

Hebrews 5:1-4

Spiritual Ignorance...

As a rule, ignorance is not something that we cannot help. It is often a condition that exists because we are committed to a path that does not include gaining needed knowledge. If we were to set ourselves to simply know, understand and obey the outward parts of what God has told us in His word, we would find that the world is a better place in every way. Our spiritual ignorance is offensive to God who has told us who He is, has given us His word so that we are without excuse, and more, He Himself became a man to come and show us in actual practice just what He requires... still we remain committed to our ignorance and still God offers mercy to overcome our rebellions and to create life in us where before there was only death. It is only His continued mercy that allows anyone to understand, to overcome their ignorance. And sadly, even true children of the Most High God will often walk in ignorance and death. God alone is the cure for our spiritual ignorance.

I. IGNORANCE IS THE NATURAL STATE OF MAN AND IS SINFUL

a. It is itself a violation of the law of God

Numbers 15.27-28

b. It is a defect in the knowledge of God that is our first birthright.

Colossians 3.10

Romans 1:16-32

c. Ignorance is the product of man's corrupted understanding. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil did not render any new knowledge it simply corrupted the knowledge of who God was and what He required

d. Ignorance causes many other sins. –

Galatians 4.8

1 Timothy 1.13

e. God pronounces ignorance as sin and judges it –

Hosea 4.6
2 Thessalonians 1.8

f. It becomes a punishment growing in a spiral of destruction

Isaiah 6.10
John 12.40

II. KNOWLEDGE PRODUCES FAITH –

knowing the truth about God will produce saving faith in those who have been granted that knowledge... but it is not something that we can create on our own. It is something that is GRANTED by God... a gift, a calling, an awakening, an enlivening...

a. This knowledge not only produces faith but also produces an awareness of our absolute dependence.

b. The compassion of God in Christ is the principle source of that mercy and care which sustains us

c. God not only called us from our native and total ignorance, but He continues to pity us after He made us alive, for ignorance remains our normal.

d. We continually doubt His

i. Power

ii. Love

iii. Knowledge

iv. Good will

v. Grace

vi. Mercy

vii. This is constant provocation to Him

viii. It is great and terrible blasphemy

ix. It is born out of our willful determination to be our own masters

x. We refuse to be faithful in our dealings with Him and with one another.

e. When spiritual ignorance becomes the dominant theme in our lives, we WILL fall into sin.

III. SIN PRODUCES WOE –

while those who belong to Christ can never lose their salvation, we CAN and do enter into consequence when we sin without repentance.

a. We lose peace of conscience

b. We lose our sense of God's love and our love for Him grows weak and frail

c. We not only cease to grow in grace and holiness but we actually begin to atrophy in that which is distinctly Godward

d. We become useless to the kingdom and in the worst cases cause actual harm to the work of God and the good name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the reputation of His bride the church for whom He shed His blood. –

1Timothy 1.18-20

e. Constant afflictions in this life are often a sign of sin's dominion.

- i. Not always - Job is a good example, but the exception proves the rule.
- ii. When we are afflicted it is good to examine our lives and ask hard questions

2Corinthians 13.5

- iii. The vast majority of the time, the temporal judgements of God are caused by our rebellions and are most often the natural and logical consequences that accompany our rebellions

Hebrews 12.5-11

- iv. Ultimately, this commitment to continued sin will bring a death without peace and without evident hope. –

1 Corinthians 11.30-32

f. Bear in mind that we live by grace, we are held in grace, we are sustained in grace and we will all die in grace. God is the one who preserves each of us from the worst of offenses and when He withdraws that protection from us for reasons known to Himself, there is not one of us who will stand. Thus, we live and die in grace. Thus take heed to yourself lest you fall... -

1 Corinthians 10.12-13

IV. CALLED TO COMPASSION –

Our calling is compassion for the ignorant. We should not heap ridicule, scorn, resentment or hatred on those who are trapped in ignorance. Remember that it is the mercy of God alone that preserves you from even worse... Christ has compassion on the ignorant. So we, who have been snatched from the darkness of our own ignorance should be gracious to those who are still trapped. There are many varied snares and traps from the evil one...

a. Moral and Spiritual Ignorance

- i. Common among all
- ii. Ignorant even of their own ignorance
- iii. Unaware of their own depravity
- iv. Unconscious of the terrible nature of their own sin
- v. Blind to their own inability to do good.

b. They are blind also to the way of salvation

- i. They chase other "ways"
- ii. They have wrong and dangerous "knowledge" about Christ and the one true path to peace with God
- iii. They are usually scornful of anyone who believes the truth and of the truth itself when explained to them.

c. They are unable to recognize Jesus

d. They are blind to the power and person of the Spirit

- i. They misunderstand His inner promptings
- ii. They are unregenerate and ignorant of its power, purpose and scope
- iii. They are unable to understand the truth that the Spirit teaches us
- iv. They remain unsanctified in their cores, let alone their lives.

e. This ruin must provoke compassion in us, for in truth our souls cry out in anger against them. Hence the need to urge ourselves to have compassion.

- i. We see the folly - we understand how absurd their position often is
- ii. We understand its pride - the vanity is overwhelming
- iii. Prejudice - they will not listen to learn, and despise every attempt to instruct
- iv. The obstinance is provoking as it refuses the most basic course of logic and reason, not to mention the truth that shows light in the darkness
- v. It continually opposes the truth, often violently

- vi. It will NOT be enlightened
- vii. It is willful in its determination to be ignorant
- viii. It continually returns to its folly

f. Jesus took compassion on those who were thus

- i. He offered to teach them
- ii. He called them to follow Him and made of them all His disciples
- iii. He continually taught them, with parables and little tales, including what they could take in at the time, then when they could no longer do so, He even explained the parables
- iv. He repeated the lessons with patience
- v. He never despised them, but continued to offer life
- vi. He never cast them off