

“Practical Theology ~ Justification” (6.4.17)

[Ever noticed] that some warning signs are more effective than others? When
we lived in Tucson, AZ the first (2) signs always made me pause and pay attention:

1. ...a rattle snake coiled – enjoyed hiking and occasionally would see this warning;
2. ...a mountain lion – enjoyed biking, during heavy droughts lions would come down out of the mountains seeking water – that’s quite an imminent threat a 5:30 a.m.
3. ...effective danger sign: next to wires w-high electrical voltage caught my attention:

“DANGER: Do not touch. Not only will this kill you,
it will hurt the whole time you are dying.”

[For me] I am more likely than not to heed a warning sign when I understand there
is a distinct possibility—**imminent threat that is present.**

In Christendom there are **some warning signs emerging** that
actually make me nauseous to consider the damage being done to God’s church ☹

IT’S WHY...

we are taking the next few weeks to teach on establishing a biblical worldview!

Practical Theology is not an academic series to sharpen our theological prowess; at some
point good theology touches the ground – practical, practical. . .

What we believe determines the course of our life – recent data from the
[American Bible Society] cites these troubling stats of what Christians now believe:

- ✚ A recent report from The American Bible Society finds that 2/3 rd’s of the nation
believe the Bible contains “everything a person needs to know in order to live a
meaningful life.” **But just how deep does their Christianity run?**

✚ LifeWay Research, asked 3,000 participants a set of 47 questions about foundational Christian beliefs. *Many of the answers revealed a mishmash of heresy and confusion about Christianity's most basic doctrines.*

- ✓ 70% of Americans agree there's only one true God—one in essence, three in person: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *Yet almost the same number believe God accepts the worship of all other religions, even those that deny the Trinity or worship other deities.*
- ✓ 60% correctly say Jesus is both human and divine, but ½ think that He's also "the first and greatest being created by God," rather than existing eternally, as Scripture and the ancient creeds of the faith teach.
- ✓ BEFORE you dismiss the seriousness of this interpretation that Jesus is a created being, CONSIDER:

® Colossians 1: 15-17b or p. 902

If Jesus were a created being – it denies that he is the CREATOR (*heresy*)

✚ Over 60% of Americans say that God, who cannot err, is the Author of the Bible. *Yet fewer than ½ are willing to affirm that the Bible God wrote is "one hundred percent accurate in all it teaches."*

Many will scripture has errors b-c humans got involved: justifying a perfect God and implying the Bible is an imperfect word (*justifying sins*)

- ✓ 75% admit everyone sins, yet also insist that most people are good by nature! Consider the logic behind that...anyone of us who has ever raised a teenager knows that this logic is non-sense.
- ✓ ½ of Americans believe that only those who accept Jesus will be saved, yet 60% also say everyone will eventually make it to Heaven.

✚ Lifeway identified 586 of the three-thousand respondents as "conservative-evangelical." *These are folks who believe the Bible is their highest authority, that*

personal evangelism is important, and that trusting in Jesus' death on the cross is the only way of salvation.

- ✓ *An astonishing 70%, for instance, say Jesus is a created being.*
- ✓ *56% say the 3rd Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, "is a divine force but not a personal being."*
- ✓ *Evangelicals, by definition, believe trusting in Jesus is the only way of salvation. Yet 2/3rd's of evangelicals—more than Americans as a whole—claim Heaven is a place where all people will ultimately be reunited with loved ones.*

Next (2) weeks we are going to think through a biblical lens about Salvation:

WEEK ONE = *Justification*
WEEK TWO = *Sanctification*

I. Salvation (Biblically grounded)

A. (R) Romans 3: 21-26 or p. 859 in pew Bible

1) *Salvation is God's free gift to us PERIOD.* We are *justified only by the blood of Jesus*; we can't personally do anything to earn this privilege ~ only accept it!

2) **EMPHASIZE** ~ Justification is what God does FOR US!

✚ "...a one-time event; *Justification*" *happens instantaneously* the moment you confess your sins & ask Jesus to be the Lord & Savior!

3) **EMPHASIZE** ~ Sanctification is what God does IN US!

✚ *Sanctification* *exhibits the fruit of our relationship w/ Jesus* = Proof

- ✓ a life-long process; *Sanctification* is the *continual work* of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer to conform us into Christ's likeness.

