

General Topics :: Sin after Salvation - an illustration

Sin after Salvation - an illustration - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/5 9:55

This is a parable about sin after salvation:

One day, King John decided that he wanted to take for himself a wife who could share in his love and glory. He journeyed across the land in search of a suitable woman only to discover that every woman in the land was a smoker. This was a problem, for John was a nonsmoker. Smoke conflicted with his very nature. It was impossible for John to be around smoke. In fact, if smokers ever came near him, he would have to cast them from his presence and condemn them. Being a just and might King, he did not want to condemn all the women in his land. So, he devised a plan.

John came down to the village from his castle. In public, he gave a mighty demonstration of his mercy and grace. He lifted himself up in front of everyone and killed the part of himself that could not be near smokers by suffering their condemnation. His blood shed down upon the streets and became a mighty testimony of his love for all the women in the land. John still hated smoke. But from that point on, all women were forgiven for their smoking and now the mighty King could be in their presence. So he wandered again across the land proposing to different women asking them to be his wife.

John went forth telling all the women that if they would repent for their smoking, they could be his wife. He told them to come forward. "I will help you with your smoking. I will cleanse you of this filthy habit, and you can live forever with me in love." He said.

The first woman he asked said, "No." She did not want to turn from her smoking. She enjoyed smoking too much, and did not think anything was wrong with it. She could not accept John or his offer. So, John let her go.

The second woman he asked also said, "No." However, she decided to quit smoking. She said, "I want other people to see how good I am. I want them to know how strong and independent I am." She went around telling everyone how she quit smoking.

The third woman he asked also said, "No." This woman quickly ran from John, but followed him at a distance. She knew that King John had great power and wanted the other people to think she was going to be his wife. She stayed just far enough away that John could not see her, but she told all the other women that John was her fiancé. Only John knew the truth about her, and he also knew she would be revealed later at the wedding, when he would make all his true lovers into his wives.

The fourth woman he asked said, "Yes." She fell down on her knees knowing what John had done for her. She was overwhelmed by his mercy and grace. She asked John to forgive her for smoking and to help her. John was so touched by her that he gave her the finest engagement ring ever known and wrapped it tightly around her heart so that she would never lose it. John promised that one day he would marry her. On that day, she would be made into a new person and shaped with a new body. Until then, she would carry her engagement ring on her heart to help her and remind her of his love.

Her heart was transformed. It was as if someone had lit a huge fire inside of her. Everywhere she went, she told people of her newfound love and what King John had done for her. This continued for quite awhile before the fire started to die down.

After the engagement, she tried to quit smoking. Everyone told her to "Stop Smoking." It seemed simple to her. She loved John with all her heart, so she should stop for him. She wanted to stop, but found that she couldn't. It was too difficult. At first, she did well. She hardly smoked. After time, however, she began smoking more and more.

The other woman in town began talking about her. She could hear the whispers. "How can she call herself the fiancée of John? He is too good a man for her. Look at how she smokes." Many people looked down upon her. Others did not believe she was the fiancée of John. They thought her story was absurd. "Why would King John do all that for her?"

These whispers stirred in her mind. She cried out to John several times. She begged him to help her. "Help me stop smoking. Please." However, it seemed like John was never there. He seemed so far away. So, she kept on smoking and

d feeling more and more bad about herself.

The struggle became a huge war. She began hiding it from John thinking that he didn't notice. If John knew, why didn't he say anything or punish her? It was not that John was not there, he was there the whole time, she just ignored him. She was too focused on her smoking. She would say, "This will be my last one" and fight against it, until she fell weak started smoking again. After some time, she wore down. She was smoking two or three packs a day. She became terribly depressed and started to doubt John's love for her. "How could John love me? I am a horrible smoker." The fire and excitement she once had in heart was nearly gone.

A day came where she broke. She fell down in a fit of tears. John saw her and quickly came to her. He knew why she was crying, but for her sake, he asked, "Why do you cry my dear?"

"Because I don't deserve to be with you. I am a horrible smoker. I cannot quit smoking. I am weak." She said.

"Don't you know that I forgave you? You have my ring wrapped around your heart." He said.

"I know, but you don't like smoke. You don't want me to smoke and I still do it. You shed your blood for me. I should stop smoking." She said.

"Do you want to quit smoking?" He asked.

"Yes, I do but I can't. I am weak." She said. There was a pause. She burst out in tears. "How can you possibly love me? I am ugly."

He put his hand under her arm, looked at her straight in the eyes and lifted her up. "I love you my dear, even though you smoke. I love you all the more for your weakness." Tears rolled down her face. She knew it was true.

