**Who Needs Theology?**

**Humanity**

**Class #10**

1. Humans are *both* physical *and* spiritual beings.

-Humans are *both* part of nature *and* transcend nature.

-Humans are *both* like animals *and* like God.

\*Gen. 2:7

-Humans were created from “the dust of the ground” - (physical).

-This physical aspect of our humanity is “good” – see Gen. 1:31.

-God breathed/spirit/*ruah* (life force/not Holy Spirit) into man – (spiritual).

-Humans beings are souls.

-(*Soul* is often used in scripture as referring to the whole person).

i.e. “*As the deer pants for water so my soul/life longs for you*” (Ps. 42:1).

“*What benefit is it for a person to gain the world, but lose his soul/life*” (Mark 8:36 - *soul* / Luke 9:25 *very self*).

-*Soul* is also used in the Bible for all living things.

“Soul (nepes): The Hebrew word usually translated ‘soul’ appears 755 times and actually means ‘soul’ in only a few places. This word speaks primarily of the person as a creature. In only 3 percent of the appearances does it refer to God. In Genesis 2:7 God breathes into man and he becomes a living soul. That this term is not unique to human beings is seen in the use of the term in the creation of animals in Genesis 1:20, 21 and 24 where it is usually translated ‘living creature.’ The meaning there is simply a living individual. Human beings live as souls; they do not ‘possess’ souls.” – (From *Themes in OT Theology,* William Dyrness, p. 85).

-Humans are “living souls” composed of both body and spirit.

-Both were created good.

-Three positions within this orthodox position.

1. Dichotomists
2. Trichotomists
3. Holists
4. Dichotomists

-The majority of Christians throughout church history have been dichotomous of one sort or another (there are subcategories even within each of these three views).

-The dichotomist dualist position was popularized by Aquinas (13th century).

-The body and soul are seen as two separate distinct parts that make up the human being.

-The immaterial part (soul) is immortal and the material part (body) is mortal.

-Catholics basically follow Aquinas view.

-And many Protestants have agreed with this view.

-They would then say that upon death the *soul* is either in purgatory (Catholic) or in heaven (Protestant) awaiting a body – which will be received at Christ Second Coming.

1. Trichotomists

-Was held by some church fathers (i.e. Irenaeus) but was a much less popular view.

-Has regained a following in some evangelical circles under the teaching and influence of Chinese Christian thinker Watchman Nee (died 1972): Three volume work *The Spiritual Man.*

-Divides body, soul, and spirit as three distinct and separate entities.

-Many see the soul as the animating life force.

\*Neil Anderson diagrams (*The Bondage Breaker*).

-Body, Soul (mind/emotions/will), Spirit.

1. Holists

-My personal position.

-Holists argue that much of the teaching in this area throughout church history has been influenced more by reading the Bible through the eyes of Greek philosophy than by understanding what the Bible actually teaches.

-Human beings are united entities that cannot be sliced up into separate substances.

-The words for body, soul, and spirit are often used throughout the bible interchangeable to describe our will, emotions, intellect, personality, etc.

-For a soul to exist without a body or a body to exist without a soul is like a heart to exist without a brain or a brain to exist without a heart.

-People are ensouled bodies and embodied souls - which cannot be divided.

-When we die we die (our spirit (life force) goes back to God).

-We come back to life at Jesus’ Second Coming and are raised bodily.

-This leads most holists to deny any conscious intermediate existence.

-All three positions would agree that we are incomplete until the resurrection (living as disembodied souls is not our hope – see 2 Cor. 5).

-All three positions are orthodox as all three uphold that humans are *both* physical *and* spiritual beings.

-When we get into the *either/or* heresies that can affect the church we will see ones that either deny the spiritual nature of humanity (secular humanism) or that deny the physical nature of humanity (new age/Hindu/Gnostic).

Heresies (either/or)

1. Secular humanism (anti-spiritual. Materialistic – we are only physical beings).

* 1. Anti-supernaturalism.
  2. Human-centered ethics (not God centered)

-Humanity is the measure of good and bad.

-Utilitarian (greatest good for the greatest number).

-Individualistic.

-Hedonistic.

* 1. Commitment to use of critical reason (as opposed to the “*and*”of faith in divine revelation).
  2. Humanitarian concerns (as opposed to the “*and*”of divine/spiritual concerns).

-Secular humanism’s biggest threat for evangelicals is to compartmentalize life.

-Live in our secular/sacred worlds.

-We end up living out its principles in our “secular life” (the way we pursue money, work, education, recreation, business, etc) while denying it in our “spiritual” life.

-Sometimes even how we run church can contradict the church’s message.

-The world sees this and rightly calls it hypocrisy.

1. Gnosticism (neo-Gnosticism)

-Anti-physical.

-Spirit is good and flesh is evil.

-Mind over matter.

-New Age type ideologies.

-There is a “spark of God” in each of us.

-A higher self.

-Sin is merely ignorance of one’s own divinity.

-Gnostic threat to evangelical Christianity is found in a lot of self-help Christianity.

-Inner-you, “true-to-yourself”, pop-psychology, New-age, etc.

-Many Christians mistakenly equate our inner person as one’s own god within.

-Or see cannot distinguish prayer from magic.

\*Go over the graph.

2. Humans are unique in that they were made in God’s image and likeness.

\*Gen. 1:27

-Both male and female

\*Ps. 8:4-8

-Made a little lower than heavenly beings (Heb. 2:7 angels) / (footnote – God).

-Crowned him with glory.

-Made ruler over God’s works (Ps. 8:6-8) / (see also Gen. 1:28-30).

