

- ii. God's Call and Christ's Judgment (Matthew 25:14-30 & Luke 19:11-27)

C. The Present Gift of the Holy Spirit (8)

- i. Paul assumes that these Gentile believers embody the fulfillment of the promises to Ezekiel (e.g. Ezekiel 36:25-27)
  
- ii. Holiness is not achieved by *sheer* human initiative, but by the agency of the Holy Spirit working upon our new hearts. ***Our effort in concert with the Spirit's work.*** (Phil. 2:13)
  
- iii. We *must* live holy lives because the Spirit of God within us is holy! We *can* live holy lives because the Spirit of God within us moves us and changes us, making us holy.

*We are to live our lives to make God happy and God has given us everything we need to accomplish it!*

**LIVE THE STORY**

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- How does it strike you to think Paul tells us to abstain from sexual immorality in order to make God happy? If it seems uncomfortable, why do you think that is?
- Discuss the Bentham on pg. 2 of this outline in contrast to the ideas presented in the list of scriptures on pg. 1 about pleasing God. How do you see the Bentham quote reflected in culture?
- How does Paul's language in our text reveal the scandal of the gospel?
- Discuss *how* the threefold reasons Paul lists (Triple Grace for Pleasing God) provide grace for living in sexual purity.
- How does this text (and others) speak to the necessity of our efforts in concert with the Spirit's work in us?
- How is God calling you to increase in a walk that pleases God?

**Dissident Disciples (Part 6)**  
**Triple Grace for Pleasing God**  
Jerry Cisar — July 22, 2018

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 READ

**Introduction**

*Paul doesn't tell us to abstain from sexual immorality in order to make us happy; He tells us to abstain from sexual immorality to make God happy!*

**I. Paul's Double Appeal to Increasingly Please God (1-2)**

- A. You must walk so as to please God.
  - i. It wasn't optional.
  
- ii. Pleasing God as the Motivation for the Christian Life
  - a) John 5:30 ; 8:39
  - b) Matthew 3:17; 12:18; 17:5
  - a) Romans 8:8
  - b) 2 Corinthians 5:9
  - c) Colossians 1:10
  - d) Romans 12:1-2
  - e) Ephesians 5:8, 10
  - f) Colossians 3:20
  - a) Hebrews 13:20-21
  - a) 1 John 3:21-22
  
- iii. Already spoken about in 1 Thessalonians
  - a) 2:4 *I please God.*
  - b) 2:15 *They displease God.*
  - c) 4:1 *You must please God.*

B. Consider 3 things from vv1-2:

- i. You can please God.
  
- ii. This isn't talking about getting saved *by* making God happy!
  - Ephesians 2:8-9

iii. A dissident disciple lives to please God.

C.S. Lewis: *"Which of the religions of the world gives to its followers the greatest happiness? While it lasts, the religion of worshiping oneself is the best. ... As you know, I haven't always been a Christian. I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity."*

Jeremy Bentham: *"The greatest happiness of the greatest number is the foundation of morals and legislation."*

C. Paul makes a double appeal (4:1c)

## II. Paul's Triple Call to Sexual Purity (3-6a)

A. God's will is your holiness!

- i. Why is their holiness, your holiness, what pleases God?
  - a) When we do what He wants, He is pleased!
  - b) "will": *what one wishes to bring about by the activity of others, to whom one assigns a task (BDAG).*

ii. Holiness is what God is like!

- Exodus 19:6
- Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7; 20:26

B. How does Paul call us to be holy?

- i. Separate yourself from sexual immorality (3b).
  
- ii. Control your own body; not like Gentiles (4-5)!
  - a) The word for body is actually vessel.
  
  - b) Not like the Gentiles.
    - The scandal of the gospel: *Gentiles are no longer Gentiles when they have faith in Jesus!*
  
- iii. Don't wrong or take advantage of a brother (6).

## III. The Church's Triple Grace for Pleasing God (6b-8)

A. The Future Judgment of the Lord Jesus (6b)

Bonhoeffer: *"Cheap grace means justification of sin but not the sinner,"* leaving the church to *"live the same way the world does."* *"Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without repentance; it is baptism without the discipline of community ... grace without discipleship."*

B. The Past Call of God the Father (7)

- i. The Thessalonians became Israel, without becoming Jewish!
  - a) *You were made His holy people by the very call of God!*
  - b) God's call is a means of grace to your obedience.