

(Radical Jesus) 3 Radical Jesus

by Glenn Meldrum

The sermon highlights the radical nature of the Atonement, God's love, and the plan of God for mankind, emphasizing that we must seek Him with all of our heart to be found by Him.

Duration: 23:21

Scripture: Genesis 15:1, Job 9:10, Job 38:14, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Radical"

Description

In this sermon, Glenn Meldrum discusses the concept of the Radical Jesus. He emphasizes that the teachings he presents are not new doctrines, but rather the simple truth of God's Word passed down from Jesus and the apostles. Meldrum focuses on the promise found in Genesis 15:1, where God assures Abram that He is his shield and a great reward. He explains that true wealth and abundance come from knowing the fellowship and favor of the Lord, rather than material possessions. Meldrum also highlights the profound love of Jesus displayed through his atonement for humanity's sins, urging believers to strive to understand and appreciate this truth in order to live a worthy and devoted life in Christ's kingdom.

Transcript

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We're now into the third week of our investigation into the Radical Jesus. This series comes out of my most recent book, which carries the same title. In last week's lesson, I established that what I am teaching is not some new doctrine, but the same and simple truth of God's Word that has been passed down to us from Jesus and the Apostles.

I also gave a rough outline containing some of the material we will be digging into in the weeks to come. As we progress in this study, which is an examination into the person, character, and work of Jesus, we will begin to see more clearly the Radical Jesus and come to understand that His teaching is also thoroughly radical. Today, I want to highlight the radical nature of the Atonement.

Christ's Atonement for the salvation of sinners is absolutely radical in how it came about and in what it accomplishes. When we think of the Atonement, we are prone to look only at the cross and those events

that led up to it. That is not the way the early Church viewed it, though.

As can be seen in the teaching of the Apostles, they concentrated upon the resurrection because it revealed the divinity of Christ. However, they viewed the Atonement as a more inclusive event, comprising everything from His miraculous conception to His ascension into heaven. This idea is true, because even if one event was removed or altered from the life of Jesus, the Atonement would be affected as a result.

Let's look for a moment at Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. The conflict that raged within Him in the Garden of Gethsemane was a struggle only a God-man could endure and overcome. Mankind has known suffering ever since Adam's infamous rebellion, so the physical suffering Jesus experienced, though thoroughly excruciating, was not beyond what others have endured.

Before the events ever took place, Jesus knew the agony He would experience, ranging from the humiliation He would face to the beatings He would endure to the atrocities of crucifixion. I do not want to downplay the realities Jesus physically endured upon His human body. Because He was and is God does not mean that He did not experience the physical horrors of scourging and crucifixion.

He felt the pain like any human would have felt. The humiliation He experienced was infinitely greater than any person could experience because of the position He owns by divine right as King of kings and Lord of lords. But that is not what caused Jesus' sweat drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Why did Jesus sweat those drops of blood? We know that it had to do with what He would face in the hours following His season of prayer in the Garden. As I have touched on earlier, even though the physical suffering would be excruciating, many people have suffered to such an agonizing degree. One major difference, though, is that Jesus thoroughly knew that His suffering would last for only a short time and that He would never endure such abuse again.

Jesus knew something by experience that we can only know by faith, and that is what waits for us on the other side of what we call death. And He did not have anything to fear about that. The extreme depth of agony that caused Jesus to sweat blood was overtaking upon Himself the judgment that all of mankind's diabolical sins justly deserve.

This is the only way mankind could be reconciled to God so that we could find the joy of fellowship with a holy God. Jesus fully knew what He was doing, why He was doing it, what He would accomplish, and why He must suffer to such a degree beyond anything any human could imagine or endure. For Jesus to be the Lamb of God to take upon Himself the sins of the world was so costly that we will only be able to grasp a small portion of the price He paid for our redemption.

What a tragedy that we who claim to love Jesus can be so thankless for what He did to rescue us from the justice of His divine wrath. The fact that we are not awestruck over the radical Jesus and what He accomplished for us at Calvary proves just how spiritually deaf, dumb, and blind we can become. Sin has been, and always will be, the ruin of mankind.

Without Jesus, we are hopeless and helpless slaves to sin. The phenomenal love that Jesus lavished on us was proved once again when He took upon His sacred head the vast evil that ruined and perverted the entire human race. Such knowledge should cause us to gaze in awe at Him and motivate such profound devotion that the world takes notice.

The Atonement is infinitely beyond radical, but we do not have words that can even begin to adequately describe what He did for us. Though we will never even come close to fully comprehending the wonders of the Atonement, we should nonetheless be striving to understand this truth so that we walk worthy of this great and high calling of being adopted children of the living God. The knowledge we can fathom about Christ's work on Calvary should cause us to burn with holy passion and to be totally devoted to Jesus and the building of His kingdom.

