

## LESSON 2

# THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING (Continued)

### Introduction

#### Aim

1. How does the minister explain the problem of sin, both individual and social, as it relates to the problems which people face?
2. How are sin and suffering related?
3. How can we make the message of salvation through faith in Christ a basis for effective pastoral care and counselling?

### The Problem of Sin

#### Is the idea of sin outmoded?

The pastor will deal repeatedly with the problem of sin. Although there has been a growing tendency in the past on the part of some psychologists and anthropologists to consider the idea of sin as outdated, in more recent years there has been a renewal of the use of the term and a recognition of the reality and destructiveness of sin. When we read in the daily newspapers of the atrocities that are committed by man against his fellow man, we can hardly doubt the reality of sin. This is seen in the greed which motivates some to take advantage of others through paying wages which are below the minimum that one needs for survival. The hunger and unemployment which is the result of overpopulation and lack of planning on the part of the political leaders all attest to the fact that something is basically wrong in our world. We can safely say that the pastor is one who repeatedly will be involved in the activity of trying to salvage some lives which have been wrecked because of the effects of sin. Sin is both personal and corporate, and the pastor will have occasion to work with people who are feeling the effects of both in their lives. The pastor will be able to help people who are repentant of their sins to appropriate God's grace for them in forgiveness. At times he may be called upon for a prophetic ministry in which he condemns the sins that others have committed with a view to creating in them a sense of guilt that will bring repentance. At the personal level the pastor can have an effective ministry, and it will be a joy to him to help bring people who are estranged from God back into fellowship with Him. Also, it can be a joyful occasion when he helps people to correct the things in their lives which have been impeding their fellowship with God.

*Is the following statement true or false?*

*In recent years there has been a renewal of the use of the term sin and a recognition of the reality and destructiveness of sin.* \_\_\_\_\_

*(true)*

*List ways pastors may help people in a sin-plagued world.*

---

---

---

---

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

### Is sin self-love or self-hate?

Reinhold Niebuhr in *The Nature and Destiny of Man* and in *The Self and the Dramas of History* points out that self-love or pride is the basic sin of man. Man in his self-love tends to deny the place that rightfully belongs to God and establishes himself as the centre of his own existence. This self-love leads to sensuality, which is a further expression of his rebellion against God. The truth is that man is free enough to choose, and in his choosing creates estrangement from God.

This truth can be illustrated in the explanation of the origin of sin in Genesis 3. There, man's freedom to choose caused him to disobey God's commandment. Man's unwillingness to submit to God's limitations in his life is an expression of his pride. It is recognized by the biblical writers that man has the freedom to choose between two alternatives, and man chose the pathway towards evil (Rom. 3:23). Thus man is responsible for his actions because he has chosen the pathway of rebellion against God's ideals.

Modern psychology takes a different approach. It emphasizes that the basic problem in man is his feeling of a lack of self-worth. According to this view the great majority of people who have trouble functioning correctly in their environment are people who regard themselves as worthless and unlovable. Psychology tries to face this issue by helping people to develop a greater self-image and to accept themselves as they are. Robert H. Bonthius' book, *Christian Paths to Self-Acceptance*, is a work which seeks to present various views of self-acceptance from a religious and psychological perspective.<sup>1</sup>

The gospel also contains this same truth. Although Jesus challenges those who would come after Him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him, He also challenges people to act freely on their own self-worth (Matt. 22:39). Paul also emphasizes the place of self-esteem in one's life (Phil. 2:3-4).

Walter A. Horton tries to make compatible the views of Reinhold Niebuhr and Carl Rogers by stating that although Niebuhr mentions that self-love and pride are the principal sins of man, he interprets this to mean that underneath these surface attitudes are anxiety and lack of faith in God.<sup>2</sup> These elements come close to what Rogers calls the lack of self-worth and lack of self-love. It is evident that Rogers has little doctrine of sin, and sees man as wholesome and needing only to be released from the shackling bonds of self-condemnation in order to be able to realize his full potential. That Rogers seeks this goal for his patients and is quite permissive in helping them to reach the goal, is evident in his *Becoming Partners*, in which he gives assent to forms of marriage apart from monogamy and the permanent nature of marriage.<sup>3</sup>

Niebuhr paints a very dark picture of what man can do to help himself. Most of man's efforts at righteousness are as filthy rags. It is impossible for man to do what is necessary to save himself, and many theologians in the

That self-love or pride is the basic sin of man is the view of \_\_\_\_\_

(Reinhold, Niebuhr)

Modern psychology takes a \_\_\_\_\_ approach.

