

# IN DEPTH BIBLE STUDY: SPIRITUALITY OF THE CROSS

## CLASS 4 and POWER POINT 4:

1. Moralism is impossible and filled with contradictions. People can't, don't and won't live up to their own high standards. We fail. Sometimes attempts at this lead to immoral acts, and higher standards can cause us to hate, coerce and feel better to others. At times our own attitudes undermine our virtuous actions. I have done good works with acclaim and praise, while inside it took away any pretension of my good work meriting anything. The passions, sins of the will and secret desires of my heart chip away at my best moral intentions. Moralists mask their failures with dishonesty and rationalization. Moralism is mostly accompanied by hypocrisy, and external righteousness that reveals the true story inside.
2. Another way to cope when our morality slips are grasp is to hold the correct positions, vote properly or have correct social causes. It can push virtue outside of our experience, even while personal life has become a wreck. We define Moral perfection down so we can make it easier to our control. In doing so we end up violating moral obligations that really count, that with our own behavior and our relationship to others around us.
3. Another problem is that righteousness can become self-righteousness. This superior feeling of pride undoes the virtue that was done. Even the highest moral people slip up and the attempt to be morally perfect breeds harshness, pride, and cruelty, hardly signs of being a 'good person.' Being good is laudable, if we are honest no one can achieve that. We don't have the will power and inner motivation or the inner purity to achieve moral perfection.
4. Speculation is the assumption that the key to spiritual fulfillment is knowledge. If we only know the truth, we can find the key to understanding the complexities of life. If we had the right knowledge we can be content. There is metaphysics, the impulse to figure out the why of life.
5. The pursuit of knowledge is a worthwhile endeavor like moralism. As a spiritual path it has dead ends, the human mind can't comprehend all of existence. Answers are offered and change as history of thought shows. One school of thought is followed by another, and need revisions. It seems impossible to settle upon truths that are final and indisputable. Truths, like to know an infinite God staggers the human intellect, the Woman at the Well, John 4:11, reflects the well is deep and we have nothing to draw upon.
6. Human systems reflect human desires more than objective reality. Ideologies that claim to account for everything set up systems of power and oppression. The French Revolution gave us Napoleon, the tenets of 'liberal' Marxism gave us the gulags. Just was with Moralism, extreme views become another occasion for pride, arrogance, and elitism that shuts out the rest of the world, the truth right now seems more elusive than ever.
7. In Marlow's Dr. Faustus, the hero sells his soul to the devil for knowledge. When he knows everything, machinery, celestial mechanics, astronomy, the wonders of an educated mind, all that knowledge seemed pointless and unconnected to the spiritual condition.

8. EV poured over all sorts of books for spiritual illumination. They contradicted each other and EV wondered about putting all my trust in one human being. No matter how wise, that person knew as little as I. While I filled my head, I neglected my life.
9. Moralism and speculation are followed by religious and non-religious people. The most appealing mode of Spirituality is mysticism, attaining becoming one with God. Transcend the ordinary life with communion with God- ascend into the spiritual. Have direct supernatural tapping into its power for our own sources (Harry Potter), these are the goals of mystics and all religions. From self- denial to spiritual ecstasy promise supernatural endowment.
10. A fine line between the self-becoming one with God and the self-becoming God, when one searches for the divine, they may seek self- deification. Hinduism and the New Age movements conclude with "the god within!" Hindu is the "Atman," the god of the inmost self and Brahma, are one. New Age Seminars help us "create our own reality." The ultimate discovery is expressed more or less directly is that "you are God."
11. Even Christian mystical experience can claim supernatural power, from divine inspiration to the Holy Spirit speaking directly to do miracles, Mystical experiences can come close to the Serpent's primal temptation, "You will be God."
12. Even when mysticism doesn't go that far, the temptation is thus to use God for my own purpose; pleasure, a 'spiritual' high, to gain power. Magicians and con men can be spiritual masters. Even the notion that one can master the spirit, shows the spirit has limitations. At its best mysticism draws one into the self or inner emotions, one can shut out the exterior world and those therein. This is what EV said of himself.
13. All three approaches expand HUMAN EFFORT to reach God. This makes God an observer who does nothing and one must make it their goal to get to him. God is a treasure to be sought, discovered and earned.
14. To Koeberle, these three forms of spirituality are tied to the mind; Moralism the Will. Speculation the intellect and mysticism the emotions.
15. LS (Lutheran Spirituality) begins with the reality that all efforts to reach God are futile. To Luther the Will is in bondage to sin. Not can't fulfill the law, but don't want to. The intellect is in bondage, bound by its limit and tainted by the sinful will. The emotions are in bondage as well, and will lead us more away from God than closer to Him, we would run FROM God.
16. LS is what God does! He rescues us depraved and miserable sinners. He became human Himself. The God man did what moralists couldn't do. He was perfect and took upon Himself all of Human punishment for all moral failures on the cross. The Spiritual life is about what GOD DOES and CONTINUES to do through the HOLY SPIRIT!
17. To Koeberle, LS addresses the moral impulse of the will by Law and Gospel, L and G. In place of speculation is the Word of God. In place of mysticism experienced by emotion, LS focus is on God's union in Christ and the phenomenon of faith. GOD DOES it all. Next time, L and G!