

Ps 30:1,2
 Hy 1
 Ps 130:2,3
 Ps 27:3,4
 Hy 34:1,2,3,4
 Philippians 3:1-11
 Romans 7:7-25
 Lord's Day 2

Yarrow, April 24, 2011

Beloved Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Lord's Day 1 been so delightfully rich.

- Gospel rich
 - Almighty God is my Father → all work for good.
 - Gives Son for my sin → forgiveness
 - Indwells through Holy Spirit → renewed, alive.
- Q: what it take to appreciate depth of this wealth?? How milk it for all it worth in grunt of daily life?
 - Lord's Day 1.2: need to know re Sin & Misery, Deliverance, Gratitude.
 - Now Lord's Day 2 begins discussion re Sin & Misery. A topic we don't really care for. But recall purpose: to get most out of wealth of Lord's Day 1.1

THE GOSPEL ABOUT SIN.

1. What sin is,
2. What the law teaches,
3. What Christ did.

1. What sin is.

Everybody knows what sin is: doing very bad things, eg, Robert Picton.

- Most people don't do those kind of things, instead try to be decent. So don't want to use word 'sin' for normal people.... Result: to talk of 'sin' is unfashionable. Just don't do it.
 - Christians, though, keep talking about it. When world hears us talking about it, hears us say we all do very bad things – which people see to be untrue.
 - ∴ becomes necessary to have good understanding in our minds of what sin is.
- Certainly true: sin is doing really bad things, is rebelling against God. But: why is doing bad thing sin? In point of fact, doing good things can also be sin. Think of Pharisees. Tried really hard to do just what law of God required. Cf Philippians 3:4ff. Zealous in terms of prayer, tithing, clean, etc. Yet Jesus faults them..., ie, they guilty of sin.
 - Define: sin is seeking your sense of happiness, self-worth in anything other than God.
 - Point here is: *why* do things you do?
 - Why Robert Picton kill and butcher those women? Achieved a sense of worth, satisfaction through it. But his actions distinctly sin, evil, hideous.
 - Similarly, why give money to Mission Aid Brazil? Action is honourable, highly commended. But if do it to achieve sense of worth, satisfaction, it still sin.

- To explain, consider why we here. Created to glorify God, cf Isaiah 43:7; 1st petition. Q: what does *glorifying God* look like?? Can you describe, draw me picture?
 - Could say: means to sing, to praise. Means to do what's right according to God's law. True. But doesn't get to bottom of it.
 - Picture in eye of mind: God in heaven, exalted, worthy of glory. Creates earth, creatures, finally *man-of-dust*. Says of this man (Adam/Eve): Mine.
 - What Adam to do? Focus on tulips? Self? Anything on earth? Have his actions/thoughts determined by what he sees/smells? Understand: focus to be on God, so that actions/thoughts in Garden determined by who God is.
 - Point: he to *look at God*, and *delight* in what He sees.
 - A couple deeply in love have an eye only for each other. Ie, there's an unending consciousness of the other, the other is always in your thoughts, you want to keep eye on him/her (to point of carrying photo, put picture in office), delight in other determines what do/say.
 - This Paul's point in Philippians 3:1: "rejoice in the Lord," cf 4:4.
 - Rejoice ≠ be all warm & fuzzy inside.
 - = fix eye on Him, delight in what see. What you see will put gleam in your eye, and determine what you say/do.
 - Result: you'll watch out for dogs (3:2), ie, Judaists.... Their focus is selves, ie, through obedience striving to win God's approval. They've got *religion*, where religion = a methodology of keeping in God's good books. Result: feel smug re self, judgmental of those not as good as you. ∴ even persecute those who are different....
 - Realize: this eye on God, delighting in Him, means: *love* for God.
 - So: what glorifying God look like?? Eye on God, delighting in Him, His identity as Father in Jesus Christ puts gleam in eye and determines what you/say. Ie, *get sense of self-worth, happiness, inner contentment* from God. *That* glorifies Him.
 - What sin? Seeking that sense of self-worth, inner happiness, anywhere else.
 - I not expect too many of us in great danger of doing what Picton did... (ie, sin = doing really bad things). But doing good things so that we'll feel good re selves – that's a danger/temptation for most of us.
 - Why visit in congregation? Why keep house/room clean? Why read Bible? Why money to charity? Temptation so real: if I obey law, if I do what's right, I feel better re self....
 - But sin is: seeking my sense of self-worth, inner happiness, in anything outside of God.... To take a good thing (money to charity, helping Mom clean up kitchen) and raise it to the ultimate (as in: doing it makes me feel good re me) is sin – simply because I'm here to glorify God, eye on Him, get self-worth from what *He* says re me. Ie, MINE.

- Then very religious person can be greatest of sinners (recall Paul was a very religious person!), because *does religion as means to feel good re self*, including thinking: I obey ∴ God is happy with me....
 - But in fact he living in sin, and needed repentance. See Philippians 3:7 ∴ 3:9: no righteousness of own through law, but something better....
 - ∴ consider: of what value is law?

