

# IN DEPTH BIBLE STUDY: SPIRITUALITY OF THE CROSS

## CLASS 24 and POWER POINT 24:

### LIVING IN TWO KINGDOMS: The Sacred and the Secular:

### CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE:

### IMPLICATIONS OF THE TWO KINGDOMS (TK):

### EVERYDAY SPIRITUALITY:

1. "A Christian lives in vocation and the church," observes Wingren. Vocation is the concrete form of the L and the Church the concrete form of the G. Both are essential to a believer's life. The person who knows both faith and G and active service in the world that is someone who lives consciously in both kingdoms at once. They have a spiritual balance, in which the sacred/secular, the morality/freedom have a place.
2. Luther describes the ordinary person of humble occupation who knows where he stands in the TK. *"As long as he (a shoe maker or black smith) clings to these two, to the Word and faith by God by which the heart is made clean, and to the word of understanding which teaches him how to act toward his neighbor or his station in life, everything is clean to him, even if his hands and his whole body he deals with nothing, but dirt."*
3. The grimy workman is clean in his heart, through faith in Christ. Conversely, everything in his grimy world is clean to him, since this too is part of God's Kingdom to which they have been called.
4. L wrote 2 theological masterpieces that carry seemingly contradictory titles: *"The Bondage of the Will,"* which emphasizes our slaver to sin, our inability to save ourselves, and our utter dependence on the state of God; and *"The Freedom of the Christian,"* in which he explores the utter freedom opened up by faith in Christ, the latter book sets forth these two paradoxical theses; *"A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."*
5. The spiritual K is one of perfect freedom in which kings and peasants, rich and poor and men and women of all culture and vocations are equal before Christ. They are free from the demands of the L and the world. Yet they live in the earthly kingdom and they freely set aside their spiritual freedom for a life of service. Christians voluntarily serve their neighbors subjugating their own interests for the good of others, living out vocation in good works for others.
6. We often expect a highly spiritual life to include mystical reverence and superhuman virtue or the possession of a supernatural power that overcomes obstacles. The spiritual life turns out to be rather ordinary—on the surface. It involves the universal experiences of forming relationships, marrying, struggling with problems, and working. The doctrine of the TK is that God is hidden in everyday life. Thus it is not moments of transcendent ecstasy that we are "spiritual." Human relationships are spiritual. The pleasure of being so caught up with someone you love that you forget yourself in marriage is a high and holy experience! So is child-raising!

7. When one acts as a parent, protecting, disciplining, caring and loving your child—you are intimately close to God, who is hidden and active in what you do for your child.
8. The satisfaction that one feels from their work is something spiritual. When you work hard and are at your best or what many call, 'in the zone.' When one is caught up in their work and it's going well, then God who gave you the talent and your vocation is lurking close in the background.
9. We encounter God when we serve and work, but when we receive His gifts from others. Being loved by a spouse or friend is really being loved by God. Benefiting from others' vocation eating at a restaurant, getting your car fixed, going to the Dr., slowing down at the site of a State Trooper, buying something well crafted—are all occasions for thanking God. To EV, listening to music, reading a novel, or gazing at a painting is an especially pure example of God's sovereignty in human vocation. As EV takes pleasure in other's God given talents, who have a vocation that he/we don't have, fill us/him with a sense of praise. Not just to the artist, but to the God who is so generous with His gifts.

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. EV remembers the first time he attended a L church with his wife, they both came from liberal and Evangelical backgrounds. They never attended a formal service, yet they liked it. It was different from what we were used to. The next Sunday they came back as they could tell something significant was going on. To their surprise the congregation chanted. This time the service was not from a bulletin, but from a red book, a sequence of prayers, scriptures and ancient song. The pastor in a robe with a stole was forgiving our sins and making the sign of the cross. The liturgy reached a crescendo with the sermon, then again with the Lord's Supper, in which communicants kneeled as the pastor placed the wafer on the tongue as if they had stepped into the Middle Ages.
2. It turned out their first service was actually the church's informal service. Once a month, they go casual. The rest of the time they follow the traditional L liturgy. EV found out that when L are less formal, they are actually more formal than others.
3. L spirituality is embodied, expressed tangibly, in L worship. In fact, I have been discussing seemingly personal issues, such as justification and vocation, it is impossible to be L, really w/o Word and Sacrament, L and Go, the vocation, pastor, Real Presence and the real presence of Christ animates the liturgy at every point. Each week in worship, the Christian takes part in a diving drama, a mystery in which Christ's gifts are received.
4. After worshipping there for months, EV realized the difference. Even though he didn't recognize it, he had a sense of holiness. The robes, rituals, music, "set apart," and in America at least the Egalitarianism, casual ways and laid-back attitudes, nothing is set apart, and as we say, nothing is sacred. But church EV was learning, the sacred is found. The way the pastor would bow, and the Word of God on the altar and pulpit, the way the congregation would stand and kneel (In many LC-MS churches), the majestic language of the liturgy convinced me that something different, extraordinary was going on.

