

GOD IS GREATER THAN OUR HEARTS

- A. Introduction: The psalms speak of magnifying God (Ps 34:3; 35:27; 40:16; 69:30; 70:4). We are taking some time to magnify God.
1. When we magnify God, we don't make Him bigger than He is. We make Him bigger in our eyes.
 - a. When we magnify God, we expand our picture of God, get a better view or perspective of God.
 - b. We magnify God by getting a more accurate picture of Him from the Bible and then focusing our attention on Him as He truly is. We are taking some time to magnify God.
 2. In the past two lessons we have made the point that God is small to us, God needs to be magnified in our eyes, because we have a separation mentality.
 - a. Because of sin, it is built into our thinking that God is far from us, and, anything far away seems small.
 - b. But, in reality, God is omnipresent or present everywhere at once. There is no place God is not. In reality, all human being live, move, and exist in God. Jer 23:23,24; Ps 139:7,8; Acts 17:27,28
 - c. You have never, in your worst moment, been cut off from or separated from God. You were living, moving, and existing in Him, in His presence. Because of sin you were cut off from the awareness or consciousness of His presence.
 - d. One of the results of the new birth is that we can now begin to see or perceive what has been there all along and become partakers of it. John 3:3,5
 3. Our minds have to be renewed to reality as it truly is: God is present everywhere at once, loving and reigning. I John 4:8,16,7; Rev 19:6
 - a. In Him we live, move, and have our being. God is with us and we are in God.
 - b. There is never any reason to fear because we live, move, and exist in God who is loving and reigning, and His presence is salvation. Ps 42:5
 - c. In the last lesson we talked about taking time to sit silent in the presence of the Lord in faith, beholding His beauty in order to increase our awareness of His loving presence. Ps 46:10
 4. In this less we want to continue to magnify God by dealing with another reason why God is small to us -- we are more conscious of our sin than we are of God's loving presence with us.
- B. One reason God is small to us, one reason we need to magnify God, is that our sins, our failures, our sinfulness, are bigger to us than God.
1. Part of our makeup as human beings is a conscience. Conscience is that sense or consciousness of the moral rightness or wrongness of our own conduct, intentions, character, etc.
 - a. Rom 2:14,15--Man, even in his fallen condition, has a conscience. Every person, every society, has a standard of right and wrong, or a conscience.
 - b. Because of man's sinful condition -- apart from Christ and the renewing of our mind -- our consciences aren't necessarily reliable. We need the light of the objective standard of God given in His word, the Bible.
 - c. But, none-the-less, human beings are made in such a way that if we violate the standards of our conscience, we feel bad -- guilty, ashamed, worthless, etc. All men are guilty of sin and, when we come to Christ, if not beforehand, we feel guilty for sin.
 2. One of the goals of the New Covenant, one of the goals of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is to cleanse our consciences so that we can stand before God without that crippling sense of guilt, condemnation, and worthlessness. Heb 9:14
 - a. Cleanse your conscience from dead works. (ASV); Cleanse our conscience from the deadness of our former ways. (NEB). Dead works are works that produce death or works deserving of death.

- b. The Old Covenant sacrifices could not take away sin, and, therefore, could not cleanse the conscience. Heb 10:1-3
 - 1. v1--Give complete freedom from sin to those who draw near. (Weymouth); make the people who come to the altar...completely clean. (Bas).
 - 2. v2--The worshippers having been once cleansed would have no more consciousness of sins (ASV); their consciences would no longer reproach them of sin (Norlie); they would no longer have any guilt or consciousness of sin. (Amp)
 - c. But, Jesus put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, to purge our conscience. Heb 9:26--Do away with sin (Weymouth); eliminated sin (Berkley); annulling our sin by his sacrifice (Knox).
 - 1. Heb 10:10-12--Jesus at down at the right hand of God because His work was complete.
 - 2. Through His sacrifice he purged our sins. Heb 1:3--And when he had effected our cleansing from sin. (Berkley); accomplished our cleansing of sins and riddance of guilt. (Amp)
 - 3. Heb 14:14--For with a single offering He has forever perfected. (Berkley); He has forever completely cleansed and perfected those who are consecrated to Him. (Williams)
 - d. Consciences are cleansed through the knowledge that our sins have been put away.
3. God's intention has never been to punish man for sin, but rather to remove sin and its effects from man. Our sin was put on Jesus to remove it from us. That is the essence of the New Covenant: God forgets our sins.
 - a. Heb 10:17--I will never, never anymore recall. (Williams); I will never again remember. (Taylor)
 - b. Heb 10:18--Now, when sins have been forever forgiven and forgotten (Taylor) there is no further need of an offering for sin. (20th Cent).
 - c. Heb 10:19--Therefore we now have boldness, a cheerful confidence (Montgomery) to enter into the Holy Place, or the awareness of the perfect, loving presence of God.
 4. Jesus died to cleanse our conscience, or our awareness of our sin. The Cross says: I don't remember your sins any more. That means you don't have to remember them because God doesn't remember them.
 - a. God is not keeping a list of your sins to greet you with when you get to heaven. He doesn't remember them.
 - b. God is not punishing you for you sins now. He doesn't remember them.
- C. But, many Christians still labor under a guilty conscience and struggle with that sense of unworthiness and shame before God.
1. Why do our consciences still bother us? Why do we still feel condemned for our sins? There are two reasons why, and the remedy for each one is different.
 - a. The first reason: You are persisting in willful sin and your conscience condemns you. The remedy for that problem is to turn from your sin and stop sinning.
 - b. The second reason: You're doing your best to serve God but you have a sense of guilt or condemnation over past sins or issues you are still working to overcome, or you just have a vague sense that God couldn't be pleased with you. The remedy for this is to magnify God and see Him and His plan more clearly.
 2. I John 3:18-21 says that if you are living right, or doing you best to live right, God is greater than your heart which still condemns you.
 - a. Your own heart says: I'm no good. Look at the sin I've committed, the mistakes I've made.
 - b. But, God's testimony is: What sin? God doesn't see sin in you. How could He? He doesn't remember it.
 3. We have the idea that we saw God face to face, He'd blast us for sin. He'd lecture us and let us have it.

