

The Restoration of All Things – Marshall Reeves

Sermon 20

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In Heb 2:14-15 we read

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil, And release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to its slavery."

The Mirror Bible says it this way,

14 "The fact that the children are flesh and blood beings by design, explains the Incarnation. In the genius of God, the Word was always destined to become flesh-He lived and died in a body as fully human as ours. Dying our death was His doorway into our deepest fears. He thus disengaged (nullified) the dominion of death that had trapped the human race in a fallen mindset."

15 "As a fellow human He redefined death and delivered us from the lifelong dread of death." (He brought final closure to the idea of judgement, which is what the system of works is all about. Evil is not immortal, love is.)

This is why John tells us 'Perfect Love casts out fear because fear involves judgement.'

Death, like sin, is not natural to man. It is the result of separation from God, our creator and sustainer of life. It is the absence of life just as darkness is the absence of light.

In John 1:3-4 the Apostle writes,

"All things were made by Him and apart from Him nothing was made that was made.

In Him was life and the life was the light of men."

He is both the life and the light, not the death and darkness. This should initiate thought for contemplation. If Jesus created all things yet He didn't create death and darkness, the question we must ask ourselves is how real is it?

John 8:12 "For I am the light of the world (creation). He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life."

For in James 1:17 we further read

"Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights in which there is no shadow of turning."

As we saw in Heb 2:14 the power of death and thus darkness, for they are two sides of the same coin, reside with the devil. But who is the devil? As Malcolm taught last year, the term devil, as used in scripture, doesn't always mean a supernatural entity. It is determined by context. The Greek word is diabolos and consists of two words, dia meaning because of or as a result of, and ballo, to cast down. Therefore, it describes the fallen mindset of Adam, which was cast down as the result of sin. This mindset that initiated death, still retains power over it. It is perpetuated by the flesh, our perception of reality in which man is to earn righteousness or right being apart from God, based solely on behavior. This began with the poison induced into our being through the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The word evil is used throughout scripture and sometimes refers to the undermining or spoiling of that which is good, however, it is most often used in the manner of meaning a futile mentality

of labor, hardship and annoyances. It's the word *poneros* and speaks to a purely religious attitude which describes a mindset of separation from God. It appears to be so natural that we've been convinced that it is reality. It describes what is "good" as being a life of religious existence apart from God and based on all manner of legal requirements. Without God to answer to, we were able to make our own rules and keep score through evaluating ourselves. In our deception we're certain of having just enough righteousness to get into heaven because of our comparing ourselves to and judging ourselves against others. This is the mindset of death and is the reason for

2 Cor 4:

6 "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of the darkness and who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Notice Paul doesn't say God shown light into our darkness but out of it. This is the Incarnation, Christ in you. He looks out through our eyes and penetrates the darkness, continuously revealing reality to each of us.

John 3:19 "And this is the condemnation, that the light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil (once more the word is *poneros*, a mindset of futility)."

Isa 5:20 "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, Who put darkness for light and light for darkness..."

Woe relates to grief. God isn't saying "if you do this, I'll punish you". What He's saying is the way of evil and darkness carries its own destructive sadness because sin is its own punishment.

Because we have carried this into the modern church and subscribe to a mixture of law and grace, (a lethal combination), we see examples in how we approach each other in our greetings Sunday morning. I've been here and am as guilty as the next. We respond to 'How are you' with 'I'm just fine' and maybe we are but is it true of us every week, week in and week out? No, we're afraid to answer honestly because it might reveal a problem. This attitude is rooted in blessings and curses, part of the OT law. If I'm not fine then God must be punishing me. The punishment of course being the curse I'm sure I'm experiencing. Can't have anyone thinking I'm a bad person and certainly not someone who is cursed! If we only knew that there are no curses under grace, we could save ourselves a lot of anxiety and subterfuge.

1 Cor 1:20 "For all the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yes and amen!" No more curses for He became our curse and destroyed it.

This is our veiled image which we must protect at all costs, otherwise people will think less of us. Besides, most don't really care that much about how others are doing. For religion is about self and is comprised of comparison. What about me and my problems? We like to grade ourselves on a generous curve but it's these things from which murmuring, slander and gossip are given birth. It's much safer to talk about others and their problems. This is the very behavior that caused a generation of Israelites to die in the desert due to a false perception of who they were.

Heb 3:17 "Now with whom was He grieved for 40 years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?" Wilderness is the place of barrenness due to lost or forgotten identity and is the most miserable of existences.

18 And to whom did He swear (declare) that they should not (could not) enter (arise into) His rest but to them that did not believe?

19 So we see that because of unbelief they were not able to enter His rest."

The unbelief spoken of is due to our tragic loss of identity.

Gen 3:13 "...and the Serpent deceived me (or caused me to forget) and I ate." YLT

We clearly see this in the Israelites encounter with the people of Canaan when they perceived them to be giants and themselves as mere insects. Whether or not their perception of the inhabitants was accurate, more importantly, those of themselves certainly weren't. Their problem was they did not believe in who they were in God's eyes. Our unbelief concerning ourselves cannot nor ever will compromise what God knows to be true about us.