(different)

neo-orthodox school insist that only God can save man by breaking into his life in a dramatic way just as Jesus did in His dealing with sin.<sup>4</sup> "Unwarranted and thus harmful optimism about the nature of man is just as unrealistic and hence fruitless as it would be to disregard the complexity of the human predicament and to deflate man to a mere sum total of deterministic mechanism and the consequent predictability of his development."<sup>5</sup>

### Individual sin and responsibility

The Bible and personal experience show that man chooses to disobey God's commandments and personally is responsible for his own sin of rebellion. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). This is not to say that man is as bad as he could be, but it does say that no man is without sin. Man's problem is not a lack of education or culture. His problem is that he has a nature which is inclined towards seeking personal satisfaction through physical actions which represent missing the mark of God's ideal in his life.

Man has inherited from Adam a tendency towards disobedience which guarantees that when given a choice he eventually chooses the path of egoism and disobedience instead of submission to God's laws. The Bible contains the history of man's actions in this respect. Current experiences in life testify to man's search for personal pleasure and gain which results in his estrangement from God.

The pastor and other Christian workers will have ample opportunity to see the personal and social consequences of this rebellion against God. Much of our ministry is that of helping people to find their way through the mazes which they themselves have unknowingly constructed through their own thoughts and actions. Frequently people turn to the counsellor when they discover that their own decisions or those of others have brought unhappiness and frustration. Counsellors will not need to convince people that they are sinners. They will rather be involved in helping people to find the pathway out of sin and into a more satisfying way of life.

One's theological belief regarding sin will influence his ministry as he seeks to help others. Some may be able to minister without giving consideration to the theological aspect of this issue. Secular helpers do so with varied levels of success. Some would place greater responsibility upon man and his own freedom in making choices which result in the suffering which he endures and from which he seeks alleviation. They see life apart from any relationship to divine ideals and a sense of oughtness towards a Supreme Being. Others go to the other extreme and simplify all difficulties as being caused by man's sin. When people come for counselling, they are encouraged to recognize that their problem is basically one of personal sin. They are encouraged to confess to God, repent, ask for forgiveness, accept God's promise to forgive, and then move ahead as people who are forgiven and restored to a new relationship with God. This formula represents an oversimplification of the

Man's problem is not a lack of \_\_\_\_\_  
or \_\_\_\_\_.

(education, culture)

Much of a pastor's ministry is spent in helping people to find their way through the \_\_\_\_\_ which they themselves have \_\_\_\_\_ constructed through their own \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

One's theological belief regarding sin will influence his \_\_\_\_\_ as he seeks to help \_\_\_\_\_.

(ministry, others)

matter in my opinion. People's problems are the result of a complexity of actions and relationships. We seek to help them untangle all the tangled threads through the use of biblical truth, the help that comes from the behaviouristic sciences, and any other help which offers hope.

Doubtless egoistic pride is at the root of all sin. Man's unregenerate nature causes him to seek the first place and the best part for himself. It is only as this nature is transformed through the New Birth that man is able to put his sense of values in the right perspective. He then sees himself as having infinite worth because God so loved him that He gave His only begotten Son in order that he might have everlasting life. This experience of faith helps man to focus upon others rather than himself. He recognizes that satisfaction for himself comes most when he invests himself in service to others.

A healthy self-image is not the same as egoistic pride. Being able to think positive thoughts about oneself is the basis for being able to serve with an unselfish purpose. Self-love makes it possible to love others in a wholesome manner. The pastor will be able to help people to move from this egoistic basis of existence to the investment of one's life in those activities which enrich life for oneself and others. Much of his work will be in the area of seeking to help people to come to feel good about themselves—to rid themselves of crippling guilt through confession and forgiveness. The result will be active and effective service as they live productive lives with a healthy sense of self-worth and a spirit of humility.

### Social sin and its effect

The social implications of sin are evident in the following quote:

Much physical disease and virtually all psychic illness are the outcomes of failures in social relations. One-third of a nation (not to mention more than one-half of a world) is ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-housed because the other two-thirds do not love them sufficiently to so arrange the economic and political order as to get them fed, clothed, and housed.<sup>6</sup>

Dealing with corporate sin will be more difficult for the pastor. Many times he and his parishoners will be the victims of this sin. As he preaches, he will call out for judgement upon the evils of society, and point the way towards the solution to these problems. He may create a conscience on the part of his people which could result in a change of conditions. Many individuals have begun movements which resulted in having significant impacts upon the world. At other times the minister will only be able to give understanding and support as people pour out their hearts in suffering because of the sins of others. He may not be able to do anything to change their world, but he can communicate a God of love who understands their suffering.

The New Birth enables man to put his \_\_\_\_\_  
in the right \_\_\_\_\_.

(values, perspective)

A healthy self-\_\_\_\_\_ is not the same as  
\_\_\_\_\_ pride.

(image, egoistic)

List the social implications of sin given in the adjacent quote.

