

NCC Roots Class-Experiencing God Session #2 September 9, 2020

Led by Terry Cooper

- Tonight's session begins with something that is foundational to everything we will study in these 12 weeks.
- God centered life vs. a self-centered life.
- The essence of sin is a shift from God-centeredness to self-centeredness. The essence of salvation is denying self instead of affirming self. We must deny ourselves and return to God-centeredness in our lives. Then God has us in a place where He will accomplish His eternal purposes through us.
- Self-centered life comes naturally, and a God-centered life requires a person to be born again through the power of Christ. We will never seek God's will...God's way while living a self-centered life.

Matthew 16:24-25 (NLT2)

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. ²⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.

1 John 2:15-17 (NLT2)

¹⁵ Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. ¹⁶ For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. ¹⁷ And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

- This is the essence of sin and this is the essence of salvation...turning from our self-centered (natural man) life and allowing the power of God to make our lives God-centered.
- The day one assignment asked us to write in our own words the definition to self-centered and God-centered. This is what I wrote on that study day:
- Self-centered: to see my self as central to life's meaning and purpose
- God-centered: to see God as central to life's meaning and purpose.
- We will never become God-centered until we encounter the power of Christ that can change our hearts toward God.
- This transformation always begins with an encounter with God (Old and New Testament). But bear in mind there is another power at work that wants us to remain self-centered, in rebellion against God.
- Satan convinced Adam and Eve to depend upon self rather than the very clear Word of God...it all began there in the garden.
- Satan is the master deceiver and he can make your self-centered life look like you are following God, but actually the opposite is occurring.
- The only way to fight off this very natural self-centered life is daily surrender to God.

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy

and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

John 12:23-26 (NLT2)

²³ Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory.²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.²⁵ Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity.²⁶ Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

- After a person has dealt with this issue of surrender and death to self...then they are usable in the Kingdom of God. Remember, this all began when God called you and now God wants you to join Him in His divine plan to redeem a lost world.
- God will begin to reveal things to you. Example God revealed His plan to judge the world to Noah. God revealed His plan to bring judgment upon Sodom. It is very important to know what God is about to do to be able to live accordingly. Wouldn't it be crazy to try to start a church in Sodom as God was planning to bring down His fiery judgment?
- The same is true today. God is not looking for us to implement our clever ideas about how to please Him. God is looking for us to join Him in the plan He has already developed. We are the body of Christ and we are to be His hands and feet on this present earth. Yes, during the final days before the judgment comes.

Day 2...who delivered the Children of Israel out of Egypt? God or Moses?

- This was not the plan of Moses. This was the plan of God. But before God would implement this world changing plan, God was going to form a love and trust relationship with Moses.
- God was going to use Moses to complete His divine mission. There was no way that Moses could pull this deliverance thing off apart from God. God used those 40 years in the wilderness of Midian to develop the character of Moses.
- But when the timing was right (God's timing, not Moses') God set His plan in motion. Do you know how many Israelites were lost in the Exodus...none!
- Do you know what happened to the wealth and treasure of Egypt in the Exodus...they handed it all to the Israelites as they departed. Moses could have never dreamed of such a plan and you and I cannot possibly imagine what God is going to do in these final days before the return of Christ. That is why we must be totally connected to God through Christ the Son.
- Let's stop for moment and bring this idea into the modern American church.
- I believe much of the power of the church has been lost because "we have a plan". We want to create something that pleases God, rather than submitting our lives to the will of God.
- We sometimes ask God to bless our plan, and then we promise to give Him the glory when He does. Yet God is not glorified by making our plans succeed. He receives glory when His will is done His way.
- Blackaby...Understanding what God is about to do where I am is more important than telling God what I want to do for Him.

- Why did the children of Israel spend 40 years wandering in the wilderness...was this God's will...God's way or was this the result of man's will and self-centered rebellion?

Psalm 81:8-14 (NLT2)

⁸ "Listen to me, O my people, while I give you stern warnings. O Israel, if you would only listen to me!
⁹ You must never have a foreign god; you must not bow down before a false god. ¹⁰ For it was I, the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it with good things. ¹¹ "But no, my people wouldn't listen. Israel did not want me around. ¹² So I let them follow their own stubborn desires, living according to their own ideas. ¹³ Oh, that my people would listen to me! Oh, that Israel would follow me, walking in my paths! ¹⁴ How quickly I would then subdue their enemies! How soon my hands would be upon their foes!

- Can you see this application for us and for the church today in the church age?

