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Objections to the Gospel Part 2

In this article, I will be addressing a second big objection to the Good News of the Adoption and Inclusion of all of creation in Jesus.

That 2nd objection is: **“Isn’t this theology encouraging people to sin?”** When people ask this question, their fear is that we are actually promoting immorality and encouraging people to just go out and steal, fornicate, kill and get drunk.

After all, isn’t saying that “everyone is still included” saying that there is no real harm done in the end, and all will be well. They then point to the various and OBVIOUS sins mentioned and condemned in scripture, hence the fight they put up against a theology of Inclusion in Christ.

So, how do we respond to this very passionate and real objection in the Light of Christ? Here are my basic thoughts in that Light!

I am learning that the first thing to do is to recognize that there is no real light on a subject without the Light of the Person of Jesus Christ! If I truly want to understand what sin is, then I have to know Who Jesus is. If we begin defining things too soon, and without that Christ-centered foundation, we are destined for a very darkened take on the subject matter at hand. Regarding this subject, I also find a quote by Henry David Thoreau helpful. He said *“For every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil, there is one striking at the root.”*

Our strong and sinful temptation is usually to begin arguing among the “leaves” on the subject of sin and start fighting about what is and is not a sin and, of course, fighting with scriptures. We’ve heard of people saying something like, “I may have murdered my brother but God knows that wasn’t really in my heart!”, or “that ‘sin’ is not even mentioned in the bible, so I don’t think it really is a sin, plus, God knows what is in my heart!” And off we go into abstract arguments and definitions of what REALLY constitutes a sin or not!

I am sure you can identify with some of this type of conversation. It seems that in our desire to get comfort from God “knowing our heart” we easily dismiss the other scriptures that state how wicked God knows our heart to be, and how little we do know of it! (Jer 17:9, John 2:23-25)

Let’s strike at the root of this issue, and get more practical and concrete! The Gospel is the Person of Jesus Himself. In His Person we Christians believe that Jesus is really the Son of God as Man (John 1:49-51), and the One in, and through, and By, and For Whom all things are created and sustained (Colossians 1:15-18).

We believe that when He died, all of creation somehow mysteriously died (2 Cor 5:14), and that when He rose, creation rose and ascended into the very life and being of the Triune God in Him (2 Cor 5:15, Eph 2:4-7). As the One in Whom all things are created and sustained, this is the Reality and fundamental Truth regarding all things in creation! If we don’t think this way, we are not thinking in a Christian way, nor are we thinking properly, biblically speaking.

Therefore, no matter how much we argue about what constitutes the various transgressions and sins we commit, there is a statement about all things that we must pay attention to in the Person of

Jesus. In Him is the Truth about where and what all things REALLY and Truly are RIGHT NOW (John 14:6); reconciled and redeemed in Him, with our transgressions absolutely NOT being counted against us by God no matter how wrong they actually are (2 Cor 5: 18-19)!

This is not a Truth saying that harming our neighbor or ourselves is right, because it is wrong (the Godhead do not harm Themselves!) But it is a Truth that says that sin isn't so harmful that it could keep Jesus from reconciling us, redeeming us, and including us in His actual relationship with his Father in the Spirit! Encouragingly, it says that God loves and likes us so much, he came into darkness and sinful flesh to get us, and nothing, not even our sin was going to keep us from being adopted into His family relationship (2 Cor 5:21)!!

Wow! All of our talk about God not being able to get near sin is a lie! He actually used it as the means by which he would unite us to Himself in an even stronger way!

