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The Divine Conspiracy Teaching Series
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Session 5 Outline: Salvation Confusion

What is Salvation?

An instructive reading of Titus 2:11-3:7

v.11 - *The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared publicly. It is a public fact. It has appeared to all men.*

v. 12 - *Teaching us that if we believe that Jesus suffered what we would have to suffer for the wrongs we have done, we will go to heaven when we die. Does your version say that?*

OR

v.11 - *The grace of God that brings salvation has publicly appeared.*

v.12 - *Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.*

v.13 - *looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ;*

v.14 - *who gave himself for us, that we might go to heaven when we die.*

OR

v.14 - *that he might redeem us from all ungodliness— every lawless deed— and purify unto himself a peculiar people who attended church faithfully.*

OR

... *who gave regularly ... who witnessed ... they're zealous for good works. They just sit around thinking about doing good things.*

v.15 - *These things speak and exhort, and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.*

3:1 - *Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,*

v.2 - *to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.*

v.3 - *For we once were foolish also, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our lives in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. Being lost is not a matter of not knowing where you are going, it's a matter of where you are. A lost person does not know where they are. If you're really lost, you can't even use a map because you can't locate yourself on a map. This is the condition of lostness.*

- v.4 - *But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,*
- v.5 - *He saved us, not on the basis of our deeds—that would be the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees—which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy. And here's how He saved us: by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,*
- v.6 - *whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*
- v.7 - *that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

That is a good picture of what salvation means in New Testament terms. The emphasis on a new life, a new spirit that is moving in us, it's upon the regeneration. And the first move is the move to new life; to be "Born from above."

- Life is a kind of activity that is self-initiating, self-directing from the inside.
- The life we are given in Christ is a new kind of activity that begins with the acknowledgement that Jesus is Lord. In **1 Corinthians 12:3**, when Paul says, "no one can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit," he means acknowledging, *seeing* that Jesus is Lord. To really see that is something you cannot do on your own. Faith is a gift of God lest anyone should boast. Everything good that we have received has been given to us.

One of the reasons for our non-Disciple Christianity is because people have mistaken grace for passivity, and they have become passive.

- That passivity has generated a whole culture of consumer Christians: Christians who think that being a Christian is a matter of consuming. They consume the merits of Christ. They consume services. They consume ministers.
- The reason they have new life in them is so they can live that new life out.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God and Discipleship to Christ [09:40]

We start with this claim: The now universal assumption is that you can be a Christian without being a disciple.

- Do you know of any church or denomination where you are told you cannot be a Christian unless you are a disciple?

The problem for the church is never that they need more people, more money, or influence, or education. Never. The basic need is for the transformation of the people who are there. Our problem is the quality of the people who are there.

- In my early ministry I realized I was not really saying anything to help people change.
- What are we teaching people that leaves us in this situation?
 - Does using the language of “Jesus as savior and Lord” teaching lordship as part of salvation? The wording isn’t as important as teaching that Jesus really is Lord, which entails discipleship. Not just a doctrine, but a practice.

The Loss of the Precise Meaning of the Word “Disciple” [15:40]

People have turned to the term “Spiritual Formation” because the word *disciple* had become so flabby and misplaced. Illustrations:

- The Navigators used to divide Christians into 3 classes:
 1. Just Christians – People who said they accepted Christ
 2. Disciples - People who could make Christians
 3. Workers - People who could make Disciples

The Navigators have since realized they were producing people who were not Christlike and made an effort to change this. That's just an illustration of how “disciple” comes to mean something other than a person who is a full-time student of Jesus in the kingdom of God.
- Sojourners Magazine saw discipleship as things like service to the poor, political action, protesting, and government opposition. That needs to be done, but it’s not discipleship.
- Sometimes people think discipleship means being involved in church activities.

These don’t come to *the central issue of transformation into Christlikeness*. That is what would make the church be what it is supposed to be as the people of God and do what it is supposed to do in the world: the transformation of individuals into to Christlikeness...people progressively coming to the place where they routinely and easily do the things Jesus talked about.

Now we can understand why there’s no serious question of actually doing what Jesus said, because we’re not making an issue of that. Most of our groups have an emphasis on particular things Jesus said, but not all of them.

Three Parts to The Great Commission [24:30]

1. Make Disciples

That’s why it is so important for us to know what a disciple is.

- If we are going to make disciples, the first step is to be a disciple.
- Get people to commit to learning (see the treasure) so they will say, “Yes, this is the most important thing.”

Imagine groups of people together who acknowledged the Lordship of Jesus, and their whole purpose was to learn from Him. Then you have

people who are ready for a different kind of operation to go on around them.

