

LIFE GROUPS

Sermon Discussion Notes

Pastor Steve Peach: Deeper in Transformational Prayer

This week we are considering the idea, “the end of the story is yet to be written”. This phrase comes from a quote attributed to Martin Luther: *“We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is going on, this is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified.”*

READ: Matthew 26:31-35

Q: What do you think was a basis of Peter’s confidence in these verses?

Q: Have you ever made similar comments about your own faith?

READ: Matthew 26:69-75

Peter disowns Jesus when he had an opportunity to prove himself faithful, as he believed himself to be, and as he had proclaimed amongst the group.

Q: Why do you think there was such a quick turnaround for Peter, from his comments made earlier that night to Jesus, to those later in the courtyard of the High Priest?

Q: Verse 75 says, ‘And he went outside and wept bitterly’. Why do you think he did that?

Peter had not yet become all that God had in mind for him to be - he is yet to become the person who can deliver on his promise.

READ John 21:15-19

Like Peter, we are not yet what we will become.

Q: What do these verses tell us about how Jesus views our weaknesses?

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Q: What do they tell us about the kind of timeframe in which he works with us over our lives?

READ: Romans 4:25-5:1; 1 Thess 4:3a

The Christian has been justified; it is also God's will that we should also be sanctified. Let's discuss the difference between justification and sanctification.

Justification is a legal term - it is in reference to your standing. You might say in a legal sense, what is your standing before the court.

The gospel gives us a pathway that Martin Luther referred to as the "happy exchange": you and I are guilty before God of rejecting Him. But we have been given the opportunity of standing before the Judge, our Creator, with the record not of our own guilt but with the record of Jesus.

READ: 2 Cor 5:21

This is justification in the biblical sense. When God looks at you and I as followers of Jesus, you are 'justified' before God, because God sees the record of Jesus, not the record of your sin. You were guilty - but God allows Jesus to be your substitute.

However, when we treat the process of justification as an internal process, we go off track (eg. we try harder and harder to please God with our own righteousness, to prove to God our worthiness).

READ: Ephesians 2:4-5

Q: The righteousness of Christ is given to us through faith in him. However, in what ways might we attempt to 'justify ourselves' in God's sight through our own efforts?

Sanctification differs from justification, as it refers to the ongoing process of progress in holiness and Christlikeness. As you read the following passages, take special note of how inner transformation occurs in the life of the believer:

Romans 6:19-22 (read in ESV if available); Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 2:11-14; 2 Corinthians 3:18

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Sanctification is an internal process of growth, as distinct from justification which is bestowed on us from an external source.

READ Matthew 23:25-26

The Pharisees emphasised the outward display of ‘righteous’ behaviour.

Q: What are some ways we display ‘righteous’ behaviour outwardly for others to see?

If we treat the process of sanctification as an external process, as a path of effort, we will find ourselves in an endless cycle of cleaning the outside of the cup and dish, thinking our external performance is what has bought about our righteousness and maybe even our salvation. However, the inner work of transformation is what God calls you and I to pursue.

READ: Psalm 139:23-24

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

When you see God’s path to maturity for the Christian as a path of surrender and laying down our inner weakness and our disobedience, it will change the way you pray dramatically. Your prayers will be less about external measures and performance, and more about inner transformation. The inner change that God is seeking to bring about in you.

You are not yet what you will become. Let’s invite God this week to do the inner work of transformation.