

An Awakening in the American Church (part 7)
Are You Really Walking with God?
8.4.2019

Review

Over the last few weeks, I've been challenging myself and all of us to pursue God in a fresh way.

June 2nd, I mentioned that I felt an unusual stirring inside, and mentioned a parallel I saw to America when reading the book of Jeremiah and his challenges to Judah before they went into captivity.

June 30th, I spoke on the Dark Night of the Soul, and how sometimes we feel "in between" spiritually. In between what God has done in us, and another unknown place He is taking us.

July 7th, I spoke about the challenges we face as Christians in America and what our response should be.

July 14th, I spoke on walking with God in a nation of compromise and listed 21 ways we are compromising as a people. And these compromises are affecting the church.

July 21st, I spoke about what we believe God's character is like in America. And most think that God is a God of love, totally accepting of any and all behavior. Because God loves and understands us, we all go to heaven.

July 28, I spoke about purity being a shield God places around us to keep us from demonic attacks as our culture erodes...

We have looked at God from the unappreciated angle of His Holiness last week. We mentioned that although God is love, He is also Holy.

God has an insatiable desire to get close to us. He loves us deeply, but our fallen state keeps us away from Him. Sin has corrupted the human heart, and has alienated us from God's love.

God sent Jesus, the God-man, to bridge the gap that our sinful hearts has created between us and Him. Without a true faith in Christ, it is not possible to get close to God because He is Holy.

John 14:6 (NLT)

...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.

John 3:16 (NKJV)

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

2 Corinthians 5:19-21 (NLT)

For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. 20 So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" 21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Today, I want to address something that may be happening on a large scale in American culture. We have lots of churches, but many people who attend church may have what John Wesley called a mental agreement salvation. That is, they mentally agree to certain beliefs but do not really have a heart change.

Question - Has your life changed since you've met Jesus? has your experience changed how you live?

If not, it may be mental agreement without a real heart change.

**Here are four simple yet MAJOR things to know about a serious walk with God.
Are You Really Walking with God?**

1. We all need to understand that we are sinners in need of a savior!

Most people are not aware of their sin, so they are not looking for a savior.

A person on the ground has NO NEED for a parachute.

A person on land has no need for a life jacket or life preserver.

Sinners will not come to Christ until they see their need for Him. They will never understand the good news of the gospel until they understand why they need rescuing.

Today, it's become taboo to even mention to a person that there is a defect in their life in some way. Some schools won't even declare winners at ballgames because that means that one team would be a loser.

We try to be so positive that we are blind to our real needs.

You cannot overcome a problem until you recognize you have it.

Quote from Holman Christian Standard Bible Notes on Romans 3:9:

All the world is under sin, and yet sin is considered an archaic topic in our secular society. It is not hard to guess why. Vice is something done against oneself; crime is something done against society or an individual; but sin is against God. Since modern culture is essentially atheistic, "sin" has become a meaningless term.

Romans 3:23-24 (NLT)

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. (24) Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

Romans 6:23 (NLT)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:12 (NLT)

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

John 3:16-17 (NLT)

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (17) God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

Psalms 51:4-5 (NLT)

Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. (5) For I was born a sinner— yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.

Isaiah 59:1-10 (NLT)

Listen! The Lord's arm is not too weak to save you, nor is his ear too deaf to hear you call. (2) It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore. (3) Your hands are the hands of murderers, and your fingers are filthy with sin. Your lips are full of lies, and your mouth spews corruption. (4) No one cares about being fair and honest. The people's lawsuits are based on lies. They conceive evil deeds and then give birth to sin. (5) They hatch deadly snakes and weave spiders' webs. Whoever eats their eggs will die; whoever cracks them will hatch a viper. (6) Their webs can't be made into clothing, and nothing they do is productive. All their activity is filled with sin, and violence is their trademark. (7) Their feet run to do evil, and they rush to commit murder. They think only about sinning. Misery and destruction always follow them. (8) They don't know where to find peace or what it means to be just and good. They have mapped out crooked roads, and no one who follows them knows a moment's peace. (9) So there is no justice among us, and we know nothing about right living. We look for light but find only darkness. We look for bright skies but walk in gloom. (10) We grope like the blind along a wall, feeling our way like people without eyes. Even at brightest noontime, we stumble as though it were dark. Among the living, we are like the dead.

