

## The Cost of Freedom

2 Corinthians 5:19-21

October 4, 2009

### Introduction: Gazing in the Mirror

We have been looking the last couple of weeks in the Mirror. It hasn't been fun or pretty, but I believe quite necessary, and a significant trek on our spiritual journey. In our Book of the Month "The Prodigal God" by Timothy Keller, we have seen that the Elder Brother-tendencies, in the Luke 15 Parable of the Two Sons, are much like our own. We have discovered that these tendencies are just as destructive and dangerous as the loose-living of the younger brother. This week we are using chapter five as a springboard to our discussion of the Scriptures this morning.

Any reflections from your reading of "The Prodigal God"

I found this quote that is printed in your listening guide from Dr Synder Professor from Davis College, wrote on his facebook page:

*"Paul writes: every time you criticize someone, you condemn yourself. Don't we always justify ourselves by focusing on others' faults. Instead we should be looking at our own [faults], allowing the Spirit (ghost) to do His mysterious work convicting our selfish behavior. . . We all have established rules according to which God must govern. How arrogant! Do we really know whom we worship?" - Dr. George Snyder Jr. Prof. Davis College on Facebook.*

We see clearly that we have the potential of alienating ourselves from God either by being very, very bad, or by being very, very good. Both are wrong. Both ways are just

as lost.

[Video, session five, The Prodigal God]

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The Cost of Freedom

2 Corinthians 5:19-21

Here we see just how God accomplishes our salvation, our seat at the banquet table, our ability to overcome the lostness of our soul, to the celebration of eternal life, eternal living. As we study this passage, may God, even now prepare our hearts and minds for the communion table, the Lord's table, the celebration of God's work on our behalf.

I. God Is In The World, **Pursuing** Us. v.19a

A. Reconciling us back to Himself

**(HE MAKES UP THE DIFFERENCE)**

B. Inviting into a restored personal relationship

II. God Is In The World **Forgiving** Us. v.19b

A. From Our Arrogance

B. From the very reason we have done right

(If following a set of rules is what it is all about, we would be in position to boast of our accomplishments, our ability to follow our designed standard. By we can't - the law is never intended to be a standard, it's a schoolmaster, to show where we have missed the mark. Christians are very good at setting standards, following the rules, clinging to

doctrine, traditions, and preferences. There is such a fine line. If reading your bible, getting baptized, going to church, following the rules was it, we would be no different than Islam, The Mormons, the Jehovah Witness.

The good news there is a difference, marked difference. Our salvation, our standing before a Holy God, our security is not in what we can DO. It's all about what He has already DONE. And in His DOING, on that basis, we are forgiven, we are Commissioned.

### III. God Is In The World **Commissioning** Us v.20

A. As Ambassadors

B. Walking Across the Room

As Ambassadors, we are commissioned to go out on the wings of our reconciliation, plead with others to enter in a right relationship with God through Christ. It is that Christ is the only way, because He is the only ONE. The only One who as fulfilled the requirements of the Law, that why we can't, we aren't supposed to. If we could Jesus would not have had to die.

### IV. God Is In The World **Dying** **For** Us v.21

As we celebrate the finished work of Christ on the Cross for us, for the world.

An element of the communion service, is the element of examination and reflection. We all have idols, none are righteous, none have attained. We are all carriers of the disease called sin, and we will struggle under it's influence and presence as long as we are this side of heaven.

The Penalty of sin has been paid for by Christ, the presence of sin still lurks. Hides in the bushes, lies in deception ready to pounce. Our weapon - the Holy Spirit - to

examine, to reveal sin so that we can confess it, enjoy the forgiveness, cleansing, and strength to take charge over it.

Keller says: “Aren’t you glad we have a true elder brother that was willing to come and find us, and pay for us to sit at the banquet table. He didn’t just come across town or to another country for us, our elder brother stepped across the universe just for us. We should be captured and captivated at the expense of our freedom, It cost Him everything to express His grace to us. It cost Him everything for the opportunity to sit down with us, to lavish His love, His glory, His riches, on us. Let’s celebrate together.

Our Idols: Comfort, reputation, acceptance, achievement, religion, materialism, independence

Sample Prayers: (from “TPG Discussion Guide)

I Repent of my Idols:

“Lord, why am I giving this so much power over me? If I keep doing it, it will strangle me. I don’t have to do so - I will not do so any longer. This will not be my master. You are my only King.”

Lord, I see how repulsive idolizing this mere idol really is. In yearning after this, I was trampling on your love for me. I realize now my lack of thankfulness, my lack of grateful joy for what you have done for me.“

Rejoice in Christ for times of temptation: (John 6:32-4)

“Lord, only in your presense is fullness of joy and pleasures forever more. (Ps 16:11), yet I am trying to find comfort in something else. Please remove my idol of pleasure, which can never give me the pleasure I need.”

Rejoice in Christ for times of anxiety: (Luke 8:22-25)

Lord, I live by your sheer grace. That means though I don’t deserve to have things go right, yet I know you are working them all out for good. (Rom. 8:38), because you love

me in Christ. Please remove my idol of security, which can never give me the security I need.“

Rejoice in Christ for times of anger: (Matt. 26:36-46)

Lord, when I forget the gospel I become impatient and judgmental toward others. I forget that you have been infinitely patient with me over the years. Please remove the idol of power - the need to get my own way - which is making me so hard toward these people.“

Rejoice in Christ for times of worthlessness: (Jn 17:9-17)

Lord, when I forget the gospel I become dependent on the smiles and evaluation of others. I let them sit in judgment on me, and then I hear all their criticism as a condemnation of my very being. You delight and sing over me. You see me as a beauty. Let me be satisfied in Your love. Please remove the idol of approval, which can never give the approval I need.“