Anything less is to degrade Christ and the Atonement by which men are saved. Though our finite minds cannot fathom the immensity of Christ's work, we are obligated by the very fact of what He did for us to passionately seek to know and absorb as much of it as possible. It is not an exaggeration in the least to say that such knowledge is literally worth selling everything we have to obtain, even to the point of laying down our lives.

Let's look a little deeper at what happened when Jesus hung on the cross so we might see more clearly the radical Atonement. By keeping with the prophetic meaning of the Old Testament sin offering, we will see a picture of what Jesus did as the Lamb of God. If a person sinned, he could take a lamb to the temple in Jerusalem and offer it up as an atonement for his sin.

He would lay his hands on the head of that animal and so transfer his guilt unto that lamb. This is exactly what took place on Calvary. The guilt of the entire human race was placed upon the head of Jesus as the Lamb of God, who was the substitute for our sins.

He accepted the consequences that our sin justly deserves, so that the wrath that each and every human being has earned came upon Jesus. Jesus received upon Himself the full fury of the Father's just wrath, so that we could receive His mercy instead of the damnation we legitimately deserve. The astonishing thing about Christ substituting Himself for us is that only God could withstand the wrath of God.

Before we became followers of Jesus, we did not realize what it meant to know God or to experience the awesome wonder of His presence. Yet within the Godhead, the one God who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, only knew the infinite joy of perfect, unbroken fellowship. We do not even have the capacity to grasp this reality.

When Jesus became the Lamb of God by substituting Himself in our place, the Father rejected the Son, not as rejecting the Son, but as rejecting us. This act of mercy for mankind inflicted violence upon the Godhead by causing there to be the first and only separation between the Father and Son. This is radical love for mankind.

The incalculable agony we see expressed in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus' sweating blood was over the rejection He would receive by being the Lamb of God. We finite creatures cannot fathom such pain because we have never known such fellowship. A right understanding of the atonement and the divine love that was the motivation for it should fill us with endless praise and adoration.

Guess what? That's what heaven's all about. I speak this not only to you, but to myself as well. What right do we have to complain for anything we suffer since Jesus paid such an infinite price so we could be with Him forever? This is truly radical.

Let me ask a question here. What is the worst aspect of judgment in hell? Is it the flames that will never be quenched? No. How about the weeping and gnashing of teeth? No again.

Because weeping and gnashing of teeth has to do with hateful rage the residents of hell will relentlessly hurl at God and it's not about their torment. How about the idea of utter darkness? This will indeed be agonizing because it has to do with utter solitude or eternal loneliness. This is here alluding to the worst part of hell.

We commonly think that the outer or outside darkness is about separation between the residents of hell. And I would agree with this. But there's far more to it than this.

Jesus told us in Matthew 8-12 that the children of the kingdom of this world shall be cast out into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then in the parable of the sheep and the goats He said, and cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is the idea that they are cast out of the presence of God and the redeemed to spend an eternity without ever knowing the love and goodness of God. The worst judgment that hell can mete out is eternal separation from God.

To never know the love, peace and joy that the Lord freely gives to His children. To never dwell in the glory of His manifest presence. These are the real horrors of hell.

Jesus tasted hell for us so we would not have to. And He was separated from the Father for a time so we would never have to experience the agony of being separated from Him for eternity. Jesus received the judgment we justly deserve so that no one who places their faith in Him would taste the eternal horrors of the damned.

What a good and merciful God He truly is. This is the love of God that has been lavished on us and it can only be experienced by faith through the surrender of our heart, mind and soul to the One who created us and owns us by the right of redemption. Peter told us that even angels long to look into the wonders of Christ's atoning sacrifice and His work of salvation for the residents of this rebel planet.

Think for a moment what it must have been like for all of heaven to gaze in horror as they watched their God hated, rejected, beaten and then murdered through the slow agonizing death of crucifixion. We cannot even fathom the ecstatic joy that filled the corridors of heaven when Jesus rose from the grave as the absolute and undisputed conqueror of hell. The victory that Jesus purchased with His life and blood is seen in the power of His resurrection.

Hell had no claim upon the Holy Jesus because He was the only sinless, perfect man this world has ever known. The infinite power that God inherently possesses was displayed at His resurrection which declared that His limitless power was freely made available to transform sin-laden humanity. Mankind could then be born again into Christ's radical kingdom and enter into intimate fellowship with an infinitely holy God.

Job stated in chapter 9 that the Lord performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. When He passes me, I cannot see Him. When He goes by, I cannot perceive Him.

