

Judgment Of Cross pt. 3  
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090429

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The Old and New Covenants

We're going to continue today with the judgment of the cross. For a couple weeks now, we've been talking about the cross as a division. We've been looking at how a cross divides what the Bible calls the first and the second. And this is a huge reality. A reality that we never see the bottom of. But it is a reality that if we don't begin to see, then we you will go nowhere. If the Lord doesn't have room in our hearts to show us this division then there is nothing he can show us. Everything God teaches the human soul is taught in such a way that it rests upon the division of the cross.

There was a time in my life where I would have thought that was a very strange comment. But that's only because I didn't understand the absolute centrality and enormity of the cross of Jesus Christ. I'm hoping that in some of these messages the Spirit of God will have the freedom in our hearts to magnify the cross. The cross is much more than our ticket to heaven. The cross is much more than the forgiveness of sins. The cross is much more than the justice of God on sinners. The cross is an enormous division. And God must show us the nature and reality of this division.

And the reason why God must show us the nature and reality of this division is because, as we grow up in him, it is this division that transforms our soul. It is precisely this division that works in us, taking away what is old, taking away what God considers to be dead, putting away all that is of the first, and an establishing and revealing all that is of the second.

So we spent a week or two looking at this division with respect to the old and the new man. Last week I tried to focus in on the powerlessness and corruption of the natural man. And I also said some things about the natural man's relationship to the law of God. And this is something that is massively misunderstood in the body of Christ.

We talked about how Paul describe the law. Paul says that it was a ministry of condemnation, a ministry of death. Paul says that the law caused us to know the nature of sin through many specific sins. He says the law aroused our sinful passions. He says he would not have known sin except through the law. We read many verses like these. And the point of all that Paul was saying is this: the law functioned in these two ways, **it described and demanded the righteousness of God, and at the same time it demonstrated and condemned the un-righteousness of man.**

And so we saw that the law condemned the Adamic man to death. And the cross became the division between that man and God. The cross became the way that God gathered up the Adamic race and put them out of his sight in judgment. The cross became the division between the living and the dead. It ended God's relationship to one man. It's finished God's dealings with the Adamic man. And that

is why Jesus is called the last Adam by Paul in first Corinthians 15. **Not the last to exist on earth. But the last two have any relationship with God.**

But the cross was also the beginning of God's relationship to a new man. And that new man came forth out of the grave. That grave was like a womb. For three days and three nights the earth travailed, and Zion was born in a day. All of the prophets testified of this. And it came to pass in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What came to pass? A new life, a new kingdom, a new creation, a new man. Paul describes this in Ephesians chapter 2. The cross gathers into itself both Jew and Gentile, brings them both into the death of Christ, and brings forth in the resurrection one new man. Christ is the head, the life, the resurrection, the beginning. We are the body, the increase, the harvest, the kingdom.

What is this new man? He is one spirit, has one mind, has one faith, has experienced one baptism into death, has one Father, and lives by one life. He is made of Jew and Gentile him, yet he is neither Jew nor Gentile. He is the living body of the Lord Jesus Christ. One new man, the church.

And so last week we discussed the fact that the Adamic man in every way has fallen short of the glory of God. This natural man with his natural senses and natural mind cannot know God, access God, please God, understand God. In fact, this man has been divided from God by the cross. The laws judged him guilty and worthy of death. The cross executed that death. **And the cross still stands as the eternal boundary between what God has rejected and what God has gathered unto himself.**

Paul says it like this, "through the law I died to the law, I have been crucified with Christ". And Romans chapter 8 Paul says this, "what the law could not do because it was weak through the flesh God did. So now, the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us who no longer walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death".

So what I was trying to highlight last week is the absolute inability of anything in the Adamic man, or anything in the Adamic world, to please God or stand in his sight. The cross has settled the issue. **The cross has divided eternally between the living and the dead. And if any one of us desires to live, we must come to know ourselves, experience ourselves, crucified with Christ where it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us. Any other kind of relationship with God that we may think we have is an imagination on the wrong side of this great divide.**

Adam has no relationship to God. That in mind, that man, that nature, it does not access him. In first Corinthians chapter 2, Paul says that spiritual reality can not be known or understood by the natural mind. In Romans chapter 8, Paul tells us that the natural mind is hostility towards God. In Ephesians chapter 2 and Paul tells us that we are by nature children of wrath. In Romans chapter 3 Paul tells us that there is not one who does good no not even one. We listed many of these verses last time. And I'm not simply trying to be repetitive. I'm trying to give the Spirit some time and some room to make these realities more than words in our hearts.