Hebrews 3:7-19 (NLT2)

⁷ That is why the Holy Spirit says, "Today when you hear his voice, ⁸ don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested me in the wilderness. ⁹ There your ancestors tested and tried my patience, even though they saw my miracles for forty years. ¹⁰ So I was angry with them, and I said, 'Their hearts always turn away from me. They refuse to do what I tell them.' ¹¹ So in my anger I took an oath: 'They will never enter my place of rest.'" ¹² Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. ¹³ You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. ¹⁴ For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. ¹⁵ Remember what it says: "Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled." ¹⁶ And who was it who rebelled against God, even though they heard his voice? Wasn't it the people Moses led out of Egypt?
¹⁷ And who made God angry for forty years? Wasn't it the people who sinned, whose corpses lay in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom was God speaking when he took an oath that they would never enter his rest? Wasn't it the people who disobeyed him? ¹⁹ So we see that because of their unbelief they were not able to enter his rest.

- **Blackaby**...Understanding what God is about to do where I am is more important than telling God what I want to do for Him.

Amos 3:7 (NLT2)

⁷ Indeed, the Sovereign LORD never does anything until he reveals his plans to his servants the prophets.

- This is why methods can never replace a relationship with God. Methods don't reveal what God is about to do. Methods are man's idea about how to serve and please God. They are a cheap substitute for knowing God.
- I realize that some of you might be intimidated at this point in the study. Don't be! God is the one that takes the initiative in all cases. God calls and God equips the called. Our job is to abide and remain in Christ. We must abide in fellowship through prayer and the Word. We must surrender ourselves day by day the power of God that is at work through the Holy Spirit. Trust that God's power is sufficient for that day. Our main job is John 15:5.

John 15:5 (NLT2)

⁵ “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

Day 4/5...God speaks to His people and God speaks with Purpose

- Does God really speak to people today...do you really believe that?

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NLT2)

¹ Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets.

² And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe.

- In the past God used the prophets, angels, burning bushes and even a donkey, but in these last days something has changed...God speaks through His Son Jesus. But how?

John 14:25-26 (NLT2)

²⁵ I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. ²⁶ But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

John 16:13-15 (NLT2)

¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. ¹⁴ He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’

- I’m going to include 3 major English translations for this next verse so there is no confusion regarding this very serious point of being able to hear from God.

John 8:47 (NLT2)

⁴⁷ Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God. But you don’t listen because you don’t belong to God.”

John 8:47 (NIV)

⁴⁷ He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

John 8:47 (NASB)

⁴⁷ "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God."

- Don’t tell me that God doesn’t still speak to people today because I know for a fact that He does. God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit reveals/teaches everything that we need to know, when we need to know it.
- The Holy Spirit reminds me of the Words of God, the Scriptures when I need their truth and application.
- The Holy Spirit will communicate what He hears from the Father.
- The Holy Spirit will reveal all we know about coming events, the future.
- The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by revealing Christ to believers.

- Notice that all of these are based on the revelation from the Holy Spirit and if you don't have the Holy Spirit you don't have Jesus...that's why you can't hear from God.

Hebrews 1:2 (NLT2)

² And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe.

- But how and when does this occur? Prayer is 2-way communication. When we pray the Spirit is also revealing things to our heart, even if we don't know it at the time.
- The Bible reveals 4 ways that God directly speaks to believers today...The Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church. God uses these 4 ways to reveals Himself and His ways.
- When God speaks, He is revealing Truth, Himself, His purpose and His ways. This is not a formula, this is a relationship. There are no methods that can bring a person to hear from God.

John 10:3 (NLT2)

³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

- The sheep follow Him because they know Him and they recognize His voice because they are in a relationship with the Good Shepherd. This is not a formula or a method...this is a love relationship.
- A word of warning here...be careful when you say you have a word from the Lord. Don't use that phrase carelessly. Don't be afraid to follow the Word that you have received from God, but also be careful about using that carelessly.
- It is highly unlikely that God is going to come and speak casually with a person (careless chit chat). When God speaks He is communicating something important that He is doing and inviting you to be a part of it. This is a serious moment and it must be taken serious. When He speaks, we must respond immediately. We don't wait and think about it...we respond with "YES LORD".
- There might be a long delay between your YES LORD and the actual event. God will probably use that time to develop your character for the upcoming event. There was 25 years between God's calling of Abram and the birth of his son Isaac. There was maybe 10-12 years between God's anointing of David as King and the time that David took the throne. God uses the time of waiting to develop our character so that we don't fail.

2 Peter 1:3 (NLT2)

³ By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.

- Blackaby...God has a right to interrupt your life anytime He want to! When you accepted Him as Lord, you gave Him the right to help Himself to your life.
- When God speaks our response must be Yes Lord and our response must be immediate and complete.