



SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS FOR BIBLICAL CHURCH HEALTH

FANNING THE FLAME
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Session 1

Christ is our All in All

Revitalization Paradigm

Revelation 2:4-5, But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.
⁵Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

REMEMBER - REPENT - RECOVER

Every church and believer is always in need of revitalization - as shown in –

Acts 15:41, “Paul . . . was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”

Why doesn't it say he was growing the churches?

Because, biblically, health trumps numbers.

Bigger is better only if the growth is the result of spiritual health.

The Extent of the Need

After all church planting we still close 3500 – 4000 churches in the US every year.

The Nature of the Need

Individual and corporate spiritual vitality is impossible apart from a biblical/Christian world and life view.

What is that?

Preoccupation with Christ as Savior and Ruler

As described in:

- o Colossians 3:17, Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Reason for the Need

Dobson has discovered that only 9% of professing Christians understand and live according to a biblical world and life view.

This is because of the lack of understanding of:

The specifics of the work of Christ (**neither individuals nor churches are Gospel driven and Christ centered by default**)

The real and ultimate purpose of salvation

The nature of grace and how to capitalize on it

The biblical relationship between the individual Christian and the church

Isaiah 5:16

“The LORD of hosts will be exalted in judgment, And the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness.



Isaiah 30:18

The Lord longs (waits) to be gracious and rises to show compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait (long) for **Him!**"

Christ is our All in All

Christ, Himself, is our:

Justification	No indictability before God
Atonement	Removes our sin
Expiation	Removes our uncleanness
Propitiation	Absorbs God's Wrath
Redemption	Ransom payment for liberty
Righteousness	All requirements fully met
Reconciliation	Restored before God's <u>face</u>
Adoption	Joint heirs with Himself
Sanctification	maturing in conduct
Glorification	Complete perfection at last

He Is Our Salvation

These truths, about Christ, when understood, believed and accepted, provide:

- Recognition by us of our need to be changed
- Hope/assurance of imputed/credited change
- Openness to being changed
- Power to live the change

"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you **have been made complete** . . ." Col. 2:8-10



What is there about your relationship with Christ, or, possibly the lack of such a relationship, that has been addressed by this consideration of these specific accomplishments of the saving work of Christ?

Philippians 1:6

“I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Takeaways

· What is there about your relationship with Christ, or, possibly the lack of such a relationship, that has been addressed by this consideration of these specific accomplishments of the saving work of Christ?

For Testimony, Question and/or Discussion

What do you want to share?

What do you want to ask?

What do you want to discuss further?

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith for the demonstration of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Romans 3



Session 2

It's All about Him

Salvation, Christianity and Church are about God!

Romans 3:21-26

“. . . the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Matthew 6:9

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.”

Illustrating the Point made in the title

Bach - “Sola Deo Gloria”
Handel - Hallelujah Chorus
Reformation “Solas” all point to One
Faith Alone
By Grace Alone
In Christ Alone
According to the Bible Alone
For the Glory of God Alone

Discovering the Bible's expansive emphasis on the ultimate point of Rom. 3:25, Ps. 23:4 and Matt. 6:9

The Bible “drives down” the central point of becoming God/Christ/Spirit centered.
The elemental and paramount purpose of God's forgiving us is for God to be recognized and magnified in the demonstration of His righteousness. (Rom. 3:25-26) for His own Name's sake (Ps. 23:3)
Personal history with this
It is ultimately all about Him, and deservedly so



Ezek. 36:22-32

"Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name which you have profaned among the nations where you went. ²³ "And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. ²⁴ "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. ²⁸ "And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ "Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. ³⁰ "And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, that you may not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations. ³¹ "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations. ³² "I am not doing this for your sake," declares the Lord GOD,"

Rom 3:25-26

"... whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration I say of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

Isaiah 26:8

Indeed, *while following the way of Your judgments, O Lord, We have waited for You eagerly; Your name, even Your memory, is the desire of our souls.*

Is 48:9, 11

"For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, And for My praise I restrain it for you, In order not to cut you off. - - - 11 "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned?"

Ps 85:6

Wilt Thou not Thyself revive us again, That Thy people may rejoice in Thee?
Psalm 23:3, He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Ps. 130:4

"... there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared."

Phil. 1:11

... having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.



2 Thess 3:1

“ . . . pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you;

Josh 4:24

. . . that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever.”

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light . . .

2 Cor. 4:15,

“ . . . all things are for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.”

Jn 9:2-3

And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.

Ps 73:28

“The nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Thy works.”

2 Cor. 5:15

He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him...

Rom. 11:36

“ . . . from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen”

Romans 16:27

. . . to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

Ps 30:12

That my soul may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to Thee forever.