So what is God's rest? It is declared in His perfect likeness revealed and redeemed in human form in the finished work of Jesus Christ. His ultimate desire is not the revealing of Himself for its own sake but to reveal Himself in order that we may see ourselves. To be face to face with God, spoken of so often in scripture, is to stare eye to eye into our mirror image.

Col 3:4 Passion Translation "and as Christ Himself is seen for who He really is, who you really are is also revealed for you are now one with Him in His glory."

They did not die because of an inferior salvation from Egypt and neither have you. The meaning of the word Egypt is bondage, stronghold or to besiege and is symbolic of being enslaved by sin. Just as Pharaoh and Egypt, symbolic of sin and bondage was completely removed from their existence, so has The Lamb of God taken away all sin and removed it as far as the east from the west. Yet just like them, most simply do not believe it. Man is told by the church that we are creatures of depravity and mere sinners saved by grace and we've accepted it as true. Today, however, just as then, we can't blame Pharaoh, Satan, our parents, our ex-husbands or wives nor anyone else for our unbelief. Just like the children of Israel, we can experience God's supernatural provision and protection and yet have no rest. Rest, as mentioned, being the ultimate celebration of the proof of His faith in us, for it celebrates His perfect work, Christ in You! He longs for us to discover our completeness and perfection as He sees us. His rest is sustained in us by what He sees and knows is true about us. Jesus is what God believes about you. We will only come to know who we are when we truly know who He is, that is Love. Pure unadulterated unconditional love. He's not love AND...nor is He love BUT...There are no add-on attributes to who God is. He's not love and judgement because we believe that there must be justice in the world. The truth is our perception consists of nothing more than punishment. Somebody has to pay. Nor is He love but also wrath as if there has to be balance in His person. To assign His attributes to a place of equity in His being is to have a pagan schizophrenic God. No, He is quite well balanced for all His attributes flow forth from His love.

We were therefore created from love, for love. God has no needs for He is complete in Himself. He never needed us; He simply desires us in love. When we have seen this, we will begin to see who we truly are.

Let's look at some misunderstood verses that will probably surprise you.

Rev 20:13 "The sea gave up the dead who were in it and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them and each one was judged according to His works."

Rev 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly (without delay) and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to My work."

What is the reward He is referring to? He told Abraham in Gen 3:15 that I Am your exceeding great reward. He has brought to fulfillment the giving of Himself to us.

It is all about the finished work of Christ!

The Judgement Seat of Christ:

2 Cor 5:10 NKJV "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he has done whether good or bad.""

16 Therefore we no longer regard anyone according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh we know Him thus no longer."

This sounds very foreboding, leaving a sense that our future destinies might still be in doubt. Now let's read the Mirror, a translation couched in the Trinitarian love of God.

2 Cor 5:10 Mirror "For we have all been thoroughly scrutinized in the judgement of Jesus Christ. We are taken care of and restored to the life of our design, regardless of what happened to us in our individual lives, whatever amazing or meaningless things we encountered in the body."

16 Therefore from now on, I no longer know anyone according to the flesh. I no longer see anyone from a human point of view. This is a radical and defining moment. No label that could possibly previously identify someone no longer carries further significance. Our doctrines of Christ are redefined. Whatever we knew about Him historically or even sentimentally is challenged in this conclusion. By discovering Christ from God's point of view we discover ourselves and every other human being through His eyes.

Because most of the church has no idea concerning God as Trinity, they simply believe Jesus was the sacrifice who paid for our sins and rode off into the sunset, returning to heaven. He promised to come back one day, our assumption being He would really complete things. In spite of His proclamation that "it is finished" we know He didn't really complete the job and by the way, when He does return, He's going to be furious. In the meantime, most conjure a picture of what He was like on earth and try to figure out WWJD, what would Jesus do. This is a blatant pursuit of knowing Jesus in the flesh. To continue to know Him in the flesh is to not know Him at all.

Rom 8:

5 "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh..."

6 "For to be carnally minded is death..."

The judgement of Christ is the conclusion that man is worthy, beautiful and made in love. Not an evil being, simply one in need of healing. We don't punish someone for being ill. His judgement is found in His Justice which is to make all things whole. It has been said that God is the most judicious and least judgmental being in the cosmos while man is the least judicious and most judgmental. As a result, we have a difficult time believing that He isn't the same. This is projecting the very worst in ourselves upon Him. Our only healing for this is to rest.

John 12:31 "Now is the judgement of this world (creation); now the ruler of this world system will be cast out." Mirror

The ruler of this world has been man in a Satanic fallen mindset. His rule was ended when we read

1 Peter 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again (anouthen-restored, to return to the beginning) to a living hope (assurance) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

2 Cor 5:14 "For if one died for all, all died."

Romans 6:11 "Therefore, reckon (to know with absolute certainty, a perfect calculation) yourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Hos 6:2 "For after two days He will revive us, On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight (face to face)."