- ✓ An inward life that is marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, & self-control
- ✓ This is *TANGIBLE PROOF* of a life dedicated unto God!

Moments Adam & Eve disobeyed God—sin entered the world & our sins separate us from our Holy God—**rescue plan was immediately implemented.**

II. Why Jesus = the Scarlet-BLOODED thread throughout the Bible?

A. The Scarlet Thread:

✚ ® Genesis 3: 14-15

✚ ® Genesis 3: 16-19 (*Consequences for disobedience*)

B. God's plan to reconcile Adam & Eve back to full relationship w-Him

✚ ® Genesis 3: 20-21

✚ As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, God shed innocent blood in order to make them clothes from animal skins to cover their sin.

C. This is a picture of the covering of righteousness that we receive when the Lord Jesus Christ died for us.

✚ The **acceptable sacrifice for our sin has always been blood**, something that Adam and Eve's sons learned. (**Genesis 4**)

- ✓ They both instinctively wanted to worship God
- ✓ Cain sacrificed the fruit of the land.
- ✓ But Abel knew that God demanded blood and brought a lamb to sacrifice.
- ✓ God accepted the blood offering, but did not accept Cain's offering.

+ This is because: QUOTE Hebrews 9: 22

“...according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood.
For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.”

D. *Scarlet Thread continues* =

+ ® Exodus 12: 11-13

+ God wanted to deliver His people from bondage in the land of Egypt. Passover-
God instructed each house to slay lamb-put the blood on door.

E. ® Joshua 2: 18-19 or (6th book in the OT)

- ✓ Rahab, the woman spoken to in this passage, was a harlot in the city of Jericho. As the Israelites came to possess the land, her city was destined for destruction, and she along with it. But she was delivered, and her life transformed, simply by tying a scarlet cord in her window.
- ✓ **The cord represented the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ**, and it pointed to the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.
- ✓ In fact, ALL of the Bible is about Jesus Christ and His blood redemption, and you will find this scarlet thread throughout the Word of God.

F. ® Matthew 1: 21-23 or p. 723

From the first sin = BLOOD was applied

+ He came to die; He planned to die; He lived to die; and He was born to die.

+ Before this planet was ever swung into space, God had determined in His heart that He would send His Son to die upon the cross. How wonderful it is to trace **the scarlet thread of the blood of Christ** woven throughout the Bible & how much more wonderful to experience its redemption personally.

III. *Justification—it's practical implications:*

A. Justification = *no effort on our part* in being *declared innocent* in the eyes of God through Jesus' sacrifice.

B. **The nature of our relationship with God** = happened in an instant through Christ.

- ✓ When we accept Christ, God doesn't put an ankle bracelet on us for two years and then says, ok I know you aren't going to steal anything, I will adopt you now.
- ✓ **It is positional and instantaneous, and unconditional.** You are adopted as sons and daughters of God, the creator of everything.
- ✓ **So when God looks at you, you are blameless in His sight** because of your position of being holy and justified by the blood of Christ.

We *seek to understand the rationality of justification*, but I am left wrestling with the mystery of God who would dare provide such a way for us. I might get some of the why He would do such a thing, but it is a mystery that he would do such a thing for such as I.

C. When you teach that **JUSTIFICATION** before **GOD** has nothing to do with **THEM** and everything to do with **JESUS**... they need to know that when they fall, stumble, or screw up (we all do),

- ✓ They are **able to RUN TO GOD** and *not from Him*.
- ✓ **I don't think that God will ask you**, "why should I let you into heaven?" ... but if He does the answer will have absolutely **NOTHING** to do with anything you have done... you won't talk about you.

Theology has to touch the ground. . . what we believe about God determines how we live

® Hebrews 10: 26-31 or p. 926

How do the opening illustrations of warnings tie back into these practical implications?

What makes these high voltage warnings to the state of the church?

1. Not everyone will be saved
2. The basis of salvation is not determined by how good we are
3. Heaven will include a reunion but just because you love someone, doesn't guarantee they are there or they will be there! We must challenge them to love Jesus with heart and mind and soul.

I am just trying to restate the things that are giving warnings or make you nauseous.