

SOME REFLECTIONS FROM THIS WEEK

I've been doing some reflecting this last week on the goodness of God—partly because of the passing of sister Gracie, and partly because it's the Christmas season—and my heart has been overwhelmed by His goodness. I have also been grieved because of all the people we have known personally, who have turned down that goodness or traded it for things that have no eternal value and will soon pass away—houses, cars, careers, reputations, honor and glory, the good things in life, relationships, etc. At this point I'm not necessarily talking about people rejecting “salvation” in order to have all these things; though there are many who have done that as well. I'm talking about people not attaining the place in God's kingdom that He has prepared for them. I'm talking about people not becoming the kind of person God has desired to make them because of these things.

I was also considering all the people in the churches and out here who will miss the goal of redemption because of all the error they have been taught. Have you ever meditated on this reality? Has the reality of *missed* kingdom opportunities, or *missed* callings, or *un-apprehended* destinies, ever settled down in your spirit and caused you to weep? It has for me, quite often. I know I'm often accused of being “hard” and “unloving” and “too rough” on people, and even “proud” because of the way I present my teachings. But the reason I speak as I do is because the reality that so many of God's people are missing what He has prepared for them weighs heavily on my spirit much of the time. Living in that kind of reality will make you a different kind of Christian.

Unfortunately, most of those I've come across don't understand *that kind* of intensity or soberness because of all the theological garbage that fills their heads. They can understand having a “passion” for something, like evangelizing the lost or engaging in some kind of ministry. But they can't even begin to understand or relate to the *urgency* of someone like me who constantly warns people about the possibility of missing what God has prepared for us. Even if you could convince them that their destiny in the kingdom is not something that's automatically gained just by virtue of believing in Jesus, they still wouldn't be able to grasp the seriousness of the issue. There's just too much error in their heads which keeps the reality of the truth from ever sinking in.

Even out here, where it is at least acknowledged by most ministers that the goal of Christianity is to bring forth the “fruit of the Spirit” and be conformed to the image of Christ, even many of *these* ministers can't see how detrimental some of the doctrines they promote are. They don't seem capable of understanding how they war against the truth they are preaching. They can't see how they hinder the work they are seeking to accomplish in the brethren. Neither do they seem capable of understanding how *hard* some of these doctrines have made them.

How can we expect the Holy Spirit to produce the “fruit” of the Spirit in us, when our minds are filled with ideas and teachings that not only hinder that work, but produce a *hardness of heart* as well? How can we expect to be conformed to the image of Christ when we refuse to let go of doctrines which produce religious pride and arrogance in us?

We all know that believing correct doctrine will never in and of itself save us. We also know that we don't have to have all our doctrine absolutely correct in order to be saved because salvation is a *relationship* with a Person. But salvation is also a process which has a beginning and a goal. *Basic* salvation—being saved from the wrath of God—is not the goal of redemption. Rather, it has to do with being saved *from* something, and that something is the Lake of Fire. *Full* salvation has to do with being saved *to* something, and that something is the image of Christ. We will never reach that goal while believing doctrines which produce a hard heart. I've said this on many occasions but it's worth repeating—*Bad doctrine produces bad experience.*

I've spent the last two years in this chat room, exposing many of these doctrines so people can see the truth. The fact is, most of these errors come straight from the lips of John Calvin, or at the very least, they are the end result of his teachings. Two of these errors, which I see continually see influencing people in a wrong way, are his teachings of God's sovereignty and predestination. I'm not going to do an in-depth expose on these two errors tonight. I just want to share a few thoughts I had about them this week, as I was considering the goodness of God, and how tragic it is that so many of His children will miss so much of that goodness because of the error they are being taught wherever they turn.