Being able to bless people who curse you is simple once you learn to do it. But if you don't do the things that will bring you there, it won't happen. Grace will not *force* you to become the kind of person who easily and routinely does what Jesus says. This is a fundamental truth about the whole business of discipleship. Because if I am not a person who easily and routinely turns away from sin, it isn't because of the law of gravity. It is because I don't *intend* to become that kind of person.

People are not the kind of people that you might expect to see if you just candidly read the New Testament. It's because they do not *intend*. See William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*; read chapter 2. This is the missing link. When we are talking about making disciples, we are talking about making people who actually *intend* to do it.

If you want to do something different in your churches, *the key is generating intention. That is what discipleship is about.* That's why I said you make disciples by ravishing them with the kingdom of God and the way you do that is get them focused on Jesus.

It's amazing how little we hear about Jesus and the soul in our churches. We need to help people understand about the greatness of Jesus and what He is doing. He is often presented in a very narrow perspective as opposed to "the unfathomable riches of Christ."

Go to people and ask them, "*How are you doing with your kingdom?*" Then we bring people to look at Jesus and see the place of life in His Kingdom. That's how we make disciples and say, "*Look, this is your greatest opportunity in life.*"

2. Immerse Disciples in the Trinity

[38:07]

What this means in terms of our church services

Look at the problems people have with what to do with church services. Just getting nice people together in a building, seating them in rows and talking at them wasn't "doing it."

This led to various movements and denominations. But the problem of discipleship remains an issue across the board. The temptation to program differently needs to be avoided.

The second clause in the Great Commission is the key to understanding this. If the people who are there honor the Trinity and invite Him to come and be there—I mean really be there—and get off of the idea of *performance* and *program* as solving the problem, the Trinity will come. It doesn't matter much what you in the way of programming, as long as you honor the Trinity, the Trinity will come.

I don't think that will happen if you don't have disciples. One of the things we miss in reading the scripture is the order. You have to have people who really honor Jesus as Lord and come to church in that attitude and spirit. They're prepared to love one another; invoking the presence of God over the whole thing.

People have come together in all sorts of ways that God has blessed. His blessing doesn't mean He favored the methods, but probably means the people there are really disciples looking for the presence of God.

3. Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded

If you try to start here without 1 and 2, you will wind up with some form of legalism.

If you have disciples and you are submerging them in the Trinitarian life that flows in community of disciples of Jesus, then you can now teach them to do everything Jesus said. That is how discipleship in the gospel of the Kingdom comes together. If you don't preach a *whole life gospel*, you'll never make disciples.

The point is: *Living now within the range of God's effective will* in our whole life. Discipleship is learning how to come from running our own Kingdom, and bringing our whole self increasingly into the kingdom of God.

What is a Disciple?

[45:49]

1. A Disciple is one who is with Jesus, learning to be like Him

Discipleship is a matter of being with Jesus. So you have to be prepared to invoke Him, invite Him, and as you do that you are going to experience His presence with you. Discipleship is not something to be done merely by human effort, but by living in the Trinitarian presence. That is the meaning of the teaching of grace we receive from the Scriptures. Grace means we can't do that on your own. You don't have to. We are with Jesus, and we experience Him acting with us.

As human beings under God, we are constantly attempting to do things we can't do. That is standard with the life of grace. The fact that you can't do something has nothing to do with the case. The question is, "Does God want it done?" Are you willing to start lifting a load you know you can't lift, and watch it come up. That's God with you. **Isaiah 63:12**, "*God's glorious arm went at the right hand of Moses.*"

2. A disciple is interactive with Jesus.

[51:21]

"Now this is eternal life: that they would know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." **John 17:3**

“Knowing” in the Bible always refers to interactive relationship. So a disciple is someone who is interactively with Jesus. In practice, that means:

- I never go into a situation where I assume I’m in control of the outcome.
- If I have to do something that I think I can’t do, I won’t assume it can’t be done.
- If I think know what’s supposed to happen, I don’t.
- I try to never assume what will happen.

Sometimes I assert my Kingdom when I start acting like I’m in charge, but it would be very foolish of me to assume I know what’s supposed to happen. I have ideas, hopes and plans that are always held in abeyance with the idea that Jesus knows what supposed to happen. I am very hopeful a lot of things happen that I don’t even think about. **Ephesians 3:20** says, *He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we can ask or think...*”

3. A Disciple lets Him lead.

[54:28]

I’m learning from Him how to lead my life as He would lead my life if He were I. My life is the one that is of interest here. It’s not harmful to say I want to be like Him, but He led His life. Now I lead my life. I have to get concrete about that. *The very kind of person I am – that’s my life.*

Any work that is important for others can be done in a spirit of love and in the power of the Kingdom.

I’m an apprentice in Kingdom Living. He is the Master of living in the Kingdom; I am the apprentice. It’s the easy way of living. That’s what he said in **Matthew 11:28-30**: *“Come into me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I’ll give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart and you’ll find rest to your souls.”*

As a pastor, the performance is what you’re held to. Whereas what Jesus is talking about is transformation. We have to put that right up front.

