Core Seminar

Two Ways to Live

Class 2: Humanity in Rebellion

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PRAYER

I. Introduction

Welcome to the second week of the Two Ways to Live Core Seminar.

As we begin, let me remind you of the two primary goals of this class.

1) to solidify the CONTENT of the gospel in our own minds and

2) to equip us to share it with others (1 Peter 3:15).

In order to accomplish these goals, we’ll be working through a different aspect of the gospel each week using the Two Ways to Live tract as our guide.

[Does everyone have one? Mention Phone App]

It’s true, while there is only ONE gospel message, there are MANY *ways* to go about sharing the gospel.

- With some people, we may share the gospel with them *in a few minutes*.

- With others, we may share the gospel over the course of a few months [or even *years*].

The situation may not *always* look the same. But our GOAL is to share the gospel in its entirety so that others may know JESUS and *ultimately*…be saved.

II. Review

last week we talked about evangelism.

We said that *evangelism* may be *defined* as:

- sharing a *specific* message (the gospel of Jesus Christ)

- to a *specific* people (lost men and women),

- in the power of the Holy Spirit,

- with a *specific* purpose—[the aim that *they* would repent and believe.]

We also talked about what EVANGELISM is NOT,

- and it’s not *merely* giving your testimony

- or *debating* the incarnation

- or being *kind* to people

- [it’s not going up to someone and praying for them,

- or *merely* telling them Jesus loves them…]

We, discussed what *successful* evangelism looks like...

- Successful evangelism is NOT converting someone.

- Because conversion is God’s work

Our *responsibility* and *privilege* is to tell the gospel *accurately* to lost people *relying* on the Holy Spirit in prayer.]

John MacArthur says in the T4G 10-year reunion video: "It's not about how cool you are [not about how *attractive* or *eloquent]*, it's about how *clear* you are in the *proclamation* of the truth."

Now before we begin with Cell 2 of 6 in our tract, we want to briefly review Cell 1, which we discussed last week.

- [*Repetition* will help us to get these ideas firmly planted in our minds and so we’ll practice what we’ve learned each week.]

What was the first theme of the gospel that we discussed in Cell 1?

We were introduced to God, the *loving Ruler* and *Creator*.

- In His *vast wisdom* and *might*, God *created* all that exists.

o All things were *made* by Him and for Him,

o including humans, *made* in His image,

o and this means... that He has *creator rights* on our lives.

- He lovingly made us *in order to display His image* as we *RULE* the world under His *guidance* and *protection*.]

>>>Does anyone REMEMBER THE VERSE, Revelation 4:11 that corresponds to this idea?

Revelation 4:11—“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created *ALL* things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

[Now, would someone DRAW the picture that we used to illustrate this truth?]

DRAW IT!!!

Before we conclude our review,

- [Can anyone tell us WHY we *emphasize* God at the beginning of the gospel?]

[In order for us to *understand* anything else that *follows* about the gospel, we need to understand *WHO GOD IS* first.

It’s His gospel,

- and the *offense*, *judgment*, and *salvation* we will see in the gospel are all *BASED* on *WHO* God is.

- The *Doctrine of salvation* depends on the Doctrine of God.]

Questions or Comments?

III. Humanity in Rebellion

Christianity, *similar* to other religions, recognizes that there’s a grave problem with the world we live in.

- It’s CLEAR to just about everyone that something has gone *terribly* wrong.

- Whether you’re an atheist or a Buddhist or a Muslim, everyone agrees that the world is *NOT* as it should be.

Why is that?

Why *do* we see things like addictions, murder, theft, poverty, racism, and starvation?

According to God’s Word, Christians believe that God created the world as GOOD.

But when we look around the world, SOMETHING *DRASTIC* HAS HAPPENED.

- Corruption, injustice, hatred, greed, and death are everywhere.

What *happened*? Where did it go wrong?

The *fundamental* problem, Christians believe, rests within what has GONE WRONG in each and every one of us.

* The fundamental problem lies within our OWN hearts, not anywhere else.

