

TITLE: Responding to Salvation Grace (Part 4)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:15

THEME: Our Response to the Glory of our Salvation

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Read Passage

In Luke chapter 19 we read about Jesus' encounter w/a man who was very well-known & very much disliked. Was a man by name of Zaccheus. Luke tells us he was a man small in stature. As Jesus entered t/city of Jericho, Zaccheus seeing t/crowd buzzing w/excitement, climbed a tree to get a better vantage point.

As he's sitting in a tree, Jesus passes by and looks up & calls Zaccheus by name. Imagine that, you see this man, who is being heralded by many as a great prophet, but who in reality is t/Son of God. You climb up into a tree to get a better look, & Jesus walks by your tree, looks up at you, & calls you by name!

Luke 19:5 **And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house."**

I believe that Jesus was not only calling to Zacc. by name in order to stay at his house; he was also calling Zacc. to salvation (cf. 1 Pet. 1:15).

Zacc. response was in keeping w/the Holy One who called him==>

8 And Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much."

IOW - "I have lived as a rich man, but I'm willing to be poor for your sake." "As a tax-collector (notorious for skimming off the top) I will repay anyone I have cheated four-fold."

9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Genuine salvation demands a response

It's not a response of obligation; it's t/response of a heart changed by t/grace of JC. This AM we embark upon part 4 of "Responding to Salvation Grace".

As it relates to our passage==>

Responding to salvation grace results in the pleasure of hope and the pursuit of holiness.

We see hope in the beginning and end of this passage . . .

In v. 13 we are told to ==>

. . . set [our] hope fully on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ

In v. 21 we see that thru t/Res. X ==>

. . . [our] faith and hope are in God.

We see holiness sandwiched in between those two bookends of hope==>

. . . be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written: "You shall be holy, for I Am Holy."

– and that's where we left off last week.

The entirety of this passage, from v. 13 to v. 21 (and beyond)==>

I. Our Response to the Glory of our Salvation (13-21)

Our 3rd point under this heading, a point we started in last week==>

C. We are to Pursue Holiness (15-16)

But like the holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;

We, as God's children, born-again through His grace, we are to make our lives focused on ==>

1. The Pursuit of Holiness (v. 15)

Question we left you hanging with last week==>

a. What does it mean for us to be "holy?"

What does it mean when it says ==>

... like the holy One who called you, be holy yourselves . . .

Xns t/o t/ history of t/CH have tried to put this into practice in many different ways: From asceticism to legalism to antinomianism to mysticism to quietism and pietism.

I promised what I advertised would be==>

b. A Balanced Approach to Holiness

(1) Starts with taking sin seriously

Reformers took God's grace seriously because they took sin seriously. They understood the holiness of God (so foundational).

Perhaps the greatest of the English Theologians, Puritan Preacher, John Owen (d. 1683), wrote that ==>

... for Christians, the doctrine and conviction of sin form the basis of all we have to do with God . . . "

(a) If it's a doctrine that is so central to our faith, one wonders what has ever happened to it

In 1973 a secularist, psychologist Karl Menninger wrote a book asking that very question: Whatever Became of Sin? Menninger contended that the t/concept "sin" was steadily evaporating from everyday life.

Another psychologist, O. Herbert Mowrer also reflected on this when he wrote==>

"For several decades we psychologists looked upon the whole matter of sin and moral accountability as a great incubus [nightmare], and acclaimed our liberation from it as epoch making. But at length we have discovered that to be 'free' in this sense, that is to have the excuse of being 'sick' rather than sinful, is to court the danger of also being lost." [O. Herbert Mowrer, cited in the preface to Sin and Temptation (from the works of John Owen), James M. Houston, Ed.]

(b) "The psychologizing of sin"

One thing when culture at large does that; it's another when t/CH falls prey to what I call "The psychologizing of sin."

We don't want to talk about sin, because people don't want to hear about it. You can't build a large CH that way. People want to hear about their self-esteem & their diseases, not their sin.

I once heard a pop. Xn psychologist on radio discussing why Xn men & women have adulterous affairs. His reasons centered on lack of self-esteem; a desire to feel "worthy" & "worthwhile;" an attempt to fill some inner need. Solution? realize that you have inherent value & worth; build your self-esteem. Never once did he mention sin. Never once did he mention t/demands for personal holiness. Never once did he mention growth & maturity in X. Never once did he mention t/possibility that t/professed Xn may be unregenerate.

