



New City Church: Sermon Discussion Notes

“Where does Religion Come From?” – Galatians 6:6-18

Purpose: These discussion questions are designed to help you apply the sermon to your personal life, church life or your city’s life. You can use these for personal, family, or small group reflection. To review the sermon, go to www.newcitychurch.ca/sermons.

Introduction

Pray – Take a moment to pray, asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture.

Read – Galatians 6:6-18

Sermon Summary – Paul’s closing words to the Galatians are anything but formal niceties. Paul closes his letter with as much vigor as he starts it!

This passage is rich enough that it warrants two or three sermons, so any attempt to preach it in a single week is bound to miss much. You may want to discuss this passage in your groups by looking at parts of the passage that were not directly touched on in the sermon. As a recap, the sermon showed how Paul was (as in much of the letter) presenting his audience with the contrasting ways that people can approach/relate to God. He starts by speaking about sowing and reaping and makes the bold claim that just as there are objective truths in the physical world (such as the agricultural principal of sowing and reaping) there are objective moral and spiritual truths. This flies in the face of our culture that is prepared to accept that there are objective truths in the physical world (i.e. gravity) but that in the moral world things are more relative – we are free to determine what is right and wrong for ourselves. Paul says that there are moral truths and there is a God who we cannot escape. If we claim to believe that something that God calls bad is actually good, and we live in such a way that we contradict God’s principles for living, then we cannot escape the natural consequences of our actions. Just as the farmer who sows wheat will reap wheat (and not tomatoes no matter how hard he “believes” that wheat is actually tomatoes), so the person who sows into things that are contrary to God’s principles for the human and moral order will reap the logical fruit of what he has sown (namely spiritual and relational ruin in this world and ultimately cosmic and eternal ruin in the hereafter).

After making it plain that God (not man) determines how things work in the universe, Paul turns to how the false teachers see things. They “want to make a good showing in the flesh”, meaning they want to achieve outward righteousness through circumcision and law-obeying in order to earn salvation. They are promoting a human-initiated religion. Circumcision is a human work done to humans and by humans. They then think that obedience to the Law of Moses will keep them saved (see Acts 15:5), and this is just more human work. Theirs is a religion of humanity. They see religion (the way to be right with God) as a human centered thing.

Paul objects, accuses them of not really believing that obedience can save them, which they show in their refusal to obey the law themselves. To Paul, it is the cross, a God-initiated act, that defines Christianity. He says (v.16) that the “rule” that all believers (the Israel of God) are to hold to for health and security and peace is the gospel. Until we accept that God is at the center of everything, that He is the only way to salvation, we will forever be creating human-centered religions. When we see the marks that Jesus bore for us, we will be people willing to bear the marks of serving Him in our city.

Questions

1. Review the passage (Gal 6:6-18) How does this speak to your life?
 - What does Paul mean when he says God cannot be mocked? What are some of the ways people imagine they can mock God? What is the outcome that mockers can expect?
 - What do you make of Paul's comments about sowing and reaping? How do you sow and reap into the "field" of the Holy Spirit?
2. What implications does Galatians 6:6-18 have for us as a church community?
 - What does verse 6 mean for New City? How does it speak to the relationship between the preacher/teacher/pastors and the congregation?
 - Why should the family of believers deserve special attention (v.10)?
3. How does this text speak to our city?
 - How might NCC sow into Calgary? And how might we keep focused and not tire of doing good "to everyone"?

Concluding Question

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

Prayer

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