Is the redemption of mankind partial or total? To answer that lets look at the atonement theory framed by the early church. It was the earliest of these theories and was their way of explaining the reconciliation of man back to God. It was advanced by Irenaeus, one of the early fathers and is based on Paul's writings from

Ephesians 1:9 "Having made known to us the mystery of His will (desire) according to His good pleasure (kind intention) which He purposed in Himself,
10 that in the dispensation of the fulness of time (the completion of the fixed seasons) He might gather together in one ALL things in Christ, which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him."

It is known as The Recapitulation or the Re-presentation Theory of Atonement. Its meaning was that all creation was gathered in Christ, sanctified in Him and re-presented to the Father in a holy, righteous and restored state.

The Incarnation sanctified ALL of creation. How many of us struggle with the concept of "all" as it relates to the work of Christ? In spite of the fact that the Gospel means the Good News, how do we define it? The residue we carry concerning our pasts attempts to make us doubt the goodness of God. We believe that no matter how good we're told that He is, even He must have limits. We've been convinced that if I slip up once too often or backslide too much, the wrath of God will surely be unleashed. This in spite of the fact we're told that Love keeps no record of wrong. Is He in fact just like everyone else, someone who ultimately punishes and seeks retribution. We've been told most of our lives that He is.

No, I think the Good News is far better than most of us can comprehend and that is why it is difficult to accept.

The gospel is about cleansing creation of centuries and even millennia of dirt and grime created by sin and death, renewing its lost vitality and redeeming that which was considered worthless to its actual priceless state. Paul was so overwhelmed by its power to save that he vehemently defends it in his letter to the Galatians. Once again, the Mirror Bible captures it best in vs. 6-7

Gal 1:

6 "I am amazed that you can so easily be fooled into swapping the Gospel for a gimmick. The Gospel reveals the integrity of your original identity rescued in Christ; the gimmick is a conglomeration of grace and legalism. This mixture boils down to a do-it-yourself plan of salvation. This is a recipe for disaster."

7 "There is no other Gospel in spite of the many so-called Christian products branded as "gospel". If any hint of the law remains in it, it is not "good news" but merely the ideas of religious people attempting to minimize the work of Christ. Some seek to unsettle your minds by perverting the Gospel to accommodate their own feelings and opinions.

This sums up well everything I've said thus far. Many, if not most here in the West, continue to define it as a transactional relationship whose end purpose is to go to Heaven when you die. They interpret it as conditional, not knowing or accepting the finished work as completely unilateral, something we had no role in. They teach that you must do X for Y to happen rather than the unconditional reality that because God has done X, Y happened long ago.

We overlook the many scriptures that prove the unconditional love of God holds true for all people. Because we've been saturated with the demoralizing understanding of who we are we are hard pressed to accept the truth that God, who is Love, loves all men and by His kind intentions has determined that ALL be redeemed. Let's look at a few.

Romans 5:18

"Therefore, just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all."

This verse is particularly interesting because it references the origin of the Fall. Paul clearly uses the term "all" with knowing intention. The trespass or sin which resulted in death to our original parents resulted in a heritage of death for "all" men. They didn't bequeath sin to us, their offspring; they passed along what they possessed, death and mortality.

Eze 18:20

"The soul who sins shall die (die in their dying) The son shall not bear the guilt of the father nor the father the guilt of the son."

In Genesis 4 we read about a very interesting conversation between God and Cain. If Cain had inherited sin from Adam, as most in the church today believe, then why did God warn him about it? He said sin broods or lies in wait at the door (of heart & mind) and desires you, yet you should rule over it. In fact, God, who cannot lie, tells Cain that you have the ability to control it. How so? Because it is something we allowed in, not something natural to us. God implores Cain to resist but his loss of memory concerning who he was overwhelmed him. He forgot his identity and in his spiritual death, committed the first recorded murder.

In Philippians 2:9-11 Paul continues in the context of "all of them".

9 "Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every (ALL) knee should bow, of those in Heaven and those on the earth and those under the earth

11 and every (ALL) tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father."

The Greek word for confess is *exomologeō* meaning to openly and joyfully express something. It consists of *ek* - to be from or out of and *logeō* - from *logos*, the Word.

Therefore, what every tongue is so exuberant about is coming to the knowledge that His life is now our life and the living water that flows from us reveals that we are once again restored to our Maker! All have returned from death to life in the fulfillment of His promise of

John 14:20 "In that day you will know that I Am in my Father and you in Me and I in you."

Here are a few more "all" passages-

Acts 3:21 "whom heaven must receive until the restoration of all things, which God has spoken."

John 12:32 "and if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to Myself."

Romans 11:32 "for God has committed them all to disobedience that He might have mercy upon all."

1 Cor 15:22 "...in Christ all shall be made alive."

Col 1:15 "He is the image of God, the firstborn over all creation."

Eph 1:10 "that He might gather together in one all things in Christ..."

Eph 4:6 "one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."

1 Tim 2:4 "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth."

Heb 10:10 "by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Titus 2:11 "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men."

Rev 1:18 "I am alive forever more and hold the keys of Hades and Death."

Rev 22:3 "and there shall be no more curse."

Rom 11:36 "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things."

Scripture is filled with passages clearly stating that God's incredible grace has been bestowed upon all men yet how often have they been pointed out.

Amen for this is the Good News!