

PRICELESS SOUL WELL OF REVIVAL

MINISTRY

The Central Idea Of Christianity

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Abridged and restated by Jeff Paton

There can only be one central idea of the Christian scheme, and that is, as it exists in the mind of God. If we start with the wrong central idea, we will end up with a system of belief that is full of errors.

If my central idea for Christianity were the Church, as it is with the Roman Catholic Church, then the “end” to all of Christian meaning would consummate in the maintenance and existence of this organization.

As you can see, with any central idea we by nature will limit ourselves to that focus.

Where is evangelism, holy living, and outreach within the Catholic Church? It is not there because the central idea of Christianity for them demands that the highest meaning and purpose exists in the “Church”.

What if we make the central idea to be regeneration as many Protestant churches do? If this is the central idea of Christianity, then we can safely assume that evangelism is the highest goal for the Christian. Anything beyond the initial new-birth would not be essential to the Gospel system. Anything beyond “getting saved” is superfluous and expendable. This is the attitude of many Protestant churches today. To them, holiness is an option, but not really necessary, or even possible. It is a nice “goal,” but they feel they have already reached the highest achievable state of religion, which is regeneration. They have attained to the end of Christianity in this life, which in their mind is regeneration. This makes “getting saved” their central idea. Concern for holiness is spoken of, but all that really matters to them is that people get saved. Evangelism, and not holiness is their central idea. You see, people generally only aspire to the highest level of living that they believe is possible. They will generally only go as high as their central idea.

The question of the central idea Christianity however, is not what we say that it is, but what God says that it is. In Scripture, what does God say is the

highest acquisition of grace this side of heaven? To put anything less than this as our central idea is to set our sights short of the will of God. It is to aspire to a lesser standard than is commanded by God. So, what is God's ultimate goal in our lives this side of heaven? The Scriptures are clear that it is not the church, and it is not regeneration; it is **Holiness**.

The Central Idea of Christianity is not regeneration; it is holiness.

1. The choice of God for the moral condition of the human race was perfect purity; hence he created man in his own image.

2. As this was once the choice of God, it must be eternally so, and the divine preference or will can never be met but by perfect moral purity.

3. Sin interfered with this choice, to the full extent of its existence and reign, and hence called out the severest divine displeasure.

4. There has therefore, never been and never can be the slightest toleration if sin in any divine communications. It is condemned with unsparing severity in its most secret and plausible forms.

5. As man, by becoming a sinner, has incurred the divine displeasure, he can be saved from calamity and made perfectly happy only by entire deliverance from sin.

6. Remedial measures, originating from God, must aim directly at the destruction of sin. Excepting it in any of its forms, making provision for its continuance, its justification, or excuse in the soul of the saved to any extent, would be trifling and impossible in Him.

7. The sacrificial offering of Christ, and the means, and appliances of the Gospel, reveal the plan of salvation by the destruction of sin and the restoration of man to the image of God, and can in no way, be reconciled with the idea of salvation in sin.

GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SIN

(adapted from a quote by William Booth)

1. He cannot be ignorant of sin, for God is omniscient.
2. He cannot be indifferent to sin, for God is Holy.
3. He cannot approve of sin, for then he would be the Chief of Sinners.
4. God must therefore be utterly and totally antagonistic to sin, and that with all the strength of His great moral being.

HOLINESS, THE CENTRAL IDEA

Matt. 1:21; 5:6-8, 48; Luke 1:74, 75; Jn. 17:17; Acts 24:16; Rom. 6:22; 12:1, 2; 2 Cor. 4:12; 7:1; Gal. 2:17; Eph. 1:4; 4:10, 11; 5:25; Col. 1:22; 1 Thes. 2:12, 3:13; 4:3, 7; 5:23; 2 Tim. 3:16, 19-22; Heb. 6:1; 12:14; 1 Pet 1:15, 16; 2:24; 4:1; 2 Pet. 3:11-14; 1 Jn. 1:6, 7; 2:1; 3:9, 10; 5:4; Jude 24.

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