

A Christmas Series: The Doctrines of Grace in the Coming of Christ

THE WORLD'S GREATEST NEED

Ecclesiastes 7:20

Intro: The month of December is the month when the thoughts of Christians around the world, are turned again to consider in a special way the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, into the world. For many of us our thoughts turn to Christ continually day after day, throughout the year. We love to hear about our Lord. We love to read about Him in the Bible. We are always eager to learn more about Him. We enjoy getting together with other Christians so that we can worship Him together and sing His praises. And frankly, it bothers us that each year there seems to be growing opposition to anything that has to do with Jesus Christ. We know that the opposition is not caused by an acquaintance with our Lord, but out of ignorance as to Who He is. People who know Him, love Him, and can never hear too much about Him IF what they are hearing is based upon the Bible. We Christians live on His teaching. We believe that He lived a perfect life. We believe that because He was the Son of God, always has been, and always will be, that His death ought to be of special interest to every person who has ever lived. We seek to live according to the Bible because it is clear that the life described in the Bible is the way He wants us to live. But we also know that we never please Him perfectly. In fact, in own strength we cannot please Him at all. But we trust Him to help us. Our fellowship with Him is the great delight of our lives. We readily admit that He has changed our lives, and we have assurance through the Bible that because of His death we have been made acceptable to God.

Now all of this sounds ridiculous to people who do not know the Lord. It really doesn't make sense to them. But that is why we seek by our lives and by the words that we speak, to show people that they need to know the Lord Jesus. He came to save us from the penalty of our sins, and also from the power of our sins. We know that we don't deserve what He did for us. But we know that what He has done for us, He has done because God loves us, and He loves us, not because we deserve it, nor could we ever earn it. God has saved us through Christ by His grace. This means that because of Christ and His death on the Cross, God will not give us what we deserve, His judgment, but He will give us what we what we do not deserve, the forgiveness of our sins, eternal life, and the promise of going to be with the Lord when we die, or, and we like this truth even

better, that He might return again before we die to take us to be with Him in heaven forever. We really believe that there is nothing as important in any of our lives as our relationship to Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Anybody can look at our world today, and see that there is something that is terribly wrong. There are difficulties among the nations of the earth that seem to be getting worse, not better. Crime has really gotten out of control. We are not safe on our streets. Some of us can remember when we did not even have to lock our homes when we were away, but now we have all kinds of locks and alarm systems to give us as much protection as we can get. Our children have to be protected all of the time. People live for pleasure. It is a rare person who really enjoys working for a living. We have been trained to want what we don't have, and many people have gotten into heavy debt by spending more than they have, or by gambling to get what they don't have, usually to lose what they have. We have more in the way of material possessions than any generation before us, and yet we are never satisfied.

I want to suggest to you this morning that there is a very real connection between the way we as a nation are treating God and His Word and all of the terrible problems that we face, most of which are of our own doing. It is time for us to wake up to what our greatest need is. I want to spend this month on Sunday mornings talking to you about what that need is, and how God is the only One Who can meet that need. All that we are doing nationally to get rid of the Bible, to turn our backs upon God, to keep Him out of our schools, and to take the Name of Jesus Christ out of circulation, is only hastening the judgment of Almighty God upon us. Tragically it seems that in most nations where the Word of God was once honored, and where people once spoke freely of Jesus Christ and their faith in Him, that the same anti-God and anti-Christ and anti-Bible activities are in full operation as they are in our country. Do you know that the chaplains in our military are no longer permitted to say that Jesus Christ is the only Savior, the only way to God? For some time there has been a move to get "in God we trust" removed from our coins. Who is the one who has given us all of the blessings and freedoms that we enjoy in our country, if it hasn't been the Lord? Perhaps you have heard that for the first time in our history, when Congress goes into session again, one of the legislators is going to be allowed to take his oath with his hand on the Koran, instead of the Bible. I know that the Bible doesn't mean much to many Americans, but it is these things that move us farther away from God and provoke Him to bring further judgment upon us. When people are free to

do whatever they want to do, they naturally will do the wrong thing, that which is contrary to God and His will. And this is because of sin. For a long time people have been trying to eliminate the word *sin* from our vocabulary. But sin is a word that is there, and it is there to stay. I know how the Bible defines sin. It is anything that is displeasing to God. I have a dictionary which does not mention God in its definition of sin, but I have another dictionary which defines it as “a condition of estrangement from God as a result of breaking His law.” The Bible agrees that sin is a condition of estrangement from God. But our sinfulness did not begin when we first disobeyed God; the Bible teaches that we were born sinners. King David acknowledged this after he had sinned in two major ways—adultery and murder. In confessing his sin to God he said this: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psa. 51:5). David, like all of us, was born a sinner. No one had to teach us to sin. We are all sinners by birth. But David also acknowledged that his sins were primarily against God. We are responsible to God for our sins. People have some understanding of this, and this is why they would like to get the word *sin* and all other words which mean the same thing out of our language.

The verse that I have chosen as a basis for my message this morning, is found in one of the books we are presently studying in our Sunday School. It is in the book of Ecclesiastes. This book was written by King Solomon of Israel, who was King David’s son. And he wrote it under the direction of the Holy Spirit to show us how, if you are expecting to find satisfaction and fulfillment in this life, you are going to be disappointed because satisfaction and fulfillment are not to be found in this life. It just isn’t here. But throughout this book Solomon had many things to say that are very important for us to know. And one of these is in chapter 7, verse 20. This is what we read in that verse tells us: “There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good, and sinneth not.” That is how it is stated in the KJV.

In the NASB it is translated this way: “Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins.”

The NIV gives us this translation: “There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.”

