essence, if we are forgiven then obedience is not required of us by God.

Godliness: displaying a God-like character (Donald McKim).

Understanding and Applying

1. For you personally, do you ever find yourself struggling with legalism or antinomianism (refer to the definitions under **Handling the Word**) and why do you think that is? How is the gospel—Christ crucified—the answer to combatting legalism *and* antinomianism, or how does the gospel shape the way believers see God's commands (Romans 6:15-18, 7:24-8:2; Hebrews 10:15-18)?
2. Have you found Paul's words (v. 1) to be true, that as your trust and understanding of God and His gospel increase, your desire and ability to obey have followed (Colossians 1:9-10)? Please share. If so, why do you think the gospel message leads believers to obedience (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 John 4:8-10)?
3. Have you ever tried to pursue a godly life in a manner that was different from Paul's methodology—growing in knowledge and confidence of what Jesus has done and is doing, for us (v. 1)? If so, what was your method and what was the result?
4. If a believer is going to live a life pleasing to God, Paul directs them to continue to understand the gospel and its implications for their lives (v. 1). Prior to this idea, how would you have encouraged someone to pursue godliness or deal with their sin? Assuming your perspective has changed, how would you now encourage this person? Please share.
5. If obedience, rather than the gospel, becomes *the focal point* of the Christian life, how might this shape the believer's perspective of God or their assurance of salvation? If you grew up in or attended a church that made obedience *the essence* of Christianity, how did this personally impact your walk with God?

6. How do the passages below point to the idea that, an understanding of the gospel, or the love of Christ, is “the great motivator” for obedience to God’s commands?
- Romans 12:1
 - Ephesians 5:1
 - Titus 2:11-14
7. In general, when reading the Old Testament, what do you tend to take away from it? If you had to give a summary statement of the Old Testament, or what it is about, what would you say? Please explain your answer.
8. In response to the reality that all too often Christians view the Old Testament as a book of moral examples and principles to live by, Alistair Begg said, “we lose our way around the Bible when we take our eyes off Christ.” What do you think Alistair meant by his statement? If our eyes are ‘fixed’ on Christ, how might this impact the way we glean from the lives of Abraham, David, or Daniel (Hebrews 12:1-2)?
9. Given the reality that “gospel truth,” as opposed to simply guilt or fear, is a means that God uses to motivate His people towards godly living, as we jump back into the book of Ephesians, how will chapters 1-3 (gospel truth) shape your perception and pursuit of chapters 4-6 (responsibility)?

“Focusing on the gospel has the power to change our lives at a deep level. Through the gospel we come to see both the true depth of our sin (and therefore that our earlier feelings of guilt were actually far too shallow), while at the same time being reminded of the glorious good news that Jesus is our perfect substitute who removes our sin and guilt. He lived the life of obedience in our place and fulfilled the relentless clamor of the law’s demands, and he took upon himself the awful punishment that our sin truly deserves. As the Holy Spirit enables us to grasp this gospel reality, he frees us from our guilt and refreshes us with a deep joy that motivates our hearts to love God anew. In this way, the gospel begins the slow transformative work of changing us from the inside out.”

-Iain Duguid