---

---

---

---

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Dealing with \_\_\_\_\_ will be  
more difficult for the \_\_\_\_\_.

(corporate, sin, pastor)

The author has had frequent opportunity to counsel people who are victims of economic injustice. Their lives have been wrecked or they are struggling to survive day by day. Many cannot find work, and those who do so, cannot begin to pay all the expenses with the meagre salaries which are paid. How can we encourage these compaines to pay higher salaries and thereby help the people to live better? It will be the task of the minister to encourage people to take the steps which will open doors for better opportunities for them in the future. For young people this will be mainly through acquiring more education. Through better preparation for life they can claim opportunities which do not now exist. Pastoral care for these young people will take the form of encouragement for them to prepare themselves for greater opportunities in the future.

### The Problem of Suffering

Man has always tended to relate sin to suffering as a matter of cause and effect. The Hebrew people felt that good health, prosperity and numerous descendants were a direct result of having been favoured by God. Also, it was felt that sickness, misfortune, or sterility were evidences either of sin or God's wrath upon the individual. This is in contrast to the heathen contemporaries who felt that suffering was a plague or misfortune that befell man without cause.

#### Does sin cause suffering?

*The Old Testament answer.* — Genesis 3 states clearly that man's sin has brought disorder to the world, including physical pain. Man's sin upon the world brought the wrath of God's judgement in the flood in Noah's day (Gen. 6). The psalmist taught the same lesson as he said "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, . . . For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb" (Ps. 37:1-2).

These passages evidence an erroneous conclusion that the Hebrews sometimes derived, namely, that suffering indicated that sin had been committed. The only problem that made the Jews question this fact was that many people who were openly wicked did enjoy prosperity. Jeremiah was aware of this when he asked: "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" (Jer. 12:1).

The book of Job was written in order to help correct this erroneous idea about suffering and sin. Job, a perfect and just man, suffered the loss of his possessions, his sons, and his health. His friends came to "comfort" him. Their comfort consisted at first in making indirect suggestions that if Job would admit, confess, and repent of his sins, God would desist in His punishment of Job. Job was adamant in insisting that he had no secret sin. The book of Job does give us a partial answer to the problem of suffering and its relation to sin. To the writer, suffering was in Job's case disciplinary or a test of his genuineness and faith-

*The task of the minister is to encourage people to take the \_\_\_\_\_ which will open doors for better \_\_\_\_\_ for them in the future.*

*(steps, opportunities)*

*State the conclusion concerning sin and suffering generally held by the Hebrews.*

---



---



---

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

*What was the purpose for the Book of Job?*

---



---



---

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

fulness. Satan was permitted to tempt Job and see if he would remain faithful. Job was victorious in his test, and he concluded with the resignation, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). It appears, however, that the real message of the book is that Job's suffering was pedagogical, not retributive.

*The New Testament answer.* – In the New Testament period, suffering was still thought of as the logical penalty of sin. When Jesus and the disciples were passing along the streets, they saw a man who had been blind from his birth. The disciples asked: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents? Why was he born blind?" "It is not that this man or his parents sinned," Jesus answered. "He was born blind so that God's power might be displayed in curing him" (John 9:2-3, NEB).

When friends brought the paralytic to Jesus and lowered him through a hole in the roof, Jesus said to him: "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Luke 5:20). It may be argued by some that Jesus related sin and suffering in the sense that some of His miracles were performed upon cases of suffering that resulted from moral evil. It is true that some of the cases in which Christ cast out "devils" were what we would now call "moral disease." Jesus gave no philosophical or theological solution, rather He sought to alleviate suffering where He found it.

The author of Hebrews tells us that the discipline of the Lord, though not pleasant at the moment, is for our good: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11). This verse helps us to see that God works through suffering to help us to know more clearly the way of life that He would have us follow. As ministers we will have occasion to help people to meditate upon God's plan for their lives and how their suffering might be related to this plan. Many will testify that they began to listen to God while they were lying in bed in the hospital or convalescing at home.

Near the end of the first century many Christians suffered persecution as a result of their faith. For this reason James and Peter wrote to encourage Christians to be joyful as they are given the opportunity to suffer for the Lord (James 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:6-8). Thus we see that faithfulness to Christ almost guaranteed that persecution would come as a natural consequence in those early years of the Christian movement.

Thus there is development in the explanation of suffering during the New Testament period. Some suffering was explained as a result of sin. Other suffering was disciplinary, in order to help the Christian to be more faithful to God. Other suffering was a result of faithfulness in one's witness before a pagan world.

