



NEW LIFE

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“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)

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Right Now Counts Forever

*By Dr R C Sproul, Part 1 of 4 of “The Parable of the Sower”
Adapted from TABLETALK from Ligonier Ministries – June 2009*

Grace Alone. *Soli Deo Gloria* is the motto that grew out of the Protestant Reformation and was used on every composition by Johann Sebastian Bach. He affixed the initials *SDG* at the bottom of each manuscript to communicate the idea that it is God and God alone who is to receive the glory for the wonders of His work of creation and of redemption. At the heart of the sixteenth-century controversy over salvation was the issue of grace.

It was not a question of man’s need for grace. It was a question as to the extent of that need. The church had already condemned Pelagius, who had taught that grace facilitates salvation but is not absolutely necessary for it. Semi-Pelagianism since that time has always taught that without grace there is no salvation. But the grace that is considered in all semi-Pelagian and Arminian theories of salvation is not an efficacious grace. It is a grace that makes salvation possible, but not a grace that makes salvation certain.

In the parable of the sower we see that regarding salvation, God is the one who takes the initiative to bring salvation to pass. He is the sower. The seed that is sown is His seed, corresponding to His Word, and the harvest that results is His harvest. He harvests what He purposed to harvest when He initiated the whole process. God doesn’t leave the harvest up to the vagaries of thorns and stones in the pathway. It is God and God alone who makes certain that a portion of His Word falls upon good ground. A critical error in interpreting this parable would be to assume that the good ground is the good disposition of fallen sinners, those sinners who make the right choice, responding positively to God’s prevenient grace. The classical Reformed understanding of the good ground is that if the ground is receptive to the seed that is sown by God, it is God alone who prepares the ground for the germination of the seed.

The biggest question any semi-Pelagian or Arminian has to face at the practical level is this: Why did I choose to believe the gospel and commit my life to Christ when my neighbour, who heard the same gospel, chose to reject it? That question has been answered in many ways. We might speculate that the reason why one person chooses to respond positively to the gospel and to Christ, while another one doesn’t, is because the person who responded positively was more intelligent than the other one. If that were the case, then God would still be the ultimate provider of salvation because the intelligence is His gift, and it could be explained that God did not give the same intelligence to the neighbour who rejected the gospel. But that explanation is obviously absurd.

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The other possibility that one must consider is this: that the reason one person responds positively to the gospel and his neighbour does not is because the one who responded was a better person. That is, that person who made the right choice and the good choice did it because he was more righteous than his neighbour. In this case, the flesh not only availed something, it availed everything. This is the view that is held by the majority of evangelical Christians, namely, the reason why they are saved and others are not is that they made the right response to God's grace while the others made the wrong response.

We can talk here about not only the correct response as opposed to an erroneous response, but we can speak in terms of a good response rather than a bad response. If I am in the kingdom of God because I made a good response rather than the bad response, I have something of which to boast, namely the goodness by which I responded to the grace of God. I have never met an Arminian who would answer the question I've just posed by saying, "Oh, the reason I'm a believer is because I'm better than my neighbour." They would be loath to say that. However, though they reject this implication, the logic of semi-Pelagianism requires this conclusion. If indeed in the final analysis the reason I'm a Christian and someone else is not is that I made the proper response to God's offer of salvation while somebody else reject it, then by resistless logic I have indeed made the good response, and my neighbour has made the bad response.

What Reformed theology teaches is that it is true the believer makes the right response and the non-believer makes the wrong response. But the reason the believer makes the good response is because God in His sovereign election changes the disposition of the heart of the elect to effect a good response. I can take no credit for the response that I made for Christ. God not only initiated my salvation, He not only sowed the seed, but He made sure that that seed germinated in my heart by regenerating me by the power of the Holy Ghost. That regeneration is a necessary condition for the seed to take root and to flourish. That's why at the heart of Reformed theology the axiom resounds, namely, that regeneration preceded faith. It's that formula, that order of salvation that all semi-Pelagians reject. They hold to the idea that in their fallen condition of spiritual death, they exercise faith, and then are born again. In their view, they respond to the gospel before the Spirit has changed the disposition of their soul to bring them to faith. When that happens, the glory of God is shared. No semi-Pelagian can ever say with authenticity: "To God alone be the glory." For the semi-Pelagian, God may be gracious, but in addition to God's grace, my work of response is absolutely essential. Here grace is not effectual, and such grace, in the final analysis, is not really saving grace. In fact, salvation is of the Lord from the beginning to end. Yes, I must believe. Yes, I must respond. Yes, I must receive Christ. But for me to say "yes" to any of those things, my heart must first be changed by the sovereign, effectual power of God the Holy Spirit. *Soli Deo gloria.*

In Everything Give Thanks

by Henry Morris, Ph.D.

