**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

 ***Nail it to the Cross***

 ***Colossians 2:13-14***

 **October 16th, In the Year of Our Lord 2022**

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

Read and/or print sermon notes from our website – roundtopchurch.org

**Preliminary Remarks:**

**Motivations**

I want to be clear. . . I mean, so there are not any misunderstandings of why I preach expository sermons in contrast to thematic. Expository means to explain or describe an event or situation. Thematic sermons are intended to relate to or are based on a particular subject(s) or theme. By definition, expository sermons are more detailed to specific points throughout the message. There is more focus or forensics applied to specific events and subjects. Thematic sermons can be detailed but often drift into and include a broader range of thought and ideas. Both have their place. My sermons heavily lean to the expository approach by intention.

I am called to explain God’s Word in sufficient detail in order for people to make an informed decision. I do not see that thematic sermons provide enough information to make a fully informed decision. Throughout our lives, we have heard many things about all beliefs. Such as. . . “it does not matter what path you take, they all lead to the same God.” This is a very naïve, false and uninformed statement. By examining the Judeo-Christian Scriptures in comparison to Hindu, Islamic or whatever transcendental writings there are. . . there is not any other conclusion at which to arrive than to see that the God who gave us the Bible stands-out as the only reasonable and factual answer to elevated fallen humanity from death to eternal life with God.

**Perspective**

 All of us are born into a specific time of the human experience. Therefore, we see our world differently than those who have lived before us and to those who will live after we leave this temporal world. We all have a unique perspective in that there is the era we live and then there is the geographic location that provides a specific life context to the development of our world views. For instance. . . if a person is born in India, they will most likely be inundated with the Hindu or Islamic religion. There is not any certainty a child born into one of these religious communities will follow suit. There are thousands of people over the years that have become Christians from these countries. With this said, just because we are born in the Western world does not automatically make us Christians. Look around, the Americas and Europe are very eclectic places. So, my question for the person who has not made a belief choice is . . . on what are you going to base your decision? Hopefully, not a few sound-bites from public media. And my question for the Church. . . for Christians is . . .what is your witness, what are you going to tell someone? All groups should have a detailed investigation.

I believe that the Word of God, containing His plan for our lives, calls us to humbly surrender to Him leading to eternal life in His Heaven. And by the way. . . God’s plan for all people is the best plan for survival in this world. Remember, the Word of God is more that ink on paper. . . it is a living Being as when the Word became flesh and lived with us (John 1:14). **Hebrews 8:10** declares. . .

10 "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. (Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:30)

If we did not have any Bibles, God still reveals Himself to us through the creation (Romans 1:18ff). This mean that people have the compacity to know the basics of morality. To know ‘right’ from ‘wrong’ regarding stealing, hatred, murder, respecting parents, personal relationships and forgiveness, as examples. And the awareness to know that they alone cannot overcome sin. The question for every person is, what are they going to choose to do about controlling sin that operates in their life? This is what Paul says/writes in Romans 7:17-20. . . he loses to the law of sin. But then, Paul presents the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that sets us free from the law of sin and of death (Romans 8:2).

No doubt, God desires for us to have His word in written form as evidenced when He came to Moses (Exodus 34:27,28) and directed him to write. Due to us having His Word in our possession, we are responsible to read, learn and teach His Word to others.

In reaching-out to others, Believers are called not to be ashamed to proclaim God’s Word **(Romans 1:16-17)**, because it is the power of God for salvation to every person who believes (surrender, trust and commit).

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

The Word is active and spiritually living. . . stronger than anything else in the world. God’s Word pierces to separate spirit and soul from this fallen world. God calls His Word sharper than any two-edge sword (Hebrews 4:12) . . . and, at the same time, declares His Word the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).

**Scripture, God Acts and Baptisms**

It is self-evident in Scripture that all the Bible is tied together making a coherent connection from one God act to another. We have recently talked about baptisms and the differences between the three distinctive purposes God set aside for each. Two of the three baptisms people can do. However, the baptism for salvation can only be accomplished by God. (See Sermon – October 2, 2022 “Baptisms”)

In review. . . one was the water-baptism of John the Baptist in order for people to witness their turning (repenting) to Jesus, the Messiah. . .who is the only One possessing the authority to forgive sin. Then, there is the water-baptism the disciples performed on
“recent” converts who publicly witnessed their faith. Then, there is Jesus’ Spirit-fire-baptism for salvation. All three have a different purpose. And, there is not any instruction or witness in the Bible to baptize infants by any means. Roman’s 8:9 summarizes the important eternal significance of Jesus’ Spirit-fire-baptism (that is not by water) for adults bringing forth salvation.

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

We can see that Scripture proclaims that there is only one kind of Believer. . . that is a Spirit-Filled Believer. No person can spirit-fire-baptize another. . . it is a God act. Salvation is a God act.

**Baptism Bragging Rights?**

It is revealing that Paul chastises the disciples for bragging about who water-baptized them (**1 Corinthians 1:10-18**) in order to stop divisions among them. Note that Paul identifies water-baptism as the issue that is dividing them. Sound familiar?

10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be **no divisions** among you, but that you be made complete in the **same** mind and in the **same** judgment.

