

Sixty Days of Purity: A Training Program For The Sin-Stuck

“Lessons From The Cross”

February 10, 2008 * Galatians 2:15-21

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” ~ 1 Cor.6:19-20

I. Quick Review

- A. *What’s the problem we face as humans?*

- B. *What’s the solution God gives us for this problem?*

WHEN IT COMES TO PURITY, WHY IS THE CROSS WHERE WE MUST BEGIN?

Reason #1: The cross teaches that I am _____, there is no _____ I can give for sinning, I am responsible.

- A. *What was going on in the Galatian church that prompted Paul to write this letter?*

- B. *What did Paul say to those who taught we could approach God through our own law-keeping and goodness? (15-16)*

- C. *Why not? (Gal.3:10)*

- D. *What does Gal.3:22 say that everyone in the world is?*

- E. *If there were any way I could earn my way to heaven, what wouldn’t have had to happen? (Gal.2:21).*

- F. *What does it mean: ‘There is no excuse for sin; there is only a sacrifice’?*

Reason #2: The Cross teaches that I am _____, that Jesus has _____ in _____ the price demanded by my sinning.

- A. *Why can’t God just forgive us with a sweep of his hand? Why all these barbaric theatrics of Jesus dying on a cross?*
- To understand this, we must realize the truth that:
All _____ comes with a _____.
- Examples:*
- B. *What happens as I commit greater and greater sins?*

 - C. *What debt do I owe God for the collective weight of all my sinning?*

 - D. *What is the greatest wonder of all in the fact that Jesus died in my place?*

Reason #3: The Cross gives me a new _____ and power to live a pure life; Jesus himself comes and is the _____ inside my heart, helping me to defeat sin’s power.

- A. *According to Gal.2:20, how does Paul see his life differently now?*

- B. *When Captain John Miller says to Private James Ryan, “You earn this”, what did he mean?*

- C. *If I see Jesus’ sacrifice for me properly, how will I live my life?*

My Projects for This Week:

“Lessons From The Cross”

February 10, 2008 * Galatians 2:15-21

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” ~ 1 Cor.6:19-20

I. Quick Review

A. What’s the problem we face as humans?

By nature none of us seeks God. By nature, none of us can understand the truths of God. And by nature we are slaves to sinning. Prone to doing what it wrong. We know what’s right to in our minds, but we are powerless to do it with any consistency.

B. What’s the solution God gives us for this problem?

Romans 8:3 – “For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man.” What is the solution to our sin nature? What can give us a new start and a new power to walk in purity? – the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. There it is friends: the greatest piece of good news your ears will ever hear. Jesus Christ has died for you.

WHEN IT COMES TO PURITY, WHY IS THE CROSS WHERE WE MUST BEGIN?

Reason #1: The cross teaches that I am guilty, there is no excuse I can give for sinning, I am responsible.

A. What was going on in the Galatian church that prompted Paul to write this letter?

Galatians was written to a group of young Christians who forgot for a time that Christianity is not about following legalistic steps and principles, but it’s about having a relationship of faith and love with Jesus Christ. Some false teachers slipped into their congregation and began to teach them, “Now if you’re really going to be pure, you still have to keep all the Old Testament laws, especially circumcision, and you have to eat these foods and avoid

these foods, and you have to celebrate these festivals” which was a direct contradiction to Paul’s gospel message – that Jesus Christ came and fulfilled the Old Testament law through his death and resurrection, so we’re no longer under it.

B. What did Paul say to those who taught we could approach God through our own law-keeping and goodness? (15-16)

Approaching God that way doesn’t work, Paul insisted. And Jesus’ death on the cross for us proves it. Proves that the only way we sinful human beings can come into the presence of a holy God is through faith in what Jesus has done for us.

Verses 15 and 16 is where Paul says this as clearly as he knows how: “We who are Jews by birth, and not ‘Gentile sinners’ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.”

C. Why not? (Gal.3:10)

Galatians 3:10 says: “All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law.’” If you’re going to approach God on the basis of your own lawkeeping, get him to accept you on the basis of your own goodness, great, just understand what the groundrules are then: you need to be perfect then. Can’t mess up once. You must “continue to do everything written in the law”. God is holy, then you must be holy, and God does not grade on a curve. He can’t. Sin, no sin however small, cannot exist in his presence.

D. What does Gal.3:22 say that everyone in the world is?

A prisoner to sin.

E. If there were any way I could earn my way to heaven, what wouldn’t have had to happen? (Gal.2:21).

Jesus would not have had to die.