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

It is easy to be happy and cheerful in times of prosperity, when one has all the comforts of an affluent lifestyle, and everything seems to be going well. The testing times come, however, when these material comforts are somehow taken away, and one feels defeated and all alone.

Except for God! Whatever else may fail, God "will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). Since we still have the Lord (assuming we have trusted Him for forgiveness and salvation, through Christ), we can always "rejoice in the Lord, . . . in the God of my salvation."

Job, for example, lost all his possessions, then his children, finally his health, and even his wife turned against him. Yet he could say: "the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).

God has commanded the Christian: "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Not for everything, but in everything!

This has always been one of the greatest testimonies a Christian can give to an unbeliever--the testimony of a life rejoicing in God's salvation even in the midst of trouble. This was the example of Christ Himself, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

HMM

Taken from: <http://www.icr.org/article/4449/>)

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WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am** and **4.00 pm**.

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

| Worship Services | | | WELCOME |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Morning | <i>Today: 05/07/2009</i> | <i>Next Week: 12/07/2009</i> | We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Loo Mee Kwee, Hannah Lim, Ivy & Lois Kwan and Sayaka Asakura to our worship services last Lord's Day. |
| <i>Chairman:</i> | Jonathan Kim | Joey Seow | |
| <i>Preacher:</i> | Rev Timothy Ki | Rev Timothy Ki | |
| <i>Message:</i> | What is a Christian? – Part 1 | What is a Christian? – Part 3 | |
| <i>Text:</i> | Acts 11:26 | Ephesians 2:1-10 | |
| <i>Organist:</i> | Anthony | Grace | |
| Evening | | | |
| <i>Chairman:</i> | John Poh | Jonathan Kim | NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calling of Resident Minister: Continue to pray for the Lord's calling for Rev Timothy Ki to serve as our resident minister. Rev Ki will be here for the months of July and August. Pray for his visa application. • DHW Bible Study today: Today, we will cover Lesson 10 (Genesis 12). Please spend the upcoming week preparing for Lesson 11 (Genesis 13). • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas (knee pain), Maria (ankle and joint pain), Constance (left heel pain), those suffering from hay-fever • Pray for those who are on travel: Sophia (Singapore), Lee-Wei (Singapore), Grace & family (UK), Nicolas (Belgium) • School of Theology at Metropolitan Tabernacle – 7th to 9th July: The theme for this year programme is "Reviving the Lost Art of Evangelistic Proclamation". Copies of the programme are available at the Book Table. • Lord's Supper: Please note that we will be observing the Lord's Supper next Sunday. |
| <i>Preacher:</i> | Rev Timothy Ki | Rev Timothy Ki | |
| <i>Message:</i> | What is a Christian? – Part 2 | What is a Christian? – Part 4 | |
| <i>Text:</i> | Acts 11:26 | John 14:23 | |
| <i>Pianist:</i> | Anthony | Hubert | |
| Other Duties | | | |
| | <i>Today: 28/06/2009</i> | <i>Next Week: 12/07/2009</i> | |
| <i>Ushers</i> | Daniel / Yetta | Jonathan / Daniel | |
| <i>Sunday Sch:</i> | No Sunday School | No Sunday School | |
| <i>Lunch:</i> | Sharon | Maureen | |
| <i>Washing-up:</i> | Volunteers | Volunteers | |
| <i>PA Crew:</i> | Joshua | John | |
| Appointments of the Week | | | |
| Fri 10 July | 7:30pm | Young Adults Fellowship: No YAF | |
| Sat 11 July | 4:00pm | Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Jonathan Kim | |
| Worship Service Collections | | | |
| Offering: £378.00 | | Lunch: £51.10 | |
| <h2 style="margin: 0;"><u>Over-Answered Prayer</u></h2> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 40px;"><i>Adapted from "In Green Pastures" by J.R. Miller, D.D.</i></p> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 40px;">No true, faith-winged prayer goes unanswered, but many a prayer that seems to us unanswered is really over-answered. The very thing we ask God does not grant, because he is able to do something infinitely better for us. We ask only for bodily help or relief, and he sees that we need far more some deep spiritual blessing. He answers our soul's needs before he gratifies our personal wishes. We ask for a temporal favour; he does not give it to us, but instead he bestows upon us a spiritual good which will enrich us for ever. We ask for the lifting away of a burden or the averting of a sorrow; our plea is not granted in form, but instead we receive a new impartation of the power of Christ, or an angel comes from heaven and ministers to us. Thus many times our little prayers are really over-answered.</p> | | | |