1 Sam 17:46

"This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel...

1 Ki 8:43

that all the peoples of the earth may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by Thy name.

1 Ki 8:60

so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no one else.



2 Ki 19:19

"And now, O LORD our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou alone, O LORD, art God."

Psalm 25:6-7

"Remember, O LORD, Thy compassion and Thy lovingkindnesses, For they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; According to Thy lovingkindness remember Thou me, For Thy goodness' sake, O LORD."

Eph. 1:3-6

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace.

Ephesians 1:11–12

In Christ I have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who have trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Psalm 25:10–11

For Your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

Isaiah 43:25

I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake.

Col. 1:18

He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

Ps 109:21a

But You, O God, the Lord, deal *kindly* with me for Your name's sake.

Ps. 31:3

"For Thou art my rock and my fortress; For Thy name's sake Thou wilt lead me and guide me.

Ps 79:9

Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name; And deliver us, and forgive our sins, for Thy name's sake.

What if...

Matt. 7:13-14, "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it."



Vertical U turn of salvation

GOD THE GIVER

U

Man the receiver

The Concluding and Ultimate Reality

SALVATION IS ULTIMATELY FOR GOD
AND
IS GOD CENTERED NOT MAN CENTERED
AND
LEADS TO WORSHIP WHICH IS FOR GOD
AND
IS GOD CENTERED NOT MAN CENTERED.

Revelation 1:5b-6, “. . . Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

•

This is more than thankfulness, which is motivated by reception of benefit. While thankfulness worshipfully recognizes/praises the Source of the benefit, it is humanly preoccupied with the benefit/gain. I.e., while thankfulness, as an attitude, and thanksgiving, as an expression of that attitude, is a right, and required, form of worship, it is weaker worship than the worshipful focus on God/Christ for Who He is in and of Himself. That’s the point of the last ten words in verse 6. Without minimizing the importance of Christ as the Source and Giver of the benefits described in the words leading to these ten, these ten call us to worship Him for Who He is in and of Himself.

The Concluding Questions

What have I learned from this?

What changes are required in my thinking and in my actions?



Session 3

Understanding and Capitalizing on Grace

Saving Grace Defined

Rom. 5:8, God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Graphic illustration

Grace, therefore, is giving salvation to actively undeserving people.

Is. 53:6

2 Corinthians 5:21, He made Him who knew no sin *to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Mercy is doing for someone what they cannot do for themselves

Proceeds out of grace, and is the compassionate application of grace to us in our helplessness.

Sanctifying Grace Defined

Sanctifying grace is the outward evidence of Saving grace.

Gal 5:22-23 -Fruit of the Spirit

Phil 2:12, Work out your salvation

1 Thess. 5:18-20 (These are a unit of thought.)

“In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

“Quench not the Spirit.”

“Despise not prophesyings.”

Ephesians 4:29-30

Sanctifying Grace is both the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit which changes the spiritual condition, attitude, and functions of true Christians so that Christ is increasingly recognized in them.

Saving and sanctifying grace are delivered to us through the means of grace.

The means of saving grace is the preached gospel of Christ.

Our primary focus in this point is to learn to “capitalize” on the means of sanctifying grace.

Progress in sanctification is in proportion to his/her use of the God ordained, God provided and God instructed Means of Grace.

Important to know - this is not legalism.



What are the means of sanctifying grace?

Scripture

The word of **GOD**

The only infallible rule of faith for practice
what to believe

The only infallible rule of faith for practice
what to do with what we believe

James 1:22, “prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”

What do we actually follow as our “infallible” rule for practice

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. John 15:7

Prayer

Three levels of prayer

Unhurried, intimate, worshipful communion with God, Coram Deo

Meditative listening to God in Scripture, i.e., waiting on Him, combined with communing Prayer

Kingdom focused praying

Circumstantial praying

See Survey for Promoting the Understanding and Practice of Biblical Praying (next page)

Church

Word

Preaching

Teaching

Small groups

Prayer

Pastoral

Congregational

Small groups

Sacraments

Accountability

Fellowship

Again- A Christian’s growth in grace is in proportion to his/her faithfulness in using the God ordained, God provided, and God instructed Means of Grace.

Spiritual Disciplines by Don Whitney

Our belief is indicated by what we practice. (Heb. 3:12-19)



Session 4

The Biblical Relationship between the Christian and the Church

1 Peter 2:4-10 – chosen race, priesthood, holy nation, people for God’s own possession, the people of God.

Matthew 16:15-18 – build my church

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 – in all persons

1 Corinthians 12:25-27 - you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.”

Historic assumptions about the relationship between the Christian and the Church

I was never taught that my relationship with Christ was anything other than personal.