Yes, this kind of talk, humanly, ticks us all off Matt 20:1-16 (we would be liars to say otherwise!) Somehow in our minds we actually convince ourselves that we really "know" our heart and actions to be better than someone else's, and "by God, those others are worse than me and don't deserve to be where I am at or go where I am going!!" (I want to preach Jesus' grace strong right now, but must restrain myself and stay on the subject at hand ☺)

In the grace of God I say, "go ahead, be ticked!", but don't believe for one second that God puts a thermometer in your mouth to check his own temperature, because he doesn't!! ☺ Enough said "You 'sinner/saint' you" (and me too!) ☺

Let's clarify all of this as it pertains to the question of our 2nd objection. If we truly believe and preach that Jesus is God's Good News and that we are included in God's relationship in Him (and we do), then the first thing we must say about sin is that it has something more to do with that Truth than about our moral actions against ourselves and one another. **Do you see that?!**

If our inclusion is good (and it is!), and sins are bad (and they are!), then bad is defined in the Light of Jesus as something opposite or contrary to the Truth (Jesus!). This means that, fundamentally, sin is first and foremost our opposing the truth of our inclusion in God's Relationship, in Jesus!!!

ARE YOU OPPOSING THIS TRUTH OF CREATION'S INCLUSION?! Jesus actually said that the Holy Spirit was coming to prove us wrong about sin because we don't believe in Him (John 16:7-9!) If we have ears to hear, Jesus is saying that part of sin's devastating problem is that it gives us a sinful view about sin!!!

So, the next question becomes, since we are included in God's family in Jesus, then why do we still do harm to one another, and why does scripture encourage us to avoid moral sins and transgressions like the plague (see 1 Thess. 5)? Well, first, let's be real honest! None of us actually does avoid sin like the plague, no matter how "Christian" we are, now do we? Just the opposite, in fact (Rom 7:7-12)!

Most Christians believe in the sins of commission and omission, and we aren't always sure what those are, are we? Well, rather than heading in an abstract manner to try to sort it all out, God has given us the simplicity of Christ in the Gospel. The basic reason we all commit transgressions and

sins, even though we are saved in Jesus is because we really and truly do not believe the Gospel!! Soberly, but seriously, this is true!! (Mark 9:24)

If you really believed that God has fully included you in His Provision, would you try to find your life in stealing? If you really believed you were included in God's life and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Jesus, would you try to find life in fornication or adultery? If you were fully assured about your inclusion in Christ, would you try to find life by killing others in jealousy and envy? I think you see the point! These acts we call sin and transgressions actually point to a deeper problem and root of life.

When we do not believe the Good News of our inclusion, we are sinning and we begin to transgress in a variety of ways to try and find the Life that we already have in Jesus! Sin is about blindness and not seeing Jesus and ourselves properly. When we transgress there, we start trying to find life in our own way and begin "hiding in the bushes" (of drugs and alcohol perhaps) in order to dull the inevitable pain that follows unbelief and believing improperly that God's mind about us has changed (Gen 3:1-13!!)

This is why Paul always begins with the Gospel in his epistles (Eph 1) and then discusses the practical outworking of it (Eph 4). When Paul speaks for or against good works, he is describing (not prescribing), the natural result of believing God's Good News, or the disaster of not believing it. When we believe the truth of who we are in Jesus (included), sins begin to fall off our backs like water off a duck's back (how can they not – we are trusting Jesus with our lives and do not have to try to get or sustain life for ourselves!)

When we don't believe who we are in Jesus, sins begin to creep up faster than we can keep up, and before you know it our tongues are hanging out in despair! We then start running on the hamster's wheel of futility trying to overtake our increasing poor performance (Gal 3:10-12), OR, we climb off the wheel admitting defeat and try to numb the inevitable pain with whatever little pleasures we can temporarily scrape up (Heb 11:24-25)! **Do you see that?!**

So, are we encouraging people to sin when we unhesitatingly proclaim their inclusion in Christ? Absolutely not! Just the opposite! We are encouraging them to TRULY stop sinning and to trust Jesus for their hidden life in God, in Him (Col 3:1-4!) They are INcluded! If we reverse this, and put more emphasis on their need to be holy and overcome their sins and immorality in order to be included, we are actually encouraging them to trust in themselves and they will engage in bad practices even more trying to "get and stay right" (Romans 7:5-6)! They will inevitably get on the hamsters wheel of hopelessness or get off and "hide in the bushes", either way, their trust will not be in Jesus and their already inclusion!

I believe we are encouraged to toil and struggle in mainly one area of life: "For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the Living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe!" – I Tim 4:10b NRSV

~ Tim Brassell