

## What is Man? Who is God? 5-22-16

Lord God, we worship You today. You are the Almighty God & King! You know all about us! Yet, You love us w/an everlasting, unfathomable love. You hold us in the palm of Your all-powerful hand. We worship You Father. We bow down to You, Jesus. We trust You Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. A.

In today's world and in some churches, it's popular to think along these lines, "We don't want to be negative & think about sin; we want to cultivate a more positive relationship w/God." Sounds nice, doesn't it? Who likes to be negative? But in reality, those words don't accurately represent truth! Some do not see a need for confession of sin. If we do emphasize confessing our sin, we may insecurely ask, "Oh, are we being too negative?" Well, if we only focused on sin, evil, etc., yes, it'd be too negative. And if we only confessed our sin, that'd be negative. If we left out the absolution, that'd be negative. So we must get to the absolution – the **pronouncement of forgiveness!** If there is no sin to be dealt with, Jesus died in vain! We do sin, but because Jesus took our sins to the cross, we are clean! Forgiven! That's not negative! It's freeing!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> thing that is upsetting is the idea that we can cultivate a relationship w/God any way we want. Like, let's be positive! Let's just stick w/the good stuff. I don't want to damage my self-esteem. If we do that, we end up creating God in our own image. We'd find ourselves saying things like, "Surely a good god will understand. Instead of going to Him & asking, we'd keep our distance from the true righteous God & decide what a good god would or wouldn't do. Oh, He wouldn't judge, He wouldn't allow

people to go to hell.... etc.” The truth is God is the One who controls our relationship to Him. God is God & we are not. God has sent the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin, leads us guides us... Sin separates us from God. It’s kind of like this scenario. Suppose you stole something from some one. If that person happens to call & invite you to lunch. How would that go? Would you be comfortable? Or would you be wondering the whole time if the person knew you’d stolen from them. You wouldn’t be doing much honest relating. You’d probably think up a reason you couldn’t go to lunch in the 1<sup>st</sup> place because you’d want to hide from that person. If we don’t want to face the truth about ourselves, we hide from God.

When David asks in Psalm 8, “what is man that You are mindful of him?” he isn’t thinking man was so great. David saw creation. He was in awe of God. He knew God is **holy, full of glory!** When he considered all of that, David was **full of praise & adoration** of God. David wondered how could **a holy, powerful all-knowing God** be concerned about man? Man is weak, self-centered, prone to do his own thing. Why is God willing to visit him – to desire relationship w/him? David knew about sin. In Ps. 51 he pleads, “Have mercy upon me, O God... Blot out my transgressions.. Wash me... cleanse me... For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever b/4 me...

We don’t get free from sin by denying its existence – pretending it isn’t there We are freed from sin by confessing it – admitting it, facing it – then receiving forgiveness that God so **generously** pours out on us. You see, God knows us through &

through. He's not surprised by any of it – only disappointed when we refuse to honestly face ourselves b/4 Him. Since He knows us & desires truth, He has thought of everything that we need - & we need a way to be right w/God; we need sin to be obliterated so it doesn't come between God & us. Jesus did that very thing – took our sin, removed our guilt. Therefore, rejoice!

So what does this mean for our lives? All we have needed God has provided. God cares for us like a Father cares for His children. Jesus has paid the price for our sin – we have been made right w/God. We are righteous! Holy! Jesus has promised the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. All of this because we believe in Jesus! We have faith! Oh, we may not always feel confident. We can be harassed by all sorts of fear – we're not good enough, if people really knew me, they'd know I wasn't fit for the kingdom. LIE! It's true we aren't good enough! But God has made a way! It's by the shed blood of Jesus we make it to heaven. The enemy, also known as the accuser, can dish out all sorts of accusations – especially if we are going through a hard time. The devil wants us to believe there is no hope for us because we are bad! We're sick because we're bad. We're having this problem because we're bad! LIE! LIE! LIE!

The truth is we are justified by faith & have peace w/God through faith – it's not by anything we've done. It is a gift from god. Paul says, “we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” What? We are to glory in tribulation? Like James says, “Count it all

joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” How can this be? Wouldn’t a good god spare us from trouble? Don’t we wish.

There have been a couple of extremely hard things that have happened lately: a 2 year old drowned in a septic tank in Custer & a young man was killed in a motorcycle accident in Hill City. How will God meet those who grieve? I don’t know **how** He will, but I do know somehow **He will** meet them. God is good!

We attended our grandson’s graduation in Georgia. The guest speaker was a beautiful young woman - Aimee Copeland. She was working on a master’s degree, finished her last final of the semester, & went w/some friends to ride a home-made zip line across a river. On her 2<sup>nd</sup> pass, the line snapped, & she fell on rocks in the river & severely cut her leg. She ended up getting a flesh-eating bacteria in her body. Her left leg had to be amputated at the hip. She was in renal failure, had to have a ventilator to breathe, 5 major organs were shutting down. Survival chances were “slim to none.” At one point she was in cardiac arrest, her brain was swelling, and her lungs were severely damaged. She obviously survived & later had to have her right foot & both hands amputated.

While introducing Aimee, the president told of all the prayers that had been prayed on her behalf – he acknowledged that he too had been praying. Aimee has made the choice to not focus on what she has lost, but what she has gained

She considers herself to be blessed – blessed to be different, blessed to be able to share her experience & to improve the quality of someone else’s life! Wow! Like our son-in-law said, “She is obviously from a strong Christian family!

We are justified by faith! Our job is to trust. Our God will make a way. Listen to some words written by Kim. “We can relax knowing He has everything under control. We have all wondered many times, . . ."where are you God. . . don't you care? . . am I praying wrong? . . living wrong? . . why won't you answer?" God isn't deaf nor is He cruel. Every day is a gift. . . . our God is totally trustworthy! We may not understand nor like how this life plays out, but we can relax in the knowledge that God is not missing a thing, . . He is not dis-interested, . uncaring or unable. We can approach His throne with confidence that He sees what is going on in our lives and in the lives of those we love. . . . we can ask that His will be done and that we may have strength for whatever outcome is in store. Because my dear friends, . . God IS good, . . He IS light, . . . In Him we find courage, . .encouragement and strength because He is totally trustworthy!”

God is faithful, Jesus reigns, and the Holy Spirit will lead, guide, and teach us. God has made a way. God is making a way. God will make a way!