

Truth For the Final Generation

Midday Message

“The Paradox of Free Will”

Opening Hymn: 225 NH “God is working His Purpose Out”

Scripture Reading: Revelation 22:17

Introduction:

Last time the scriptures made it abundantly clear that God destroys by giving up those who do not want Him to the awful consequences of their own rebellious choice. With tears in His eyes God leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves to reap what they have sown.

But why did not God fix the error before it got that far?

God is Love

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸ He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 1 John 4: 7, 8 KJV

God not just loves but the scripture is clear that God is Love. God is the source of Love. Without God there can be no Love of which the bible speaks so highly. This Love is described in the Greek as agape or self-less love. Paul says it is a Love that “...seeketh not her own ..,” (1 *Corinthians 13:5*) In all God’s acts He seeks only the best good of everyone and everything.

Intelligent Creation

God always wanted a creation to share in His Love. It was always in the mind of God to create. When God created intelligent creatures, He made them free, With the capacity to think and to do independent of outside influences. In fact, mankind created after sin, was made especially in the “*image of God*”.

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Genesis 1: 26, 27 KJV

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do...Ed 17.2

God wanted a creation that could respond to His Love freely and one that was totally free from in that same Love.

Love, Freedom and Risk

The act of creation meant that intelligent creatures would have to be free in the highest sense. Without freedom, Love could not exist. Love is a choice, an act of the will, to treat another with favor whether deserving or undeserving. This also meant, since free, that there would be the possibility of exercising their choice not to receive God's Love and to act contrary to that same Love. To be sure, rebellion is no wise a function of Love but rather it is a mystery.

⁷For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 2 Thessalonians 2:7

In creating then God was taking a risk, in that, His creation now free, could choose to reject His Love and act contrary to His will. They could rebel and one third of the angels rebelled along with mankind. How Would God face such a challenge?

From the Foundation of the Worlds

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Revelation 13:8 KJV

It was always in God's mind to have and intelligent creation that could respond to His Love. At the same time God foresaw the rebellion of His highest angel and the fall of man. Looking forward from

creation all God could see was the cross of calvary. God chose to create anyway.

The Paradox of Free Will

Here is the important question, that is not new but still baffles many minds. If God is Sovereign (in direct control of everything) and all powerful, then why does He not stop the rampant evil and lawlessness in our world? Why does God allow all this suffering?

We should now be in a better position to answer these questions.

It is totally inconsistent to give an intelligent creature free choice then punish them for exercising that choice, isn't it? God cannot both give free choice and at the same time "punish" wrong or hurtful choices. The scriptural principle is clear that there is sowing and reaping. Choices.

⁷Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. ⁸For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Galatians 6:7,8 KJV

God's Sovereignty

God is Sovereign in that He is all powerful, all wise, all knowing etc. God is the absolute of perfection. At the same time in creating intelligent creatures free He has pledged not to violate their choice and must work along with their choices whether they are good or otherwise. God does not determine choice; He sees human choices before they occur, but He seeks to bring them to His perfect will which is for their best good.

So is every action or effect caused by God? No! Human choices bring the sure result God simply allows that which He cannot prevent because of human choices.

The Plan of Salvation

Since mankind chose to go against God's will the only option that God had was the cross. Rebellion could not be put down by force. God's government must stand or fall on the basis of freedom and self-less love.

Mankind had broken the law of God which incurred the penalty of death. Since the law could not be changed, because it is as eternal as God, a substitute and surety had to found to offer man another chance. That person was the man Christ Jesus.

God did all He could do without violating or forcing man's choice to win Him back to faith and trust. Only every possible means that Infinite Wisdom and Love could devise were put into operation at the fall of man.

The Hidden Mystery

²⁵Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

²⁶But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the

commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: Romans 16: 25, 26

¹¹Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

¹²Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

¹³Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 1 Peter 1:10-12

Paul, the apostle, made it clear in his doxology to the Romans that God is able to keep believers, both Jews and gentiles in faith and trust by the gospel. His emphasis was the gospel of the crucified and risen savior. But interestingly the Apostle Peter is clear prophets wrote more for our time than theirs. And the hidden mysteries of redemption is the theme that angels desire to look into!

Not only will be the amazing Love of God be an overwhelming focus of the angels and the universe but also the wonders of creation at such a cost and sacrifice to the Eternal God in order to have a creation free of sin!

Appeal

God is depending on His creatures in the great controversy. In order to prove once and for all that self-less Love is the only way His creature must now freely choose to allow His grace to recreate the character of God in them that He may both win the great contest and come to claim them as His own.

⁹ And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

¹⁰ To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

¹¹ According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: Ephesians 3:9-11 KJV

God is depending on His church to display the multicoloured wisdom of God. Through the church the universe will see and know that God is Love and Love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom. They will see that God from all ages wanted a free universe to share in His love and all the results from the inception of sin to its eventual overthrow will be the result of the choices that His free creatures have made.

Closing Hymn: 606 "Once to Every Man and Nation"

Yours in Our Master's Service

Elder Ryan Griffith