*In the New Testament period, suffering was still thought of as the logical \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(penalty, sin)*

*Is the following statement true or false?*

*Jesus went into long theological and philosophical explanations before helping people who were suffering.*

*(false)*

*The discipline of the Lord is for our \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(good)*

*Christians sometimes suffer as a result of their \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(faith)*

*There is \_\_\_\_\_ in the explanation of \_\_\_\_\_ in the New Testament period.*

*(development, suffering)*

## Partial explanations of suffering

*Some suffering is because of sin.* — It has already been pointed out that the concept that suffering is sent by God as punishment for personal sin is inadequate. While it is true that some suffering is a result of sin, we should not conclude that God willed it. Some suffering is a result of the operation of the natural laws which God has established in the universe, and in this sense the biblical precept “As ye sow, so shall ye reap” is true (Gal. 6:7).

At times man is unwilling to admit or recognize that he himself brings much suffering to the world. God’s laws operate in an unwavering way, and sometimes man in rebellion to these laws harvests shattered dreams and considerable pain. Ignorance causes suffering. Man’s exercising of his own free will results in suffering. What one man does freely affects the lives of many others.<sup>8</sup> The pastor who counsels will have many occasions to see this truth lived out in practical experience. Although we recognize that at times the operation of these laws has negative effects upon us, none of us would desire a universe without natural law.

Pastoral care implies that God has a message for those who are engrossed in personal sin. Many people will not seek help until they become ensnared in the clutches of some sin which is destructive for them and their loved ones. In these conditions the pastor will be called upon to help people to see the consequences of their action, and he will help them to find the foundations of forgiveness through confession, repentance and restitution where this may be considered appropriate.

*Some suffering is pedagogical.* — Through Job’s suffering God revealed to him deeper truths, and made of Job a better person. Through suffering Job came to experience God’s presence and power in a new dimension. “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee” (Job 42:5).

A few years ago a colleague of mine who works in another country lost his wife in an unexpected way at the time in which she was giving birth to a child. The following days were filled with a lot of suffering, but they also brought a deep inner conviction that God’s comfort is real at a time like that. Later, in giving his testimony before others, he spoke of how God had shown him so many things through that experience that helped him to understand better God’s loving care.

Illness has a way of helping us to reflect upon our priorities and gives us time to listen to the lessons that God wants to teach. Sometimes we are so busy in daily routines that we have no time to learn from God. When a young man was hospitalized for several days following a farm accident in which he lost one of his legs, he told the chaplain that he had been able through that experience of suffering to reorganize his own inner self and establish some new priorities.

While it is true that some suffering is a result of sin, we should not conclude that God \_\_\_\_\_ it.

(willed)

Show how man brings suffering upon himself.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Pastoral care implies that God has a \_\_\_\_\_ for those who are engrossed in personal \_\_\_\_\_.

(message, sin)

Job learned deeper truths about God through his \_\_\_\_\_.

(suffering)

Illness helps us to listen to the \_\_\_\_\_ that God wants to \_\_\_\_\_.

(lessons, teach)

The minister will have many occasions to listen to his flock as they tell of all that they have learned as a result of an illness, a tragedy, or simply a time of testing in their own personal lives. Some will subsequently thank God for the time of testing, because it was the turning point for them.

*Some suffering is vicarious.* – The second part of Isaiah reveals another step in the Old Testament’s development of the meaning of suffering—the vicarious element that shows how one may suffer for another. In the suffering servant poem Isaiah says:

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. . . and with his stripes we are healed. (53:4-5)

This message was fulfilled in Jesus’ death upon the Cross for the sins of all mankind. His suffering was innocent because He had no sin, but it was purposive in that through it we are able to participate in everlasting life.

There is a sense in which each Christian spends some time in his life when he endures suffering for others. The mother experiences this as she endures the pains of childbirth in order to bring new life into the world. Any parent will risk his or her life in order to avoid danger for an offspring. History gives us abundant illustrations of people who endured hardships and sufferings in order to benefit others, both in a spiritual and physical sense. All this points out that some of the suffering in the world is voluntarily endured in order to enrich life for others.

*Some suffering is innocent.* – Much of the suffering in the world cannot be explained. As I am writing this section, we experienced an earthquake this morning. Fortunately no victims have been reported as a result of this earthquake. About six months ago there were two earthquakes within a month’s time, and some fifty people lost their lives. Others were homeless as a result of the damages. How can this kind of suffering be explained? Every attempt at explanation fails to give satisfaction.

Much suffering in our world is endured by innocent victims. Many live and minister in areas where hunger and starvation is very real. We were all shocked as we viewed the pictures and read the reports of the intense hunger in Cambodia. In other parts of the world the problem is also very serious. The effects of hunger will be felt for generations to come, as disease takes its toll due to the reduced resistance to infection. The intellectual capacity of people is reduced because of extended malnutrition. All this points up the fact that we minister to people who suffer without being able to give answers to the causes.