Some of you may remember a group called "*Stand Up Ministry*". It's a loose-knit network of pastors, most of whom are black, and most of whom are still in the Church System. Most of them still believe in the pre-tribulation rapture. Most of them are staunch Calvinists and are very much pro-institutional church. They are not calling people out of the church, but rather, calling people to stand up for truth and righteousness inside the church system. They are encouraging people to stand against the "apostasy" that's sweeping through the church.

They used to do a chat room on Paltalk on Tuesday evenings. I haven't listened to them for a long time; so I'm not sure if they still do that chat room, and if they do, if it's still on Tuesday nights or what but when I first heard about them, I listened to them for a couple of months to see exactly what they were teaching and where they were coming from. At that time, the *main* teacher in the chat room was one of the few white brothers who are involved with this ministry, named Bob Miller. It was very hard for me to listen to this man's teaching because everything he taught, I disagreed with. But I kept going back for over two months.

The last sermon I listened to from Mr. Miller was the one where he told his story about how he was sick and there was no hope for him. But somehow, God made a way for him to get into a program where they were doing some new, experimental treatment for his particular illness and the treatment turned out to be a success in his case. So he was giving God the glory for miraculously moving on his behalf to heal him, which is all fine and good. But from there his comments degenerated into the most sickening discourse on predestination I have ever heard. At the end of it, his last statement went something like this: "*I don't know why God chose to save me out of the billions of people He predestined to be lost and to be quite frank, I don't care. All I care about is the fact that He did choose me*". This was so disgusting to me, I never went back.

Now, I'm sure that neither Mr. Miller or any of the preachers who are part of "*Stand Up Ministry*" see anything wrong with the attitude that produced such a callous statement because to them, this kind of attitude is not only normal, it's righteous. It establishes and exalts God's sovereignty over His creation. According to them, God has chosen before the foundation of the world who He will save and who he will *not* save. This led me to ask myself a few questions. Would the same God who *intentionally* (ie: sovereignly) chose *not* to save billions of people, sit in heaven, *weeping* over the lost condition of those same billions of people? Would the same God who sovereignly predestined multitudes of people to be lost, sit in heaven, grieving over those lost souls?

John Calvin didn't believe God would grieve over those He deliberately chosen *not* to save; and the vast majority of Calvin's followers today feel the same way. Mr. Miller feels that way, I can assure you. Any effort on his part to evangelize the lost has to do with finding God's "elect" out there in the world. He does not grieve for the lost because in his mind they are no great loss to God or His kingdom.

Calvinist's don't grieve over the lost anymore than a carpenter grieves over something he makes to help him build a complicated piece of furniture. The thing only has one purpose, and it's destined to be discarded once that

purpose has been fulfilled. When the piece of furniture is done, that accessory that was made in order to help produce it is discarded and the carpenter doesn't shed a tear. That's how John Calvin viewed those who were predestined to be lost. In his warped little mind, God created the lost for a specific purpose, and that purpose had nothing to do with salvation. That purpose was to help bring forth His elect. The lost are just necessary *accessories* that God uses to produce His "elect". Once they have fulfilled their purpose, they will be thrown out. Why would God grieve over the loss of these "accessories" when he *never* intended to keep any of them in the first place? This was Calvin's "god".

Well guess what? When you accept the hard-hearted theology of a Pharisee and murderer like Calvin, *your* heart tends to become hard as well. This view of predestination came from a hardened heart and it produces hardness in the hearts of all those who accept it. Of course, none of the people who embrace and propagate Calvin's view of predestination *perceive* themselves to be hard, anymore than did John Calvin, or anymore than does the Mr. Bob Miller. They all think they are upholding and magnifying the *glory* of God. To them, it's the glory of God that He uses human beings in such a cold blooded way.

This error does leave them in a place of confusion when dealing with those who were once genuine believers, but who end up lost. It's one thing to point the finger at those who are saved and say God *predestined* them to be saved; and then point the finger at those who are lost and say God *predestined* them to be lost. But what do you say when it comes to someone who was once saved and then ends up lost? Did God predestine that person to be saved; or did He predestine that person to be lost?