This is what I mean by "The psychologizing of sin." We don't fully appreciate the fact that God hates sin with a holy hatred. We don't hate it, or see it like he sees it. Good prayer would be "God, help me to see sin more like you see it." If we did, we wouldn't tolerate certain sins in our lives; we would flee them like one flees from a crazed axe-murderer.

Jerry Bridges, in his book The Pursuit of Holiness writes ==>

"Therefore, every time we sin we are doing something God hates. He hates our lustful thoughts, our pride and jealousy, our outbursts of temper, and our rationalization that the end justifies the means. We need to be gripped by the fact that God hates all these things. We become so accustomed to our sins we sometimes lapse into a state of peaceful coexistence with them, but God never ceases to hate them. . . . Frequent contemplation on the holiness of God and his consequent hatred of sin is a strong deterrent against trifling with sin." [Jerry Bridges, The Pursuit of Holiness, 32-33]

Speaking of books, I have a book in my office by t/English Puritan Preacher Ralph Venning entitled (I love this title) "The Sinfulness of Sin." However, that was not Vennings original title. The original title

was "The Plague of Plagues" – the book was written shortly after t/Great Plague of London in 1669. Quite Politically incorrect. Would be like writing a book today entitled, "The Hurricane of Hurricanes" meaning by that, that Sin is much worse than any disaster that can befall men. Among other things, in this book, Venning writes==>

Nothing is so evil as sin; nothing is evil but sin. As the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us, so neither the sufferings of this life nor of that to come are worthy to be compared as evil with the evil of sin. Sin is worse than affliction, than death, than Devil, than Hell. Affliction is not as afflictive, death is not so deadly, the Devil not so devilish, Hell not so hellish as sin is. . . . The four evils I have just named are truly terrible, and from all of them everyone is ready to say, Good Lord, deliver us! Yet non of these, nor all of them together, are as bad as sin. Therefore, our prayers should be more to be delivered from sin, and if God hear no prayer else, yet as to this we should say, We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord!" [page 177]

All of this to say that a balanced approach to holiness starts w/a biblical understanding of (to use Venning's words) "the plague of plagues."

(c) Before sin ever leads us to holiness, it must first lead us to Christ

i. My study of Martin Luther

In my Ph.D. studies I have been reading quite a bit about the great reformer Martin Luther. Perhaps no other thing was as instrumental in God's leading Luther to a true knowledge of Himself than Luther's sensitivity to his own sinfulness [following taken from the early chapters of D'Aubigne, The History of the Reformation].

*** While yet a Roman Catholic Monk, Luther drove himself mad in an empty quest for personal holiness**

Within t/yet to be Reformer burned a desire to be holy, to be acceptable to a holy God. This is what precipitated his entrance into t/monastery at Erfurth in t/first place. He felt his could somehow attain to holiness by way of religion & asceticism. He prayed, he fasted, he attempted to mortify his flesh. He lived in a small cell. He was a model monk.

He later wrote:

"If ever [a] monk could obtain heaven by his monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it,"

He wanted assurance of salvation; he had none. His fellow religionists exhorted him to find peace thru meritorious works. Yet Luther sensed that his heart was so depraved that no good thing could come from w/i him. The answer must lie elsewhere. He visited the confessional daily. That was of no use. He was tortured in his soul and his body began to waste away as a result.

On 1 occasion he locked himself away in his cell for days allowing no visitors. One of his friends, Lucas Edemberger, brought some members of a boy's choir to the cell to cheer him up (Luther loved music). Edemberger knocks on the door repeatedly. No answer. He then breaks down t/door & finds Luther prone on t/floor showing no signs of life. The boys begin to sing & slowly Martin is revived. But this revival is temp.; Luther yet awaits t/spiritual revival that only X can bring.

*** Keep in mind, Luther's sensitivity to sin in light of God's holiness was unique for that time**

The R.C. CH was ablaze w/immorality (much as it is today).

Sale of indulgences (paying t/CH to forgive your sin) turned venders into deceitful salesmen. Priests openly cohabitated w/women. Was so bad that the knowledge of a priest having a mistress actually brought a sense of relief to wary husbands (the thinking was that t/priest was occupied w/someone else). These priests fathered illegitimate children, they frequented taverns, gambled, and spoke blasphemies. According to one historian, "all the clergy kept mistresses . . ."