If you and I are going to know the Lord, it is not going to have anything to do with what we are by nature. If you and I are going to know the Lord, it is not going to

have to do anything with what we think in our minds. What we want with our flesh, know with our five senses, what we need according to our lusts. If you and I are going to know the Lord, it requires the Spirit of God dealing in our heart hearts according to this great division called the cross. **First we must be born of a new life altogether. Then we must turn our hearts to the spirit of God to reveal the life that God has given us. And then we must constantly, daily, and bear in ourselves the end of all that God has separated from himself.**

There is no other way to know the Lord except to know him according to his cross. That is why Paul says it exactly like that. He says, "oh I want to know him, but there is a way by which he can be known. I want to know him in fellowship of his sufferings, in conformity to his death, and attaining his resurrection. Jesus says it like this, no one can be my disciple unless he lose his life.

I say this over and over again, but we must continually come back and face it. **The cross is how God sees everything. The cross is how God relates to everything. If you have a question about anything spiritual, if you have a question about anything that has to do with God, I can promise you something. This may not make a whole lot of sense to you right now, but it is true. Whatever your question, the answer will come in a greater view of Christ and him crucified. The answer will be yours in a deeper view of the cross.**

And that is why this division, this judgment, this boundary is not something that we are going to talk about just once or twice. This division is not going to be something that we learn about. **This division is going to be something that we experience in our soul unto the complete devastation of all that God has judged through the cross. We're going to see that by the spirit, and experience that in the soul. This judgment is going to become our judgment. This death is going to become our death. And this end is going to become our end. And this resurrection will begin to be our experience of life.** This light will be how we begin to see. This resurrected Christ in will start to become to us the person who is our life, the place that we call home, the truth that defines all things.

In other words, you and I are not studying a series on the cross. You and I are being escorted by the spirit of God into a deep and permanent familiarity with the cross that will conform us to the one who's cross it is. We have been in Christ since we were born again. It is time that we learn to be in Christ according to the defining reality of his cross.

With that said, I want to spend the rest of our time today a probably some of our time next week, talking about the cross in relation to the new covenant and old covenant. The new covenant is not a theological reality to be studied. The new covenant is the relationship to God that we have in his Son. It is not a doctrine to believe, it is a reality to be revealed and a relationship to walk in. We have to know the new covenant this way.

If you'll remember last week I drew a diagram of the cross as the end of God's relationship to the old man, the old creation, and the old covenant. And I mentioned that God, through the cross, ended one kind of relationship with one kind of man. And established another kind of relationship with another kind of man. This is the reality of the old and new covenant.

The word covenant is one of those Christian words that is so common it almost has no meaning. I mean, at least for me it was a word that I was very familiar with as a word, but it was nothing in my heart as a reality. The concept of covenant is actually quite simple. A covenant is really just a relationship. It is the nature of a relationship, the way that two parties relate to one another. It is the understanding and agreement by which two parties have some sort of a relationship. It's that simple.

In the natural realm an obvious example would be a marriage covenant. What is a marriage covenant? It is a particular kind of relationship. It is a relationship that has a specific nature, a specific understanding and agreement associated with it. When two people enter into this covenant, this kind of relationship, they are walking together according to a common understanding. The covenant determines the boundaries of the relationship. That is a very important thing to understand. **The covenant determines the boundaries of the relationship.**

Therefore, there are certain things that I cannot do in a marriage covenant. There are certain things that are outside of the boundaries of the relationship. I cannot bring another person into this relationship. I cannot treat my wife in various ways that are contrary to his covenant. It's not supposed to be to my will to break this covenant, to end this relationship.

