

# **IN DEPTH BIBLE STUDY: SPIRITUALITY OF THE CROSS**

## **CLASS 25 and POWER POINT 25:**

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.

## APPENDIX: The First Evangelicals and Other Churches

7. EV wrote a formidable article; "Evangelical Catholics and Confessional Evangelicals; The Ecumenical Polarities of L." It shares L amongst other Christian traditions, and offers other insights that may be beneficial. He will offer it to us here.
8. Imagine a church that is both, Evangelical, sharing Christ's forgiveness through faith and Sacramental, centering on B and the LS. Imagine a church grounded in Scripture, yet avoids individual interpretation to an intellectual rigorous and imminently orthodox theological system. Imagine church that has strong preaching and a history liturgy. Imagine a historical church with a rich spiritual tradition, but w/o legalism. In short, this church as the best of Protestantism and Catholicism.
9. Such a church many might dream of who are disaffected by the vacuity of liberal theology and the shallowness of American Evangelicalism. This church exists, it has an inadequate name, L.
10. Worldwide there are 60M on the coasts, making it the largest Protestant denom. There are 9 M in America, 5M in Africa, 5 in Asia, and another M in Brazil. It is one of the dominant religions in Papua New Guinea and they're the same amount of LCMS in the USA as Episcopalians.
11. The L church in America is unknown, Catholics, Episcopalians, Baptists, Charismatics and Calvinist are represented in polls, debates and articles, but L who have their own distinctive approach from everything to salvation to politics are theological wall flowers.
12. Billy Graham called the LCMS, the "Sleeping Giant." If L is the invisible church, or to paraphrase what L said of God, the church that hides itself is partly its own fault and the fault of the theological tension of American culture. Nevertheless, L has much to offer Christendom as a whole. As a church body with a worked out theology which it actually follows, some L denominations have retained their orthodoxy more than others. But more than that L theology, it's spirituality is animated by a dynamic polarity in which divisive theological controversies are put into balance and thus resolved.

## PARADOXY:

13. The character of L theology is its affirmation of polarities. Calvin and Arminius both constructed systematic theologies, explaining away and contrary Biblical data in a rationalistic system of belief. L developed his theology in Biblical commentary, following the contour of Scripture wherever they lead and developed its most profound polarities: L and G, Christ, true man and true God, justification by faith and baptismal regeneration, LS as real presence in bread/wine.
14. L have affirmed Evangelical and Catholic ideas, their way of paradox resolves issues that divide protestants. Calvinist hold to double predestination. Arminians insist that potentially all can be saved and stress the freedom of the will. L stress grace above all that God does literally everything for our salvation, Christ dies and the Holy Spirit breaks into our lives through Word and Sacrament, the means of grace. Jesus died for all so that all might potentially be saved. L affirms the best of Calvin and Arminius, while avoiding the exclusivity of one and the morality of the other known as Pelagianism. Charismatics emphasize the HS and so do L finding the Spirit not in the vagaries of emotions, but even more tangibly as being genuinely operative in Word and Sacrament. L are tenacious in the doctrine, while excluding separatism and legalism. L

cultural theology affirms 2 Kingdoms, preventing the secular from swallowing the sacred, and the sacred from swallowing the secular. (This is why L can seem both inwardly focused, free & easy & why they seem conservative & apolitical, & they often have beers at church dinners.)

15. L with its Sacraments and liturgical purpose synthesized with its Biblical emphasis and Evangelical proclamation might serve as a bridge among the various factions of Christianity, of course it's not that simple.
16. If L represents a EV. Catholicism, (Some Confessional L like this) its paradoxes mean that it is likewise subject to attack from every side. Evangelicals consider L too Catholic, making fun of stale formality, its old fashioned music and ancient liturgy and more seriously questioning how L can save salvation by faith, yet hold to baptismal regeneration, and become appalled when the pastor says and gives absolution, forgiving sins. Catholics lump L and all other Protestants in fact, L are the worst because they started the "dissolution" of Christendom.
17. With Protestants, L did not go far enough in the Reformation, for keeping Papistical practices and idolatrous worship. Arminians attack L for not believing in the freedom of the will and leaving the door open for Antinomianism. Charismatics think that L are cold, Fundamentalists believe that L are strong on doctrine, but weak on morals.
18. While L are attacked on every side, L counter attack all. L condemn Arminians for denying Predestination and Calvinists for holding to double Predestination. Catholics and Charismatics are considered alike in believing that the Holy Spirit reveals Himself in humans, apart from the Word. Fundamentalists are savaged for their legalism. In fact, many L don't see themselves as Protestants at all.
19. The L synthesis is a baroque structure that can only be held together by a doctrinal rigor that constantly reinforces every point-Anglicans attempt a via media between Catholics/Protestants. which works through compromise, broad consensus and tolerance for differences. The L way is one of polarities. Each pole is to be maintained- heightened. Chesterton said in Orthodoxy of the paradoxes of Christianity is particularly descriptive of L theology: "We want not an amalgam or compromise, but both things at the top of their energy; love and wrath both burning." Christianity does not approach doctrinal issues such as the nature of Christ or the moral status of a human being in terms of the Aristotelian golden mean. Rather, "Christianity got over the difficulty of combining furious opposite, by keeping them both and keep them furious."
20. L are Sacramental and Evangelical. Anglicanism, even with its high liturgy was still rejected by Continental L as being another variety of Calvinism. It articles it as being too wishy-washy and not clearly affirming the Real Presence. Evangelicals are not Evangelical enough, falling as they do into the trap of "decision theology," and moralism, and not trusting God to accomplish literally everything that is meaningful.
21. As a result, L theology embraces in one sense the whole range of Christian spirituality and is an entity unto itself. With its own spiritual disciplines that are quite alien of other traditions. Consider for example the way L oppose the so called TOG. TOG has its pretensions of power, victory and earthly success. L TOC, God reveals Himself in weakness, defeat and failure. Or The Bible, not just an info book, but a Sacramental means of grace. Or the way that God hides Himself in the material elements of the Sacraments in humiliation and defeat in what seems most secular and nonreligious. Or the exhilaration, under the G, of Christian Freedom.