The Gospel Heard Does Not Produce Disciples

[1:00:40]

Where is the problem? The central problem is the message preached (or at least the one that is heard). Sometimes anything you say about the Kingdom of God gets translated into going to Heaven when they die. It’s a real feat to succeed in getting through. The message that is heard does not have a natural tendency to produce disciples.

Even the idea of Lordship has become a controversy. This comes with a misunderstanding of grace. The gospel of Lordship, as it is preached, does not have a natural tendency to produce disciples.

The bitter truth: "Your system is perfectly designed to produce the result you are getting." This is a profound truth. If you want a different result, you have to change the system. This goes with another saying: "It is the mark of a disordered mind to think that you can repeat the same process and get a different result." So we have to find the place of change.

Non-Lordship Salvation is Ryrie's response to Lordship Salvation. He says:

"Some of the confusion regarding the meaning of the gospel today may arise from failing to clarify the issue involved. The issue is how can my sins be forgiven? What is it that bars me from heaven? What is it that prevents my having eternal life?" (Having eternal life means going to heaven when you die.) "The answer is sin."

He doesn't mean "sin", he means "guilt." One of the systemic ambiguities in much of contemporary theology is between sin and guilt. And the issue there is whether or not Jesus removes sin or just guilt.

Matthew says Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. Is that just guilt? "*He came to save his people from their sins.*" Not from guilt. Ryrie means guilt, as you will see:

"Therefore I need some way to resolve that problem; the problem how to go to heaven when I die. And God declares that the death of his son provides forgiveness of my sins."

He means that if you believe that Jesus died for your sins you'll be forgiven. If you don't take it that way, you get Universalism.

"Through faith I receive him and his forgiveness then the sin problem is solved." (He means the guilt problem is solved.) And I can be fully assured of going to heaven."

Ryrie later distinguishes issues of Christian life from salvation. You can reject the issues of Christian life (teaching) and still be saved (atonement). "Whether or not you believe His death paid for all your sins" is the way the gospel is often presented. This is just one *theory* of the atonement. That by "believing" in him you can have forgiveness and eternal life; you're account is paid off. Ryrie says, "When one believes, He commits his eternal destiny to God. That's the issue, not the years of his life on earth. The non salvation issues belong to Christian living, or relate to the Christian life, not to the issue of salvation. I do not need to settle issues that belong to Christian living in order to be saved."

Ryrie is driven by "Salvation by Grace." When he thinks about a difference in this life, he thinks "works." That is where Lordship Salvation and non-Lordship salvation join the issues.

The Three Gospels Heard Today

[1:10:20]

1. Forgiveness Centered (Ryrie)

The good news is entirely about forgiveness. The beating you deserve has been taken by someone else. If you *believe* it has, then you won't get that beating. Your sins will be forgiven and you'll be in Heaven because they won't find any reason to keep you out if you believe Jesus suffered your sin penalty.

This is the standard version of the gospel you will hear among evangelical and conservative, not to mention fundamentalist, churches. They don't mean for it to come out this way, but that's what you'll hear. And that will leave the issues of Christian living unconnected.

You'll see various ways to try to connect it.

- Reformed Tradition - You'll be so grateful, you'll obey.

2. Liberation Centered

Jesus died to liberate the oppressed and you can stand with Him in that battle. They don't say much about forgiveness of sins.

Is oppression bad? Is forgiveness essential? Yes. Reconciliation, justification...

In my own view I think it is right to think regeneration comes first, then justification, then sanctification, then glorification. They all fit into a natural progression along a continuous line. The way it is often presented now is that justification is the whole deal, no one makes much sense of regeneration and there is no natural progression to sanctification. And that's because of the way it is presented.

3. Church Centered

Do what your church says and it will see to it you will be received by God. (Take care of your church, it will take care of you.)

Sacramental Churches present this gospel, with rituals that will make sure you're OK. That is looking more to heaven when you die.

As you think about it, your key has to be what the scripture says. If it isn't in the scripture, don't do it. Scripture is the place where God has deposited, in a public way, the knowledge we need to have eternal life.

These are all Gospels of **Sin Management** - what are you going to do about sin? They are not gospels of regeneration and new life now in the present Kingdom of God, the present Kingdom of the Heavens, under the living Lord Jesus Christ. It is often presented as somehow as if we had never sinned we would have no use for Christ.

The misunderstanding of grace is another way of approaching this. Grace is often taught as only for guilt. This misunderstands Grace. Go to your Bibles for a thorough, inductive study of grace.

When presenting Christ to the world is it primarily or only what to do about sin? Those are gospels of sin management. The true gospel is: Put your confidence in Jesus and live with Him as His disciple now in the present Kingdom of God.