How do you explain God's "predestination" and "sovereignty" when a Christian falls away from the faith and ends up eternally lost? Was the devil, or the world, or the guy's own flesh, stronger than God's predestination? Were all these things stronger than God's sovereignty? Was God confused? Did He make a mistake when choosing this guy's destiny for him in eternity past? If God sovereignly predestined Mr. John Smith of Houston Texas to be saved, then Mr. John Smith of Houston Texas *better* end up saved, or else God's predestination and sovereignty aren't very dependable, are they?

When it comes to the dilemma of the fallen and lost Christian, there are really only *three* possibilities. One is that God *predestined* Mr. Smith to be saved *for a time*, but in the end, to be lost. If that's the case, it's not a very comforting thought, is it? Since according to most of today's preachers, salvation is based on God's election and predestination—*not* on anything we do or fail to do—who among us can be sure *we're* not one of those people God has predestined to be saved for a time, but end up lost?

Another possibility is that because God predestined Mr. Smith to be lost, regardless of how religious he became or how changed he was, or how committed to God he was, in truth, he was never *really* saved. He just *appeared* to be saved. He just *thought* he was saved. He was never actually regenerated and accepted into the family of God. Of course, if this is the case, how do you know *YOU* are really saved? Maybe you just think you are saved. Maybe you just appear to be saved.

The third possibility is that somehow Mr. Smith managed to get *genuinely* saved by mistake. God wasn't trying to save him and He had no intention of saving him but somehow Mr. Smith managed to hear the gospel and accept it. Somehow there was a communication error between the Holy Spirit and the Father and the Holy Spirit saved Mr. Smith him *by mistake*. Now, the mistake has to be corrected, so God works it out that Mr. Smith falls away and is lost.

Actually, John Calvin did have an answer for those who fell away permanently. He invented a special kind of “grace” that was temporary, and he named it, quite appropriately, “*Temporal Grace*”. Temporal Grace was necessary in order to plug some rather large holes in his theology when faced with some of the clear statements of Scripture. It was also useful when someone pointed Calvin to someone who was once a real Christian, but who had since fallen away from the faith and died in that condition. Calvin said:

“Let no one think that those [who] fall away...**were of the predestined**, called according to the purpose and truly sons of the promise. For those **who appear** to live piously may be called sons of God; but since they will eventually live impiously and die in that impiety, God does call them sons **in His foreknowledge**. There are sons of God who do not yet appear so to us, but now do so to God; and there are those who, on account of some arrogated or **temporal grace**, are called so by us, but are not so to God.”

Concerning The Eternal Predestination of God; p. 66

He also said that sometimes God: “...causes those whom he illumines only for a time to partake of it; then he justly forsakes them on account of their ungratefulness and strikes them with even greater blindness” (Institutes of Christian Religion, 3.24.8. So by “some arrogated or temporal grace,” God “illumines only for a time” the alleged *non-elect* for a specific purpose, none of which has anything to do with actually calling them to salvation. If this doesn’t appear hard and callous to you, then you are under this man’s influence and you need to repent.

I think most people would reject possibility number 1 simply because of it’s very unpleasant *ramifications*. If such were the answer, then nobody could ever walk in any kind of assurance that they were saved. Nobody could ever be sure they weren’t one of the poor shmucks who were destined to only be saved for a little while, and then end up lost. IF number one were true, you and I could not have any assurance *until* the day that we died that we were really saved.

I also think most people would reject possibility number 3 because of *its* ramification. God would certainly not be *infallible* if part of the Trinity went out and did something that was against the plan of rest of the Trinity. If the Holy Spirit saved by mistake, a person who was predestined to be lost, God would no longer be kind of God the Bible declares Him to be.