-What exactly it means to be created *in God’s image* has been debated even before the age of the church.

-Different church leaders have emphasized, debated, and disagreed over the following suggestions.

-Having dominion over the earth.

-Our reasoning capacity.

-Conscience.

-The ability to respond to God’s word.

-Freedom.

-Immortality.

-Knowing that we know (Thinking about thinking).

-Etc…

-None of these differences of opinion has ever been seen as heresy.

-Note: Being created in the *image of God* has never referred to a bodily likeness.

Roger Olson suggests the idea of the *image of God* as referring to “personhood”.

The *image of God* is that “psycho-spiritual” ability and function that transcends mere nature and physicality through reasoning ability, need and capacity for community and cultural creativity, development of language and communication, worship and self-transcendence, freedom and responsibility.

* 1. Humans are born in sin and inherit a spiritual corruption that pervades every aspect of their being which causes them to disobey God.

-Original sin.

-Depravity.

\*Rom. 3:9-12

-Note: Sin is *not* true of human nature. (e.g. “We sin because we are human”)

-Adam was fully human before he sinned.

-Jesus was fully human without sin.

-We will be restored to full humanity without sin.

-Sin is a defect upon humanity.

-Sin affects us spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, physically, relationally in our day-to-day living.

-We are born as sin diseased humans.

\*Universal humanity depravity is affirmed Biblically and has been upheld throughout church history.

From the Council of Ephesus (431 AD) on, the Christian consensus has been that all humans are both with and in the condition we call *sinfulness* such that sin as corruption and guilt is universally inherited and all people are in need of repentance and faith and reconciliation through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. (p. 209).

-The debate among orthodox Christians is in the details.

-How much of the *image of God* has been damaged?

-All of it / none of it - have never been accepted positions.

-As Olson points out – even Calvin, who had one of the lowest views of depraved humanity still saw us different from the animals and retaining uniqueness of being *in God’s image.*

-So the question is one of degrees.

-How much of the *image of God* has been lost?

-And where the Bible does not give clear cut answers, Christians throughout history have taken varying positions and have debated greatly on this subject.

-Let’s take a look at this regarding infants.

Infants:

1. Guilty of Adam’s sin and in total bondage (Augustine/Luther/Reform).

Regarding the salvation of infants who die:

Infants die guilty and are condemned to hell except for those God chooses to elect for salvation.

1. Guilty of Adam’s sin and in total bondage (Catholic)

Regarding the salvation of infants who die:

Infant baptism washes away original sin and so, therefore, will be saved.

1. Guilty of Adam’s sin and in total bondage (Wesley/Methodist)

Regarding the salvation of infants who die:

Infants are covered by the atonement of Jesus Christ until they reach the age of accountability.

1. Innocent in spite of original *guilt.* (Baptist/Pentecostal).

Regarding the salvation of infants who die:

Infants are saved until they begin to commit willful sins.

When is a sin willful? What is the age of accountability?

1. Innocent in spite of original *corruption.*

(Zwingli/Ana-Baptists/Menno Simons/Mennonites).

Regarding the salvation of infants who die:

Infants are saved until they begin to commit willful sins.

1. Other Christian thinkers just leave this whole issue up to mystery and appeal to God’s mercy and justice.

-As Olson points out in his footnote (p. 220), “This does little to satisfy inquiring minds, however.”

-I think it is legitimate to put the Catholic view, which states that water baptism *saves* an infant, a heresy.

Heresy

Pelagianism

-Humans are born good.

-Denies original sin. (Note: Islam and Mormonism also deny original sin).

-Humans can choose the good without divine aid.

-Adam’s sin was a bad example of how humanity should live, but didn’t directly affect us.

-Jesus set a good example of how humanity should live.

-Humanity has full control and responsibility for their salvation.

-Pelagianism threat to evangelical Christianity is found in:

-“God helps those who help themselves” formulas.

-WWJD can manifest a Pelagian attitude towards Christianity.

-(If taken from the perspective that *I* can do what Jesus did outside of regeneration).

-Moralism / Legalism.

-Ironically, Pelagian dangers can often be seen the most in both *extremes:* Christian liberalism circles (where Christianity becomes simply moralist) and Christian conservative/fundamentalist circles (where Christianity becomes simply legalistic).

-Both sides would be horrified to find out how close their underlying ideologies may be to each other.

Note regarding politics: (C.S. Lewis – I think) “Why is it that extreme

Conservatism (fascism) and extreme liberalism (communism) look exactly alike in practice?”

Conclusion

“The basic unifying Christian perspective on humanity is that humans are ***both*** unique and possessed of special dignity and value because they are created in the image of God ***and*** corrupted from birth by a spiritual disease that prevents them from being fulfilled apart from God’s saving grace. (p. 221).

Questions

1. Which position regarding our human make-up do you hold? (Dichotomists, Trichotomists, or Holists)? Why?
2. Do you think a person’s position on this affects how they see humanity (themselves)? (If so, how?)
3. How have you understood our being “made in the image of God”?
4. How much do you think The Fall (sin) affected our being made in “the image of God?” (What implications does this have?)
5. What do you think happens to babies when they die? (Why?)
6. Which heresy do you encounter the most? (In what ways?)
7. Secular humanism – (Belief that all there is, is what we can see and touch).
8. Gnosticism – (Belief that the physical (i.e. out bodies) are bad and that spirit (our souls/spirits) are good).
9. Pelagianism – (Belief that people are basically good and can save/improve their lives by their own efforts/will power).
10. What in this chapter/lecture is something that you feel you now have a bit of a better understanding of?
11. What in this chapter is something you would like to explore in more depth?