

SET FREE!

September 1, 2010

Half A Gospel

A masterful job has been done of keeping the Christian church preoccupied with the thing that God has dealt with once and for all – sin. While at the same time it has been ignorant of the thing that God wants us to be preoccupied with – life!

This in no way means that we are to minimize what Jesus did on the cross. We can never be thankful enough for that!

What we need to understand is that the ultimate goal of salvation was the restoration of life so that we can truly appreciate the purpose and meaning of Jesus Christ's death for us on the cross.

When I was a boy my mother and grandmother used to carry out a ritual every summer called canning. I don't know why it was called "canning" since everything was put into glass jars.

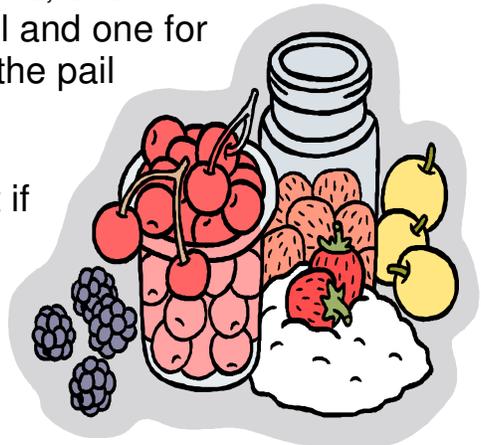
Grandma and we kids would go out into the back yard and pick fruit for what seemed like days. The morning went like this, one raspberry or strawberry or blackberry for the pail and one for our eager little mouths. It took a long time to fill the pail doing it like that.

Grandma would scold us and remind us that if we ate them all now there wouldn't be enough for next winter. Some how next winter just didn't seem very important to us on a warm summer day.

Once we had enough berries we would take them into the kitchen and carefully wash them all.

Meanwhile my mother had been sterilizing the jars. The kitchen was filled with steam!

The reason for sterilizing the jars was so that the contents – the fruit – would be preserved from spoiling.



It would have been rather strange if we had come into the kitchen in January and found my mother still sterilizing the same jars since there was nothing to put into them then. So if she had just kept sterilizing the same jars day after day and then put them on the shelf only to clean them again it would be rather futile.

Why clean them if you are not going to fill them?

We'd certainly have a lot of clean jars, but that would be only half of the process. That's a lot like asking God to forgive us and to forgive us and to forgive us – in an effort to stay like clean jars but not putting anything into us.

Sin has been dealt with once and for all. We need to realize that first.

Hebrews 9: 24-26

For Christ didn't enter the earthly version of the Holy Place; he entered the Place Itself, and offered himself to God as the sacrifice for our sins.

25 He doesn't do this every year as the high priests did under the old plan with blood that was not their own;

*26 if that had been the case, he would have to sacrifice himself repeatedly throughout the course of history. But instead he sacrificed himself **once and for all**, summing up all the other sacrifices in this sacrifice of himself, **the final solution of sin.***

As far as God is concerned the issue of sin has been dealt with. We need to be seeing it from His point of view. Jesus did what John the Baptist said he would do:

John 1:29 (Amplified)

*²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming to him and said, Look! There is the Lamb of God, Who **takes away the sin** of the world!*

Sin has been taken away. The jars are sterilized we don't have to keep "boiling" ourselves!

Unfortunately we have done that with the Gospel, we have separated God's sterilization process – the cross – from His filling process – Christ coming to live in us through His resurrection!

The church, to a large extent, has been guilty of teaching half a gospel – that is, the cross of Christ that brought us forgiveness of sins. But by separating forgiveness of sins from the message of receiving the life of Christ, we have not only missed out on experiencing life, but we have lost sight of the purpose of forgiveness in the first place.

The reason that God had to deal once and for all with the sin issue was so that we could be filled with Christ “without spoiling.”

Let me illustrate this “half the gospel” issue in another way.

Let’s imagine that a man has died of a disease. If we were to rescue the man we would have to deal with two problems. One, we’d have to raise him to life, but also we’d have to cure him of the life threatening disease.

Now what if we only cured him of the disease, but did nothing else? He would still be dead – right?

On the other hand, if we raised him to life but didn’t deal with the disease, he’d only die again.



Ever since the Fall of Adam, the earth has been the land of the walking dead – spiritually dead. The disease was sin.

From God’s point of view, salvation involves the raising of spiritually dead people to life. But before He could give life to the dead, He had to totally eradicate the fatal disease that killed men – sin. So the cross was God’s method of dealing with the disease, and the resurrection of Jesus was and is God’s method of giving life to the dead.

The half-gospel that has been taught has stopped at the point of dealing with the disease and not going onto the purpose of providing the cure in advance of raising us to life, which is to have the life of Christ living through us.

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

That takes us to the next point.

There was another step in the “canning” process. On the stove would be a pot filled with melted wax. It used to come in little bars measuring about five inches by three inches.

When the wax was hot, Mum would pour it onto the now filled jars of preserves.

I can recall finding jars in the cellar with homemade labels that told what was in the jar and when it had been preserved. Those wax seals were still in place years later!

“**Preserves**” was the perfect name, because they were sealed tight for a reason. The sealing kept the good things inside and the bad things that would spoil the contents outside.



**This is the picture of the born-again believer.
He has been cleaned, filled and sealed.**

Ephesians 1:13 *It's in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it (this Message of your salvation), found yourselves home free--signed, **sealed**, and delivered by the Holy Spirit.*

Cleansing, filling and sealing: a great picture of salvation!

Once we see that the goal of salvation is the raising of the dead man to life, it is easy to see why Christ had to deal with the sin issue once and for all. He did it to fill us with His life.

1 John 4:13 *This is how we know we're living steadily and deeply in him, and he in us: **He's given us life from his life**, from his very own Spirit.*

We can now find the full purpose of our having been cleansed of sin, so that we could be filled with life, everlasting and eternal life!

As Paul Harvey would say, “*now you've heard the rest of the story.*”

Not just half the Gospel, but also the second part that gives us purpose, the SET FREE joy of being filled with the life of Christ!