- a. What would God say about you? What would His testimony about you be? It would be what Jesus said to and about sinful men who came to Him. Remember, Jesus said He only did what He saw His Father do. John 5:19
 - 1. Luke 15:3-11--You have value to me. You are the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son.
 - 2. Luke 15:20-24--I love you. I'm glad your back!! Let's celebrate your return to my house!!
 - 3. Luke 5:8-10--Don't be afraid. I'll make you what you were meant to be.
- b. God's testimony is greater than our hearts. By His testimonies about us, we assure our hearts before Him.

D. One way we magnify God in our eyes is by clearly understanding His plan for us.

- 1. God's goal has never been to punish sin. His goal has been to remove sin and every trace of its consequences from His entire creation. His clearly revealed plan shows us that.
 - a. In all of this, we are not saying that sin goes unpunished. The wages of sin is death. Sin brings forth death. Sin itself brings punishment through its effects. Rom 6:23; James 1:15
 - b. But, we've got to get beyond the fear that God is going to punish me for my sin so we can have confidence before Him and live the way He intends for us to live -- as Jesus lived when He was on this earth.
- 2. It's never been in the heart of God to punish man for sin. He removed our sins through Jesus. Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
 - a. Rev 13:8--The Lamb that has been sacrificed from the foundation of the world. (20th Cent)
 - b. I Pet 1:20--He was pre-destined indeed to this work, even before the creation of the world. (Weymouth)
 - c. Titus 1:2--Which God, who never deceives, promised from all eternity (Weymouth); which was made certain before eternal time, by the world of God who is ever true (Basic).
 - d. II Tim 1:9--Which was granted us in Christ from all eternity. (NASB)
- 3. We start with ourselves, we assess ourselves from the standpoint of our fallen condition.
 - a. Yes, we were born into a fallen race. Yes, we were marred by the fall and through Adam's sin we were made sinners. Rom 5:19
 - b. But, you must understand that your history with God did not begin when you were born. Your history with God did not begin when you committed your first sin. Your history with God began in eternity.
- 4. God knew you in eternity past. You have always been in the mind of God.
 - a. Eph 1:4--For consider what he has done -- before the foundation of the world he chose us...in Christ. (Phillips)
 - b. I Pet 1:2--Chosen of old in the purpose of God the Father (NEB); chosen and destined by God the Father (RSV).
 - c. Rom 8:29--For those on whom He set His heart beforehand (Williams) ...to share the likeness of His Son (Weymouth).
- 5. God knew and knows a perfect you -- you before the human race fell in Adam, you before you were born into sin and committed your first sin. Ps 51:5; Ps 139:14
 - a. When God looks at you He sees the perfect you. He sees the you He knew from eternity past, the you He created in Adam before the fall.
 - b. God created one man, the entire human race in Adam, in His image and likeness (Gen 1:26). When God looks at men, He sees past the sin, past the fallen condition, to the coin stamped with His image and likeness. According to the Bible, men, in their fallen condition, still bear the image of God. Gen 9:6; James 3:9

- c. Man went astray in Adam. Man is in the pigpen of sin and death. But, Jesus came to seek and save the lost and to restore man to the original picture of him God has had since eternity past.
 - 6. Heb 8:5--God showed Moses a picture of the tabernacle and told him to make it according to that pattern.
 - a. God had a picture in His mind from eternity past of the perfect tabernacle, and it was Moses' job to bring it into manifestation in the physical realm.
 - b. Jesus knew the perfect picture of mankind God has had in His mind since eternity past. Jesus came to earth to bring that picture into manifestation. Through the Cross and through the work of the Holy Spirit and the word of God in us.
- E. Conclusion: God did not make man to sin or for sin and He has done everything necessary to remove sin and its consequences from us.
- 1. Jesus came to cleanse our conscience from dead works, to make it possible for us to stand before God, our Father, with confidence.
 - a. He does it by showing us the Father's attitude toward lost humanity. Jesus came to seek and save the lost because they are valuable to God.
 - b. He does it by removing our sins through His sacrifice on the Cross. God has wiped out our sins, even the memory.
 - c. He does it by showing us our purpose, showing us what man is supposed to look like.
 - 1. Jesus is God become a man without ceasing to be God. While on earth He lived as a man, as an example of how sons of God are supposed to live.
 - 2. Jesus lived in communion with God, in a Father-son relationship with God. And, Jesus, as a man, fully expressed God by speaking His words and doing His works by His power in Him. That is your purpose. That is the reason you exist. That is your destiny.
 - 2. Salvation is not just getting your sins forgiven so you can go to heaven when you die.
 - a. Salvation is being made like Jesus through the operation of God's life in you.
 - b. Salvation is that original image and likeness of God, conformity to the image of Christ, that perfect picture of you in the mind of God, being brought into full manifestation in every part of our being by the power of God.
 - 3. When God looks at you and me He doesn't see the flaws, the weaknesses, the sin, He sees us as He always intended us to be -- His image and likeness.
 - a. That testimony is greater than our hearts. With that testimony, you can assure your heart, your conscience, before God.
 - b. He who has begun a good work in you will complete it. Phil 1:6