5. When the service culminated in the Lord's Supper, the mystery became palpable. My wife and I knew not to take the Communion. They could not partake in this until they had been properly instructed and accepted into the fellowship and knew what was going on. In all their other churches, the Sacrament, was not that big of a deal, were free and easy of who could partake, but EV was not turned off by L closed communion practice and strict fellowship rules. Such practices were alien to him, but they added that something monumental was happening with this Sacrament. To see communicants go up and kneel, receive what they believed to be, the pastor's words, "the true body of Christ and given for you." Then people came back to their pews with a transported ecstatic expression on their faces—drove home the point.
6. May people tease L and L tease themselves about not worshipping in an emotional way. L worship has an objective quality about it, the sense that grace is actually operating outside of one's perception, that is very different from the more subjective styles favored by other theologies. L worship is God centered, not human centered. EV finds L liturgical worship to be extraordinarily moving. IT does make him emotional, but not in a sense of some sort of spontaneous release, but in a positive sense to something real.
7. We found the services, the depth of the preaching and the richness of the doctrines to which he started reading about so compelling that he wanted to join. This would not be easy. After a few weeks, they realized no altar call, no simple walk up to the front and receive "the right hand of fellowship," and thus become a member. They had to take a class that extended over months, as thorough as long as the college courses EV just finished in graduate school, but there was a lot, a lot to learn. Finally, they were received into the community of the church. We received the Lord's Supper. Later our newborn daughter was baptized. We were drawn further and further in.

## **HEAVEN ON EARTH:**

8. L worship bathes the congregation with God's Word. The readings, liturgical responses, the great set-pieces and the Introit and Kyrie are not vain repetitions, as critics say. They are the very words of Scripture. L hymns are not emotional effusions. They are doctrinal and artistic and rigorous explorations of the Biblical text. The creed and prayers are grounded in Scripture. A L sermon is not a moralistic pep talk, nor a meditation on current events or pop psychology, but the proclamation of L and G, drawn from the appointed text of The Bible. And The Lord's Supper is the fulfillment of God's promises as recorded in the NT. The Word of God permeates L worship, and the Word of God is a means of grace.
9. Australian L, John Kleinig says that worship is an experience of heaven on earth. When earthly kingdoms try to build heaven on earth, as we have said, it is disastrous. But the church as the same spiritual kingdom that exists on earth as it is in heaven, bring heaven to earth every Sunday. What we do in worship is what the saints do in heaven, namely come into the presence of God.

10. Drawing on Biblical teachings about worship, from the temple through the Christ-centered worship of the new covenant (Hebrews 10 and 12), Pastor Kleinig maintains that we worship in church we also worship with saints and angels in heaven. Jesus through His cross gives us complete access to God, because we are in Christ. In God's eyes we are just as holy as Christ as He hears our prayers as if we were Jesus. So we come into the Holy Place, into the presence of God. Something that will happen in heaven and something that happens every Sunday.
11. We don't need to wait until we die, says Kleinig to know how we stand with God. At the beginning of the service, we confess our sins, hear the Gospel and are absolved of our sins. The pastor in his vocation, is acting "in the stead and the by the command of Christ." So we hear God's judgment on us; "Forgiven." In the service of the Word, God addresses us through Scripture, and The Holy Spirit creates faith in our hearts. As we praise God in the hymns, glorias, we join with all Christians around the world—furthermore, with all the redeemed in heaven, from the ancient martyrs to our friend and the relatives who are now with Christ.
12. Just as the OT priests washed themselves in pure water, before they could enter the holy precincts of the temple, Christians have been washed in Baptism. Just as the OT priests consecrate themselves with the blood of the sacrificial lamb, Christians receive the body and blood of Christ. And when Christ gives us His very body and blood the bread and wine, He is really present, just as He is present in heaven and just as He was present with His disciples. IN fact says Pastor Kleinig, when we worship, Christ is more accessible to us than the disciples were. He is closer to us, more intimately connected, since He has taken us into His cross.
13. The SOTC negates all moralism, but it inspires selfless service. The cross swallows up rationalistic speculation, while it affirms the truth of revelation in all of its ineffable mysteries. The cross counters the mere quest for mystical experience, by lifting up what is inglorious, ordinary and even painful, yet, through the Word and Sacraments, offers a true union with Christ.
14. A spirituality in which God does everything for us may seem to be too true or too easy to be true. There is to be sure nothing easy about being broken by the L, struggling against one's nature, and fighting through trials and suffering. But on another level, it is indeed easy simply a matter of receiving Christ's gifts and the G of forgiveness and grace on the cross, is, as the Catechism says, "most certainly true." This truth is no mere intellectual assertion, but a faith lived out in worship, in the inmost depths of the heart, in love of others, in work and in the day-to-day routines of everyday life.

Do you as a class which to cover "The Appendix?"

- A. On a scale from 1 to great to 10 poor, rate this class. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. What did you enjoy the most about this class?
- C. What did you enjoy the least or how can this class improve?
- D. Write down three things you learned from this "The Spirituality of the Cross Class?"