He continued, "I made a promise to you, don't you remember? I said one day I would make you beautiful. Trust me. I will remove all your smoking. However, that time has not come yet. It will not happen until we are married. I have already given you a new heart. Your heart has never failed you. Inside, you know that smoking is bad. You don't like smoking. However, your body is still weak. When we marry, I will give you a new body. At that time, you will be made beautiful, more beautiful than anything and everything. Your beauty will shine with all my glory." She cried, she also knew this was true.

"Until that time, do not worry about your smoking, my love. Do not be focused on it. Instead, put all your focus on me. When you hide from me, it hurts me. I love you. I want to have a relationship with you. I want to spend time with you and give my love to you. Come and spend time with me. When you spend time with me, you will be closer to your heart. You will not think about smoking and it will not control you for you will be close to me. You know I don't like to smoke. In your love for me, you will not smoke when I am near. However, when you turn away from me and look toward other things, then you smoke more heavily. Stay close to me and think about me in everything you do. This will help you. And if you do smoke, remember what I did for you. Remember that I shed my blood for you and that you are forgiven. I don't want you to smoke. This is true. However, in my love I understand you are weak. My grace will be sufficient for you. Trust me." He kissed her on her forehead. She felt a warm rush of His love over her body and her tears dried. She curled near him and her heart was on fire again.

King John knew she would fall away again. No matter how many times, his love always prevailed. Each time she would fall all down broken, he would lift her up. As time passed, she would learn to walk in his presence always keeping him close. These pitfalls would become less and less and her love would mature.

Then the wedding day arrived. It was the most glorious day. He had kept all his promises, and on that day she shined brighter than any star. The whole land rejoiced of King John's love and the awesome beauty of his bride who chose to love him in return. They lived forever united in love, and together they reigned supreme over all the land.

Re: Sin after Salvation - an illustration - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/5 11:10

Quote:
-----He lifted himself up in front of everyone and killed the part of himself that could not be near smokers by suffering their condemnation.

beenblake

this is a cute story but it has some dangerous flaws. This sets up love as the killer of holiness. God's love and holiness are not opposites. His love is holy love, and his holiness is an aspect of his love. He did not remove his holiness in order to come near, rather he removes the cause of the offence so that the sinner can come near to him.

Re: - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/5 12:41

Dear Ron,

It is really a matter of semantics. God's Holiness was satisfied by the death of Jesus.

What is the cause of offence? The cause is the breaking of the law. If we did not have the law, we would not sin.

Jesus is God. God died. However, he lives. How is that possible? How can something that died bring itself back to life? A part of God died on the cross. What part? His anger. His revenge. His retribution. His sovereignty.

For instance, let's say you are an upstanding man who hates theft. However, while visiting the store, you discover that your son has stolen a candy bar. What will you do? As a good and upstanding man, you must punish the boy. It is the right thing to do. However, as a father, you love him and do not want to punish him. So what do you do?

Part of you says, "Just let it go." But another part says, "This boy must be punished. He did wrong." And so, you make both sides happy. How? You suffer the punishment for the boy.

By doing this, you killed off a part of yourself that accuses the boy. You did not kill your goodness. You merely killed the part that must enforce your goodness upon the boy. This is the part that must be right. This part can also be looked upon as your sovereignty or authority. You gave up a part of your power in order to overlook the boy's sin.

God did this through Jesus. It is important that it was through Jesus. For in the above case, the boy could have easily seen how you overlooked the punishment and in return thought, "Well, I guess that means I can do whatever I want." Oops, that doesn't work. Instead, God gave His authority to Jesus, and said, "If you believe in Him, you will be saved."

Given the above example, it would be like you saying to the boy, "If you call me father and believe everything I say, then I will overlook what you stole and help you never steal again. However, if you do not recognize me as your father, then I will turn you over to your punishment, and leave you to be condemned." You do this, because if the boy recognizes you as his father (his authority), then he will accept your help. However, if he does not believe in you, he will reject your help. If he rejects your help, then there is no hope for him. He is forever lost.

That is why it is so important to believe in Jesus specifically. The God of the Jews and the God of the Christians, is the same God. However, life only comes through Jesus. How can that be?

God is basically saying, "To all those who submit unto Jesus, He will be their God and judge. And Jesus forgives all sin. However, all those who do not, will be judged by me. You will be judged by my Holiness."

Maybe I am wrong, but this is just my perspective on it.

Thanks for sharing.

Blake

General Topics :: Sin after Salvation - an illustration

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/5 13:42

Quote:

-----It is really a matter of semantics. God's Holiness was satisfied by the death of Jesus.