That leaves us with possibility number 2. The only answer for the dilemma of the fallen and lost Christian is that he was not really a Christian to begin with—which also means there was dilemma to begin with because a genuine Christian cannot possibly be lost. There are only two kinds of people: those who are saved and *must remain* saved because God chose to save them from before the foundation of the world; and those who are lost and *must remain* lost because God chose to not save them before the foundation of the world.

Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah. As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD. Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart. My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon

destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

Jeremiah 4:16-22

As I was reading in the book of Jeremiah this week, I came across this very interesting passage. God was in *anguish* over what He was forced to do to His people because of the choices they had made to rebel against Him. They had forced Him to act. They had forced Him to move against them and destroy them. But He took no pleasure in it. The justice of God demanded punishment from such blatant rebellion, but His heart was broken over it. Listen again and see if you can hear God's anguish? *My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.*

"*My bowels, my bowels*" cries the Lord God. "*I cannot hold my peace*". He says my grief is so deep I must cry out; I cannot be silent! I believe this is the way He feels about many of His people today, who have rebelled against Him because of all the false doctrine they have been taught, especially regarding what Satan can and can't do in their lives, and who walk in disobedience and carelessness as a result. Because of the hour we are now living in and because of what God's plan is at the end of this age, He is being forced by their own choices to turn them over to the spirit of Antichrist. But I don't believe He's happy about the situation because some of these people have walked with him for many years. Some of these people really loved Him. When He looks down at the destruction of His people, I believe He is crying "*My bowels, my bowels*".

I'm not the kind of guy who displays his emotions or grief in public. You'll never hear me making long prayers in public. I do my grieving, my weeping, and my praying alone, in my bedroom. But I can tell you that for years now, anytime, day or night, I can feel the weeping and the burden of the Spirit of God because so many of His people are either being turned over to Antichrist, or they are missing the destiny He has prepared for them.

*Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God? **Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?***

Joel 2:12-17

This passage is very relevant to us because I believe it is speaking of *our* day. God is about to pour out His wrath upon on all sin and rebellion—including the sin and rebellion of His own people—as a prelude to the establishment of His kingdom on this earth. But the minds and hearts of today’s Christians are filled with errors which have them convinced that they are safe from that wrath. The errors they have been taught have them convinced that none of His wrath will ever touch *them* because they are *His* people. Therefore, they are smug and self-confident; and they are waiting for God to pour out His wrath on the rebellion and the sin of the *unsaved*, after they have been safely tucked away in heaven. Because of this incredible blindness, this is what God is saying to Jerusalem: “...*turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD*”.

And to Zion, He’s saying: “*Blow the trumpet...sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts...Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach*”.

If you are part of Zion, then blow a trumpet; sound an alarm. Call a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather everyone you can who is part of Zion and cry out to God to spare His people from the Beasts of Revelation 13, which are devouring so many of them at this very moment. Let the priests, the ones who are functioning as God’s ministers, weep between the porch and the altar. Let everyone who understands what is happening right now, say, “*Spare thy people, O Lord*”. The time to weep for your brethren is *now*. The time to call them to repentance is now, before the wrath begins because once God begins to pour out His wrath, the time to weep for them is over. We will be expected to rejoice with the heavenly host at that point, when they are destroyed

*And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off. And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. **Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.***

Revelation 18:16-20

Please notice that when God finally pours out His wrath on Babylon The Great, John hears a voice from heaven saying: “*Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her*”. That’s a clear reference to you and me, my friends. The only ones who will be weeping at that point will be those who are still *part of* Babylon—especially “the ship masters, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea”. God’s true saints should be rejoicing at this point.

The unpleasant part of all this is that we will have to rejoice over many *Christians* who are have been destroyed along with Babylon—the ones who were called out, again and again by the Spirit of God, but who refused to leave. They will still be part of Babylon when it’s destroyed, and we will have to *rejoice* on that day, even though

they have been destroyed. It will be unpleasant in that hour because many of us still have loved ones in Babylon, and in the world. At that point we won't be able to intercede for them any longer. It will be too late to say: "*Spare thy people, O Lord*". At that point, they will have become God's *eternal* enemies and we will have to rejoice that He has destroyed them, along with the rest of his enemies who are part of Babylon.

