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7-7-1983

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Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "The Two Sides to the Coin" (1983). *Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts*. 95. https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_acts/95

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THE TWO SIDES TO THE COIN

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF THE ACTS
NUMBER 92
ACTS 20:20-21

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ACTS 20:20-21 "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

In this passage we see that Paul got the preachers aside for a time of thinking and praying and meditation. Paul described the meeting in these words--"I kept back nothing that was profitable".

"I kept back nothing" is a nautical term and it means taking in the sail or changing the slant of the sail in order to slow the ship down. So Paul reminded them that he had not kept information from them or given them information that would slow them down in their ministry. Paul was the best indoctrinated man in the world and he gave Bible doctrine to the people every time he opened his mouth. "Upo-stello" means taking in the sails. Paul was in every sentence giving them doctrine by which they could live in the days after he was no longer with them. "That was profitable" means that Bible doctrine is the one thing that is profitable and is the one thing that will carry people through the storms of life. The words, "But have shewed you" means he had gone over and over and over the same things many times, hoping that they would get the truths in their minds. Now this is important not just for preachers, but for all of us. During the last three years Paul had taught those preachers doctrine and he had repeated himself over and over again. The principle for us is this--Don't be afraid to go over doctrine again and again. About the twentieth time or the fiftieth time it will catch fire in our minds and we will have that truth forever. The phrase, "And have taught you" is an aorist, active, infinitive of "didasko". From this word we get didactic. This means to teach categorically, systematically, and go over and over the same truth. "From house to house" tells us that they didn't have church buildings but they met in homes and the church was usually a small group. Many of the Christians would open their homes up to Paul and other preachers and for several centuries they didn't major on church buildings but met in the homes of the members. In Acts 12:17 and Romans 16:5 and 1 Corinthians 16:19 we read of churches meeting in homes. Church buildings didn't come until the Roman Catholic Church became strong and the state gave money for the erection of church meeting places.

Paul, without doubt, was the greatest doctrinal preacher in the world. He went from house to house doing this sort of thing and he never got tired of going over and over these important doctrinal matters. He never worried about the size of his crowd and he didn't have to go to the meeting of the preachers on Monday morning and give a report on how many he had and how many additions he had the Sunday before. He didn't have to give an associational report on the number of baptisms he had. Paul left that kind of thing in the Lord's hands and did his teaching as unto the Lord. Paul was faithful and the Lord rewarded him for his faithfulness.

ACTS 20:21 "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." "Testifying" really means, "to make a solemn and earnest declaration". It means to witness until you have made the matter clear. From this word we get the word "martyr". Paul had the "follow through" which made him successful. In many sports the "follow through" is the thing that counts. This "follow through" made Paul a missionary genius. He, through this method, built the foundation for the church movement throughout the world. He made the issue clear.

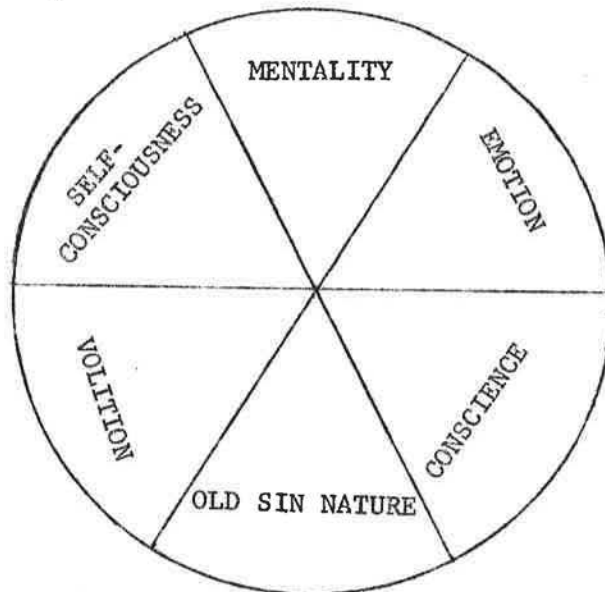
Paul is the one who invented the salvation coin. A coin has two sides. Maybe some day either the Democrats or Republicans will come up with a one-sided coin, but so far a coin has two sides. They have been able to do about everything else to our money except take the two sides off the coins. One side of the coin is repentance toward God, and that's the unseen side of the coin. Then the seen side, the side we call man's side, is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So in salvation there is something you cannot see, something which you can't exactly analyze. This we call "repentance toward God". This is the unseen side of the coin. But the side we see and emphasize most is "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ". It is always the main emphasis--BELIEVE. This is our side and this is the side of salvation we see and feel and understand.