Hi beenblake

this isn't really semantics. We are not playing with 'words' here but are dealing with vital biblical revelation. Technically it is God's righteousness requirement which was satisfied by the death of His Son in our place, rather than His holiness. We must not open the door to some kind of dichotomy or schizophrenia within God Himself. His holiness is an attribute; that means it is an aspect of his character. Your story makes his holiness something which 'has to be killed' and this can not be right. The whole point about substitutionary atonement is that God did not change himself but provided Christ as a propitiation specifically so that he could be both 'just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus.

I am not picking at small aspects of revelation which you may see differently but the whole basis of the revelation wherein God 'justifies the ungodly'; He does not deny his own nature.

Re: Sin after Salvation - an illustration - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2005/10/5 15:13

Hello beenblake,

In addition to Ron's comments there are other concerns. The parable does a decent job of relating the promise of God in regards to how the Blood presently deals with what we have done. However, it really makes no mention of the promise of God in regards to how the Cross presently deals with what we are.

God has made provision for deliverance from sin here and now. Unlike the provision of the Blood which directly blots out sins from the remembrance of God, the provision of the Cross deals in a more indirect approach by not removing the sin but the sinner. Our old man was (past tense) crucified with Him. (Romans 6:6). Sin, the old master, is still there, but the slave who served him has been put to death. This deliverance is so real that John wrote, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John 3:9). John isn't saying we will never sin again but he is saying that sin is not the nature of that which is born of God. The life of Christ has been planted in us by new birth and its nature is not to commit sin. The parable seems to be focused on the glorification of the saints in the future, and there's nothing wrong with that, but it fails to set forth the hope of glory here and now, in Christ.

In Christ,

Ron

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/5 17:10

Quote:

-----If we did not have the law, we would not sin.

God created us with conscience. We actually don't need the Law to know that we've sinned against God. It's a cute analogy though, a few minor adjustments and a little work and it will be good to print and pass out ;-)

Re: - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/7 8:48

Dear Philologos,

I understand your concern and how the story could be misinterpreted. I don't think it advocates that God killed his Holiness for it says a few sentences later that "John still hated smoking..."

"Technically it is God's righteousness requirement which was satisfied by the death of His Son in our place..." Exactly. The law died with Jesus. The law that binds us in slavery. The only reason Satan had any power over us is due to this law. The Devil would accuse us of our sin day and night before God. However, since Christ resolved the law by satisfying its demands on our behalf, the Devil has no power anymore.

Obviously, God made a sacrifice for us. He gave us His son. This was an act of love for us. This act, did not change God, but changed us. Even still, God sacrificed something of Himself. He did not change, but He still gave something on our behalf. What did He give? What did Jesus represent that God sacrificed?

Jesus represented the law and the sin of all of humanity. God took our sins upon Himself and killed them. How can that be? How can God, who is Holy, right, and just, take our sins upon Himself? This confounds all of human logic and reasoning. For God to take our sins, He would have to say, "It was I who sinned. I sinned, and I will suffer the punishment." If God is Holy, how can He do that?

How can God, who is Holy, right, and just, take our sins upon Himself? This is the big question.

Well, He can only if the person who sinned willingly submits unto His authority and gladly accepts God as God, meaning, the person accepts God's counsel. However, God cannot take the sins of a person who does not submit unto His authority. For anyone who does not submit unto God is challenging Him. And being God is supreme and Holy, He cannot allow anyone to challenge His authority.

So, for all those that accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, meaning, all those who submit unto His authority, are saved. They can have sin and be in the presence of God. However, those who do not submit unto His authority, may not have sin and be under God's presence.

Now, it must be established in this, that true submittance unto any authority can only come through love, through a choice, through a willingness. Love is nothing more than a will toward a person. It is a will for good. And so, God doesn't people to submit to His authority under fear. He wants people to submit under love, willingly for the good of all.

In order to do this, God would have to love us first. He would have to submit unto us first. And so, He did. He submitted unto our authority. When He did, we killed him. How else could we kill Him? We were given power over Him. God willingly submitted in love unto us, so that we may in turn love Him.

Anyway, I think I have veered off track. The point of this all is, that God gave a part of Himself to us. He gave us Christ. He loved us first.

I tried to illuminate this in the story by saying, "John killed a part of himself." I guess that is a bit misleading. I couldn't say, "John gave his son unto death," because if He had a son, he would be married already. What is he doing looking for a wife, if he's already married?

I suppose there is not adequate way to really illustrate what God did for us. It is something that cannot be explained. It must be experienced.

I will have to think on this.

Lastly, though, I will say that I am a firm believer that we should build each other up in faith. Our goal should not be to "correct" or judge on another, for this is destructive, but rather to unite each other in love and encouragement.

And so, I will try to find a different way to word the above since I can see it bothers you so much.

Thank you for your concern.