The corruption only worsened the further up the leadership one went. A man named Rodrigo Borgia lived w/a woman & was sexually involved w/one of her daughters w/whom he fathered five children. Borgia also happened to be a cardinal & archbishop. Following t/death of Pope Innocent VIII, Borgia obtained t/pontifical chair by bribery & assumed

the name of Pope Alexander VI. He named his son, Caesar, archbishop of Valencia and Bishop of Pampeluna. Caesar's bloodthirsty acts of brutality are well-documented, including the brutal stabbing of a man named Perotto who was murdered while clinging to t/Pope (as he was stabbed t/blood from his wound "spurred in the face of the pontiff.").

This sort of spiritual climate precipitated Luther's arrival in Rome. It was there that his eyes were opened to the darkness of t/CH. While enjoying a time of comradery w/several monks, they began to make a mockery of the Mass. They joked about how the people worship the host when they raise it up, how they, having no knowledge of the Latin language, had no idea that the priests mockingly declared during the mass: "Bread thou art and bread thou shalt remain; wine thou art and wine thou shalt remain." Luther was repulsed.

*** In the providence of God, Luther met John Staupitz**

Staupitz was 1 of those lesser-known pre-reformers. While w/i t/RC CH Staupitz came to understand t/grace of JC thru t/study of t/Scripture & Augustine. Staupitz, like Luther, had come to embrace t/lofty doctrine of unconditional election, grounded in t/grace of God. He shared w/Luther that internal strife over t/damning nature of sin & question of how a sinful man might be justified in God's sight.

Staupitz meets Luther at Erfurth while on inspection there (was there in an official capacity as a representative of t/CH). He was a man of unusual discernment, & this peculiar monk with emaciated body & sunken eyes caught his attention. Staupitz understood Luther's anguish.

Luther found a kindred heart and mentor in John Staupitz. A record of Staupitz' early counsel the young monk is worth repeating. Upon Luther's complaint that in spite of his repeated promises to God to overcome his sin, sin was always the victor within him, Staupitz replied:

"More than a thousand times have I sworn to our holy God to live piously, and I have never kept my vows. Now I swear no longer, for I know I cannot keep my solemn promises. If God will not be merciful towards me for the love of Christ and grant me a happy

departure, when I must quit this world, I shall never, with the aid of all my vows and all my good works, stand before him. I must perish!"

He later said==>

"Why," said he, "do you torment yourself with all these speculations and high thoughts? . . . Look at the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that he has shed for you: it is here that the grace of God will appear to you. Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer's arms. Trust in him—in the righteousness of his life—in the atonement of his death."

Once, when Luther was particularly depressed, he complained to Staupitz: "My sin, my sin, my sin!" Staupitz then replied,

"Well! would you only be a sinner in appearance and have a Saviour only in appearance? You know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour even of those who are great, real sinners, and deserving of utter condemnation."

* Staupitz points Luther to the Bible

Perhaps the greatest advice that Staupitz could give his struggling student was to encourage him to get his theology solely from the Bible. He also presented Luther with a Bible (Bibles were rare in those days & only a privileged few had one) and told him "Let the study of the Scriptures be your favorite occupation."

It was through the study of the Scriptures that the words of Romans 1:17 were implanted in Luther's heart: **The righteous shall live by faith!** Luther found his assurance in JC and Him alone and the rest is history.

(c) Before sin ever leads us to holiness, it must first lead us to Christ

That was true for Martin Luther in t/16th c. It's still true for us today. Just like John Staupitz did for Luther, I would like to point you in the direction of what JC has done for us in that regard.

We need to understand==>

(2) What Christ Has Done for Us

One of the marks of good teaching & preaching is to focus on what God

has done for us, over-and-against, what we do for Him. This is one of t/failures of modern-day theology: It has become too man-centered, focusing on what we do and what we get rather than what God has done for his glory. That is, our salvation and our lives are focused on God's sovereign grace. That is the found. from which our action springs. It always has to start with God.

Even our holiness starts with him ==>

... like the holy One who called you ...

The std. for holiness is God (he's t/Holy One). He's t/one who called us (called us to salvation in X). We need to know what God has done.