According to the Bible, the essence of our problem is that: Man Rejected God as Ruler over God’s creation. [Draw only the crown crossed out and the earth]

Man, God’s creation, REBELLED against Him.

- In our rebellion against Him, we rejected him as King, and enthroned ourselves, dubbing ourselves as King.

[Finish drawing the picture]

Because WE want to rule, we try to RUN our lives OUR *OWN* way, and not His way,

* and this rebellion has *affected* the world and everything in it.
* THIS... is our GREAT PROBLEM, which the Bible calls “SIN.”

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

A great verse to memorize and communicate this truth is Romans 3:10-12:

“There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away.”

>>>>We’ll spend the rest of our time UNPACKING this truth of man’s rebellion against God.

But FIRST, I want to talk together about how this looks in a real conversation.

*How* DO you describe SIN to someone who’s not *familiar* with the term?

[You should begin by explaining: The Fall of Man]

A. The Fall of Man

Sin began a long, long time ago in the Garden of Eden with the first man and woman, Adam and Eve.

God, who is *holy*, created Adam and Eve to live under his rule in the Garden of Eden.

Because God created man,

- He had the RIGHT to tell them what to do,

- how to live,

- what was good for them,

- and what was bad for them.

And unlike what any of us would be like, with absolute power and authority,

* God was completely loving towards his creation,
* and He ruled them with their best interest in mind.

All was well in the beginning,

* but soon something terrible happened,
* something that is *still* affecting us today.

We can read about it in Genesis 3:1-8. [Ask someone to read this passage]

God tells Adam and Eve *not* to do something,

* NOT to eat from a specific tree.
* [Well more specifically, eat from every other tree, *but* this tree! Gen 2:16]

BUT! Satan comes to them, twists God’s Word around, and tempts them to eat from the tree.

* He makes promises to them,
* if they would just eat from the tree in VERSE 5—that *they will be like God*.]

…And we read that the woman is drawn in by this lie.

By disobeying God, Eve rejects God as her ruler.

- It’s either God’s way or her way, and Eve chose her own way, *believing* the serpent.

- Then, Adam does the same thing!

That’s the moment the *FALL OF MAN* happened.

- Man chose to reject God as the rightful ruler and authority of his life, and chose to make himself HIS own ruler and authority.

- Man did not want to listen to God’s Word about how he should live his life;

- He *wanted* to run his life

* his OWN way, without taking God into account.

So what was the result of this sin?

* What did Adam and Eve do?
* [In *verse* 8, it says that they *hid* from God.]

Here we see what man’s relationship with God had become.

- Whereas before, there was no strain in man’s relationship with God; now they hide from him.

- By rebelling against God, man broke the right relationship that existed between GOD AND MAN

You see, God’s holiness is *actually* an *extremely* frightful thing if we’re rebelling against God.

His purity condemns our impurity.

Habakkuk 1:13 says of God, “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.”

The Bible teaches us, sin is an affront to a HOLY God, and we need protection lest we be consumed in His presence.

- that's why the prophet Isaiah declared himself ruined when he came before God (Isaiah 6:5), and Ezekiel fell facedown (Ezekiel 1:28).

It’s a scary thought, to be exposed to God’s holiness in our sinful condition!

[The second thing we should share in explaining SIN is…]

B. The Depravity of Man

Back to Adam and Eve. At the time of their rebellion, all of mankind became rebels against God by nature. When Adam and Eve fell, all of mankind fell with them, including us.

We see this, in Romans 5:12: “Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin.”

All of Adam and Eve’s offspring inherited their sinful nature – that’s everybody.

* It’s their children, their grandchildren, their great grandchildren,
* all the way down to us.

So this wasn’t just a problem for Adam and Eve.

This rebellion against God and our broken relationship with him is the same problem that every human being SINCE them has faced.

* We’re all INFECTED with sin.

Romans 3:23 says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Just like with Adam and Eve, the Bible says that God created us to live in a right relationship with Him.

- That’s a relationship where He cares for His children,

* where He speaks to us like a Father, and we listen as His children.

- But we’ve ruined that relationship.

* We didn’t listen to God.