What is the relationship, then, of pastoral care to this perplexing question of suffering? If suffering, as some have concluded, is divine punishment for sins committed, then any effort to relieve that suffering is a presumptuous intrusion on the part of the pastor, counsellor, or physician. If, however, the possibility of suffering is one of the prices we pay for a universe of natural law *and* personal freedom,

One may suffer for \_\_\_\_\_

(another)

Is the following statement true or false?

Some of the suffering in the world is voluntarily endured in order to enrich life for others. \_\_\_\_\_

(true)

Much of the suffering in the world cannot be \_\_\_\_\_

(explained)

A lot of suffering in the world is endured by \_\_\_\_\_ victims.

(innocent)

then the counsellor, pastor, and physician can plunge into the struggle to relieve suffering confident that even in this role they may be truly ambassadors of Christ.

Although we shall never find a complete solution to the problem of suffering, we can be assured that our trust in God at such times will enrich our own understanding of the deeper mysteries of the universe and will give us a greater sense of dependence upon God. The struggles of this life are such that only a dynamic faith in God can give one the true motivation for living life at its highest and best.

## Salvation

### Is salvation personal or social?

Salvation is a personal, spiritual experience which comes to each one who repents of sin and trusts in Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord. This involves a transforming experience in which the person is born again, spiritually speaking, and his old nature is transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ. It brings a new perspective as it relates to life and one's actions. The person is no longer guided simply by egoistic motivation, but has a new point of view towards himself and others. He sees himself within a broader framework as a part of an all-incompassing plan in which he participates with God and others to bring harmony and happiness into the world. This enriches life and gives man a challenge to invest his talents and energies in those activities which are helpful others.

Salvation is personal but it is also social. This means that as people are redeemed personally they form a part of the Kingdom of God. Their new Christian perspective will give them a point of view regarding the social evils of the society in which they live and will quicken their conscience about their personal responsibility. This will serve as motivation for the Christian to participate in political issues which have the ultimate goal of bringing more justice into the economic, social, and political order. The Christian will find himself identified with those who promote that which is just for all involved, and will not align himself with the aristocrats who tend to defend the status quo or the extremists who want radical change regardless of the consequences. The Christian must be careful to examine the philosophical bases of movements which offer better social conditions but may be atheistic and materialistic in their basic approach to life.

The Christian can do a great deal by helping people to enter into the Christian fold through the personal experience of regeneration, and then encouraging them to be the salt of the earth and there by help to redeem society from the corruption that exists. Christians are to be leavening influences in the world in order that others may come to know Christ and use their influence in a positive way. It is questionable how much we can legislate morality and the Christian should be careful about becoming involved in movements that may compromise his testimony for Christ. The pastor will have occasion to talk with those in his

*The counsellor, pastor, and physician serve \_\_\_\_\_ as they work to relieve human*

*(Christ, suffering)*

*Salvation is \_\_\_\_\_*

*(personal)*

*Salvation is also \_\_\_\_\_*

*(social)*

*Is the following statement true or false?*

*Christians are to be leavening influences in the world in order that others may come to know Christ and use their influence in a positive way. \_\_\_\_\_*

*(true)*

congregation who are being pressured to belong to trade unions, to align themselves with certain groups which promote specific projects, and to get involved in other ways. Each one must decide for himself what is the best procedure to follow and the pastor will do well to help each to see all the different ramifications of the decision.

### Is salvation present of future?

Current theological considerations that have to do with salvation debate as to whether it is something which we experience in the here and now or something that is being prepared for us in heaven at a future time. The biblical concept of immortality is not as clear as subsequent theological systems have caused it to appear. The Old Testament lacks a clear statement and understanding of life beyond this life. The vague references to *Sheol* would indicate that the person who sought to be faithful to God in those times did so, not out of a clear-cut hope of future existence with God, but rather out of a conviction that this was the best course to follow for his own current way of life. It is true that the latter books in the Old Testament seem to indicate more clearly the possibility of and hope for immortality. In Job we have the famous statement that is quoted so often: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (19:25).

We are surprised as we study the Old Testament because immortality is not a predominant concept. Several suggestions have been offered as explanations of this fact. Many Old Testament scholars mention that the idea of immortality was tied up in the nation more than in the individual. There seems to be a greater concern for the continuation of the family, tribe, and nation than a search for personal immortality. We can see among the Egyptians a more developed concept of immortality, but it seems that the Hebrew people were not so interested in life after death.

There are three passages in the Old Testament that definitely refer to the resurrection. Isaiah 26:19 says: "Thy dead man shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Also, Daniel 12:2 states: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Ezekiel 37 contains the vision of the valley of the dry bones that were brought back to live. Doubtless this is a reference to the nation of Israel, but it also refers to the future resurrection of the dead.