In love,
Blake

Re: - posted by Conqueror, on: 2005/10/7 9:16

God did not kill any part of himself. He is still the same God. Unchangeable, infinite and eternal. He cannot change or ever be anything other than himself. If you remove something from Him then something is missing. If something is missing from God then that means He is less than He was. God cannot be less anything. If that capacity was there He would not be God.

When Jesus died and rose again, God was still fully and wholly God. There was not an instant when God wasn't fully God. Again, to have that happen would mean that God became "less".

Parables and stories and fables can be dangerous.

Why not just tell the True Story? How Jesus came to earth, lived among us, took our sins upon himself, shed his blood and died for us to forgive our sins and then rose again, sent His Spirit to dwell in us and will be returning for us.

This is the story that the apostles told and the story the saints throughout church history has told. Its the highest story. No story on earth is better than that.

Re: - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/7 9:26

Dear Ron,

I can see how you feel the story does not speak well to what Christ does in us now. I did not want to focus on our transformation for this parable was not meant for anyone who has not been transformed by Christ. Rather, it is for those who have been born again. I did not feel I need to repeat something they already knew.

The parable is to illustrate that our hope is in God's promises as manifested through Christ.

Many Christians become saved and think that in their transformation they are complete. They think that they God has made them completely new, and that's it. Many teachers and pastors make it seem like we can overcome all our sin due to this transformation. That is just not true.

Our hearts have been changed. This is true. We have been given a new heart, and by this, a new nature. Our new nature is one of love and goodness. It does not like sin. In fact, sin stirs such negativity within us that we become disgusted by it.

However, we still live in corrupted fleshly bodies. And so, while we do not mean or want to sin, we still do. This is a fact we all live with.

In these earthly bodies, it is impossible to be without sin. It cannot be done unless we are God Himself. We are not. Our transformation has not been completed. We have not been given our new heavenly bodies. There is not a Christian on earth who does not sin.

That is why Christians still sin after being saved. It is not because they are not saved, or because God is not strong enough to keep us from sinning. It is because we are not yet complete. We walk in faith. Our faith and hope is in things unseen. It is in something that has not yet happened. Once it does happen, then we won't need faith and hope, for we will be complete.

When we reach Heaven, then we will be truly born of God. We will be complete. We will be of God. We will be transformed to the likeness of Christ. We will be given new heavenly bodies. We will reign as Kings. We will share in God's glory.

Many people don't get this, and they become so hung up on their sins that it destroys their walk with God. This story was intended to illustrate this and encourage Christians to keep their focus on Christ and the hope of Heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:19 (NLT)

And if we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable people in the world.

Colossians 3:1-4 (NLT)

1 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits at God's right hand in the place of honor and power. 2 Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth. 3 For you died when Christ died, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 And when Christ, who is your real life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

It is dangerous for us to put too much hope in what we have now. This earthly life is like a living in a cardboard box next to a garbage dumpster versus living in a mansion on the beach with great wealth and riches.

In other words, if you knew that tomorrow you would win the lottery and be the richest person on earth, would sit around and talk about how wonderful you have it living today? No, you would constantly talk about how you were going to win the lottery tomorrow?

If we truly believed in Jesus and all the promises of God, we wouldn't sit around and talk about how great we have it now, we would be telling everyone of how great and wonderful it will be in Heaven. We would preach about the resurrection of Jesus. We would spread the good news. We would live in Hope.

Thank you for sharing your concern. I do understand there is an abundant life to be had in Christ now. For that, I rejoice. However, I believe the hope of Heaven is much, much more important. But that is just me. If you should disagree, that's okay. I love you just the same.

In love,
Blake

Re: - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/7 9:32

Dear Conqueror,

"Parables and stories and fables can be dangerous." I once agreed with you on this. But my I have changed.

Jesus taught in parables and stories. He never once came out and told people it exactly. He never once said, "I am God. Worship me."

Stories and illustrations speak to a person's heart. People's beliefs are centered in their heart, not their mind. Jesus did not debate with people's minds or did He deal with them. He dealt with people's hearts. And in order to touch a people's hearts, He told stories.

Thanks for sharing.

In love,
Blake

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/7 9:57

Hi blake

Quote:
-----In these earthly bodies, it is impossible to be without sin. It cannot be done unless we are God Himself. We are not. Our transformation has not been completed. We have not been given our new heavenly bodies. There is not a Christian on earth who does not sin.