Later in the book of Job, Elihu declared, For God speaks, now one way, now another, though man may not perceive it. God has always been and will always be active in His creation and His activity is dependent upon His own will, not ours. Because we do not perceive His activity or hear His voice does not mean that He has abandoned His creation or specifically the rebellious human race.

The radical atonement is proof that God is active in the world of men and the lives of every blood-bought saint are further proofs of the glory of God. He who knows every star by name and sustains their celestial dance through His infinite wisdom and providence thoroughly understands the intricate workings of every human being. Though we may have felt alone, we have never been left alone.

And those that belong to Jesus will never be alone for all eternity. One of the reasons we may feel alone has to do with the consequence of sin. But that does not mean that the Lord is not actively working in our lives and in the lives of men, women, and children throughout the world.

God is infinite in every aspect of His infinite nature, which means He cannot do something halfway, for that would be contrary to who He is as the infinite God. The Lord uses His limitless power and wisdom to save everyone who will receive His gift of salvation. We must also understand that the Lord will not save anyone that does not want to be saved.

He will honor the decision we make as to whom or to what we shall serve. There is no one better at saving lost souls than the Lord Himself. Actually, there is no one else that can save souls.

He is more than able to take the children of hell and transform them through His immeasurable grace into adopted sons and daughters of the living God. And this is very radical. Scripture clearly teaches that the Lord is not a respecter of persons.

It also teaches that it is not His will that any perish. So He freely makes available His unfailing grace to anyone who desires to know the wonderful Savior and receive His gift of salvation. Another point that I would like to make about the radical Jesus is that He does not make any mistakes.

He is omniscient, which means He knows everything that can be known, yet there is no end to all He knows. The Lord did not have a plan B when Adam sinned, because there is no such thing as a plan B with God. The Lord knows what He is about, and He has everything in control, even though it may seem in this crazy world that it is out of control.

Now, I am not going to pretend that I know more about the workings of God than what can be known to us fallen creatures. Like I said last week, I do not have a new revelation, which is a very good thing, because if I did, it would only be an old lie regurgitated and vomited upon the human race once again. What I can say is that God's Word clearly reveals that when He created mankind, He had a specific plan for them.

His purpose for mankind can be put in very simple terms. We were created to glorify God in everything we say and do, and to enjoy Him forevermore. When sin entered the world, it greatly hindered our ability to fulfill God's plan for our lives, but it did not thwart its potential to be fulfilled.

The story goes far deeper because God's plan for mankind was with Him before even time began. He knew before creation came into existence that mankind would sin, and He also knew what He would do about it. Because of who God is, we can rest assured that sin has not thwarted His plan because He made provision for it before creation began.

Since we can only understand such concepts to a limited degree, we must be careful before we make some theological theory that can only be advanced through philosophical arguments. God's foreknowledge does not mean that He predestined mankind to sin, or that He predestined some to go to heaven while others were created only to suffer the horrors of hell. We know that God is sovereign, and that He has given mankind a genuine free will.

How these work together will only be known in the mind of God. How can mere mortals know the mysteries of God, much less know His mind and thoughts? Have we been His counselor? No. It would do us much good if we grew comfortable with the mysteries of God, rather than pretending to be know-it-alls when we really know hardly anything.

The Scriptures teach that nothing that has happened to mankind in general, or to us as individuals, has been a surprise to God. When the Lord created Adam and Eve, He established the true definition of what it means to be human, and that definition has not changed. It has never been, nor will it ever be, mankind's responsibility to define a reason for being.

That duty belongs to God alone. It is the Creator that defines the purpose of His creation, not the other way around. Sin never altered God's original intent for mankind.

By looking at the radical Jesus, who is a perfect man, we can clearly see that sin has horribly twisted what we were originally created to be. We are a mess of sin, fooleries, and absurdities. Jesus came into this world to re-establish our reason for being by making Himself the standard of what it means to be human.

He accomplished this through His life, teaching, death, and resurrection. In the final analysis, Jesus was the only normal, perfect human being this world has ever known. The closer we get to being like Jesus, the more normal we become by the definition of the One who created us.

And the farther we get away from being like Jesus, the more perverted we become. In our sinful condition, we are so twisted and perverted that we cannot even recognize what it means to be normal according to God's perfect standard. By the sheer aspect that Jesus is the Creator God, He alone has the right to determine what it means for a human to be normal.

And because He became fully human and lived out a perfect human life, He has made Himself the sole standard by which we are to define what it means to be a normal human being. Anything that veers from Christ's perfect standard is a perversion. In the foolishness of our present evil world, what we claim to be normal is actually what God declares is a horrible perversion.