It's the same thing with the Lord. Our covenant relationship with God is something that we enter into with him. It is a kind of relationship with a particular nature, with particular boundaries, with a specific understanding. God has the perfect understanding of the relationship. And we are supposed to learn it. In the Old Covenant, God had the perfect understanding of the Old Covenant and he wrote it on tablets of stone for the people to learn. In the New Covenant, God has the perfect understanding of the covenant and he now writes it on tablets of the human heart for us to learn.

The old covenant was one kind of relationship with God. The new covenant is a different kind of relationship to God. Now maybe you're sitting there thinking that everybody knows this, but what I'm going to eventually try to show you is that though we may know what this is a matter of theological fact, all of us, in a multitude of ways, are still trying to relate to God according to a relationship that he no longer has with us. We have come to the new covenant, and yet we don't understand what the new covenant is. We have come to a new relationship with God in Christ, and yet failing to understand what that means, we continue to try to relate to God according to the old covenant.

So that's where we're going, but we need to work our way there. Listen, I'm never interested in just teaching you matters of theological relevance. If I say things that sound abstract, it is with the specific intention that the spirit of God will make them very real and personal. But I found it to be true, that if we don't understand the big picture of things like judgment and covenant, then the spirit of God has nothing to apply to you. In other words, God always shows you his finished work in the cross, and as that finished work is seen, it has its effect in you by redefining your universe of reality.

Back to the covenant. God established a certain kind of relationship with old covenant Israel. That relationship had a specific nature and a specific function. In

the cross, God established a new relationship with the new covenant Israel. In this new relationship had a specific nature a specific function. Hebrews tells us, in chapter 8 verse 13, that in making the new, He has made the old obsolete. In chapter 10, he tells us that "he takes away the first in order to establish the second." Here's what I'm trying to get. **There is a kind of relationship that God has made obsolete. He has taken it away. It no longer exists... except in the unrenewed mind of man.**

**I like to suggest to you tonight, that there are many things that do not exist except in the unrenewed mind of humanity. Let me say that a little bit stronger for those who are willing to hear it. Everything that exists in the unrenewed mind of humanity is not part of what God given you in Christ.**

Therefore, it behooves you and I, to humble our hearts and ask God to show us the great division of the cross. I realize I'm repeating myself. But it is only at the cross that God's end becomes our end.

So what was the old covenant, and what is the new covenant? We could spend a lot of time talking about this question. The old covenant was an old relationship that God had with the old man. That relationship was natural, physical, material, earthly. It pointed to testify a relationship that is spiritual, heavenly, eternal. But the old covenant relationship was the shadow of things that have now come in Christ.

The substance, or the fulfillment, of all that God desires did not come until the cross of Jesus Christ. But prior to the fullness of time, God established in the earth an enormous amount of types and shadows, the foreshadowing, a preview of coming attractions through old covenant Israel. For the time, even though God is spirit, and even though God desires to be worshiped in spirit and truth, God established a temporary relationship in the flesh, in the earth, that spoke of spiritual realities.

Jesus makes it clear and John chapter 4, that God has always desired spirit and truth. In his heart, and it is plan, it was never about a physical nationality, killing natural sacrifices, obeying literal words, winning natural victories, anointing human high priests and human Kings, celebrating physical feasts and ceremonies, following of directions and commands. All of this was the shadow. All of this was the preview of coming attractions.

But everything God commanded in the earth, everything God commanded of old covenant Israel, from the smallest ordinance of the law to the greatest miracle in the earth, everything was a physical and natural and material pre-figuring of the spiritual and eternal reality and relationship that you and I now have Christ. And while the testimony could described what Christ would be as a high priest, it could not make any human high priest actually perfect. While the old covenant could describe righteousness in words on a page it could not make the soul of the Adamic man righteous. While the old covenant could tell people what to do, how to do it, where to do it, when to do it, it could not actually bring about the things that it spoke of.