2. What the law teaches

God in beginning created man, established bond of love. Point: man to glorify this God, delight in Him.

- Q: how could Adam know what conduct/words/thoughts pleased God, praised Him?
 - God told him. Ten Commandments listed for first time in Scripture in Exodus 20. But that not mean they new to Israel. Abram not meant to commit adultery or lie or steal, ibid Noah, Cain, Adam....
 - God created man to image Him, and man did that by obeying law.... Adam could obey law perfectly, ie, so focused on God, delight in Him, so that his conduct/words reflected what God like.
- Sin entered world through fall (more next week with Lord's Day 3).
 - Result: lost ability to keep law. Ie, can't stay focused on God, can't delight in Him anymore.
 - Yet God's law remains....
- So: what sinners learn from law? This: *how sinful we are*.
 - Point: I can think to use obedience to law as means to try to please God. Ie, do lots of good things, never mess up.... If I think I succeed in earning points with God through obedience, I *wrong*. Then I can be very religious, but I live in delusion that I've pleased Him.... This what Paul used to do....
 - Once his eyes open to gospel of Jesus Christ, considers his works 'rubbish' (Philippians 3:8). Why?? Romans 7: through law comes knowledge of sin.
 - Vs 7b: "I would not have known what sin was except through the law." How so? 7c: "I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, 'Do not covet'." Covet = I want what you have. Why?? If I get what you have I'll feel better.... I get my sense of self-worth through clothes, so I need your....
 - But law: I'm not to covet. Spells out: I sin....
 - Ibid with all commandments. Why commit adultery? Why masturbate? Why lie? Feel better.... Sense of self....
 - Paul: God's law ends up confronting me with my brokenness.... Vs 9: I thought I was doing well, alive before God, he happy with me (through my religion...). God gives law, and suddenly I realize I don't keep it perfectly, fail ∴ I dead..., cf vs 10
 - In fact, I can try hard as will to overcome this weakness I have, but can't succeed. See vs 14f. ∴ 18. ∴ 24. Especially vs 24: this is Lord's Day 2.3.
 - What God wants? Full focus, delight in Him, ie, love with all I have (cf Lord's Day 2.4). But I fail.... By default my life revolves around me..., my sense of happiness comes from my efforts....
 - But it not satisfy.... That good feeling a mirage, doesn't last....

- Conclusion: Lord's Day 2.5: I hate God..., neighbour. Ie, instead of focusing on God, delighting in Him, my bent is to be full of self, find sense of worth in self. But it not work..., ie, not last, empty....
 - Conclude: doctrine of sin is hopeless, discouraging.... Best off ignore, downplay....
 - But here the gospel!

3. What Christ did

God of Genesis 1 gave only Son for sinners; this His love/compassion. See John 3:16. On earth Son of God led to cross, with its horrid suffering.

- Q: what Jesus do on cross? As God poured wrath against our sins on Him, did Jesus turn eye off God, quit delighting in Him??
 - Fact: even in agony of cross, *doing will of His Father was His delight!* Did not curse God, did not seek sense of worth in Self, ∴ did not follow own head.
 - See John 4:34; John 14:15 → showed love for God through obedience to law. Ie, eye fixed on God even when God came in judgment. For Jesus knew: this wrath was not against *Jesus' sin*, but against ours!
 - So: He persisted in loving God and neighbour – you/me!
 - Point: Lord's Day 2.5 accurate re *me*, ∴ Sin & Misery.... *But 2.5 not accurate re Jesus Christ!* He not do bad things, also not do good things to stay in God's books. Ie, His eye not on Self, but eye on God, delighted in Him, ∴ sought to please Him no matter circumstances.
 - Ie, He obeyed law perfectly, even on cross when pressure so great. His obedience not 'religion', ie, need to do this to keep God happy; pressure too great for that. His obedience was faith, ie, delighted in God, knew God would keep His promises so that His wrath would not endure but joy come with the morning (Ps 30). More, knew that own obedience would atone for sins of neighbour, so that sinners righteous before God.
- This the gospel of Scripture, good news of Lord's Day 1, which Paul confesses in Philippians 3:9b: he now righteous before God *not* through doing decent things, even many good things, ie, trying hard to obey law. But he righteous through Christ's obedience.
 - ∴ 3:10: Paul focused on Christ, and what God accomplished for Him in Christ!
 - Here good news, exciting for sinners!

Implications?

- Our world thinks: we not sinners because we don't do really bad things. That thought lives among us too.
 - Scripture teaches us better understanding of sin. Suddenly we realise: we fall short of God's standard, badly, because our focus isn't always fully on Him, ie, we not always delighting in Him so that that delight determines our words, conduct, songs. This needs repentance, and blood of Jesus Christ. And that atoning sacrifice to cover out sin *is* there! That's the gospel about sin!
 - More: Lord's Day 1c: Holy Spirit directs my gaze to God in heaven so that I'm ready and willing to live for Him....