How do you feel about the phrase 'free from sin'?
Rom. 6:7 (KJVS) For he that is dead is freed from sin.
Rom. 6:18 (KJVS) Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.
Rom. 6:20 (KJVS) For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.
Rom. 6:22 (KJVS) But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.
Rom. 8:2 (KJVS) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/7 10:09

Quote:
-----"Technically it is God's righteousness requirement which was satisfied by the death of His Son in our place..." Exactly. The law died with Jesus. The law that binds us in slavery.

hi blake

again this may sound like semantics but there is a vital difference here. Â“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.Â” (Rom. 7:6, KJVS) That may give the impression that it is the law which dies in Paul's revelation. However, you may have seen that other translations favour a different slant. Â“But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.Â” (Rom. 7:6, ASV)

Â“But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.Â” (Rom. 7:6, NKJV) You will spot the difference. These translations say that 'we' died to the law, rather than the law dying to 'us'. This is much more in keeping with Paul's illustrations.

The 'law' is good but its effect on sinners is deadly. Paul never degraded the law but explains why it cannot effect Christians in the same way; they have already received the law's full punishment for sin in Christ, and they are 'co-crucified with him'. Consequently, although the law is 'alive and well' it cannot get a grip on a man who is dead. It may pursue him to the grave but then it is helpless to continue the chase.

Re: - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/7 11:24

Dear Ron,

"Free from sin" means that we are free from the slavery of sin, and the yoke of sin. What was the slavery of sin? Sin brought about death and destruction. It also brings shame and guilt. It brings anxiety and stress.

When we are freed from sin, it means this burden of sin is lifted. It means we will not die. We will live forever. It means, that if we sin, we will not have to suffer punishment. Death is the punishment of sin. Our freedom comes in not suffering this punishment.

Romans 6:23 (NLT)
For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

You could say that those who have accepted this free gift of God are without sin. Why? Because everytime they sin, they are forgiven. It is not because they do not sin. It is because their sins are forgiven. Everytime they sin, it is immediately cleansed by the blood of Christ.

This is not to say we have a free ticket to sin. We should not follow the desires of our flesh. We should not, but if we do, we should not take on the yoke of slavery either. If we are feeling guilty because of our sin, we are not accepting God's grace. This is pride.

There is a difference in being "free from sin" and being "free of sin." We are not without sin. Would you be so bold to say, "I am without sin!"?

Let me ask, are you without sin? In the time you have been saved, have you ever sinned?

I have. I have yet to meet a Christian who has not. In fact, some of the best preachers are ones who have sinned as a Christian, who have stumbled. They have the wisdom of experience.

Lastly, if we were truly free of sin in our earthly bodies then we would never die. We would have been made perfect in our earthly body. However, we all know that everyone dies. We die to our earthly bodies so that God may give us a new Heavenly body. Our hope is not in this flesh. Rather, our hope is in the resurrection.

Paul speaks of this in 1 Corinthians 15. The whole chapter is devoted to the importance of the resurrection of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57 (NLT)

51 But let me tell you a wonderful secret God has revealed to us. Not all of us will die, but we will all be transformed. 52 It will happen in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, the Christians who have died will be raised with transformed bodies. And then we who are living will be transformed so that we will never die. 53 For our perishable earthly bodies must be transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die. 54 When this happens—when our perishable earthly bodies have been transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die—then at last the Scriptures will come true: "Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. 57 How we thank God, who gives us victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

I hope this helps you to see where I am coming from.

Thanks,
Blake

Re: - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/7 11:51

Dear Philologos,

"These translations say that 'we' died to the law, rather than the law dying to 'us'."

I see what you are saying.

In regards to those who have died to the law, it makes no difference really. For they have died to the law. Whether the law died to them or they died to the law, the law has been done away with. (Keep Reading...)

However, for people who have not accepted Jesus, they will still suffer under the requirements of the law. And so, by this, I can see how it is important to differentiate between the two. For if we say the law has died, then even those who haven't accepted Christ would be free from it. And that is not true.

Romans 7:4 - (NLT)

So this is the point: The law no longer holds you in its power, because you died to its power when you died with Christ on the cross. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, you can produce good fruit, that is, good deeds for God.

Thanks,

Blake

Story - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/7 12:19

So here is a question....

How many people think I should rewrite the story after listening to everyone's input?

---Or---

How many people think that it's useless and that I should forget about writing such stories?

I don't know. That's why I ask.

Thanks,
Blake

Re: - posted by Conqueror, on: 2005/10/7 14:25

Quote:
-----Jesus taught in parables and stories. He never once came out and told people it exactly. He never once said, "I am God. Worship me."

I don't mind allegory and fairy tail...like Narnia or even Ted Dekkers Circle Trilogy. Its fun and its fiction. If I were teaching someone yes, I would tell a story to help make a point. I have no problem with that. I still think its dangerous territory. We are too human and can make human errors in the story telling and translation.

