

One-Step, Two-Step or Twelve-Step?

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes that true salvation in Christ offers freedom from sin, contrasting it with ineffective self-help approaches.

Scripture: Matthew 1:21, Mark 2:17, Luke 4:18, John 8:34, Romans 3:23, Romans 8:2, 1 Corinthians 15:17, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 5:1, Colossians 1:12, 1 John 1:8

Topics: "Sin And Redemption", "Victory Over Sin"

Description

Anton Bosch preaches about the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the ultimate solution to the problem of sin, emphasizing the need to acknowledge and take responsibility for our personal sins. He highlights that Jesus came to save us from our sins, offering a complete transformation and freedom from the power of darkness. The sermon challenges the belief that Christians must live in defeat and bondage to sin, instead emphasizing that through Jesus, believers can truly be free and live in victory over sin and addictions.

Transcript

Most versions of modern christianity have watered the Gospel down to a self-improvement, self-help, twelve-step program. There is little difference between the techniques offered by AA, anger management programs, assertiveness training and other self-help courses and the techniques employed and promoted by churches. I am not denying that some of these programs have some good effects but, the Gospel has to be more powerful than psychological techniques for it to justify its claims. And it is. Not only is the Gospel of Jesus Christ more powerful an antidote against the problems of the human nature, it is indeed the only true solution.

Before we can seek a solution, we need to define a problem. Even AA's first step deals with acknowledging the problem. So what is the problem? Depends who you ask. Some define the problem simply as personality flaws, and to others they are genetic predispositions, social conditioning or alternative lifestyles. Some speak of sickness a habit or a weakness. But the real problem is sin. And it is not Adam's sin, it is yours and mine. Sin is not impersonal, general or generic, it is personal. Each of us has a problem and that problem is called sin. Sin controls our motives, actions, habits, thinking and even defines who we are. Until we are willing to acknowledge and take responsibility for our sin, there is no hope of redemption. It is my sin, not that of Adam, my parents or society that is the issue. Until we are prepared to get down to the truth and admit that each of us has sinned (Romans 3:23), there is no hope of

a solution. Why do you need a solution when there is no problem? Jesus said: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Mark 2:17). To those who are prepared to acknowledge the plain truth about their sin, the gospel offers a powerful solution.

The solution is to be saved. But saved from what? To most "being saved" means to be saved from the consequences of sin, meaning hell. For such Jesus simply becomes a fire-escape from hell. Yes, He does save us from hell, but that is incidental to the real work of salvation. At the birth of Jesus the angel said: "...you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21). For many being saving from sin has come to mean they have been forgiven. But that is not what the verse says. To "save from" is clearly not the same as to forgive. God's whole work of redemption begins with the fact that Jesus saves from sin.

When you save a drowning man from the water, it is understood that you have to take him out of the water. Even if you threw him a life-line, he has not been saved before he is removed out of the water. In the same way, Jesus came to save us out of our sins. Paul says that if Christ was not raised, we are still in our sins (1Corinthians 15:17). Jesus offers more than a twelve-step program. He offers a one-step program: "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2Corinthians 5:17). In one step "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:12)

Many Christians see Christianity as an ongoing process of sinning and finding forgiveness and to them, as long as they keep asking for forgiveness, all is well. Thus they live their lives in defeat and bondage to sin but find small comfort in the fact that their sins can be forgiven. While the Lord's grace and forgiveness is wonderful and to be appreciated, surely He died and rose to accomplish more than that. He came to set us free. Free from sin, habits and lifestyles. This is what Jesus said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." (John 8:34,36). Notice that He did not just say "free" but "free indeed" - truly and really free. Not in theory but in reality.

I am not saying that Christians never sin. We know that we do and "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1John 1:8) but we should not be slaves of sin who have no choice but to sin over and over again. We can break free and live in victory. If we cannot, then the Bible is a lie and we should no longer call Him "Jesus" because every time we use that Name we are confessing that He saves His people from (out of) their sins.

Unfortunately the Devil has many of us defeated and has brainwashed us into believing that we cannot be free and that we will be slaves to our habits, thoughts, addictions, anger and sin for the rest of our lives. We rationalize it all by believing that one day we will finally be free when we get to heaven. But Jesus promised something that is available here and now. In Galatians 5:1, Paul admonishes us to "stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.". Note that Christ has made us free - past tense. This is confirmed in Romans 8:2: "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death". This is part of the work that Jesus finished and completed on the cross when He cried "it is finished". The reason why so many continue to be in bondage to sin has nothing to do with the completeness of the deliverance that was wrought on the cross, but has everything to do with the fact that many choose to remain enslaved by sin instead of walking in liberty and victory.

Victory begins with believing God's word rather than our experience, or the lies of the devil. Farmers keep cows in a confined area by energizing an electric wire that shocks the animal when it touches the wire. After a while the farmer will remove the energizer but the cows will not cross that line even though it cannot hold them nor hurt them. They have become conditioned to the fact that they are trapped by that thin wire. We too become prisoners of our own thoughts and do not believe that we can be free, not because we cannot, but because we have been deceived into believing that our sin, lust and habits will forever control us. The bible says you can be free believe it today.

Jesus said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me... to proclaim liberty to the captives...to set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."... And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:18-21). Jesus came to set you free, this is the acceptable year of the Lord for you. Who will you believe, God's infallible Word, or the deceiver who wants to keep you in bondage? (To be continued)

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