

Talk It Over

Deep Problems, Deeper Grace

(Week 1)

Waking Up To The Problem

SMALL TALK

1. When you are finished with your old clothes, what do you do with them?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:24.** When you can't see your own sin as a deep problem, that's a deep problem. How do we wake up to the problem?
3. **READ Colossians 3:5.** Did this list of "idols" (false gods) surprise you? Why does Paul call these sins "idolatry"?
4. What solution does Paul offer for those who would like to rid themselves of these idols? (Read the context around Colossians 3:5)

GETTING PERSONAL

5. Do you think people are happier who can do whatever they want whenever they want? Why or why not?
6. How did you become aware of your need for "deeper grace" as an answer to your "deep problems"?

MAKING PROGRESS

7. One of our core statements is: "Love God wholeheartedly." What "good thing" competes as a rival suitor for your whole heart's devotion that God who is a jealous God refuses to tolerate because of his firm insistence upon your exclusive commitment to him? What will you do about that? How do you receive deep grace for this deep problem.

September 6, 2020

Deep Problems, Deeper Grace

1-Waking Up To The Problem

One secular psychologist (Barry Schwartz) claims that most people believe maximum freedom of choice is required for maximum happiness. We are used to this. For example, the supermarket offers well over a hundred different kinds of salad dressings. We have the freedom to choose whatever makes us happiest.

Even our personal identity has become a matter of total freedom of choice. We no longer think of identity as something we inherit, we think of identity as something we get to invent. We think we can re-invent ourselves as often as we like. We think we can re-invent ourselves any day we decide to choose differently. All you have to do is decide what kind of person you want to be. Is this true?

Barry Schwartz surprised his TED talk audience by pointing to a picture of two fish in a fishbowl as he said:

...if you shatter the fishbowl so that everything is possible, you don't have freedom. You have paralysis. ...The absence of some metaphorical fishbowl is a recipe for misery, and, I suspect, disaster.”

Barry Schwartz, TED Talk on Why Fish (and We) Need a Fishbowl

- We need a metaphoric fishbowl--a limitation of choices to thrive.
- God's commandments serve us well... NOT A DIY KIT (complete with Hammer, Chisel, and stone slab, but his design for our lives.)

All across churches in the U.S. we have a strange phenomena:
Many people who believe in Jesus don't really view their own sin as any big deal.

When you can't see your own sin as a deep problem, that's a deep problem. How do we wake up to the problem?

If our own sin was no big deal, then why would God send his most precious beloved son as a sacrifice for our sin?

This series will talk about the value of that metaphoric fishbowl.

Here is something we often forget today: Jesus, the Apostles, and great preachers like Spurgeon, Wesley, Moody, Finney, Whitfield, Luther and many others used a teaching method that is often avoided today. What was the teaching method? Jesus and the Apostles taught God's commandments to bring people to see their need for a savior.

Titles in this series:

- 1 WAKING UP TO THE PROBLEM
- 2 WHY PROFANITY IS A PROBLEM
- 3 EXPOSE THE PROBLEM OF PRIDE
- 4 LIFT THE SEWER LID

I. God's commandments makes us CONSCIOUS of our SIN

Romans 3:20 (NIV) ...through the law we become conscious of our sin.

Only by recognizing we have DEEP PROBLEMS are we led to Deeper GRACE. And only DEEPER GRACE will solve our DEEP PROBLEMS.

Teaching the commandments makes us conscious of sin.

II. God's commandments are a SCHOOLMASTER

leading us to CHRIST

Galatians 3:24 (KJV) ...the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ...

“Schoolmaster” (means pedagogue, tutor, guardian, schoolmaster)

Teaching the commandments brings us face to face with our need for a Christ as our savior. He is not just a savior who merely forgives our sin, He is a savior who also sets us free from the power of sin to keep us captive to sin.

Let’s dive into the commandments and allow these to lead us to a our Savior.

But let’s begin with the foundation for God’s commandments:

Exodus 20:1-2 (NIV) And God spoke all these words: {2} “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

I am offering myself to you as “your God.” If you would have me you need to know more about me, more about you, and more about what a relationship with me looks like.

God delivered his people. He brought salvation before he spoke to the people and gave them his commandments.

III. Obedience is the PROOF of grace received not the CAUSE of salvation.

Knowing this, we are now ready to hear his commandments.

Commandment 1 & 2:

[commandment 1] {3} *“You shall have no other gods before me. {4} [commandment 2] “You shall not make for yourself an image.... {5} You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...*

In Commandment 1, God says, “Only I deserve the priority of your heart’s devotion. To treat me as less than the central figure of your heart’s devotion is sin”.

Is this asking too much?

If you asked someone to marry you, is it asking too much to ask for their exclusive faithfulness? No! Covenants imply exclusivity. Something is off if the person you asked to marry you said, *“I will marry you just as long as you allow me the right to play the field any time I want to”*.

Red flag!! Red flag! RUN!

God is not asking too much here.

He knows himself, and he knows you. And he knows something else.

God knows something about us that we are blind to without revelation. God knows that we function best when we love him most, and this is by design.

- Do you believe this yet?
- Most of us think. No problem; I don’t worship any other gods.

In our blindness we think we will be happiest choosing for ourselves what we think will make us happy, but God loved us enough to reveal to us how deep our problem runs through the core of our being.

We want total freedom to choose whatever we want, whenever we want it, but this would require breaking free from his commandments. Do this and we are like dying goldfish flopping in the glass of shattered boundaries.

Commandment 2:

*{4} “You shall not make for yourself an image. {5} You shall not bow down to them or worship them; **for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...***

This attribute is to be understood, not as an envious egotism of any sort, but rather **a firm insistence upon exclusive commitment to the Lord himself**. Because of his deep love, the Almighty insists that no other loyalty or attraction to any rival suitor of the believer’s heart will ever be tolerated.

Complete Biblical Library Commentary

The idol you shape will shape you. The sin of idolatry is when we shape a god to fit us, rather than shape ourselves to fit God. God is the only fixation that can actually fix us. Any other fixation will misshape us.

Sin isn't only doing bad things; it is more fundamentally making good things into ultimate things. Only God is worthy of your worship as the “ultimate thing” in your life! It is sin to build your meaning on anything, even a very good thing, more than on God.

Jeremiah 3: 22 (NIV2011) [DEEP PROBLEMS described 3:19-21]

[DEEPER GRACE] {22} “Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding.”

“Yes, we will come to you, for you are the LORD our God.

Will you return to the Lord your God so that he can cure you? (This is called repentance). Would you make this your prayer today?

“Yes, we will come to you, for you are the LORD our God.