

The Sin of Man – Part VI

We don't have to have a God that we call up from the Abyss or pull down from Heaven or any of that...that presuming the presence of God, here today, is not presumption. It's the one time when a presumption is not presumption because presuming the presence of God in each of us as Christians and among us communally as we gather in His name, is faith—not presumption. So we'll begin just by presuming the presence of God, here today.

Now we always seem to have a newcomer or two, so I like to at least make a few sentences comment about where we've been. Our goal is to experience the abundant life as New Testament Christians; but we have to go back and re-lay the foundation. We don't get born again, again; but it's almost like that, where we're born again, assured of our salvation and yet at the same time, we have to gain a greater understanding. Because if we don't understand, the evil one will snatch the seed away that has been sown. That's part of the parable of the sower. So we began in the beginning to receive the revelation of the Holiness of God, the "other thanness" of God and only by seeing God as other than, can we even begin to understand sin in our own lives. So for the last few times, we've been hammering at sin from different vantage points; because remember that discrepancy between the "other thanness" of the Holiness of God, and what will prove to be the "other thanness" of the magnitude of our own sin by comparison with the Holiness of God, will open the door to receive the ever increasing revelation of the amazing grace of God. And that's what will take us into then loving as He loves us.

So, we're continuing on down the trail of sin today. Remember four frames of reference by which we address sin. God is truth, what God is and how He views everything else is truth. Anything contrary to that is a lie. Scripture tells us, what is not of faith in God is sin. So all sin is unbelief. We either surrender to God in obedience, or continue to rebel against God in our self determination. And ultimately at the root of sin, either God is the judge or we're the judge. With every thought that we have, we're pronouncing someone as the judge, either God or ourselves. And this is the theme that I'm going to begin to hammer at today and proceed into next time to go to the root of sin, which I call our judging of God.

Last time we looked at some sins. We looked at pride and then some that flow out of that; judgmentalism - fear of anything but God; laziness - which is love of the status quo, not God; lukewarmness; and grumbling. We saw that each sin can be traced ultimately to unbelief in God and self worship. By looking at grumbling through its different layers to get down to the root, to learn that language, the language of unbelief is to grumble because to grumble is to shake your fist at God and proclaim that you deserve better than He is giving you at this very moment. So all grumbling is to function in self determination, rather than God determination.

Today we're going to begin to walk down this outline, to look at our judgment of God. We'll make it, hopefully, halfway through this outline today. Now, I can't even begin to talk about the subject without reminding you of my original testimonial aspect. I was saved, almost 11 years ago when I was 50. Before that I had heard many things, but did not see. My wife witnessed to me and prayed for me for 28 years, other well meaning Christians did likewise. They fulfilled Ephesians 4:15 – by speaking the truth to me in love. They relentlessly set their love upon me by witnessing to me of the truth of Jesus Christ, without it being based on my negative response. They loved me relentlessly, but I didn't see for that 28 years. Then God acted as He promised He would to my benefit. Proverbs 16:18 – "Pride goes before a fall." So when I took my fall and I was crushed like a grape, it wasn't to have a bad outcome, it was to crush my flesh and bring me into openness to God. So when I reached that end point, hitting the wall of

the strength of the flesh, I collapsed in that little puddle of helplessness and hopelessness. The circumstances that crushed me did not cause me to be helpless and hopeless. I had always been helpless and hopeless; I just didn't know it. And the circumstances then demonstrated it. Remember, out of that came that little ditty that I still quote to myself frequently. I've always been hopeless; I just didn't know it. Then came the struggles, just to show it. Helpless I am; now helpless I know. Before, in pride, now in humility I go. Because I was as Christ described people in Revelation 3:17 – "I was poor, blind, naked, miserable and wretched." But I didn't know it as I functioned in my pride and self determination. Now, why had I not known it before? Because I was ignorant. Now we're fond of using ignorance as an excuse because we're taught in Scripture that we're accountable for that which we know, for the light which we have. But remember, when you take the sum of the Word of God, we are accountable for two things-- what we know and knowing more. That's called hunger and thirst. Because ignorance is not a condition. Ignorance is an act of the will; it's a choice. Because we are ignorant only of what we ignore. And we ignore what we give a low priority as an act of the will. In short, I did not know because I would not know. As for all of my life, I had suppressed the truth of God in unrighteousness, functioning in self determination as if I could proclaim if there is or is not a God.

That cast me in the position of judging God as not worth knowing and not worth seeking. So that's the drive of the human heart that I'm going to elaborate on in different ways, centered on the theme of our judging of God. It's a behavior that began with Adam and Eve in the garden; it continues in all unbelievers today and to one degree or another, even continues in the heart of believers in Jesus Christ. If something is that common in the human heart, then I think that it is worthy of discussion from that vantage point. So, let's begin to look at our judging of God.

Now, of course, any time you speak of judging of God, our minds are conditioned to think of God's judgment upon man. But that's not the way we're going to look at it. It's the reverse polarity—the judging of God; because if you grasp this concept, going to the root of sin as the judging of God by man, it will be a truth that will set you free. Now since we are Christians, we're going to begin gently by talking about non-Christians. The major category, of course, is the atheist. The atheist does not believe that there is a God. He considers himself to be the ultimate rational creature. He looks condescendingly upon all of those who disagree with him as being irrational and even delusional and even insane—out of their minds. He pooh-poohs anyone who walks by faith. He proudly states that he will only function in that which can be proven and his methodology is that of the scientific method. He looks at faith as being the refuge of a weak human being. But when you take the onion of the atheist, strip away the layers, then you come to the realization that he is probably the most self delusional person on Earth.

He says there is no God. Well, why does he say that? The reason given is because there is no proof of the existence of God. In other words, he says the absence of proof is proof of absence. But we know, or should know, that those are two dramatically different things. Absence of proof is never proof of absence about anything. Furthermore, he pronounces himself as being able to determine when enough proof has been given to document the existence of God. He says I'll only believe what can be shown by the scientific method. But, of course, he ignores the basic premise. Where is the proof, by the scientific method that all knowledge can only be obtained by the scientific method? The answer...well, there is no proof. The scientific method has not proven and can never prove that the only method by which knowledge can be obtained is by the scientific method. So the atheist makes an assumption that is not verifiable by his declared methodology. That, in itself, is an irrational behavior.

Now, what do we call it when someone makes an assumption that cannot be proven? Well, one word for it is faith. Because Hebrews 11:1 says "faith is the conviction or the certainty of things not seen." In

other words, the atheist makes a leap of faith as the entire foundation of his life; while taking a leap of faith in other people as being evidence of insanity. That inconsistency is horribly irrational, while he views himself as the ultimate creature of rationale. That is self delusion. He makes a leap of faith and furthermore, that leap of faith is choosing to function in hopelessness over hope, all the while deriding those who disagree with that approach.

(Next poster) So the next one is simply to review for us what any rational man would do when he looks at the human condition through the prism of the human mind. He would list all of the possibilities and then compare them. There are only two possibilities. Life has no point; or life has a point. If it has no point, there are two possibilities. I believe it has a point, well, it has no point, I believe it has a point, I'm wrong, but I lose nothing because it had no point anyway, so I'm in a hopeless condition. I believe that it has a point. When it has no point, I'm wrong, I lose nothing, if I believe it has no point, I'm right, but gain nothing. In other words, if life has no point, it doesn't matter if you believe it or don't believe it because it's hopeless anyway. But that second one, life has a point. If I believe it has no point, I'm now wrong and potentially lose everything because it has a point, I functioned through my whole life as if it pointless and I potentially lose everything and remain in the hopeless condition. But if it has a point, and I believe it has a point, I am now right, can begin to seek the point and potentially gain everything. So the only option out all the logical analysis of the possibilities by the human mind is to function in the belief that life has a point and to begin to seek that point.

Now life is not determined by whether or not I believe it has a point. Either it does or doesn't. That's truth beyond man. Whether you believe it has a point or not, doesn't create a point, it simply determines how you relate to the point that it has. So what would any rational person do looking at the options? He would say, well, three of the options are hopeless and only one of them offers hope; I will choose the one that offers hope and begin to function in it. But the atheist makes the choice that there is no God and chooses hopelessness over hope, while he looks down his nose at anyone who functions to believe as if life has a point. Remember the summary statement. There is nothing more pointless than to believe that life is pointless.

The second point: We do not come to God by logic. But this exercise is to demonstrate to us that it is entirely logical to seek to come to God. Now, how does the atheist reach his conclusions? Is it by proof? No. It's by fiat. By pronouncement; like a king gives a fiat. And as he says, so is it done. So the atheist, by fiat, by pronouncement, says there is no God. Well, that's the self determined point of view. God in Psalms 53:1 would tell us "the fool has said in his heart, there is no God." And if we don't even look at God, but just look at Pascal's wager, we would say only a fool would say in his heart, there is no God and base his life upon it.

But the atheist, as an act of the will, appoints himself as the ultimate judge and judges by self pronouncement that there is no God. That is the ultimate judging of God, namely, to think that a human being with a finite brain can make an ultimate pronouncement that there is no God. That's the ultimate act of self determination. That's to take the position that I, as a man, can determine if there is or is not a higher being than myself. I, as a man, can conclude that there is no being higher than myself; thus, I pronounce myself by fiat as the ultimate being in all of existence and proclaim myself as my own god, not answerable to any other creature. In short, I can worship myself. So, all the atheist is doing is taking an irrational act, choosing hopelessness over hope, pronouncing himself as his own god. How do I know all that so well? Because I was blind as an atheist, but now I see.

When you look at the next level, we go to the agnostic. The agnostic is nothing more than a slightly gentler atheist. The agnostic says, there may be a God, but we cannot know if there is or is not. In other words, the agnostic does not think that we can know. He begins with a human thought and concludes with a human thought. He thinks that his thinking is the ultimate rate limiting step in all of human endeavor and the determining factor in all of human functioning. So, how does he do that? By proof? No. By fiat. He simply pronounces, as an act of self determination that we cannot know. Well, how does that judge God? Because he judges that if there is a God, that God is unable to reveal Himself to me in any way that would be more powerful than my thinking, or in any way that would bypass my thinking. In other words, God, if He exists at all, is impotent compared to the power of my own thinking. My thinking is the rate limiting step, not the power of any God, if He exists at all. I thus, judge God, if He is, to be impotent to reveal Himself to me. I conclude that I cannot know, because God, if He is, cannot make me know. The agnostic bases his life on the self-contradictory statement. He says, we cannot know ultimate truth, while making the statement as an ultimate truth. So he is self-contradictory by logic itself, again choosing hopelessness over hope.

But when we strip away the layers of the agnostic, we should see what we find...an atheist in camouflage. How do we know? Because Matthew 7:16 says, "by their fruit you know them." So the agnostic does not seek God, the atheist does not seek God, so they have the same fruit. Both pronounce themselves by fiat as self determined. An agnostic is simply an atheist who's seeking to appear somewhat open minded. He believes that if there is a God, that God must give me credit for believing that He could be, as if that's worship enough from a finite creature. Furthermore, he can say, I can remain friends with all my atheistic friends and not be rejected by them because my behaviors are exactly like them, namely that we all ignore any possibility of God in all our human endeavor. He also considers himself a rational creature—pooh-poohs faith, while making a leap of faith to base his life upon an assumption that is unproven, namely that we cannot know if there is a God. So, he too lives in faith, while pooh-poohing faith. That is itself an irrational action. Well, how do I know? Because I lived there, but now I see.

The next category is the Universalist. This has two variants. The non-Christian Universalist says all religions are the same. Well, does he know that by some proof? No. By fiat. Are you getting a common theme? By pronouncement. He simply, as an act of the will, pronounces that all religions are the same as if, if he pronounces it, it makes it truth. The pronouncement gives him an excuse not to pursue any religion fully. So his position becomes like that of the tired swimmer half way across the ocean who drowns because it looks the same distance to both shores. Because no man fully commits to any religion when he believes that all religions are the same. He doesn't seek God to let God tell him if all religions are the same. He simply pronounces, as an act of self determination, that all religions are the same and that is to judge God. Because he proclaims what view God must hold. So he is telling God what God must be instead of coming to God to let God declare what He is. The commonality, of course, of all religions is that man is seeking some meaning beyond the finite flesh and blood experience. But beyond that, they're all dramatically different based on very different versions of truth and they cannot all be true.

Now the second variant of the Universalist is the Christian one. This is the one who says all people will go to Heaven because no loving God could send anyone to the horror of Hell. Again, the rate limiting step is his own mind. He thinks this to be true; he takes the scripture, God is love, and then pronounces by fiat what love must do and not do. So rather than letting God declare what He is in all His essential characteristics, the Universalist, as a Christian, pronounces what a God of love must be and must do. He doesn't seek God to let God demonstrate and reveal to him His various essential characteristics. He

simply pronounces, by fiat, as an act of his own will in self determination what God must be and what God must do. That is to judge God. Well, how do I know that? Because even after getting saved, I lived there, because I did not see.

Well, now let's move on to look at ourselves as Christians. Now you might say, I would never judge God; nor would any other Christian ever judge God. Well, maybe not; but let's explore some potential ways that maybe Christians, other than yourselves, or churches other than ones you're in that may have judged God.

The captivity of the mind: I will not believe unless I understand. If I can't understand it, it becomes irrelevant to me. But remember, that means that your God, by your own self determination, will always be smaller than your understanding. If you insist on walking only by what you understand, you're declaring your understanding to be bigger than your God. That is a form of self worship; because you're worshipping your understanding, not worshipping God. That's to judge God by the limits of your understanding, while judging God to be a liar when He said in Proverbs 3:5 "trust in Me with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding."

Self righteousness: I will decide if I'm righteous enough for God. I'll judge God because I'll judge the level of righteousness that should be adequate to please Him. My judging about that will supersede His judging. I judge, in fact, that God's time would be better spent on those less holy than myself, as I judge that God should be pleased with me in comparison with them. That takes us to judgmentalism. I'm better than the next guy; therefore, God must be pleased with me. I judge God because I will determine the standard of what is good enough for a God if He is good. And thus, I will be also the judge of when others have met an appropriate standard to satisfy God.

Self condemnation: Self condemnation, in Christians, is often camouflaged as humility. But, in fact, it's pride. Self condemnation says, I judge God because I judge that the value of my sin is greater than the value of the blood of Jesus shed to pay for my sin. I judge the payment of the blood of Jesus to be inadequate to pay for my sins. I judge that I can judge this better than God can judge this as I live a life of calling unclean that which He has called clean by the blood of Jesus. I judge God as simply being wrong about the cross. I continue to punish myself...self flagellation while judging that the blood of Jesus was inadequate to pay for my sins; but His blood plus my masochism will pay for my sins. That's pride because humility comes to God to let God tell you what value He places upon you. But self condemnation is to insist on setting your own value or letting others set your value rather than coming to a Holy God to let Him tell you what your value is. So anytime you insist on setting your own value, that's pride, not humility. So self condemnation camouflages as humility as one berates himself, but in fact, it is another act of pride insisting on setting your own value before a Holy God.

Grumbling: Grumbling, we know, is to say, "I shake my fist at God and proclaim I deserve better than He's giving me at this very moment. I judge myself as a better judge of what circumstances I should be facing, than God is of what circumstances I should face. I judge God as being wrong because He didn't prevent the circumstances and I judge God as being late because He hasn't delivered me out of the circumstances. I take offense at God." Remember, when you take offense at God, you do one of two things. You either say "He isn't here and He ought to be"; or "He is here but He's misbehaving". Both judge God.

Conditional Love: I will judge who I should set my love upon. Thus, I judge God as being wrong as He pours out lavishly unconditional love upon all; and commands me to do the same. Can I decide who is

worthy to receive my love, without functioning in self determination and when God tells you to set your love upon them without being conditional upon their response?

How about walking in my own adequacy? I understand the purposes of God so fully that I judge I am adequate to fulfill them. I judge God because I judge that His purposes can be fulfilled independent of His power. I judge that He was simply wrong when He said in John 15:5, apart from Me, you can do nothing. The opposite is also true.

Walking in my inadequacy: That's to say, I have assessed the situation and judged that I am inadequate; and thus, I withdraw from pursuing it. I judge God, because I judge that His power is inadequate to overcome my inadequacy in fulfilling His purpose. I also judge that His understanding must be inadequate because if He understood my inadequacy, He wouldn't be calling me to do this to fulfill His purpose. He was simply wrong in Judges 6:14, when God told Gideon, "go in this your strength, have I not sent you?"

Coveting: Why covet? Because I am the best judge of what I should have. I wouldn't be coveting it if I didn't think I should already have it. I judge God because if He really understood, He would have already have provided for me that which I'm coveting because I'm obviously fully deserving of it. God was simply wrong when He said in Matthew 6:33, "seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then let other things be added to you."

That will get us almost to being out of time. That will get us roughly halfway through this theme, of our judging of God. What I'm wanting you to begin to grasp, whether it be non-Christians or Christians. Anytime that we maintain any thought or any meditation where, by fiat, we pronounce in self determination what God is, what God ought to be doing, and so on, we are judging God. We don't want to look at it that way, but if I'm in circumstances that I think really I shouldn't be in, how could I grumble to God without believing that either His knowledge of the circumstance is inadequate; or His love of me is inadequate; or His faithfulness to me is inadequate? You've got to judge God to be inadequate anytime that you function in some sin, including specifically the sin of self determination. So what we've done today and what we'll continue to do next time is to take our own experience and examples from the Bible and keep pounding to the root to see that the root of all sin is man by fiat, pronouncing in self determination what is true or must be true including about God. That's the theme of our judging of God, which in fact, is the root of every sin, because the root of every sin is self determination and self determination is self looking at self and looking at God and pronouncing that self knows truth better than God knows truth...and we will pick that up next time.