

The fundamental dogma of man

Jealousy is direct opposition to our nature. It always leads to death. Anything not like God leads to death.

For God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity. Nevertheless, through envy of the devil came death into the world: and they that do hold of his side do find it. (Wisdom 2:23-24 Brenton)

The book of Wisdom, perhaps as much as the Book of Psalms, stands preeminent in the OT canon as a declarer of Jesus Christ. If one reads it carefully, one will find detailed descriptions of the God-Man Jesus Christ, the working of the Holy Spirit, the foolishness of the way of the world, and the Gospel – that is – the good news – emphatically described.

This passage, which finishes a description of the unbelief and materialism of the unbeliever, and the persecution by the wicked of the God-man Jesus Christ contains two dogmatic truths, which, ***if we do not believe, we cannot be saved.***

The first is the description of how God created man, and, for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, a commandment about ***how to live, and our eternal purpose***, which can only be realized ***if we live according to this purpose in this temporal life***, in which we exist for a few short years. This profound, fundamental dogma – the first dogma concerning man – is an amplification and repetition of the famous expression:

“And God said, Let us make man according to our image and likeness... And God made man, according to the image of God he made him, male and female he made them.” (Gen 1:26-27, partial, Brenton)

Man was indeed created to be immortal, that is, after he comes into life by the hand of his God, God will always, for evermore, by His power and His power only, maintain man as a living, sentient, knowing creature. This is the only possible way God could create man, because he made him as *“an image of His own eternity”*. Since God is immortal, any creature made in His image would be immortal.

Why then does the scripture speak of the death of man such as in Genesis: “And the Lord God gave a charge to Adam, saying, of every tree which is in the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil--of it ye shall not eat, but in whatsoever day ye eat of it, ye shall surely die.”? (Gen 2:16-17 Brenton)

Those who live life in the heart clearly understand this death, because they experience it every day, and strive to push it out of their heart, as a mountain which they cannot move, but God can. This death is when the soul is so stupefied by sin and passion, that it cannot know God, or see God, be in the presence of God without shame, confusion, ignorance. This is the death that Scripture speaks of.

Anything in the soul that is not like God brings about this death, either in totality, or in the case of the repenting sinner, partially, and with repentance, temporarily. The more something is not like God, the more it brings about death.

Although one can say that the first sin of the created universe was pride, this is more a condition of being than an actual action – pride brings about evil actions. All our actions and the underlying cause of those actions – all this is sin. Our pride brings about evil actions, in our thoughts and also in the deeds of our body.

The first evil action of the created universe, spawned by pride – was jealousy. The shining angel, who by his nature, which was given by God, was the most intelligent, and authoritative created creature in the universe, as a result of his pride, was jealous of God, because he was not worshipped as God. This jealousy brought about rebellion, and death.

To this day, jealousy brings about death. It is the mother of many slanders, and murders, and judgments, ambition, and unspeakable crimes against humanity. The Christian knows this, and guards himself from jealousy.

One can accurately, say that jealousy is the polar opposite of love, which puts it in direct opposition to God. Since only God can give life, total opposition to God brings total death.

The Christian must guard himself against jealousy. It is a wily and stubborn foe, and is much like a poisonous snake, which cannot be seen in the leaves. It makes its appearance stealthily, in many forms. The true Christian's heart must feel the cold icy fingers of death when he is tempted to indulge in this sin; he must fight this passion with every fiber of his being, because jealousy brings only death.

The great value of this passage from the book of Wisdom, is that it does not merely repeat the fundamental dogma about man, which we already have in the first chapter of Genesis. It amplifies it, and teaches us how to fulfill it.

We must recognize that all jealousy brings about death. We were not created for death. We were created for life. God is life. There is no jealousy in God, because He is life, and jealousy brings only death. This is a fundamental reason why jealousy is a sin, and why all other things forbidden by God – stealing, anger, lust, bearing false witness, etc., are sins. All of these things are not like God, in Whose image we were made, so they must not be like us either.

All of what we said so far is fundamental Christian dogma. Dogma is good, because it is about the Giver of Life, and without proper dogma, we cannot know the Giver of Life. However, dogma must be applied, individually to our lives. ***Knowledge without action is equivalent in its result to ignorance.***

Let us take a practical look at jealousy – remembering that it is a fundamental sin against our nature, which, by God's command, is in the image of God.

When we do not like someone, for reasons which we know or do not know, whether we justify our reasons or not, we are likely guilty of jealousy.

When we are angry because of a corrupt politician, we are likely guilty of jealousy. We may argue, as a means of self-justification, that we do not want what that politician has, so by our self-serving definition, we cannot be guilty of jealousy, but the heart, if we will listen, will teach us differently.

When we are ambitious, and strive to be better than others for the sake of ego gratification – this is another face of jealousy.

When we complain about those who have things we do not have – we are guilty of jealousy.

How do we fight jealousy?

First of all, and in the middle of our fight, and at the end, we must know that we were “fearfully and wonderfully made” in the image of God, and His image contains not a spot of jealousy. All of our life, in every moment, in everything we do, think and aspire to be, we must be attempting to fulfill our purpose in life.

We must be vigilant to root out this sin. Vigilance is expressed through prayer, and reading and activity – of the soul and the body.

We must pray for anyone or about anything that disturbs our heart. This loss of equilibrium may mean that the death hands of jealousy are clutching at our soul.

We must learn to be satisfied with less. We do not need a bigger TV, or perhaps need any TV! If we spend more money on entertainment and comfort than we give to the church, we are “double minded men”, and we will never conquer jealousy or any other passion. The enemy is turned back only by a resolute fighter.

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