Ignorance isn't always bliss. An acquaintance of mine who installs computer equipment related this story. He was installing a network at the public library and heard the following==>

Some high school kid came in and asked for a video tape of Abraham Lincoln giving the Gettysburg Address. When the librarian tells the kid that they don't have it, the kid says, "Well, dude, you ought to think about getting it. You've got tapes of Clinton, and Abraham Lincoln was a much greater president than Clinton."

Another kid comes to the desk and asks for information on youth in Africa. So the librarian asks the kid if he wants books about growing up in Africa. The kid says, "no I want books about killing old people and people who are vegetables." I didn't have a clue what the kid was saying but the librarian did. He says, "You don't want books on youth in Africa, you want books on Euthanasia."

After these incidents the librarian related some other humorous stories: One was about a woman who calls up and screams "I have an emergency and I need the telephone number for 911!" Another was about some college student who came in once and asked for a photo of the Underground Railroad. A man called the reference library phone and wanted to know how to say hello in sign language over the telephone. A 7th grade kid told him that he had just watched Jurassic Park and wanted a cassette tape of live dinosaur sounds. Some man called up and wanted the correct spelling for BMW. And finally,

another high school kid who was doing a research paper on the White House wanted to know the shape of the Oval Office and what flowers grew in the Rose Garden."

Ignorance about your subject while in college may get you a failing grade . . . or worse. Ignorance about what God has done for you may get you a time of pointless spiritual struggle . . . or worse.

We need to understand==>

(2) What Christ Has Done for Us (x3)

Our union with X; our positional holiness; X's active&passive obedience

(a) Knowing Our Union with Christ

I spend t/better part of a sermon dealing with this wonderful doctrine two weeks ago when we looked at Rom. 6. Not going to spend much time on it again other than to say that Jesus isn't in t/bus. of improving our old selves. He doesn't come along side of us to redirect our old self into a new way // He doesn't jump into t/boat & change t/course. No, he comes to kill us in order to raise us again to new life in Him. Why Xnty isn't t/addition of Jesus to your old life; Xnty is the death of your old life which is then transformed into a new life in X.

Like the story of a Cuban spy whose name was Salvador. He was sent into Miami as a "mole" to learn military secrets from the United States. However, as he began to assoc. w/Cubans living in FL his allegiances began to change. Soon, he renounced his loyalty to Castro and turned himself in to the U.S. govt. In turn, the U.S. offered asylum and protection which included a staged murder of Salvador, which tricked t/Cubans into believing that their spy had been caught and executed. After the plan was carried out, Salvador was issued new documents, a new name, and a new life.

When our loyalties changed from loyalty to t/sin to loyalty to X we were issued a new name and received new life in X. We are united w/Him.

i. Union with Christ means that we are in Christ and He is in us

Colossians 3:3 **For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

You have died; if you are a Xn you (the old you) is dead; it died w/JC, was buried w/Him, & resurrected to new life w/Him. As a result, your life is **"hidden with Christ in God."**

Hidden (κρυπτω) is same word that's used of burying/hiding a treasure. Often used of placing something somewhere for safe-keeping {expand}

Our UWX is also expressed by t/Gk. phrase εἰς Χριστος which is used over 80 x in t/NT.

We are "in X" & because of that fact (that we live in Him & He in us) we cannot **"sin that grace may abound"** (as Paul writes in Rom. 6)

No, according to Romans 6:3 we have ==>

... been buried with Him through baptism into death [not B. into H2O, but B. into death, the death of X] **in order that as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.**

Paul goes on to say in v. 4 ==>

For if we have been united with Him in the likeness of His death, [1st class cond. statement, we have] **certainly we shall also be [in the likeness of] His resurrection.**

Then, in v. 5 ==>

Knowing this . . .

Rem. key to obedience as a Xn is knowing what God has done for us... **Knowing this, that our old man was crucified together with Him, in order that our body of sin might be rendered inoperative, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.**

We are so intimately related to JC through his death/burial/Ress. (through our union w/Him) that it can be said that there's a sense in which we bring JC into any act that we commit.

ii. That was Paul's point in 1 Cor. 6 {turn there}

{Go through vv. 9-20}

A corollary to our UWC==>

(b) Knowing our Positional Holiness

We are holy ONLY BECAUSE JC is holy. Do you understand that? Even as a Xn you are not inherently holy. In this sinful flesh you never can be! I've mentioned it before, but this is summed up in t/Latin theol. phrase *simul iustus et peccator*. If you are a genuine believer in JC you are righteous only because X is righteous (& because you are "in X"). But you also remain inherently sinful because that's what you are!