God is the creator of the universe. Jesus spoke in parables. I would think that the creator of the universe could formulate a parable just fine to illustrate his point.

There are just some things I just don't think require an allegory or a parable or be made fictional.

I even read one author, Dallas Willard, who said that John Bunyans Pilgrims Progress has done more damage than good....allegorizing the Christian walk.

All that to say...I am not against it, but not necessarily for it either. I just think the world has heard enough stories. I think its just time lay out the Truth.

Re: - posted by Conqueror, on: 2005/10/7 14:26

Quote:
----- And in order to touch a people's hearts, He told stories.

Also, if I remember right, Jesus said He spoke in parables to keep people from understanding immediately.

I guess it could be both though.

Re: - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/7 14:51

Dear Conqueror,

Sometimes I wish the bible wasn't written in all those stories, and it too was black and white. Wouldn't it be nice if we could open it up and say, "Yep that's it right there, it says we should not spit off a bridge at night especially with our face in the wind. It couldn't be more clear."

However, if the bible were that clear, then it would be bigger than the earth itself. It would have written everything in immense detail. Not to mention, people would not believe in God with thier heart. They would know the truth in thier mind.

The bible has also been greatly misinterpreted. Does that make it dangerous?

I crave Truth as well. I am eagerly awaiting Christ's return so that we can know the Truth entirely. I have so many questions I would like answered. For instance, what is up with the dinosaurs? What was that all about?

Truth always prevails. So, the time will come when all our questions will be answered.

Until then, I guess we just have to walk in faith.

In Christ,
Blake

Re: - posted by GaryE (), on: 2005/10/7 19:16

Dear Beanblake,

When God tells us to resist the devil and he will flee from us, he means for us to do just that. When he tells us to come out and be separate from this world, he means for us to do just that. The same is true when he says to walk in the Spirit and we won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. He is telling us that we can do the above things.

His grace at the cross was and is not to just remove past sins from us but he has also given us the ability to resist sins and walk in liberty from the bondage of Satan.

The yoke of bondage has been broke by Christ at the cross. He came to bring the Christian out of bondage and we are no longer a slave to Satan. We should not look back to Egypt and the place where Satan had taskmasters over us but we are to walk in the liberty that is in Jesus.

It seems to me when a Christian makes excuse for his or her sins that person can not be a person that overcomes because he or she either isn't admitting that sin is a sin or he or she doesn't really have the faith in Christ for that particular deliverance. When someone says they are too weak, it seems to me he or she is either trying to defeat the devil in their own flesh or they currently have too weak a faith in what Jesus has done at the cross to be delivered from that particular sin.I believe, help my unbelief.

If or when a person is in a bondage, he or she should ask themselves if there is anything too hard for God. Is there anything too big or impossible with God? Would it bring glory to God if deliverance was manifested in his or her life by deliverance from the bondage?

I'm convinced that we are in a spiritual warfare with the flesh as Christians and that it is God's will that we utterly defeat the enemies of our lives. These enemies are various sins. If we grow in the grace of the Lord we overcome these enemies. The verses in Ephesians chapter 6 speak of this warfare.

In Christ,
GaryE

Re: - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/10 0:50

Dear Gary E,

Thank you for sharing.

I know what you are saying, and I do believe in what you are saying. I must also add this to help you understand.

Paul also had a thorn in his side. The Lord's response to this thorn was, "My grace is sufficient." Why did the Lord not deliver Paul from this thorn in his side? Was it because it was impossible for God?

Quite the contrary. The Lord left the thorn in Paul's side to remind Paul of His grace.

If Paul had overcome all of his sins, if Paul had walked with no visible sin, then Paul could have quickly become self-righteous. However, in order that Paul would be continually be humbled, the Lord left this little reminder.

There is a great misunderstanding of sin that many people don't realize.

At one point, a man called Jesus a "good" teacher. How did Jesus reply? Mark 10:18 "Jesus replied. 'Only God is good.'"

Why would Jesus say this? Why did Jesus not come out and admit He was good?

He did this because we are to follow Jesus and mimic Christ. And this statement is highly important: Only God is good.

When we say this statement, we are not giving a characteristic of God. Many people think we are trying give God a trait by saying He is good. This is wrong. By this statement, we are not giving definition to God, but rather, giving definition to "good". If we were to measure goodness, what standard would we use? We would use God. We would say, "how do you measure in comparison to God?" This is how good you are.

We don't say, "By what standard do we measure God?" For we know that God is core, the root, the heart of all things. We know God is at the top and everything else is below. Therefore, when we say "God is good", we are really saying, "To be good is to be God."

This is important. For whenever we saying something is good, we are saying, "This is God." Only God is good. ONLY God is good. And so, anything that is good, is God.