2. Sin cannot enter God's presence, and because we are all sinners with hearts that want to do what God says is sin, we must be changed before we can go to heaven.

1 John 1:5-7 (NLT)

This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. (6) So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. (7) But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Revelation 21:8 (NLT)

But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

Revelation 22:14-15 (NLT)

Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. (15) Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshipers, and all who love to live a lie.

Revelation 21:27 (NLT)

Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Salvation is not a popular topic today, because to need salvation, you need to be saved from something. And the *something* we need to be saved from is SIN.

And SIN is an offense to the holiness of God. If we don't know that we are sinners, then why do we need salvation from sin? And if we never consider that God is holy, then we never consider that sin will keep us from Him.

Why do we need Jesus if sin is not an issue between us and God? And right now, that is where American culture, and much of the church world, is.

We have stopped addressing sin. Because if we do, we might offend someone. And if we offend people by calling sin what it is, people won't come to our churches!!!!

So here is a tough question. Is it false doctrine and wrong to speak of God's love without mentioning His holiness, His justice, and His righteousness?

His love demands that He does something for us!

3. Jesus saves us IN our SIN, and then FROM our sin.

1 John 2:2 (NLT)

He Himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

Romans 5:6-9 (NLT)

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. (7) Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. (8) But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (9) And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.

1 John 3:6-10 (NLT)

Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is. (7) Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. (8) But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. (9) Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God. (10) So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God.

Romans 6:1-6 (NLT)

Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? 3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. 5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.

4. The Grace of God covers every person who has repented of sin, and have by faith placed their lives in Jesus' hands. Because of Christ, we are now welcomed into the presence of God.

Hebrews 12:18-24 (NLT)

You have not come to a physical mountain, to a place of flaming fire, darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai. (19) For they heard an awesome trumpet blast and a voice so terrible that they begged God to stop speaking. (20) They staggered back under God's command: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." (21) Moses himself was so frightened at the sight that he said, "I am terrified and trembling." (22) No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. (23) You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. (24) You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.

If you struggle and are honest with God, there is grace and help for your weakness.

1 John 1:7-10 (NLT)

But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. (8) If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. (9) But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (10) If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

1 John 2:1-2 (NLT)

My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. (2) He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

John 8:1-11 (NLT)

Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, (2) but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them. (3) As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd. (4) “Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the act of adultery. (5) The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?” (6) They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. (7) They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!” (8) Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust. (9) When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. (10) Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” (11) “No, Lord,” she said. And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

Psalms 103:1-13 (NLT)

Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name. (2) Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. (3) He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. (4) He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. (5) He fills my life with good things.

My youth is renewed like the eagle's! (6) The Lord gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly. (7) He revealed his character to Moses and his deeds to the people of Israel. (8) The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. (9) He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. (10) He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. (11) For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. (12) He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. (13) The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him.

Isaiah 43:25 (NLT)

I—yes, I alone—will blot out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again.

Micah 7:18-20 (NLT)

Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of his special people? You will not stay angry with your people forever, because you delight in showing unfailing love. (19) Once again you will have compassion on us. You will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean! (20) You will show us your faithfulness and unfailing love as you promised to our ancestors Abraham and Jacob long ago.

Action Points:

1. Has there been a time in your life when you were seriously convicted of personal sin?
2. Have you had a definite salvation experience when you relinquished control of your life to Jesus Christ?
3. Has there been a definite awakening of conscience in your life since you have been born again? Have there been lifestyle changes as a result?
4. Do you experience freedom from guilt now, and do you confess your sins as they happen in your daily life?