When man approaches the cross he realizes the work of salvation has already been done. Christ did it all, Christ paid for all the sins, Christ provided full and free salvation for every man. Man cannot do one thing to complete salvation. It is Jesus Christ who said, "It is finished", and he meant that salvation was completed and man could add nothing to it. The believer needs to realize that faith in Christ is a non-meritorious system and when one believes in Christ he gets no credit for it, all the credit belongs to Christ.

Most everything we learn is by faith. All academic activity in childhood begins by faith. The response is always the same--believe, believe, believe. When an unsaved person believes in Christ at that moment God does 34 things for him, one of which is to give him eternal salvation and nothing can ever change this relationship. You can mix your life up and get off on many detours, but you can never cease being a child of God, once you have believed in Christ. The issue is JOHN 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Paul gave them the "follow through" and that follow through was information on which they could base a well-balanced knowledge of the new birth. This is what is needed so much in churches today. People get some little smattering of information and they run off on tangents and fail to take into account the total information upon which the Christian way of life is built. Paul didn't rely on polished salesmanship tricks. He based his appeal on thorough information. But today we try to give people the big rush and the big push and get them into the Kingdom without giving them the full vital information they need so much. We must do more for people than to say to them, "Believe on Christ and be saved". We must give them gospel information in their minds.

Let us go back and look again at the human soul we studied a few weeks ago.



In 1 Corinthians 2:14 we read of "The Natural Man". But the correct translation is "the soulish man" the "Psuchikos" man. The unbeliever does not have a human spirit. The Spirit is the basis for learning spiritual truth. The soul cannot understand spiritual truth. But when the gospel is presented, the Holy Spirit doubles for the human spirit for the unsaved man and this is the way the new birth takes place. The Holy Spirit "convincing" the unbeliever by using gospel truth that he should be saved. This means when we talk to an unbeliever we must provide information that the Holy Spirit can use. The soulish man cannot receive the things of God for they are spiritually discerned. So when we witness we must provide gospel information. There are two sides to the coin--BELIEVE AND REPENT. The "Believe" side of the coin is rather simple, but if the "Believe" is authentic, if it is genuine, then it must be backed up with repentance. So Paul testified both to the Jews and to the Greeks. Paul made the gospel plain.

REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD

It is "Metanoia". "Noia" means thinking and "Meta" is a preposition which means "to change". So "Metanoia" means to change one's thinking toward God. Repentance does not mean to feel sorry for sin. Repentance is a change of mental attitude toward God. It is not repentance toward sin, it is repentance toward God. You can't feel sorry for your sins, join a church and be baptized and meet the requirements of this word. It is not emotion that saves you, it is repentance, and repentance is a mental attitude word. To be sure, salvation does involve your emotions. But feeling sorry for your sins is not repentance. Feeling sorry for your sins doesn't solve anything. Sometimes feeling sorry for your sins can be a detriment to salvation, for it can build up a big guilt complex in your mind. Getting back in fellowship with God never involves feeling sorry for your sins. You may feel sorry for your sins, and you should. And when you properly understand the plan of salvation you will feel sorry for your sins. But feeling sorry for your sins doesn't have anything to do with God's forgiveness and God's restoration. Feeling sorry for sin is human good, and human good has nothing to do with salvation. This is why we have here, "Believe and confess" and both are mental attitude words. So the important thing is this--CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT CHRIST THROUGH GOSPEL INFORMATION. The Holy Spirit takes this information and puts it in the mentality of the soul and if at that point volition goes on positive signals the person is saved. The positive volition, expressing itself by faith in Christ, is the other side of the coin. So it is like this--

GRACE=God doing the work and man receiving in a non-meritorious way the results of what God has already done.



THESE ARE THE TWO SIDES OF THE COIN OF SALVATION

Side one is the message, this is the information side of the coin. Side two is the action side, where you believe and are saved.

So give the information--that's our part. Leave it to the Holy Spirit to do the work in the heart.

Next time we study, "Ships that pass in the night" and how Paul got out of fellowship with God.