Now, when we call human beings good, we are using it to define them. We are using it as a trait. People judge by what they can see, outward appearance. So, usually, when we say someone is good, it is because of the good things they do. (Because of the Godly things they do.) We say, "Martin is a good person because he gives money to the poor." However, as we know, God judges by the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7) This statement is also important, although I will explain later.

When God created humans, He meant for them to be good. Which means, He created us to be like Him. However, only God is good. And so, all was well and fine as long as we did not defy good (defy God).

When God looked at His creation (the heavens and the earth) in Genesis, multiple times He called it good. Why? Because His creation did not defy Him. It was in accord with His will. It existed in the presence of God.

However, the minute we sinned, this all changed. We defied God. We defied His goodness. We went against His will.

At this point, it is important to note that we were not born of God. We were part of creation. As a part of creation, as long as we follow God's will, we are good. We are in one accord with God.

However, we were given free will. When we exercised our freedom and sinned, everything fell apart. For the first time in all of creation, a creature apart from God had defied His goodness, His supremacy, His Holiness.

Sin is the defiance of God's will. Sin is evil because it goes against God who is good.

Thus, the minute the first sin was committed, evil was born. And from that point forward, all men were evil because they were no longer in accord with God's will.

God is at the top. He is supreme. In order for God to be supreme, He cannot let anything exist that threatens His supremacy. If He did, He would no longer be good which means He would no longer be God. (Which we know it is impossible for God to not be God.)

It is impossible for God to let anything be in His presence that challenges His authority. Our sin was to defy God. This meant we defied His authority. And so God had one of two choices. He could extinguish us right then and there, or He could rebuke us. He chose to draw His spirit from us causing us to die.

God cannot be near sin. However, only God is good. This means that anything apart from God is evil. All of humanity is evil.

The story continues. God gave us the law. He gave us the law to show how sinful we are. Only God who is good can live up to the law. He gave us the law to show us that we are evil.

We know what happened. The law showed that we are sinful. We cannot be good.

And so, God then sent His son to save us. How? Jesus, who is God, came to earth and lived up to the law. He then took all sin and died with it.

Then He said, "Whoever believes in my son, shall be saved."

What happens is important. In order to be saved, we must accept Jesus as our Lord. This means that we submit unto the authority of Jesus Christ.

The first part is important. We submit unto the authority of Christ. Do you remember the problem we had above? Sin was the defiance to God's will. Sin challenged God's authority. If we submit ourselves unto Jesus and make Him our Lord, then we are submitting unto the authority of God. This solves half the problem of sin. If we submit unto God's authority, then He does not have to extinguish us or rebuke us. We can be forgiven for our defiance. We are no longer challenging God's supremacy for we have submitted unto it. We have made Him our King and God by a committed choice.

The second half of the problem of sin is to not do it. Only God is good. Only God could possibly be good. So, if we are to be made good, we must become a part of God. This means we must be born again. However, to be born again, we must first die.

When we are saved, Christ then helps us overcome sin. How? Well, He redeems us. We die on the cross to the law, and are born again as a part of God.

There are two parts to our death. We have a spirit and a body. The spirit and body come together to form us. When we are saved, our spirit that lives in what we call the heart dies. We are then born again in the Spirit. We are given a new heart. However, the transformation is still not complete. We still have this body to tackle with. Our earthly body must die and we must be given a new heavenly body to be fully transformed to the image of Christ.

However, as far as sin goes, we have been delivered. Christ has delivered us from all sin in two ways. 1) He has become our Lord. 2) He has made us new.

This means, as a Christian, it is impossible for us to sin. It is impossible for us to defy God's will. Why? Because we are a part of God. We have been born again as a part of God.

1 John 3:9 - (NLT)

"Those who have been born into God's family do not sin, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they have been born of God."

When we are born again, we become a part of God. We are good. Our heart is good. Our body is still bad.

That is why people who are saved still do bad things. It is not because they are bad, it is because their flesh is still bad.

It is impossible for us to sin after we are saved because we are a part of God. Our will has been transformed into God's

will.

Now, what does this mean for Christian's who sin? If they are a part of God, that means God sins? What about that?

You must understand that our heart has been transformed but our body has not been. When we sin, we do not mean to sin. It is not intention. It cannot be. Why? For Jesus Christ lives in our heart. If our heart is bad, then we are saying that Jesus is bad. We know Jesus is good. The heart of a true born again Christian is never bad. It is always good and always wishes to do good things. It bears Christ and has the nature of Christ.

However, as we all know, we must be reminded to follow our heart, to follow the Holy Spirit inside of us.

Inside every Christian, a great war rages between the body(flesh) and the heart(spirit). The heart is good and wants to do good. However, the body is still evil. It craves bad things. And so, we live amidst this constant conflict.