It's not only grieving to know that many of your brethren are going to end up eternally lost because they are overcome by the Beast and the False Prophet in these days, it's also grievous to know that many of them will not attain the destiny God has made available for them and called them to.

Most of today's Christians can't possibly grieve over such a situation because their minds are filled with doctrines that *preclude* such a possibility. In "package deal" Christianity not getting that which God has prepared for you is not even a possibility. They have been that if you are a genuine Christian, you automatically get the whole "package" by grace. You can't lose the package or any part of the package. Oh, maybe you can lose a few jewels in your crown; maybe you'll only be a ruler over 5 cities as opposed to 10 cities; but all that's pretty insignificant, compared to the *rest* of the package! I mean, who's going to weep because a brother or a sister loses a few jewels in their crown? That's nothing!

And of course, in the minds of these *same* people, there's *also* no reason to weep over the thousands and thousands of people who are being seduced right now because hey, they aren't *genuine* believers to begin with, right? A genuine believer is eternally secure. A genuine believer is kept safe and secure by the power of God, regardless of what they do or how they live, right? Therefore, the one's who are being deluded and seduced right now are just *unsaved* religious people. And besides, all these people were *predestined* to be lost, right? Who's going to weep over people who were predestined to be lost to begin with. God doesn't love them and He's not trying to save them. He created them to be discarded, once they have fulfilled their purpose.

You would be surprised at how many people walk around with precisely this kind of attitude. They may not always articulate it or explain it like I just did; but that's exactly what's in their hearts because that's the doctrine they have been taught their whole Christian lives. And that doctrine make them hard int their hearts. They can't grieve over their brethren who are falling away because of false doctrine; and they can't grieve over the unsaved lost because of that same false doctrine.

*Lay **not** up for yourselves treasures **upon earth**, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But **lay up** for yourselves **treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Matthew 6:19-21

Jesus told us to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Except for in the area of *tithing*, I wonder just how many Christians are actually doing what Jesus said? When we focus on attaining the high Calling, when we focus on gaining the full inheritance that God has prepared for us, that's laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven.

Now think about all the false doctrines that keep people from laying up real treasures in haven. There's the "it's by grace, plus nothing" error. That means you can't do anything yourself to attain what God has prepared for you. You just have to receive it all by grace.

Then, there's the false faith that so many are being caught up in right now. False faith tells us that all we have to do is keep on believing and trusting that God will give us everything He has planned to give us. We don't have to do anything ourselves to receive all these things; just go through life "believing" we will receive them.

Then there is the "package deal" concept that we already touched on. Package deal Christianity says every reward and blessing in the Scripture is part of a 'package deal' and it comes with salvation. When you are saved, you automatically get the whole package.

Then there's the "your best life now" doctrine, which people like Joel Osteen propagates. They tell us we can have the best of both worlds. We can have our best life now, and then our best life in heaven. I could go on and on, but I think you get the point.

So this week I found myself being very thankful for *the truths* God has given us; very thankful for God's goodness and mercy towards us; but at the same time, grieved over the fact that so few of my fellow Christians accept or understand these truths.

Of course, I don't have to grieve over this fact. I could adopt the same attitude the Reverend Bob Miller has. If he were in my shoes, he would probably say something like: "*I don't know why God decided to show me all this truth, and not show it to the rest of the church; but quite frankly I don't care. All I care about is that he showed it to me!*"

Or I could take the secular approach, which was well stated on a sweat shirt I saw the other day. It said: "*I used to care, but I take a pill for that now*".

Or I can do what the Scripture says: which is to weep between the porch and the altar for the condition of God's people. Since I want to lay up for myself treasures in heaven, I think I'll follow the Scripture.