The New Testament is much more explicit in referring to heaven, the future life with God, and the resurrection. Jesus spoke frequently of the Kingdom of Heaven, and it is clear that its nature, from His perspective, was both present and future. Paul gives the most clear statements of the assurance of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15; and John in the Book of Revelation gives a vision of the celestial city and of the fact that we shall reign with Christ throughout all eternity (Rev. 21:1-8).

*What is the current theological debate in regard to salvation?*

---

---

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

*List the explanations that have been offered for the lack of interest among Hebrews in life after death.*

---

---

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*Give three Old Testament references to the resurrection from the dead.*

---

---

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*The Kingdom of Heaven to Jesus was both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(present, future)*

Theological controversies have arisen over the emphasis to be placed on these teachings. Historically the Christian Church became more interested in the future aspects of immortality than bringing an emphasis upon doing all that is possible to enrich life in the here and now.

In recent years a growing emphasis has been placed upon the idea that we experience heaven or hell in the present life. Many who have a completely secular concept of life seem to be inclined in this direction. They insist that we get what we deserve here, either in happiness or suffering, and that afterwards we have nothing to look forward to.

Marxist philosophy has attacked the Christian faith repeatedly, insisting that religions' offer of "pie in the sky" at a future time is the opiate of the people, and that man has a right to more comforts and conveniences during this lifetime. Many people in the Third World have been intrigued by the possibility of having more of their physical needs met here, although they have not abandoned completely the idea of immortality. Liberation theology makes a great emphasis upon liberation from the contemporary structures which are oppressive, and many almost go to the point of ignoring the emphasis upon the recompense of the Christian in the future life.

A balance between these two extremes is necessary for the pastor who ministers adequately to his people, and for the counsellor who seeks to help people to achieve maximum emotional and spiritual health. Belief in the present reality and the future hope is a more proper focus for the Christian. We should do everything possible to make life as comfortable and enriching as possible now, but at the same time we must remember that there is much more in store for the Christian.

Salvation involves a hope for spiritual immortality after this life. At death the body returns to the earth and the soul ascends to the presence of God. The Christian after death has a spiritual body and is conscious while being in the presence of God. At a future time Christ will return again and the bodies of the dead will be resurrected and transformed to exist throughout eternity either in the presence of God or in hell separated from God. This means that the Christian has the assurance of everlasting life, and lives his life here on earth knowing that this is only a part of a plan that involves something far greater in the future. He understands that salvation has a present and future aspect.

### **How is health related to salvation?**

Some would equate salvation with health. While it is certainly agreed that the person who is experiencing the maximum physical, emotional, and spiritual health is able to live in a state of tranquility and serenity, we do not see this as all that is involved in the biblical concept of salvation. For this reason the pastor and counsellor will be working in an effort to bring less suffering to mankind through his ministry, but he will also be able to emphasize the spiritual nature of salvation. He will seek to help people to have the religious experience which will bring the

Historically the Christian Church has been more interested in the \_\_\_\_\_ aspects of \_\_\_\_\_.

(future, salvation)

A modern emphasis is that we experience \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ life.

(heaven, hell, present)

Belief in the \_\_\_\_\_ reality and the \_\_\_\_\_ hope is a more proper focus for the \_\_\_\_\_.

(present, future, Christian)

Name two avenues the pastor will follow in ministering to those who are suffering.

---

---

---

(Compare your answers with the text.)

assurance of eternal life to the believer, and this will be an instrument for bringing maximum health to the individual.

The biblical words for healing and salvation have the same root meaning in both the Hebrew and Greek. The meaning is ultimately "to be made whole." Our tendency to follow the Greek plan of dividing body and soul and applying healing to the body and salvation to the soul is alien to the basic Christian meaning. Good health and salvation are closely related. Salvation has an eschatological dimension that we cannot deny, but we need to relate more clearly the idea of spiritual wholeness and health.

An interesting study was made a few years ago in a hospital among patients that were admitted for surgery because of detached retinas.<sup>9</sup> Over a period of some eight years a team studied approximately five hundred cases. They discovered that there was a 400 per cent difference in the amount of time needed for recovery between the most rapid and the least rapid healers. There was a high degree of correlation between the patients who accepted their situation and their rapid recovery in contrast to those who rejected their situation, and experienced delay in recovery. Also, the attitude of the patient towards the surgeon, the nursing staff, chaplains, and others affected the time of healing that was necessary. Patients who accepted their situation tended to live longer and to be happier than those who resisted or denied their condition.

