

Horizontal Sanctification

REVIEW: The last two weeks we have looked at specific areas of how sanctification affects our lives. Specifically we looked at guilt and shame, and fear and anxiety. Guilt and shame are dealt with by God in two of the doctrines about our salvation that we have looked at: justification and adoption. Fear and anxiety are handled by two things: our faith in God - but more than that, understanding how good God is, and the character of the One that our faith is in. In other words: If I tell you to just have faith in God, that sounds like a pat answer. For many that does little for them. Now, if you know the character of the God you serve, you know that He is good, that He cares for even the birds of the field, so of course he will care for you, is it not easier to have faith in Him? Of course, because you know He will not let you down.

INTRO: This morning we are going to turn a corner in our look at salvation, and sanctification. Up to this point we have been looking at sanctification in a vertical format - between us and God. And rightly so, because much of sanctification involves pulling up the weeds by the roots that entangle us.

I. Pulling up the roots

- A. This topic of pulling up the roots deserves more time than I can give it, but suffice it to say, we need to ask God to do just that
- B. Too often we identify our sins by the fruit they produce
 - 1. This person is addicted to pornography
 - 2. This person is a gossip
 - 3. This person wants all attention on them
- C. Do we realize that all of these things are caused by roots that go down much deeper in a person's life?
 - 1. The person addicted to porn has issues with lust - lust is the real root of the problem
 - 2. The gossip - the root could be an over inflated sense of self, or a maliciousness to make themselves appear better than they are
 - 3. The attention grabber - pride
 - 4. Too often we identify the outward behavior, but we never seek the inward root that causes it
- D. How many of you maintain some type of garden?
 - 1. How many of you shake your head at the fact that no matter how often you weed the garden the weeds come back?!?
 - 2. Now, how many of you have dealt with sins in your life, only to have them come back around
 - 3. In part that is the nature of sin, and in part it can be that we are too busy looking at the fruit instead of looking at the root

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- E. One last word or roots and we have to move on, sometimes those painful moments in life can be God tugging at the roots that need to go
 - 1. Do not downplay or hate those moments
 - 2. If God is working on you to pull up a root, welcome it, embrace it, and most of all, give it up!
 - 3. You want to know the scarier thing, if God never works on pulling up your roots
 - a) The Bible says that God “disciplines those that are His.”
 - b) If He is not working on your root problem, check to make sure you are really part of the family
- II. So we have been looking at how we get out of step with God and how we are drawn back into step with Him. When we get out of step with God, it causes damage to our relationships with people often times
 - A. Some of the ways we get out of step and on the wrong path is by believing that a better version of me will solve my problems
 - 1. Be honest, how many of you thought when you were 20 “By the time I am 25- 28 I’ll be more secure in my job, I’ll have a family then, and life will be awesome. That’s my ideal life!”
 - a) So when you got to 25-28, did you think you arrived?
 - 2. Very few of us ever think “I’m there!” I am the better version of me! Why, because there is always a better version of you waiting around the corner
 - 3. Think about the damage that trying to be a better version of yourself can cause
 - a) If life is about attaining this goal which is all about you, do people not become commodities?
 - b) You almost have to use people to get what you want
 - c) Real relationships, families, friendships, they are not built like that!
 - B. Or how about the wrong path of finding someone to complete you
 - 1. Be that your spouse, or your kids, or a friend
 - 2. Do you understand what that does to the person you think completes you? You make them into a god.
 - a) Think about the weight you put on a relationship when you think that person is supposed to complete you
 - b) I’ve never been married but I am going to go out on a limb and say that spouses make lousy gods - children make even worse gods
 - c) Even if it is your job - if I made this job into the thing that completed me, its a great job, and there is so much to love about it, but it would make a lousy god, and it can never satisfy me the way in which I need to be

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- C. Or the wrong path of chasing the things of the world
 - 1. And lets just take one example of the kind of damage that can cause
 - 2. A business man or woman seek to climb the corporate ladder - nothing wrong with that when done by godly principles
 - 3. But when not done well, godly, or right, that person can wind up working to provide all kinds of stuff that the family does not really need and shortchanging them on what they do really need
 - D. The last path - religion
 - 1. Does anyone here like religious people? I mean the rule-based, no room for grace type person
 - 2. When you make others feel like, or you feel like you always have to measure up to some standard set by others, that causes all kinds of damage to yourself and those around you
 - a) Everything becomes a competition
 - E. Now all of these paths are sinning against God, but they cause damage among the people we do life with
 - 1. The vertical break in our relationship with God causes ripples effects in our relationships here
 - 2. We have looked at how God sets our vertical relationship in order with Him, but we need to consider how we set horizontal relationships in order when we step on the wrong paths
 - 3. Just because we are made right vertically does not mean that we got it set horizontally
 - a) Am I alone in this - we still have issues
 - b) For me, even with all the grace God has shown me, I can still have a mean streak in me when a relationship takes a bad turn
 - (1) I know I should show the same grace that God showed me to this person
 - (2) But sometimes its more fun to watch them suffer - God help me
 - c) So how many of you would say that in the last 2 years you have had a falling out with someone?
 - d) Of those of you that raised your hands, how many of you would say that you are a believer in Christ, you have been forgiven, and God takes delight in you?
 - e) So grab your Bible and turn to 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 (p. 1160)
- III. The biblical change that takes place 2 Cor. 5:14-21
- A. v. 14-16 - These verses really are not that new to what we have been saying and what we teach around here frequently
 - 1. The love of Christ compels (controls) us - we are motivated how we live our lives by the love of God