We defy God to such an extent that we take the most wicked people and make them our heroes and stars. Then we take the most perverted lives and turn them into our rulers, kings, presidents, and politicians. We are very deceived creatures, and this to our own ruin and shame.

The more we become like the radical Jesus, the more normal we will become according to God's perfect holy standard. The opposite is also true. The further we get from God, the more twisted and perverted we are sure to become.

This is the path of ever-deepening depravity that will cause people to look like Satan, their spiritual father. Whether we comprehend it or not, the Lord has a plan for all of mankind, and it is a radical plan to give hope and a future to a people who are without hope because their sin only offers them a future in hell if they stay the present course. Though this astounding plan is 100% free, it will also cost us everything.

The Lord's promises of salvation are totally conditional. This means that for anyone to be a recipient of the benefits of God's salvation, they have to fulfill the conditions and stipulations that the plan requires. Take, for example, Jeremiah 29, 13.

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord. The fulfillment of this conditional promise directly depends upon whether or not we will seek Him with all of our heart.

This is not earning the right to be found by God, because there is nothing that we can do of ourselves that can warrant such a response from Him. Not just that, we will not and cannot in our fallen condition seek Him with all of our heart. It is just not possible.

So the desire and power to seek Him with all of our heart comes from Him. But the will must come from us. We must desire it and seek for it.

Even with this, we must see that God is always the first cause. He is the one that does the calling to us before we would ever want to seek after Him. If we seek Him wholeheartedly, He promised to give us the greatest of all rewards, the gift of Himself.

We can begin to taste this glorious reward here on earth, but it will only be fully realized when we get to heaven, where we will be free from all the restraints of this mortal flesh and the obstacles incurred from our sinful nature. Another one of God's phenomenal promises was given to Abraham, but is also made available to us. The promise I am speaking about is found in Genesis 15-1, where the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield, your exceeding great reward. Some translations word this verse differently, making it say merely that Abraham's reward would be great, but that is not what the Lord was imparting to Abraham and now to us. A person could possess all the wealth of this world yet still be in abject poverty because he did not know the wealth or wonder of the Lord's fellowship and favor.

A man could be starving to death from abject poverty in this life while being infinitely rich because of the wealth he possessed in that he knew the favor and fellowship of Almighty God. We can see this played out in the parable Jesus gave about Lazarus and the rich man. Since God is infinite, the mysteries that surround Him are immeasurable.

If you want a God you can figure out, then all you are left with is to make one up of your own, because the Lord will forever be an infinite mystery, and you are absolutely powerless to do anything about that. I just happen to love this aspect about God, and am far more comfortable with such a humongous God that is neither safe nor manageable, for such a God is powerful enough to save. One of these wonderful divine mysteries focuses upon the aspect that God, who does not need us, wants us.

What do we have to offer a God who needs no one or nothing? In our arrogance we think that God must somehow need us, and such an idea could not be further from the truth. Actually, God needs nothing outside of Himself to be God, and there is nothing outside of Him that can add anything to Him. He is perfect and complete in Himself.

Now all of creation is in desperate need of God even to exist. When we look at all rational creatures, they need Him to have life and fulfillment, otherwise they become malevolent devils or corrupt evil men driven by such devils. In our arrogance we can also think that there is something about us that God likes, maybe our magnetic personality or our witty humor, or our beautiful face or body, or our blazing intellect.

We fail to see that in our fallen sinful condition, that we are so twisted, perverted and unholy, that there is virtually nothing in us that could attract the attention of a holy God other than His wrath. The Lord fully

realizes that what we truly need is Himself, and that we are in desperate need of Him more than anything else. The Lord wants us enough to awaken in us a desire to want Him enough so that we would seek Him with all of our heart.

Did you get that? Let me repeat it so that we might grasp it a little more fully. The Lord wants us enough to awaken in us a desire to want Him enough so that we would seek Him with all of our heart. That is an astounding thought, and the ultimate expression of His pursuit of us is seen in the radical atonement.

The way has been made through Christ so we could have all the power we need to seek Him with all of our heart. This is obtainable only through divine grace. The promise is, taste and see that the Lord is good, not see and then taste.

Faith must come before seeing, not the other way around. Only when we seek Him with all of our being will we find that He is the ultimate prize of salvation. Yet after we taste the wonder of His salvation and the joy of His presence, we have something of substance that causes us to seek Him with even more passion.

We will only seek Him with wholehearted desire when we grow to love Him supremely. All this and so much more is made available to us through the radical cross, which was the instrument whereby Jesus accomplished His radical work of the atonement.

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