Instead, we listened to ourselves.

o We rejected God’s ways and followed our own.

o We’ve set ourselves up in opposition,

* declaring our autonomy against God the Father.

You see, THIS is what sin is. It’s breaking God’s holy law.

James 2:10-11 says, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.”

We’ve all broken God’s holy law.

* But beyond that, we’ve offended a holy God, the one who stands behind the law.

The law was there to show us what God’s like.

* At the same time, it shows us what we’ve become because we can’t keep it.

Romans 3:20 says, “For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.”

So, we see then that breaking the law is not an ABSTRACT offense

* *distantly* removed from our relationship with God,
* but it’s very personal.
* We’re all rebels who have broken our relationship with God.

There are lots of people who share the gospel *without* going here first.

- They might *present* the *basic problem* as the fact that:

o We are *OUT* of God’s *wonderful* plan.

o Or we are living a *meaningless* existence.

o Or they may present the problem as the fact that this *world is broken*.

- But Two Ways to Live goes right for this issue of sin.

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\*\*\*Why do you think it’s important to talk about SIN as a personal offense against a holy God?

So, we talked about about original sin—the idea that we are *sinful* from birth because of Adam’s sin.

This concept is IMPORTANT and USEFUL to explain whenever you *share the gospel*, because it shows the DEPTH of our problem and explains some of what we see around us.

Other Questions or Comments?

C. Implications for Evangelism

Okay, let’s take a moment and think about this, in regards to our evangelism.

Is man’s sinfulness an *easy* thing for our non-Christian friends to grasp?

- Do most people believe this?

- Why or why not?

While most people will admit they’re not perfect,

* they usually come from the angle that it’s a question of merely making a MISTAKE or not,
* RATHER than sinning against a holy God.

This is because many people think they’re basically good,

* born innocent,
* and just trying to do the RIGHT thing.

We like to *think* of ourselves as good.

- Naturally, we identify with the good guys rather than the bad guys, don’t we?

- But this makes it all the *harder* to explain this part of the gospel.

If you’re telling an unbelieving friend this part of the gospel, he or she is likely to dismiss it.

- Either they don’t want to think about it, which is just more evidence of having a *sinful nature*,

- or they’re not convinced from their own worldview.

So, how do we help our unbelieving friends see that we’re ALL sinful by nature and rebellious against a good King and Ruler?

>>>Well, ultimately, God has to *supernaturally* work in the person’s heart, but we’re responsible for telling the gospel message as clearly, accurately, and helpfully as we can.

So to that end, there are MANY things that we can point at to help clarify man’s depravity. Let me give you five.

1) Look at Children - Point them to children…particularly if they’re parents! Psalm 51:5 says, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” [And this was David speaking, the one described as “a man after God’s own heart.”

Although children are VERY cute, children are born very corrupt.

o They have an inherent self-centeredness.

o I didn’t have to teach little Caidy to be selfish,

* Or little Caidy to cry for mommy in the middle of the night and when I go to calm her, she kicks me in the face?

Anyone who has ever raised a child will probably understand that the child’s *natural inclination* is to serve themselves and fight for what he/she wants.

>>>With care and grace, you might talk about this when your friends tell stories of THEIR own disobedient children.]

2) 2ndly Look at the World – Point them to the WORLD around them. As we’ve already said, most everyone agrees that the world is NOT right.

- There’s too much hate.

- There’s too much injustice.

- There’s too much selfishness.

- There’s too much greed.

That’s because the world is FULL of people,

- people do these things,

- people are naturally sinful.

Look at ISIS, look at the shootings, look at North Korea at its threats…

The REASON there are problems in the world trace back to the first sin committed by man.

In Genesis 3 after Adam’s sin, God curses the ground so that it will be difficult to produce fruit

* and declares that DEATH is now man’s CERTAIN FATE.

- Sickness, natural disasters, wars, and famine in the world can all be traced back to man’s sinfulness.

3) Look at Your Life – Point them to examine their own life, hoping they’ll see their own rebellion against God.

[Challenge them,]

Why do they choose to do things they KNOW are wrong?