I think that there are two possible translations to that verse. For one, Solomon may have been thinking about people in the world who try to

live a life doing what is right. We all have been made in God's image, and with some the desire to be moral, to be honest, to be upright and faithful is very strong. So that in the eyes of people in the world, they are good people, good from the standpoint of human standards. But, said Solomon, as good as that person might be, you will never meet a good person who is not also a sinner. There are no exceptions to this. Regardless of a person's nationality, or the country he lives in, or his age, you will never find a person on earth who is not a sinner. And that has been true in every generation from Adam on down to the present.

But this verse can also mean (and this may be the right interpretation) that even with people who are righteous in God's sight, who through Christ have been declared righteous before God, or, as we would say, you will never find a Christian who is not also a sinner. Being saved does not mean that we are no longer capable of sin. It does mean that sin is no longer our master. But believers can and do sin. There are several ways that we sin. We can sin in what we do. We can sin in what we say. We can sin even in what we think. And we not only sin by what we do, but we sin if we don't do what God wants us to do. So sin is both positive and negative. Sin is the world's greatest need. It is a universal problem. It includes men and women, young people, boys and girls, and even babies. There is not a just person on the earth, saved or unsaved, who does not sin. It is the universal and international problem of all people, all races. Nobody is exempt.

Concerning the time prior to the flood, we read in Genesis 6:5-6:

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

And this is why God destroyed everybody on the face of the earth in that day except for Noah and his wife, their three sons, and their wives. Often sins get so terrible in a generation of people, that masses of people are destroyed under the judgment of God. This happened in Egypt during the days of Moses. The plagues were judgments against God for the sins of Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

In the book of Romans Paul built a case against the whole human race in show the prevalence and universality of sin. I want to read to you from chapter 1 down through the end of that chapter. The Word of God will

impress you far more than any words of mine. Listen carefully to the Word of God through the Apostle Paul. Listen carefully to the charge that Paul made against the whole human race. **(Read Romans 1:18-32.)**

Now turn over to the third chapter and there follow in your Bibles as I read **Romans 3:9-19. (Read.)**

And so Paul wrote those words in Romans 3:23 which most of us know by heart: “For and have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Look also at **Romans 5:12. (Read.)** Wherever you go, and whoever you may meet, you can be sure that you will never meet a person who is not a sinner.

The case is a closed case. We all are guilty sinners, guilty of many sins. I do not mean that we are as bad as we can be, nor that we all are guilty of the grossest sins. But we are sinners by birth, and often sinners by choice. We all are guilty before God. People may not want to believe it, but that does not change the fact. We have all sinned, and are guilty before God. And because we are guilty, we are under judgment. You may not want to believe this, but it is true. Going back to the book of Ecclesiastes, we read this further word from God through Solomon:

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily,
therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil
(Ecc. 8:11).

People are making that mistake every day. They often will think that because God does not take immediate action against them, that they don't need to be afraid to keep on doing what they know in their hearts is wrong.

This is the kind of a world that we live in. People don't read the Bible, and they don't go to church where they will hear the Word of God, not because they think they are right, but because they don't want to be told that the way they are living is wrong, and that what they are doing is sin. People live in denial about many things, but one of the worst is their denial of sin because the consequences are not only for time, but for all eternity.

But why am I talking this morning about sin. I am talking about sin because this has to do with the reason that Jesus Christ the Son of God

came to earth, born of a virgin mother. He came to save us from our sins, from the penalty we are under, or have been under, because we are sinners and because we sin. I am not talking about Christmas trees or Santa Claus. Christmas has to do with Christ, with the birth of Christ and His mission in the world. Ask people if there ever stopped to think why Jesus Christ is called, the Savior. A Savior is one who saves, and Jesus Christ came to save us from our sins, to save us from the penalty of our sins, which is eternal death, but also to save us from the power of sin. The Apostle Paul in writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, told him at one point that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15).

Paul told the Roman church that he was “not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek,” or the Gentile. Cf. the words of our Lord Himself in John 3:16 and 17 and John 5:24. Even as far back as Isaiah’s day, the Lord led him to write:

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid upon Him (Christ) the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6).

So you see, when people try to get rid of the Bible, and when they don’t want to hear about Jesus Christ, who He was, and why He came to earth as a Man, and why He died on the Cross, they are doing away with the only answer that there is to the need that they have for a Savior. For there is no other way of acceptance with God. God has declared Himself to be satisfied with what Christ did on the Cross. There is no salvation in Islam. We have a cousin who wrote telling us that she is a Buddhist. Buddha is not a savior. People can’t save themselves because salvation is not given to us as a reward for good things that we do. None of them is good enough. Jesus Christ is the only Savior. If Jesus Christ does not save us, we are not going to be saved. If our trust is not in His sacrifice on Calvary where He died to save sinners from their sins, then we will die in our sins and face an eternal existence under the wrath of an almighty God. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” The Apostle Peter said, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for thee is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Have you heard about the Biblical doctrine of Total Depravity. That means that your whole being has been affected by sin. There is nothing in

us that would make God think that we deserve to be saved. Everything in us shows God how undeserving we are. In ourselves we are helpless and hopeless. But turning to Christ, trusting in Him as the One Who has purchased our redemption, we find help and hope. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; **and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works,** lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8, and 9).

Concl: Let us be praying at this Christmas season, that the hearts of people who do not know the Savior, will be opened to realize why He came and what He did for the salvation of sinners. But more than that, pray that many will believe His Word, and will trust Christ for their salvation. If Christ does not save, there is no other Savior. If we could save ourselves, or if salvation could come some other way, then our Lord did not need to come. But He came because there was no other way that we could be saved. Let us thank God for our Lord Jesus