

Accepting Personal Responsibility

Rev. 20:11-15

INTRODUCTION:

1. This passage in the most graphic terms reminds us that there is coming a day in which all of us will stand before the great white throne

•we will be judged according to our works •we will be judged according to the Bible

2. Many people in our world live without ever thinking about this:

•perhaps they are ignorant •perhaps they don't care •perhaps they are simply ignoring the day of judgment

I. The Unwillingness to Accept Personal Responsibility

1. Illustration: Casting the blame

•pointing at others' sins is a convenient excuse to take ourselves out of the focus •No one likes the idea of being held responsible for sin •We have become a society of "victims"; not responsible

2. From the time of Adam and Eve people have tried funny things to deal with their personal responsibility for sin

•first, Adam and Eve made clothes from fig leaves •they hid in the bushes (ashamed and afraid of God) •Adam blamed Eve; Eve pointed to the serpent

II. The Reasons Why People Don't Accept Responsibility

1. We are having a more difficult time discerning right from wrong, because we are not sure what the truth is anymore.

•for many the rules have changed in America

•3/4 of Americans now deny that there are any moral absolutes

•we can no longer call anything "sin"

•we ought never to admit we have done wrong

•New values are shaping our world and creating an environment where the unthinkable has become the norm

•homosexuality has come out of the closet and some religious people have applauded the move

•talk shows have no boundaries, any subject can be discussed

•our children are told "safe sex" rather than "no sex" (in part because we can no longer speak religiously about right and wrong)

•The terrible inconsistencies of what adults say to their children and what they permit for themselves

- adults drink alcohol and wonder why kids take drugs
- adults smoke tobacco and wonder why kids smoke marijuana
- adults use ugly words and see ugly movies; allow their children to go to ugly movies and wonder why they become immoral

2. We are assured that we must never make moral judgments on others

- when it becomes wrong to judge others, we also think we have freed ourselves from any judgment
- Best known passage of our generation: Matt. 7:1-5 without regard to other passages on the same subject

- Matt. 7:6 who are the swine? •Matt. 7:15 who are the false teachers?
- Are we to make no judgments?

- John 7:24 "Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."
- 1 Cor. 5:1-5 The Corinthians had made a judgment--toleration of sin; but Paul overruled that judgment

III. What Causes People To Accept Responsibility and Repent?

Just one Answer with many facets: a personal relationship with God

1. Relationship means taking Jesus Christ seriously:

- Sin is a personal offense, abomination, to God
- Matt. 16:24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life(n) will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

2. Relationship means taking the cross and God's love seriously:

- 1 Pet.2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.
- John 3:16

3. Relationship means taking sin seriously:

- Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.
- Ps. 51:7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- Ps. 51:8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
- Ps. 51:9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

Ps. 51:10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Ps. 51:11 Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Ps. 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

•1 Cor. 5:1-3 the people at Corinth were arrogant and tolerant when they should have mourned instead

3.Relationship means taking my soul seriously:

•2 Cor. 5:10 I will someday have to give an account
•Christianity must come out of the third person status to a first person status

4.Relationship means taking other people seriously:

•Malachai 4:5,6 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."
•I can't love God and not know that my life touches other lives. I will either help them get to heaven or keep them from heaven

Conclusion:

1.Personal Responsibility is real. It can only reside in a single individual.

•You may share it with others but your portion is not diminished. •You may delegate it, but it is still with you. •If you are rightfully responsible, no excuse, no ignorance or blameshifting can put the burden on someone else

2.God will not judge you for what others did good or bad. A saintly mother or father will not save you.

3.No one can believe for you, repent for you, confess for you, or be baptized for you. No one can be faithful all through life for you. You must decide and live for Christ yourself.

4.There is no better day than today to begin your walk with him.

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