 11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.

 12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying,

**"I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."**

 13 Has Christ been divided?

 Paul was not crucified for you, was he?

Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

 14 I thank God that I **baptized** none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

 15 so that no one would say you were **baptized** in my name.

 16 Now I did **baptize** also the household of Stephanas;

 beyond that, I do not know whether I **baptized** any other.

 17 For Christ did not send me to **baptize**,

but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech,

so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

 18 For the **word of the cross** is foolishness to those who are perishing, **but to us who are being saved it is the power of God**.

**What is God telling us through Paul in 1 Corinthians?**

First- If Paul thought/believed (or was instructed by Christ) that water-baptism saves. . . then why was he not water-baptizing everyone that accepted the Lord in their heart?

I mean, to complete the things mandated for salvation?

Oh, people are to add their works to the works of Jesus Christ on the Cross to complete salvation?

 Second - It is not important who water-baptizes you. No one has a monopoly on performing water-baptism to witness salvation. So, today, denominations who claim that their water-baptism is the only correct “real one” is unscriptural.

Third - Paul trumps preaching the Gospel over water-baptizing people. Notice in verse 18, Paul states that it is the Cross that is the power of God to those who are being saved. In the context of 1 Corinthians 1:10-18, this statement places the act of water-baptism outside the act that saves. It is the act/work of God as Jesus, the Christ, on the Cross at Calvary that saves. Jesus is the only One who could fulfill the Law (Hebrews 10) as He said He would (Matthew 5:17) and finished/completed the deeds needed for our salvation on the Cross (John 19:30).

Jesus nailed our certificate of debt that lists the decrees against us to the Cross (Colossians 2:13). We read this verse and keep in mind the previous verses that were about how “in” Christ Believers are made complete and circumcised without hands. This points directly to our salvation and the fact that God is the one who saves us without hands. . . meaning that no person had/has a hand in our salvation. It is God’s act alone.

 So, as we have noted already. . . the transition to a new life is a God act. He invites all people to humbly surrender to Him inviting His Holy Spirit to indwell their hearts. In **Colossians 2:13,** Paul reminds the Believers in Colossae and witnesses to non-believers of the “dead-hostile” state they were/are in without God’s Spirit indwelling them.

**Colossians 2**

**13** When you were dead in your transgressions

and the uncircumcision of your flesh,

He [Jesus Christ] made you alive together with Him,

having **forgiven** us all our transgressions,

**14** having **canceled** out the **certificate of debt**

consisting of decrees against us,

 which was hostile to us;

and He has taken it out of the way,

having **nailed it to the cross.**

This is the “Word of the Cross” Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 1:18 that is seen to be foolish to those who are perishing.

**Decrees Against Us? Remove Them?**

These words God has Paul write may seem foreign to many. Scripture is informing all people that they have committed offenses against God. This may be a charge of which people have a hard time.

Most people view themselves as basically good and live lives with good motives. However, in an honest self-evaluation, it is in our youth we make the most mistakes. Hopefully, for the majority of us. . . from that youthful time of spiritual immaturity we have sought to move our decisions and lifestyle closer to God’s plan for our lives. I mean, waking up in Margaritaville without a clue has got to stop. Hopefully, if you are over 30. . . ok, make it 40. . . you are no longer taking those trips.

So, all the things we did or do not remember we did in Margaritaville. . . our consciousness/subconsciousness seeks forgiveness and peace from God and our neighbor. All humanity searches for peace. They may seek peace in the wrong places. However, the fallen human condition naturally seeks forgiveness and the ability to forgive others. All humanity intuitively knows there is a moral covenant with our Creator God. And all people know that they have broken the moral covenant. By the nature of a covenant, the one who breaks the covenant owes a debt.

**Leviticus 17:11** For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.

Obviously, God’s grace pays our life-debt on the Cross with His life.The Cross makes peace possible. . . bringing a spiritual healing which is an act of God.

I see that all people know within themselves, on their own, they cannot accomplish peace. . . not an eternal peace. Excluding someone being turned-over to their own desires (Romans 1:21ff), people long to retore the relationship with their Creator God and neighbor. Again, in this restoration, there is a debt to be paid. Therefore, there needs to be a “cancelation of the certificate of debt” (Colossians 2:14) that weighs on the fallen human soul (New Testament Greek – psuche. English - Psych). Biblical Christianity provides the solution at the Cross of Christ.

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)

And He said to him, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' (Matthew 22:37; From Deuteronomy 6:5, 10:12)

In the Old Testament David writes “To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul” (Psalms 25:1) and, “Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness” (Psalm 6:4). “He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake (Psalm 23:3).

Once again, we gain access to the benefit of the Cross by our humble surrender to God. Then people can elevate to. . . and sustain. . . the spiritual healthy, eternal life to which God has called us. “Guard my soul and deliver me; Do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in You” (Psalm 25:20). This brings peace in our relationship with God and our neighbor.

**Job 33:28-30**

28 'He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit,

 And my life shall see the light.'

 29 "Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men,

 30 To bring back his soul from the pit,

That he may be enlightened with the light of life.

**AMEN**