KINGDOM COME: THREE WAYS TO LIVE – May 2023

The differences between irreligion and the gospel are easy to spot. It is often harder to discern the differences between religion and the Gospel. To become a Christian, is first to admit the problem: we have been substituting ourselves for God either by religion (trying to be our own savior by obedience to God's law) or by irreligion (trying to be our own lord by disobedience to God's law.)

Read Romans 3:21-24, Galatians 2:19-21, Matthew 9:9-13

1. Pastor Riddle mentioned two traditional ways people try to make themselves or the world right, what are they? Ultimately, why are these ways not effective?

2. Pastor Riddle mentioned people can get lost in their goodness just as much as they can get lost in their badness. What do you think he means?

3. Contrasting the differences between Religion vs. The Gospel what stands out to you. Why?

Religion vs. The Gospel

Religion	The Gospel
I obey-therefore I'm accepted.	I'm accepted-therefore I obey.
Motivation is based on fear and insecurity.	Motivation is based on grateful joy.
I obey God in order to get things from God.	I obey God to get to God-to delight and resemble Him.
When circumstances in my life go wrong, I am angry at God or my self, since I believe, like Job's friends that anyone who is good deserves a comfortable life.	When circumstances in my life go wrong, I struggle but I know all my punishment fell on Jesus and that while he may allow this for my training, he will exercise his Fatherly love within my trial.
When I am criticized I am furious or devastated because it is critical that I think of myself as a 'good person'. Threats to that self-image must be destroyed at all costs.	When I am criticized I struggle, but it is not critical for me to think of myself as a 'good person.' My identity is not built on my record or my performance but on God's love for me in Christ. I can take criticism.
My prayer life consists largely of petition and it only heats up when I am in a time of need. My main purpose in prayer is control of the environment.	My prayer life consists of generous stretches of praise and adoration. My main purpose is fellowship with Him.
My self-view swings between two poles. If and when I am living up to my standards, I feel confident, but then I am prone to be proud and unsympathetic to failing people. If and when I am not living up to standards, I feel insecure and inadequate. I'm not confident. I feel like a failure.	My self-view is not based on a view of my self as a moral achiever. In Christ I am "simul iustus et peccator"—simultaneously sinful and yet accepted in Christ. I am so bad he had to die for me and I am so loved he was glad to die for me. This leads me to deeper and deeper humility and confidence at the same time. Neither swaggering nor sniveling.
My identity and self-worth are based mainly on how hard I work. Or how moral I am, and so I must look down on those I perceive as lazy or immoral. I disdain and feel superior to 'the other.'	My identity and self-worth are centered on the one who died for His enemies, who was excluded from the city for me. I am saved by sheer grace. So I can't look down on those who believe or practice something different from me. Only by grace I am what I am. I've no inner need to win arguments.
Since I look to my own pedigree or performance for my spiritual acceptability, my heart manufactures idols. It may be my talents, my moral record, my personal discipline, my social status, etc. I absolutely have to have them so they serve as my main hope, meaning, happiness, security, and significance, whatever I may say I believe about God.	I have many good things in my life—family, work, spiritual disciplines, etc. But none of these good things are ultimate things to me. None of them are things I absolutely have to have, so there is a limit to how much anxiety, bitterness, and despondency they can inflict on me when they are threatened and lost.

THE CHURCH OF THE CROSS