Why our only remedy for our lost, sinful estate is to cast ourselves upon JC; to cling to His cross that we may have His life. No other option!

Our Holiness, our righteousness is "foreign;" It's not our own; it's imputed (credited) to us. That is our position. We are saints by calling.

What was said of the Israelites in Deut. 7:6 is true for t/CH today==>

"For you are a holy people to the \Lord\ your God; the \Lord\ your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

NT parallel to that is in Col. 3:12==>

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

(2) What Christ Has Done for Us

(a) Knowing Our Union with Christ

(b) Knowing our Positional Holiness

Thirdly==>

(c) Knowing the difference between Christ's Active and his Passive Obedience for us

(a) His Passive Obedience

When we talk about t/passive obed. of JC for us, we're talking about his suffering & death. Peter talks about this in 2:21-24 {read} That's what we mean in theol. by X's passive obedience. Very simply put, it means that he suffered and died for our sin. He gave himself up for us. We're quite familiar with that.

Something that we're not so familiar with is what we call==>

(b) His Active Obedience

Refers to t/fact that He lived his entire life (33 years) in perfect conformity to t/will of God. Neg. speaking, He never sinned / Pos. He perf. kept t/Law. Just like his death on t/cross is given to us as a gift, so also is his perfect obedience given to us as a gift. IOW - not only was his death vicarious (done on our behalf), so was his life vicarious.

He not only died the death that I deserved so that I could be forgiven. He also lived a life that I could not live & thus satisfied t/demands of the Father's holiness in my life.

Theologian Wayne Grudem writes==>

"If Christ has only earned forgiveness of sins for us, then we would not merit heaven. Our guilt would have been removed, but we would simply be in the position of Adam and Eve before they had done anything good or bad and before they had passed a time of probation successfully. . . . For this reason, Christ had to live a life of perfect obedience to God in order to earn righteousness for us. He had to obey the law for his whole life on our behalf so that the positive merits of his perfect obedience would be counted for us."

[Systematic Theology, 570]

IOW - It would not have been sufficient for JC to appear on earth right at t/moment of t/cross. Wasn't as if a cross was erected somewhere with no one on it, then ZAP t/sinless Son of God appears on it and dies. There would be no positive righteousness, only the death of an innocent who was yet untested.

He had to live a life of obedience before he could die for us. His obedience is credited to us as is his death, burial, and Res.

We pursue holiness, & it must be our pursuit, but we also know that we can never be perfectly obedient. Comfort, peace, & joy in knowing that JC was perfectly obedient, satisfying t/holy demands of t/Father for us.

I. Our Response to the Glory of our Salvation (13-21)

C. We are to Pursue Holiness (15-16)

(1) Starts with taking sin seriously

(2) What Christ Has Done for Us

(a) Knowing Our Union with Christ

(b) Knowing our Positional Holiness

(c) Knowing His Passive as well as His Active

Obedience for us

That is what God has done. Now we are ready to look at our next point:

(3) What We are to Do

But like the holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written: "You shall be holy, for I Am Holy."

A good foundation is essential

A good foundation is essential to a good marriage // education // building or structure.

If left unattended, The Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy is going to fall. Perhaps soon. Scientists travel yearly to measure t/building's slow descent. They report that the 179-foot tower moves about one-twentieth of an inch a year, and is now 17 feet out of plumb. They further estimate that by the year 2007 the 810-year old tower will have leaned too far and will collapse onto a nearby building.

Quite significantly, the word "pisa" means "marshy land," which gives some clue as to why the tower began to lean even before it was completed. Also—their foundation is only 10 feet deep! [Source unknown]

A good foundation is essential to a good building or structure. And a good foundation is no less essential to an understanding of Xn discipleship, a discipleship that includes what it means to live holy before a holy God.

We don't want to be Xns w/shallow marshy foundations (plenty out there as well as plenty of CHs that service them).

Jesus said that those who hear him and don't listen, are like a foolish man, who built his house upon sand. The rains fell, the flood came, the wind blew and the structure toppled to the ground.

On the other hand, those who hear His Word, and act upon it, are like a wise man, who built his house upon a good foundation of rock. And the rain fell, the floods came, the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock.