



FINDING
CENTER

TRYING TO ORBIT IN TWO SOLAR SYSTEMS

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:1-10



Can you be a Christian and _____? Can I be a Christian and cheat on tests? Can I be a Christian and do drugs? Can I be a Christian and hate my parents? Can I be a Christian and look at porn? Can I be a Christian and Bisexual? Can I be a Christian and gay? Can I be a Christian and be stingy? Can I be a Christian and _____?

We spent some time on this question a few weeks ago. Since then I have heard a bit of feedback from different people, so I felt it was important to spend some more time on this question in particular before jumping into our next series. **This question exposes something about what we believe about the nature of Salvation and it exposes the war we fight against sin in our own lives.**

The Nature Of God's Great Salvation:

What did YOU do? NOTHING!

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

- You were centered on sin (you were orbiting around it)
- You were dead in sin
- You were active in sin
- You enjoyed sin
- You were in a crowd of people orbiting around sin.
- You were an object of God's wrath

What did GOD do? EVERYTHING!

But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,...

- He pulled you in with his irresistible grace and out of the crowd of sin
- He ordered your chaos by giving you himself as the blazing center
- He saved you from his consuming wrath by bringing you into his family
- He made you alive to his love
- He made you alive to his mercy

- He made you alive to his goodness
- He made you alive to his generosity

WHY did GOD do it? To SHOW OFF His GLORY!

...so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- So you would glitter with his grace
- So you would glitter with his kindness

Why could God do it? Because He MADE YOU!

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- Because he made us
- Because he made us for good works – not works of selfishness
- Because he made us to reflect glory – not to wallow in darkness.

This salvation God has extended is great! If it doesn't order your life, command your obedience and shape your relationships – than you do not know its greatness!

Can you be _____ and a Christian? In once sense, "YES" – because you are not saved because of anything you did. But in the sense that I think the question is asked, the answer is a resounding "NO!" You cannot revolve around two centers. Either God is at the blazing center of your life or you are revolving around something else. To choose to ignore God is to try to make God orbit around you...and he's too big for that. He will either order all of your life, or he consume it.

The War We Fight Within Ourselves:

The PROBLEM is BIGGER than you think.

⁹ do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14

When we read these verses – and many more like them – we see ourselves, we see the sin flying around in our lives, we even see our favorite Bible Characters, and we know that this sin problem is deep, pervasive, dangerous and terminal.

God created us by his power, God saved us by his grace, God is changing us by his glory, God is making us alive to his love, God is transforming us into the image of his Son, God is finishing what he started. **From start to finish, our salvation is all about God.**

If life is like the solar system, God is the biggest, brightest, all consuming, blazing center of it all. **When he saves us, he pulls us out of outer darkness to orbit around his blazing glory.** In his goodness, he also gives us a ton of moons. These are good, God given things – abilities, responsibilities, passions, etc. Just like the moon that orbits the earth, these “moons” actually serve to reflect God’s glory to us even when we aren’t looking directly at him.

The trouble comes when we begin to do one of two things:

1. **Demand that God join our moons in orbiting around us**
2. **Begin to orbit around one of the moons rather than them orbiting us as we orbit God.**

Either option is what the Bible calls idolatry – and it is devastatingly destructive. The resulting chaos causes priorities and relationships to collide and break apart.

People don’t go to hell because they are homosexual, or thieves, or Muslim, or stingy or, whatever. **People go to hell because they put their hope and trust in something, or someone other than Jesus.** You see? Jesus commands all of our desires, all of our passions, all of our priorities, all of our relationships, all of our responsibilities, and all of our activities. **All of these “moons” reflect the glory of God and are designed to be ordered and governed by him.** Muslim’s do not go to hell because they are Muslim, but because they orbit around Allah and reject Jesus as Lord Savior God King and Christ, crucified for their sin, risen from the dead and coming to judge the living and the dead. Allah is their center. Thieves don’t go to Hell because they steal, but because they orbit around money. Jesus is not their treasure – money is their center. Gossips don’t go to Hell because they destroy reputations – but because they orbit around their own ego instead of Jesus. Homosexual people don’t go to

hell because they're attracted someone, but because they orbit around their own desires and self-expression.

Rahab – the Jericho prostitute – was saved because God pulled her into his orbit. So when He knocked down Jericho's wall, He held Rahab's part of up. Her sin was clearly present but she wasn't centered on it anymore and God changed her. David – the man who knocked up another man's wife, murdered her husband to cover it up, and wrote a bunch of the Bible – was saved because God pulled him into his orbit. His sin was clearly present but his life was not centered on it and God changed him.

The question "Can I be Christian and Bisexual?" reveals a desire to have two centers – two identities – two gods. You want to worship Jesus and do whatever you want. You want the warmth of the sun and the stability that comes with living within its orbit, but you don't want to be governed by its gravity. But you can't orbit in two solar systems.

God has clearly said that His gift of sexuality is a moon that reflects His glory. It is for our Joy, and for the Good of human flourishing, family stability, and the mingling of two souls for life. It is part of His command to "be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it." When we break from God's purpose for our sexuality, we twist His truth, embrace a lie, and orbit our lives around the gift rather than on the giver of all gifts. God's glory is no longer our blazing center – our personal happiness and self-expression has become our center. We want God to bless our idolatry – and God will not.

Around Whom/what do you orbit? You cannot have 2 centers. Whatever is at your center, whatever is most glorious in your life, whatever has the most pull over you, this is what will govern all else in your life.

CORE Questions:

- Are you a Christian?
- How do you know?
- Why do we keep sinning?
- What do we do about our sin?
- What are you tempted to orbit around other than Jesus?

Here is some helpful insight from the Apostle John: (1JOHN 1:5-26)

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of the Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

- If we say we orbit Jesus but consistently reject what Jesus tells us about our life, than we are lying.
- If we are continually running after Jesus and listen to what he say, than our orbit will become obvious to us

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

- *If we say we have no sin...* I obviously don't understand my own sin.
- *If we confess our sin...* I'm always making course corrections, as Jesus pulls me closer, then his gravitational pull is obvious in my life.
- *If we say we have not sinned...* we are basically calling Jesus a liar...which means we aren't orbiting around him

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin, but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know what we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we many know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him out to walk in the same way which he walked.

- Jesus is my advocate (he defends my right to stand in his perfection)
- Jesus is my righteousness (Jesus is the righteous one)
- Jesus is the covering for my sin (Jesus covered/cleansed my sin)
- He is my center (if we know Jesus, then we will be focused on him)
- The longer I orbit, the closer I get to him

LODG SCHEDULE

3.15.2017

- 6:15 Set up and ready to go
- **6:30 Welcome/Announcements: Josh**
 - Welcome
 - Announcements
 - Question of the Week: What does God require in the 4th and 5th Commandments?
 - Sunday night CORE Groups!
 - See the City: Chicago This Saturday! Cost \$18 Sign up at www.gracemorton.org/lodg
- **6:35 Krazee Gamez:** Shana/Mindy
- **7:00 Core Group:** WHAT ARE THE 3 MAIN THINGS THAT IDENTIFY YOU APART FROM GOD? WRITE THESE ON THE PROVIDED BALLS
- **7:10 Music:** The LODG Collaborative
- **7:25 FINDING THE CENTER: CALEB**
- **7:50 Core Group:** Refer to "CORE Questions" at the end of the message notes
- **8-8:30 Hangout**