The study also showed that there was a significant variation in the way that patients appropriated their religious faith. If patients utilized their faith as a source of strength to face reality and deal with it constructively, they were rapid healers. If they used their faith to hide from reality, or to manipulate or force God's hand, they were slow healers. We conclude that patients who accept their illness as a part of the negative that befalls them at times along with all the good that happens to them tend to heal more rapidly. Those who feel that their illness is a foul blow, and that God is a monster for permitting it to happen, healed poorly, if they healed at all.

Reeves continues to point out that there is a relationship between the quality of religious faith among different people and how this faith is used. He observed in his research that those who would be considered indifferent to religion but who had a basic positive feeling towards life tended to heal rapidly. Those who were very religious with a pious religion that tended to avoid reality had greater difficulty in healing.

Many in their religious dedication hope to get the rules suspended in their favour. "Distrust of life is often masked by frantic piety, and unfortunately many well-meaning people mistake such piety for religion."<sup>10</sup>

We have cited the study as a basis for insisting that we need to reappraise our viewpoint of the relationship between healing, faith, and salvation. To be whole in the physical, emotional, and spiritual sense is to enjoy salvation in its fullness.

The meaning is ultimately "\_\_\_\_\_."

(Compare your answer with the text.)

To be whole in the physical, emotional, and spiritual sense is to enjoy \_\_\_\_\_ in its

(salvation, fullness)

Again, we mention that there is the valid need for an emphasis upon preparing ourselves for the afterlife. The wise pastor will recognize when this is necessary as he deals with people. He also should encourage people to exercise the personal faith that is the basis for this salvation experience. As he promotes fullness of health in his work, he is also contributing to this ultimate goal.

### **The Meaning of Life for Man**

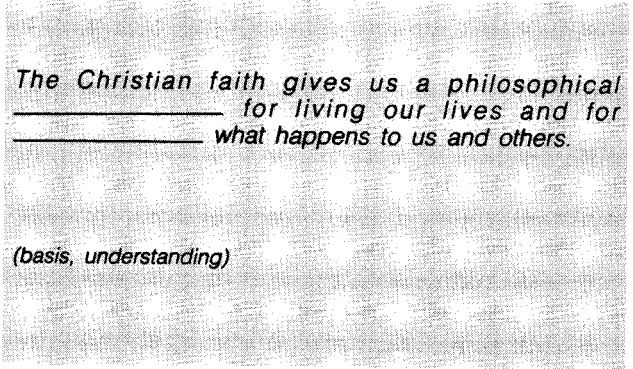
A part of the theological basis of pastoral care and counselling will relate to helping people to make sense out of life. The Christian faith gives us a philosophical basis for living our lives and for understanding what happens to us and to others. We live our lives recognizing that we form a part of a much larger plan in which God's ultimate design for the universe and man is being developed. We co-operate with God through the wise use of our talents as good stewards. We see progress in history as more and more people enter into the Kingdom of God and accept God's ideals as norms for man's comportment. Regression in history comes when man loses the vision of the ideals established by God.

Daily work fits into this overall plan because through it man is experiencing self-realization through doing those things which are meaningful and enriching. It also helps to provide the necessities of life and some of the comforts. It gives man a sense of value as he contributes through work to the enrichment of life for others. Man also uses his leisure in ways which promote well-being. He can participate in sports, civic, family, and church activities and thereby feel relaxed and renewed from his daily work.

The enjoyment of meaningful relationships serves to enrich life and add meaning to it. The different orders of creation give us the opportunity for relationships on all levels. We relate personally to those in our family and to those with whom we work, study, play, or engage in other activities. This serves to give opportunity for many enriching experiences. Unfortunately, it also gives the basis for conflicts and problems for many others. Much of the time of the pastor will be given to seeking to help people to straighten out relationships which have been damaged in this area.

In the economic order one makes his contribution through the work that he does. Much time each day is spent in this sphere of activity. It also offers opportunity for happiness or suffering, depending upon one's sense of values, whether or not economic values are uppermost in his life, and how much meaning there is in life in other spheres.

In the political order our relationships generally are less personal, but what happens in the political sphere affects much in the other orders of creation. Each person can have an impact upon his world through participation on a local level in the issues which determine our future as a nation. Many people will be victims of mistakes that were



*The Christian faith gives us a philosophical  
basis for living our lives and for  
understanding what happens to us and others.*

*(basis, understanding)*

made in the past, and others will find themselves enmeshed in many kinds of tension that come from personal participation in efforts to better our way of life. The pastor will have occasion to "bind up the wounds" which result from this activity.

### The Use of the Helping Disciplines

The minister will develop a personal stance with reference to how much and which of the supplementary disciplines are helpful to him. He will probably change his attitude as a result of his own experience over a period of years. There are many different kinds of therapy which are being used today. All of them have varying degrees of effectiveness. We cannot say that any one is the best, because so much depends upon the nature of the problem, the personalities of the helper and helpee, and the culture where one is serving.