F. *What does it mean: 'There is no excuse for sin; there is only a sacrifice'?*

The juice from the fruit was still dripping down Adam and Eve's chins as they realized what a bonehead thing they had just done. In desperation, they invented sewing – and spent the afternoon stitching fig leaves together. The coverup was on. Enter God. And it was no doubt with sorrow cracking his voice that God asks them what they have done. Adam wastes no time pointing his needle-pricked finger at Eve. “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some of the fruit from the tree – and I ate.” Notice where Adam buries the words, “I ate”. Only after blaming Eve, then blaming God (*'You put her here', it's your fault God*), only then does he throw out the smallest bone of culpability. Eve then followed suit. When God asks her for her version, she mumbles, “The serpent deceived me – and I ate.”

Neither one can come clean. Neither one can say the words *I ate* without qualifying it behind excuses. And the human race has been acting accordingly ever since.

Reason #2: The Cross teaches that I am forgiven, that Jesus has paid in full the price demanded by my sinning.

A. *Why can't God just forgive us with a sweep of his hand? Why all these barbaric theatrics of Jesus dying on a cross?*

To understand this, we must realize the truth that:

All wrongdoing comes with a price.

Examples:

If I slap you hard across the face for no reason at all, what's the price? What do I owe you? I owe you an apology. An apology is the price I need to pay to put the moral universe back in balance, to admit that what I did was wrong, and until I do that, you'll be churning with fear or anger or bitterness or vengeance. One little sin sets a lot of emotional wheels in motion.

If I steal from you, the price gets steeper. Not only do I owe you an apology, but I also owe you restitution. I must pay you back. And I also owe society a debt, because my behavior has threatened its well-being. Only then is the moral universe restored.

B. *What happens as I commit greater and greater sins?*

With each sin I commit, the weight of the debt I owe gets heavier. And the debt grows deeper with the increasing severity of my wrongdoing. The punishment should fit the crime, we say.

C. *What debt do I owe God for the collective weight of all my sinning?*

Every sin we commit is an offense against God's moral universe. Every act of wrongdoing we commit is a slap in God's face. Now can you imagine the collective weight of all our sinning, not just one's day's worth of sinning, but add up each and every day, then each and every week, then each and every month, then each and every year – how much do we owe God in the end for a lifetime's worth of sin and selfishness? Can you begin to grasp why the Bible says, “The wages of sin is death”?

D. *What is the greatest wonder of all in the fact that Jesus died in my place?*

The thing that you should make you tremble and fall to your knees: by Jesus doing this for us, the price of our sinning has been paid in full. We are forgiven. The case against us is closed if you stand today before God's throne with Jesus Christ as your representative, your advocate, your Lord. You are forgiven. Justified. It's Just-As-If-You've-Never-Sinned. All the weight of all your sinning is off of your shoulders now.

Reason #3: The Cross gives me a new vision and power to live a pure life; Jesus himself comes and is the warrior inside my heart, helping me to defeat sin's power.

A. *According to Gal.2:20, how does Paul see his life differently now?*

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

B. *When Captain John Miller says to Private James Ryan, “You earn this”, what did he mean?*

Earn his freedom? No. That was earned for him by Miller’s sacrifice. It was a gift of grace Ryan could only receive. In those two words, Miller was saying, “James, when you go home you so live your life that my death for you will not have been wasted. Don’t you dare throw this gift I’m giving you away.” With those words “You earn this,” Jim Ryan was given a vision of how he needed to live the rest of his life and given a new power and motivation to do it.

C. *If I see Jesus’ sacrifice for me properly, how will I live my life?*

How any Christian should somehow conclude that Jesus’ death on the cross now gives them license to sin their heads off is beyond me. Yet many do. They tell themselves that their sins are forgiven and that there is not one thing they could add to Jesus’ sacrifice – and all that is true. Yet they proceed to then draw the wrong conclusion from such a gracious arrangement. In the name of “grace”, they let their Christian conduct slip into sloppiness and sloth. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor who knew something of sacrifice himself (he died a martyr in one Hitler’s prisons) coined a phrase for such thinking: *Cheap Grace*.

Seen rightly, Jesus’ sacrificial, atoning death should inspire you to give your all for him, because Jesus gave his all for you. The fight for purity begins with you kneeling before your Lord’s cross.

My Projects for This Week:

1. *Ask God this week to reveal to you all the excuses you use, or have used, to justify the wrong things you do. Write out each excuse in your quiet time notebook. After each excuse, write out the words: There Is No Excuse For Sin, Only A Sacrifice.*

2. *Using a black pen, write out on a piece of paper this week as many sins as you can think of that you have committed in your life (in the interest of time and the saving of trees, maybe confine the list to the ‘big ones’). Do be specific though. Don’t just write out “Lying”, right out occasions when you have lied. Take a red pen and over each one write the word – in capital letters – FORGIVEN.*

At the end of the week, write a paragraph that summarizes your thoughts and feelings about this exercise.

3. *Write a thank you card to a veteran you know. Thank them for their service and their willingness to lay down their lives for your freedom. At the end of the week, write a thank you card to Jesus thanking him for his sacrifice. Date it and keep it in your Bible.*

4. *Review daily your three memory verses.*