I was never taught that my personal agenda must never be allowed to compete with the welfare of the Body/Church.

I was never taught that it is actually sinful to think that I can have a personal agenda which competes with the Church, and, therefore, with its Head, Jesus.

I was never taught that my true welfare in Christ is impossible apart from my fitting into His Body under His Headship.

I was never taught that if I do attempt to live in such an exclusive manner, I quench the Spirit in my own life, by quenching Him in the Church.

The common idea about the church in the average evangelical has been:

The church’s job is to provide for and promote individual spiritual welfare.

Win Arn – “why does the church exist?”

“To take care of my family’s and my needs”

It is a service station for fuel and repair for meeting our needs so we can go on our way.

It is like FSS and ATC which is to provide for information, obstacle clearance, and directional guidance through clouds, fog and darkness for a safe flight and successful landing on a route chosen by the pilot himself for the accomplishment of his own agenda.

The church is seen as an “intruder” into personal and family space. Participation is seen as an infringement rather than functional normality designed by Christ.

“Consumer Christians” evaluate the church on the basis of personal preference, and sinfully shop around for personal satisfaction with either little or no regard for the church.

Rising resistance toward vows of membership has resulted in some “churches” no longer requiring membership. This undermines effectiveness in the practice of



developmental and corrective disciplinary accountability required by Christ. This makes faithful participation optional rather than mandatory as is taught in Scripture.

These historic ideas and practices have been and are unacceptable to God. They reveal the degree to which personal preference preempts devotion to Jesus, and His Body, the Church.

“I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.” Phil. 2:20-21

The Bible’s instruction about the relationship between the Christian and the Church

The individual exists more for the church than the church for the individual.

E. g., the body does not serve the thumb, rather, the thumb serves the body, which, in turn, properly serves the head.

Further, no individual may ever be a satellite “Christian.”

If one’s thumb gets hurt It doesn’t go spastic and leave the body. Simply put, it cannot be “I and mine,” at the expense of “we and His.”

I wrongly changed “our Father” to “my Father.”

The functional purpose of the individual believer is seen in this:

You are:

A CHOSEN RACE,

A royal PRIESTHOOD,

A HOLY NATION,

A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION. -

You once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

That you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Individual salvation and blessing are for a collective function

“You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:4-5

“I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one ” Jn. 17

No person in the Trinity acts independently of the others.

The emphasis on unity (*oneness*) in Ephesians is for purposes of fruitful function in the church.

“you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in



whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. Eph. 2:19-22

“No member of the body of Christ is endowed with such perfection as to be able, without the assistance of others, to supply his own necessities. A certain proportion is allotted to each; and it is only by communicating with each other, that all enjoy what is sufficient for maintaining their respective places in the body.” John C on Eph 4:7

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church (and) in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Eph. 3:20-21

There is both individual and collective accountability

The authenticity of “Remember, Repent, and Return” in Rev. 2 is evaluated by the degree of collective results.

The authenticity of individual response to Christ is determined by the evidence of individual commitment to the collective function of Christ’s Body.

Clear instruction against personally customized interpretation of scripture

“No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” 2 Pet. 1:20

“We who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.” Rom. 12

This subject is one of those matters described in the saying “we can’t see the forest for the trees.”

“You don’t have to go to church to be a Christian.”

The truth is you cannot be a biblical Christian while being *para* church. I know that this runs contrary to our historic assumptions, but, here again, our assumptions reveal more about our preferences and our cultural conditioning than they do about biblical truth. The Bible says, “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. 26 For if we go on sinning willfully (*by ignoring God’s truth*) after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.”

Heb. 10:24-27

Conclusion

It took me a long time to make this connection, and I guess I understand why. Satan attacks the essential heart of God’s design, and tries to prevent clarification which would enhance obedience and biblical health and welfare. Just look at how he has and continues to attack the church and its individual parts by diverting individuals away from the church. In doing this he “succeeds” against the individual, because the individual needs the church more than he or she realizes. He succeeds against the church because “the Body” is hindered when its parts are “absent,” or “sick,” or both. The individual is



unhealthy apart from the church which naturally results in bad health for the church itself.

I close with this:

“Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned, therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the discernment of their discerning men shall be concealed.” Isaiah 29:13-14

DISCUSSION TIME FOR SESSION FOUR

The Christian and the Church

1. To what degree do I go to church with my evaluator’s hat on?
2. Do I expect the church to provide for and support my individual spiritual welfare?
3. Do I decide on the success of the church depending on the degree to which my needs were met?
4. Does the church take too much of my time? Why? Why not?
5. What can I do to better fit under Christ’s headship for the welfare of the body?