

Community Group Notes for Sunday 13th December 2009

“In”

I imagine that most groups will be having mulled wine and mince pies this week as it is your last group meeting before Christmas so there are no questions this week. However, notes from my sermon can be found at the bottom of this document.

Looking forward to seeing you all at one of the Carol Services on Sunday.

All that is left for me to say is have a wonderful Christmas!

“Out” by Melanie Crane

All we have left for this year is the Christmas Carol so please do all you can this week to invite friends, family and strangers to come to church this Christmas. It really is that easy!!!

I would love to hear any Christmas stories so please text: 07929791382 or mail melanie@thecommunitychurch.org.uk

Merry Christmas to you!!!

Events Coming Up...

Sunday 20th December - **Christmas Carol Services** 3:30pm, 6:00pm or 8:30pm @ The Charis Centre

Friday 25th December – **Christmas Day Meeting** 10:30am @ The Charis Centre

Sunday 27th December – **DON'T FORGET NO MEETING!!**

This Sunday...

It is the Christmas Carol Services so NO morning meetings! Don't' forget to invite your friends...

Transformed: Converted

Recommended Reading for series

- Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem: Part 5 chapters 31-43
- OR
- Bible Doctrine by Wayne Grudem: Part 5 chapters 17-25



Order of Salvation

- Election (God's choice of people to be saved)
- The gospel call (proclaiming the message of the gospel)
- Regeneration (being born again)
- **Conversion (faith and repentance)**
- Justification (right legal standing with God)
- Adoption (membership in God's family)
- Sanctification (right conduct in life)
- Perseverance (remaining a Christian)
- Death (going to be with the Lord)
- Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)

CONVERSION

Introduction

- This is the stage that we see most obviously - when someone becomes a Christian. We often call this conversion
- There is a clear definite action on the part of the individual becoming a Christian
- Conversion means turning - here it is a spiritual turn from sin to Christ (turning from sin = repentance and turning to Christ = faith)
- **Conversion = our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation**

1. True Saving Faith includes Knowledge, Approval and Personal Trust

- **Knowledge alone is not enough**
 - Knowing "the facts" is not enough - this does not necessarily lead to repentance and faith
 - People can know facts but still rebel against them (Romans 1:32, James 2:19)
- **Knowledge and approval is not enough**
 - Example of Nicodemus in John 3:2. He knew Jesus was from God but this alone was not saving faith – Jesus told him he needed to be “born again”
 - Example of King Agrippa in Acts 26:27-28. He believed in the OT but was not a Christian
- **I must decide to depend on Jesus to save me personally**
 - We have to move from being an interested observer of the facts to being someone who enters into a relationship with Jesus
 - **Saving faith = is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God**
 - It is personal trust that Jesus would save me
 - Trust can be a better word than faith or belief in our modern age because it implies a personal dependence on the facts
 - I can believe Paris is the capital of France but have no personal commitment or dependence on it
 - Faith can sometimes refer to an irrational commitment to something despite evidence to the contrary – e.g football team doing badly...“have faith” they will win
 - Trust is closer to biblical sense of the word - the more we know someone the more we can trust them
 - Relationship with Jesus is spoken about in very personal terms – it is not about joining a club but getting to know a person
 - Like receiving someone into your home (John 1:12)
 - Jesus said "Come to me" (John 6:37, John 7:37, Matthew 11:28-30)
 - For someone to be saved there must be all 3 elements present - Knowledge, Approval and Personal Trust
 - This will lead to a personal decision to follow Jesus as *MY* saviour

2. Faith and Repentance Must Come Together

- As well as turning to Christ we turn from sin
- **Repentance = is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ**
- Like faith repentance must involve the 3 elements
 - Intellectual understanding that sin is wrong
 - Approval of the teaching of the Bible regarding sin - sorrow and hatred of it
 - Personal decision to turn from it - renounce sin and decision to leave it and live in obedience to Christ instead
- Repentance happens in a moment but its effects will manifest in life
- Repentance is something that occurs in the heart and involves the whole person in a decision to turn from sin
- Sorrow for ones action (or even deep remorse) does not mean repentance has taken place unless it is accompanied by a deep decision to forsake sin and be committed to God
- Genuine repentance involves the sense that worse thing about our sin is that it has been committed against a Holy God (see Acts 20:21, Psalm 51:4, 2 Corinthians 7:10)
- Worldly grief may involve sorrow for actions and fear for punishment but no commitment to leave sin on life
- The Bible puts faith and repentance together as different aspects of the same act of coming to Jesus for salvation
- When we turn to Christ for salvation from our sins, we are simultaneously turning away from the sins we are asking Christ to save us from
- Therefore you cannot have saving faith without repentance and vice versa
- Sometimes in NT only faith is mentioned and sometimes only repentance is mentioned
 - Faith - John 3:16, Acts 16:31, Rom 10:9, Eph 2:8-9
 - Repentance - Luke 24:46-47, Acts 2:37-38, 3:19, 5:31, 17:30, Romans 2:4, 2 Corinthians 7:10
- Practically when leading someone to Jesus
 - The PERSON needs to respond to Jesus themselves in repentance and faith
 - They need to express this verbally - this shows what is going on in the heart

3. Both Faith and Repentance Continue Throughout Life

- They are not confined to the beginnings of the Christian life
- Attitudes of the heart that continue throughout life (see Galatians 2:20, Matthew 6:12)
 - "Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ...willed the entire life of the believers to be one of repentance" Martin Luther
- Initial faith and repentance occur only once in our life BUT these attitudes should continue throughout it

Religious Repentance

- **Self-centred (selfish)**
 - Religious repentance is sorry because of the consequences of sin and its punishment that we want to avoid.
 - It does not worry that it has offended God. It is me-centred not God centred.
 - Religious repentance means we are sorry for the consequences - true repentance means we are sorry for sin itself
- **Self-righteous**
 - Repentance can become a form of atoning for sin
 - We try to convince God (and ourselves) that we are sorry because we are so miserable and regretful that we deserve to be forgiven
 - The gospel shows us that Jesus suffered and was miserable for our sin so we do not have to be
 - We do not have to make ourselves suffer to merit forgiveness
 - ***If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness".*** 1 John 1:8-9
 - We simply receive the forgiveness earned by Jesus
 - God forgives us because he is just - it would be unjust to forgive us because Christ has earned our acceptance
 - In religion we earn forgiveness with our repentance - in the gospel we just receive it
- **Produces Bitterness**
 - In religion the only hope is to live a life good enough for God to bless us

- So when we sin it is traumatic and threatening
- A religious person only admits sin under duress because their only hope is their moral goodness
- The gospel makes it easier to admit wrong because our only hope is in Christ's righteousness not our own
- Religious people repent less and less often because they do not want to admit wrong
- But the more we are loved and accepted by the gospel the more we can repent
- The more we are aware of our own faults the more amazing God's love and grace becomes