Integrity therapy, reality therapy, non-directive counselling, nouthetic counselling, Gestalt therapy, psychoanalysis, transactional analysis, sensitivity therapy, conjoint family therapy, behaviouristic therapy, and existentialism—to mention those which are most popular today—represent the wide variety of disciplines which are engaged in the helping process. A Christian approach can use some of the principles that are followed in each of these disciplines. No one system can be adequate for every situation. The minister or layman who wants to have the maximum of effectiveness will become familiar with each of these systems and put them to use as supplementary to that which is fundamental in the Christian faith. The pastor will discover that some systems seem to fit his own personality and temperament, while others do not. He will gradually develop a style that is his own and that he can feel good about. I encourage him to do so, and then to go forth with confidence in his journey towards helping others.

*Underline the true answer.  
The other helping disciplines are to be  
equal  
primary  
supplementary*

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Robert H. Bonthius, *Christian Paths to Self-Acceptance* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1962).

<sup>2</sup>Walter M. Horton, "Niebuhr on the Nature of Man," *The Nature of Man in Theological and Psychological Perspective*, ed. Simon Doniger (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>Carl R. Rogers, *Becoming Partners—Marriage and Its Alternatives* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1972).

<sup>4</sup>William Hordern, *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), pp. 154-55.

<sup>5</sup>Doniger, *Op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup>Graham Ikin, *New Concepts in Healing* (New York: The Association Press, 1956), p. 7.

<sup>8</sup>James Bryden, *Letters to Mark* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1953).

<sup>9</sup>Robert B. Reeves, Jr., "Healing and Salvation: Some Research and Its Implication," *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, April, 1969.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

### Recommended Reading

Howard R. Burkle, *God, Suffering, and Belief*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977.

Carl Michalson, *Faith for Personal Crises*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974.

## Home Study Exercise

**Basic activity**(Levels 1,2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. Why can it be said that the idea of sin is not outdated?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

2. How does Reinhold Niebuhr see sin?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

3. What is the approach of modern psychology towards sin?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

4. What is man's basic problem?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

5. How does a pastor spend much of his ministry?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

6. What effect does one's theological belief about sin have on one's ministry of pastoral care?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

7. What does the author mean by social sin?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

8. How does the Old Testament generally see the relationship of suffering and sin?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

9. How does the Old Testament present suffering and sin?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

10. What does the author mean by this statement: "While it is true that some suffering is a result of sin, we should not conclude that God willed it"?

---

---

---

---

11. How may suffering instruct us?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

12. Why is suffering voluntarily endured by some people?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

13. What does the author mean by stating that some suffering is innocent?

---

---

---

14. What is the relationship of pastoral care to the question of suffering?

---

---

---

15. What does the author mean by stating that salvation is both personal and social?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

16. What explanations have been offered for the lack of interest among the Hebrews in life after death?.

---

---

---

---

17. What was Jesus' perspective of the Kingdom of Heaven?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

18. Name two extremes to which the idea of salvation has been carried.\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

19. According to the author, what is the proper focus of the Christian on the question of salvation?\_\_

---

---

---

20. What is the relationship of health to salvation?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

21. How does the Christian faith help give meaning to life?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

22. What role should other disciplines play in pastoral care and counselling? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

23. State the aims of this lesson. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Supplementary activity**(Levels 2 and 3). Read pages 34-55 in *Pastoral Care in the Church* by C.W. Brister and answer the following questions.

1. List four reasons why an understanding of man's nature is crucial to adequate pastoral care.
2. What is meant by the "lonely crowd"?
3. List four perspectives upon personality discussed by Brister.
4. List six theological observations drawn by Dr. Brister from the counselling situation with Jill.

**Advanced activity**(Level 3). These activities are based on the Supplementary reading assignment.

1. State reasons for the primacy of persons in the ministry of pastoral care.
2. What is the relationship between Christian anthropology and speculative anthropology?
3. What was Soren Kierkegaard's chief contribution towards a proper understanding of selfhood?
4. What contributions have ego psychology made to the pastoral understanding of persons?
5. What factors of human development profoundly influence pastoral relationships with persons?
6. Interpret the six theological observations drawn by Dr. Brister from the youth minister's counselling sessions with Jill.

### **Seminar Discussion**

1. Discuss the relationship of pastoral care to the problem of sin.
2. Discuss the relationship of sin and suffering.
3. Discuss pastoral care to the suffering.
4. Relate the biblical concept of salvation to the ministry of pastoral care.
5. Discuss how other disciplines may relate to pastoral care.
6. In what ways may the programme-oriented congregation fail to meet some of mankind's deepest needs?
7. How may pastoral ministry be tuned to the inner tempo of people's lives?