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- a) We were dead in our sins and we were raised to new life in Christ
- b) That motivates us - we were brought back from utter hopelessness into abundant life
2. We used this illustration earlier, that we used to live over there, but now we live over here - so I USED to turn and go that way, but now I turn and go this way
3. Verse 16 tells us that we begin to see people with spiritual eyes
 - a) I used to regard Christ according to the flesh (the physical/natural)
 - b) I used to regard others that way, but not anymore
 - c) Because of Christ's transforming love, I now see others the same way
I see Christ

B. Verses 17-21

1. We see again that we have been changed by God - the old is gone and the new has come
 - a) That is new in quality - (Kainos as opposed to neos)
 - b) Remade into something wonderful
2. Then Paul says that we are given the ministry of reconciliation
 - a) And this reconciliation is one of helping others see their need for God and get their sins set straight before Him as well
 - b) And that is how we really set things straight in our horizontal relationships - the horizontal is messed up because the vertical gets messed up
 - (1) Even though we may have confessed to God
 - (2) We still need to set things straight with others

IV. Biblical peacemaking

- A. God begins to press on us to work toward reconciliation with others
 1. And it is a good pressing, a good weight to bear
- B. Romans 12:18 "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
 1. I have always loved this verse
 2. "If it is possible..." - what did the Bible just admit right here? Two things
 - a) First that there is going to be conflict!
 - b) Second that there will be times when you cannot work out the conflict!
 - c) That should be a comfort to us IF we have handled the rest of peacemaking biblically
 3. "...as far as it depends on you..."
 - a) So you may own up to your fault in a conflict

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- b) But you may not get the same in return - nor must you have it! All you have to worry about is YOU
- 4. "...live at peace with everyone."
- 5. Now, how many of you know that no one ever is 100% to blame in conflict? I have never seen that
 - a) But here is the game we play: one person is 90% to blame and our 10% came from reacting to what they did
 - b) But I don't have to own my 10% because they are 90% to blame
 - (1) How stupid is that?!?!
 - (2) Own your part of the situation - your mistakes are the only thing you truly own anyway
 - (3) You still sinned, against God and against them
 - (4) God initiated re-establishment of our relationship, He forgave, He engaged us, and reconciled us - what makes you think you can do no less?
- C. Numbers 5:5-7
 - 1. Did you catch that first part - that when we wrong anyone in any way, we have wronged the Lord
 - 2. But the verse goes on to tell us that we need to make restitution to the person I sinned against
 - 3. So when I tell God I refuse to do things your way, I will do them my way, that causes ripple effects in my relationships with others
 - a) But a heart transformed by God will seek out the other person and set things right
 - b) In fact it will go the extra mile doing more than what is required - heart transformed
 - c) This is why the story of Zacchaeus shows us that he has a transformed heart
- D. So biblical peacemaking will require some introspection - we have to take a look at ourselves carefully to look for our fault in a given situation
- E. Go to Matthew 7:3-5
 - 1. For starters, this is meant to be a comical scene (CARTOON)
 - 2. But this scene, this passage was NEVER meant to teach that we should not judge!
 - a) It was meant to teach that we should look into ourselves
 - b) We should be very introspective and check our lives carefully, check our heart's carefully, check to see if we have sinned against God or this other person before we try picking out their faults
 - 3. When you start that process of looking inside yourself, watch for things like this:

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- a) “You know Keith, the only reason you acted like that is because...”
and then I blame the other person
- b) “He forced you to act like that when he...”
 - (1) Do you see what I am doing?
 - (2) I am justifying my sinful behavior and rationalizing it because of what the other person did - letting myself off the hook for my sin
 - (3) We can’t do that
 - (4) We have to own up to our sin
- 4. When it comes to conflict resolution, many people jump straight to Matthew 18
 - a) We will get there next week
 - b) But before we can get to Matthew 18, we have to deal with Matthew 7 about our sin first
- 5. So after the introspection and prayer, we need to be able to pull our brother or sister aside and tell them, “I was out of line. I was more concerned about myself than you and your soul, or our relationship, please forgive me.”
- 6. Now, hear me, IN THAT MOMENT, if you are looking for reciprocity, you can expect a bad turn out 9 times out of 10
 - a) None of this, “Will you forgive me?” “Yes, I will.” [LONG PAUSE] “Okay, is there anything you want to say to me?”
 - b) You need to own up to what you have done and trust God that He will bring full reconciliation
 - (1) Remember that opening verse, “As much as depends on you...”
 - (2) You have to do the part that is yours, which means introspection, prayer, confession
- F. There are some possible traps to making peace with others - natural tendencies that we can fall into
 - 1. There is a book out by a man named Ken Sande called “The Peace Maker” - I have not read the book, but based on the parts I have found on the internet, it looks good
 - a) There are various spots on the internet you can find this part of the information - it is referred to as “Seven A’s of Confession”
 - 2. ADDRESS everyone involved
 - a) When making peace with those we have wronged, don’t just think that you can go to the leader and ask forgiveness if there are more involved
 - (1) Don’t address just one person if there are others involved as well
 - (2) Address everyone

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- b) So for example: You have had a long day at work, you come home tired and crabby. You are short with your family, and treat them less than what they deserve
 - (1) When you realize how grumpy and rude you have been, you don't just apologize to your spouse
 - (2) You apologize to all of your family, including your kids - "I'm sorry that Daddy's been crabby. I may be tired, but I should not let that interfere with our relationship."
- 3. AVOID "if, maybe, and but" - In other words no statements like, "I really need to ask your forgiveness for (what I did), BUT if you hadn't..."
 - a) That is not an apology
 - b) It's an accusation
 - c) And really it is no different than basing your righteousness on other people's behavior rather than on the holiness of God
- 4. ADMIT specifically
 - a) No, "I sinned against you", "really, how?" "Well, I did some stuff that wasn't right."
 - b) Own your sin
 - (1) You should not be surprised you sinned
 - (2) And if we are honest we should not be surprised we have been sinned against and act all offended
 - c) If we are on the path of sanctification, and we have not become like Jesus yet, sinning against someone or having them sin against you should not be a surprise
 - (1) To be honest it is more surprising when I don't sin
 - (2) I know my heart, I know how easily it can get entangled in anger, frustration, thinking badly of someone, holding a grudge
 - (3) It comes far too easily, so I am more surprised when I don't sin against others
- 5. ACKNOWLEDGE the hurt
 - a) Don't play the game of, "You shouldn't feel like that!"
 - b) The hurt associated with sin is real, so acknowledge the pain, and ask for forgiveness
- 6. ALTER your behavior
 - a) Here is what I mean - because I tell you often that our faith is not about behavior modification - or not just about that
 - b) How many of you have ever apologized to the same person for doing the same boneheaded thing more than once
 - (1) All you married people should have your hands in the air

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- c) So altering your behavior in relationships is taking steps to show that you will not continue in the same pattern
 - (1) So perhaps you need to seek accountability with a brother or sister in Christ
 - (2) Maybe you need to seek professional counseling to help identify and correct where you are at
 - (3) Maybe you need to not play at seeking God and actually seek God
- d) Does this mean that you won't be a bonehead to your spouse sometimes
 - (1) You are still progressing in sanctification so - no, you will
 - (2) But when you display that you are seeking ways to break the pattern of behavior you have been living in, you are displaying an investment in your relationship, and a genuine focus on change
- 7. ASK for forgiveness
 - a) There's not much to say on this one - ask for forgiveness
 - b) But what happens if they say "no"
 - (1) Reality check, that could happen
 - (2) Here is what you do - you bless them and move on
 - (a) "as much as depends on YOU, live at peace with all men."
 - (b) If you have truly owned your own sin, you are not holding back, you bless them, pray for them, pray for grace to be overflowing the relationship, and you move forward
 - c) I have had relationship breaks - I know what it feels like
 - (1) I have looked for reciprocity and found none
 - (2) And that hurts - I can't lie, that hurts
 - (3) But the fact is, if I can look inside myself with a godly view, and know that before God I have done all I can to restore a relationship, I have to trust God for the rest
 - (a) I have to add this, just because reconciliation is sought or even granted, sometimes relationships will never be the same
 - (b) Sin messes stuff up, and while forgiveness may be granted, it does not mean that a relationship will go back to the same place it was
 - i) That is the destructiveness of sin in this world
 - ii) One of its faces anyway

CONCLUSION: Today we looked at our sin, our lives, and our responsibilities in relationship. Next week we will continue talking about this horizontal sanctification by looking at Matthew 18 and approaching someone else in their sin.