In the old covenant God said build a Temple. In the new covenant God says you are a Temple. In the old covenant God says these are the words of righteousness. And the new covenant God says my Son in you is the eternal word of righteousness. In the old covenant God's king took the uncircumcised captive, and cast down the high places. In the new covenant God's victory is over the uncircumcision of our flesh, and high places are the strongholds of our mind, the darkness that has risen up in

contradiction to the true knowledge of God. In the old covenant God commands that is fragrant oil be burned continually on his altar. In the new covenant, Paul says

*2Co 2:14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*

Can you see the contrast? **The one is the earthly and physical shadow. The other is the eternal and spiritual fulfillment. So in the one, God said do this and don't do that. In the other, God said I am this and I am not that. In the first God said live your life according to these words. In the second God said abide in my life according to my indwelling word. In the first God said remove the uncircumcised from my land. In the second God said let my cross removed the uncircumcision from your heart.**

Let me try to close tonight's meeting with an analogy that I know that many of you have already heard. It's the hand analogy. And even though I've used a lot, but still cannot think of a more appropriate way to illustrate the fact that we would rather serve as one separate than live as one joined. And the reason that we do this, the root of the problem behind this, is that we do not know or understand the nature of our new covenant relationship with God.

Think about your hand for a minute. I'm sure you are well aware that you are experiencing a union of life with your hand. It doesn't even make sense for your hand to operate independently of your life and your will.

But let's just say, for the sake of this analogy, that my hand grew lips. And then it turned and said to me..."oh Jason, what I wouldn't give to be close to you. I just wish you would come visit with me and tell me what I could do to be like you".

I would turn to my hand and say "Hand, there's obviously been some misunderstanding. I really appreciate your heart in saying that, but if you saw clearly, you would understand that you are joined to me and I am joined to you. In fact, my very life is flowing through you. You don't have to try to be like me, you simply have to know and abide in my life".

And then the hand turns back to me and says "Jason, that's profound. I'll have to mention that concept in my next small group meeting. But what do I have to do to get closer to you. I'd do anything. I'll fast, I'll pray, I'll do good deeds." And I would again say, "Hand, you obviously don't comprehend something here. There's a lack of understanding about who you are, where you are, what you are. And that lack of comprehension is drastically affecting your sense of reality. You cannot do anything to get closer to me. You are joined to me by life. You just don't understand our relationship".

And then the hand says "Yes, that's all very nice. I've read about that in a book. And I remember when I learned that in Sunday School. But let's get practical. I need something I can work with, something applicable, something that makes sense! Maybe a seven step program or some sort of work book." And I would say "Hand, there's nothing more practical then you experiencing and expressing my life in all that you do. That's all that I want from you"

And then my hand says "ok, Jason...this is getting frustrating. I've been praying to you for days about this! Maybe if I go and do a bunch of good works for you. Then you'll listen to me and answer my questions". And then I say to my hand "You know, you can try do whatever you want for me, but it will amount to nothing. You can keep yourself very busy, but I won't be in any of it. All that I want from you is that you simply know and experience and express the nature of our union, the nature of our relationship. In fact, there is no such thing as a good work unless I'm the author of it. Apart from me, you can do nothing good because "goodness" is bound up with my life and will".

And then my sad hand drops its head in confusion and frustration. You see, the simple purpose of my hand is to abide in and express my life in the world. It doesn't have an individual purpose apart from that. If there was ever a time in the past when it wasn't joined to my body, there might have been a separate purpose for it then. But because it is joined to me in living union, it doesn't even make sense for it to have a purpose other than the manifestation of my life in the way that expresses me.

This analogy illustrates what I have come to see is just the tip of the iceberg of our misunderstandings of our the new covenant. We are not ankle deep in misunderstanding. We are over our heads. When it comes to this analogy with the hand, why is it so hard for him? Why is this so difficult? It is difficult for the hand because he is starting in the wrong place, and facing in the wrong direction. In other words, he is willing to do anything and everything EXCEPT to humble his heart and let the Lord deal with some deep and terrible misunderstandings about the foundational realities of their relationship. He's willing to hear anything except that He doesn't know anything. He's willing to accept any advice or correction, except that His mind is the problem.

I suggest to you tonight that we are in exactly the same situation as the hand. And at the very heart of the issue is that we have not seen or understood the cross as the end of one kind of relationship, and the beginning of the only relationship that God recognizes.