

Hebrews – teaching #3

Living in the Tension of Truth

Opening thoughts

- My dad always used to tell us that to be successful Christians we had to learn to live in the mystery of the faith.
- As Christians we must learn to live in some theological tensions.
- Human reasoning wants to make everything explainable – It wants to put every ducks in a row. Authentic and victorious Christianity can't do that. We were meant to be a people who were willing "to see through a glass dimly".
- **Protestant reformation** – It was birthed out of rebellion against letting someone else dictate how to interpret the scripture. Protestantism has no Pope, no High Priest and not Joseph Smith. We are challenged to go to the scripture as individuals.
 - Good news – We are forced to seek God and think – to discover and own the truth for ourselves.
 - Bad news – The world has seen us a full of division due to our many denominations and splintered groups. Some have left faith for intellectual discovery.
- **Leonard Sweet wrote**
"The modern world made asking questions the highest task. The lifelong quest for answers was the highest journey. Now it's time to acknowledge that faith is not a problem to be solved or a question to be answered, but a mystery to be lived – the mystery of a real, live relationship with God – the God-Life relationship. Christianity is not for professionals. Christianity is meant to be lived by amateurs. Amateur is based on the Latin word 'amator', which means 'lover'. Christianity is meant for lovers, not experts." [Leonard Sweet Out of the Question, Into the Mystery, pp. 31]

2 Corinthians 11

²I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. ³But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

Ephesians 3

⁴In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶This mystery is that through the gospel the

Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

The Great 500 year debate

- John Calvin – early 16th century
- Jacobus Arminian – Late 16th century – Dutch theologian who reacted to Calvinism.
- Calvin’s acrostic – T-U-L-I-P

The Great Theological Divide

Calvinism

(Total Grace & Assurance)

Total Depravity

Sin is Adam’s choice for us

Unconditional Election

Salvation is God’s choice for the elect

Limited Atonement

Christ died for the elect

Irresistible Grace

Holy Spirit awakens the elect

Perseverance of the Saints

The Saints make it to the end

Salvation can’t be lost –

“Once saved Always saved”

Arminianism

(Limited Grace – Free will & human choice)

Sin is a choice

Salvation is a choice

Jesus died for everyone

Grace can be refused

Faith can be shipwrecked

You can lose your salvation if you make a willful choice to walk away.

Bottom line question – Did Christ come to save those he had already chosen or did he come to provide salvation for those who would choose him? How secure is salvation? The best answer – “I don’t know but I wouldn’t take any chances!”

How do you understand – Luke 19 ¹⁰“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”?

My dilemma - Teaching a book like Hebrews to an audience that has either been raised in a concrete line of theological thought (that differ) while at the same time within that audience people who have never given theology any thought at all.

- Vineyard has always lived in the radical middle. Examples: Spirit and Word. Now and not yet.
- I have always tried to present both sides and not dictate my views. That's why we have asked you to be in small groups and explore the scripture in your devotions before I even preach it. In my mind that is true discipleship.

Hebrews 3 draws a parallel between Israel and the Kingdom of God

It tells us that Jesus is greater than Moses but uses Moses to explain the plan of God for mankind. How you see it depends on your theological perspective.

The author of Hebrews seems to support or lean toward the free will side of the debate.

Hebrews 3

¹Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. ²He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. ³Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. ⁴For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. ⁵Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. [His work was an illustration of the truths God would reveal later. NLT] ⁶But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Warning Against Unbelief - "

[Psalm 95:7-11]

⁷So, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸do not harden your hearts

as you did in the rebellion,

during the time of testing in the desert,

⁹where your fathers tested and tried me

and for forty years saw what I did.

¹⁰That is why I was angry with that generation,

and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray,

and they have not known my ways.'

¹¹So I declared on oath in my anger,

'They shall never enter my rest.' "

¹²See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵As has just been said:

"Today, if you hear his voice,

do not harden your hearts
as you did in the rebellion." [Psalm 95:7-8]

¹⁶Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?
¹⁷And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies
fell in the desert? ¹⁸And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those
who disobeyed [or disbelieved]? ¹⁹So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their
unbelief.

A parallel story

1. A people who found themselves in bondage
2. The Provision of sacrifice – the blood of the unblemished lamb.
3. Escape for those who believed and accepted the sacrifice.
4. Baptism by faith – (The Red Sea) 1 Corinthians 10
5. Moving towards the place of rest – the promised place of God.
6. A time of testing and preparation – the wilderness (There but not yet there.)
7. The faithful who didn't walk in unbelief entered in.

What's the Point?

- Christianity is a verb. "Word" in Spanish is "Verbo".
- No matter who is right concerning doctrine and theological view the question still remains, "Who is Christ?", Where will you put your faith? & "Therefore, how will you live?"

The Great Gamble

- Man has gambling built into his DNA because Faith requires risk. Like everything else the devil has capitalized on it. Los Vegas is thriving.
- If you were to gamble on what you know or believe to be true, where would you place your chips?
- Faith is the assurance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen. It is a gamble that is based on evidence and assurance but a gamble all the same.
- What if you decided to gamble on Biblical truth and you ended up being wrong? What if you didn't and you were wrong?