Many Christians sway easily to the desires of their flesh because they ignore the joys of their spirit. They are deceived and tricked. They always mean good things, and always mean to do good things because their heart is good, but for some reason, they end up doing bad things. Sometimes, they even give in to sin becoming a slave to it. (They don't want to, but their flesh is weak.)

Matthew 26:41 - (NLT)

"Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you. For though the spirit is willing enough, the body is weak!"

We need not worry about our salvation, though, for we are judged by our heart as established above. Jesus lives in our heart, and so, we cannot fail. (Unless we ask Jesus to leave our heart, but that's a whole different issue.) This means that if we have been born again, we can do anything, and we will still go to Heaven. (Please do not pull this as a quote without reading further.)

However, as Paul so established in the bible, not everything is beneficial. Not to mention, if we truly love God, we will want to please Him. We will want to do good.

Since we have been transformed, our inward nature has been transformed. If we give into the desires of the flesh, we will quickly discover a disgust, sadness, and other such evils inside of us. We will be prone to all the desires of the flesh.

However, if we give into our true nature, the nature of God, it will produce all sorts of good things in us. We will also be joyful and at peace.

You don't really have to force this on any Christian. I have noticed that people who are filled with the Spirit learn this lesson quickly through experience. They may go into sin for a time, even a long time in human terms. When they do, it takes a toll on them. Sooner or later, they become so disgusted with themselves that they come running to repentance, and so my friend gets a call at 3am with the person saying, "Please help me get right with God." Or in another scenario, God will discipline them. This causes them to come running too.

It takes time. We must be patient with those that stumble and falter.

Now, going back to the above. It is true that we battle against the flesh and fight against it.

For many of us, we love God with all our heart, and we want to be sin free. Not because we have anything to prove, but just because we love God. There are many devout Christians who strive to be their best in order to show the Lord gratitude for all He has done.

There are also many Christians who encourage and push other Christians to be sin free, not because they are worried that his person is going to Hell, but because they love that person. They love them so much, they want to see them at their best.

Love motivates us to be sin free.

However, there is a small problem. Many people think that since they have been saved that they should have complete

victory over thier flesh. This will never happen. It is impossible for you to have complete victory over your flesh. Your flesh has yet to be transformed. It is not a part of God. Your flesh is no good.

If you were to become sin free in your flesh, then you would do what Jesus did. By this, you wouldn't need Him. As we know, that's no good.

If you were to gain complete victory over sin in your flesh, then you would not be at war. You would not have a flesh to battle against.

If you walked without sin, then you would not die in the flesh. You would be perfect and live forever.

That is why God did not give Paul victory over His thorn. We all have thorns. There is a sin or sin(s) that haunt every Christian. Some try to hide it. Some are completely ignorant of it. Some fall away from God because they don't get victory.

This story was written to help those people who stumble because of thier thorn. It was written to help them realize thier need for Jesus. Everyday, we must die to our flesh. Everyday, we should fall on our knees and ask Christ to give us strength. Everyday, we must realize that we are weak and that we need Jesus.

The Devil uses our thorn to hurt us. We think, "I have victory in Christ." And then we sin in the flesh. This breaks us down. It opens us up to attack. "Why did I sin? Why did not Jesus help me?" We then start think, "Where was Jesus when I needed Him?" This opens us to more attacks and more attacks until finally we start to question our salvation. We become guilt stricken and defeated.

WE ARE AT WAR!!!! We battle against the dark forces of the world who have power over us because of our fleshly bodies.

We do not yet have victory. If we had victory, then there would be no war. Victors don't fight, they rejoice. We know that we have victory in Jesus. We have the hope of victory. We have HOPE!!! Because we have Jesus, we can say the war has already been won. The war has been won, but the war is not over. We still have to press on to the end. We still have to persevere.

The story ends on an important note. It reminds us that we need to keep our focus on our King. Keep your focus on the victory. Keep your focus on the hope. Walk in faith. Keep your focus on Jesus.

If we do, we will not let sin have power over us. And I don't mean we will not fall into sin. This is not right. The body is weak. We will fall into sin. If we never did, then we wouldn't need grace. We need grace. The above statement means we will not let sin have power over us. It will not bind us. It will not lead us into guilt. It will not bring us into addiction. It will not control us. It will not haunt us.

When our focus is on Christ, we will be aware of His presence in our lives 24/7. We will live in fear of the Lord. We will not be drawn to the world, but rather be filled with love.

Amen.

I hope this better explains some things. I did not mean for it be so long. It is late and I am really tired.

May God bless you my brother. Thanks for reading my story, and reading this long passage.

Blake