- Have they ever lied or cheated or stolen or hated?

- Why did they do that?

These are just symptoms of something that is more fundamental to who we are.

- It’s like a tree that bears bad fruit.

- It’s the sap, or life, of the tree that needs to be *changed*, not the external fruit.

The Apostle Paul was right when he declared, “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature” (Rom. 7:18).

>>>When making the case that this person you’re speaking with is sinful,

* also make sure that you include yourself in that indictment.

Feel free to expose some of the sin in your own heart.

* This will actually serve to breakdown barriers that may be up and will invite further conversation and sharing.

4) 4thly Look at God – When asked to “look at themselves,” people will undoubtedly compare themselves to other people.

Instead, Challenge them to compare themselves to God.

When they see WHO God is, they will be BETTER able to see who they are.

They might feel like they’re NOT all that bad, but that’s because they haven’t understood how HOLY, blameless, and morally pure God is.

- They need to understand that God demands perfect obedience to His law.

- He is a holy, holy, holy God (Isaiah 6:3).

5) Finally, Look at the Bible – The Bible is where God’s law is found.

We can help our unbelieving friends to “look at themselves” by holding up God’s law to their lives like a mirror.

Ask them, Does God think they’re okay?

- Walk them through the Ten Commandments to see whether or not they meet his standards.

After that, walk them through the Sermon on the Mount to see the far-reaching extent of those commands and what it means to KEEP them perfectly.

At this point, some people may object that their good deeds will OUTWEIGH their *evil* deeds if called to *account*,

* but that’s NOT how God judges sin.

Once sin is committed there’s no amount of good works that will FIX it, at least from *sinfully* depraved people.

- and....This is where Christ comes in, which will get to in a couple more weeks, *Lord willing*.

[At this point, have the class practice a bit.

- Have them split up into pairs and

- share the first two cells of Two Ways to Live with each other—

- and then ask some questions that a non-Christian might often ask.

[Explain that if you’re not a Christian, that’s just fine—you can participate just the same.]

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, let me summarize what we talked about today and give some final thoughts.

The clear biblical picture is one of man in a natural state of sin and rebellion against God.

Sadly, there are naturally no “good” people.

- This is a difficult message to get across in today’s inclusive, tolerant, and pluralistic culture.

Christianity, similar to other *religions*, recognizes that there is a grave problem with the world we live in. Something has gone terribly wrong.

But, Christianity does NOT fundamentally understand the problem to be an economic, political, or social.

- It’s not even a problem that can be solved by realizing our *true inner potential*.

Christianity is very clear that there is a problem between God and man.

- The problem is that we are in spiritual rebellion.

- We fundamentally want to live our own way, not God’s way, and so we’re at enmity with God.

The nature of this rebellion is what the Bible calls sin.

- And human history from Adam and Eve onwards details the disastrous consequences of our rebellion,

* and God’s plan to make right what man has made terribly wrong.

Next week, we’ll plan to consider the effects of man’s sin.

- We’ll see that man’s problem is not *simply* that we’re at enmity with God,

- but that there are consequences for our rebellion.

- God won’t let our rebellion *persist* indefinitely.

But PRAISE GOD that He has given us a remedy through Jesus Christ in this gospel that we continue to learn about.

So keep trying to familiarize yourself with the Two Ways to Live gospel outline and try to memorize the scripture verses – one a week.

The two we’ve done already are Revelation 4:11 and Romans 3:10-12.

Questions or Comments?

PRAYER

APPENDIX

Depravity of Man

People may think that they’re free to do whatever they want. And in a sense they’re right. But that’s not the issue. As slaves to sin, they’re free to do what they want, but they don’t have the ability to want what is good. An example of this is an alcoholic or a crack addict. These people are free to do what they want, but the problem is that their wants, their desires, are to do the very things that destroy them. They’re not free. Rather, they’re enslaved.

In the words of Jesus, we love darkness (John 3:19). We can do whatever we want, but by nature we want to reject God. By nature, we are dead in our sins. So remind your friends that though they may feel free, their sinful desires make them slaves unless God intervenes.