


TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- What was a solution you once tried which was a total "fail" because you misunderstood the problem?

What is a failed solution to a **spiritual** problem you or a friend has tried? Tell us about it.

We often say of a less-than-successful attempt at something, "*Well, it's the thought that counts.*"
But when it comes to our sin, why isn't God satisfied with sincere, but failed, attempts (Psalm 49:7-9)?

Why do you think God reacts to sin as strongly as he does (see Mark 9:43-48)?

What does it tell you about God's **personality** that **he** resolved our sin problem (see 2 Cor. 5:21)?

- We would never excuse the incompetence of a doctor simply because he is sincere or nice.
Why do you think people want sincerity, not effectiveness, to be the measure of a spiritual solution?


Have you ever tried to convince someone that a **health** practice (diet, exercise) was wrong? If so, why?

Have you ever tried to convince someone that their **spiritual** practice (ie, religion) was in error?

If **not**, why?

Application-Challenge

- If you are convinced that Christ is the Savior of the world—but have never repented of your sins and trusted him to save you—do it today!
- If you are **not** yet convinced that Christ is uniquely qualified to be the Savior of the world—then you need to find out today! Read chapters 7-13 of Wayne Grudem's **Christian Beliefs** and complete this week's "**Digging Deeper**".
- If you have a friend or loved-one who believes in some other way than Jesus Christ, pray for them, study Grudem's **Christian Beliefs**, and then discuss it together.

 **Take One Step:** What is one small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week?

Sermon Summary

Christianity had gotten off-course, and so 500 years ago a brave Catholic monk named Martin Luther nailed to the door of a church a list of 95 abuses. In Luther's day, church leaders competed against the Scriptures for authority. Today, due to globalization, Christianity is just one of many religious options—each of which claims to be “the right way” and “the only way”. Add to the religious mix today the view that science is capable of saving humanity, and we now even have a secular “religion” which is competing in the marketplace of ideas. How do we decide which “savior” to believe in? The reformation doctrine of “Sola Scriptura” (Scripture Alone).

Today we turn to the question, “What does God reveal in his Word about the nature of mankind's problem?” ...and therefore what the solution possibly could be. In college, the most interesting class I took in my major was epidemiology (the study of epidemics). At the same time that the Reformation was just getting started, an epidemic called “the Black Death” began spreading. It killed an estimated 50% of Europe's population. They came up with some strange “cures” which, of course, did no good (one of them involved eating eggshells and human excrement!).

The Reformation clarified mankind's spiritual “disease”: sin (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Many people say, “You Christians! All you ever talk about is sin!”, but because 100% of us are sinners we're going to need to know our “disease” and just as eggshells and excrement couldn't combat the Black Death successfully, any proposed solution to mankind's sin is going to have to successfully solve our sin problem. Anything less is just a band-aid. Notice how “resistant” our disease is (Isaiah 59:2). Maybe we've been applying “eggshells and excrement” to a problem which is so serious that it only responds to a much more powerful cure. We can't “by ANY means” redeem our souls. (Psalm 49:7-9)?

Well, enough of this grim news. God loves us so much that he solved what we couldn't. Yes, the wages of sin is death, BUT ...God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. What a marvelously loving, kind, sacrificial God we have! We were the treasonous traitors and our debt is beyond our ability to pay, so he died to solve our problem! This is our second great Reformation doctrine: “Solus Christ”—Christ Alone is able to cure humanity of our sin-disease. Allah can't save us. Krishna can't save us. None of the 3,000 Hindu deities can save us. Science cannot save us. These are all man-made attempts to redeem mankind, yet this is impossible. Why is he able to be the redeemer of the world, when nobody else can? Because Jesus is God (Titus 2:13; John 1:1-18; Rom. 9:5; 2 Pet. 1:1; etc.)

The proposed “cures” for the Black Death—eggshells and excrement—didn't work because they were utterly unrelated to our little germ here who caused the disease. In searching for a cure, or in evaluating one which has been proposed, there has to be a connection between the two. So, as we try to connect a potential cure to the disease of sin, what attributes will it need to have? Well, since the wages of sin is death, any successful cure would need to be powerful enough to cure a fatal condition. Since our sins have cut us off from God, so that God has turned away and will not listen to us, then any successful cure will need to originate with God, not us. And since no man can by any means redeem a soul, since we should cease trying forever, it cannot involve human effort. Sounds hopeless, even incurable (Mark 10:26-27).

“With people it is impossible”. Education won't save us. Good deeds can't save us. Our problem is too serious. Christ alone can solve it—and this is the second great Reformation truth. Now, some people find it offensive that we say that there's only one way to God. But if there's only one “medicine” that is sufficient to cure what ails us, and if that medicine has graciously been provided to us free of charge, why is that news offensive? Why indeed?

Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time

**The Reformation affirmed “Solus Christus”—Christ Alone is the Savior of the world!
What qualifies Jesus for this distinction? Let’s see...**

Monday—Read Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38.

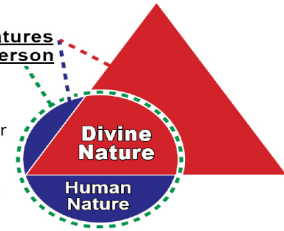
- List everything you see that shows that Jesus is God.
- List everything you see that shows that Jesus is human.
- Try to explain the diagram to the right.
- Does being truly human necessitate that Jesus also be sinful? Support your answer biblically. (Need help? See John 8:29 and 15:10. 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15 and 7:26. 1 Peter 1:19, 2:22 and 3:18.)
- Read John 1:1 and 18; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; and 2 Peter 1:1. What explicit claims do these verses make about Jesus’ deity?

“The Christ”:

• **two** distinct **natures** united in **one person**

• the natures neither mixed with each other nor ceased to maintain their own attributes.

• Jesus Christ, the perfect “God-man”!



Tuesday—Read Philippians 2:3-11

- How do you see Jesus’ full divinity in this passage?
- How do you see Jesus’ full humanity in this passage?
- If Jesus has a human nature and we do too, than why are we so different? Why would we need to be commanded to be like him?
- Which aspect of Jesus’ humiliation do you find most comforting? Most challenging? How can they inspire you?

Wednesday—For nearly a month during A.D. 451, church leaders convened a universal church council in the city of Chalcedon (a suburb of today’s Istanbul, Turkey) to clarify the mystery of the person of Christ. The “Chalcedonian Creed” has never been improved upon! It reads: *“We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhood and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and body; coessential with the Father according to Godhood, and coessential with us according to the Manhood; in all things like us, except without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusing them, changing them, dividing them and without separating them. The distinction of the two natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Substance, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has been handed down to us.”*

- What makes sense to you now, which did not before?
- What questions do you still have?
- Does the Chalcedonian Creed seem to you to “cover all the bases”?
- What present day errors are you aware of which would be resolved if people understood and affirmed the Chalcedonian Creed?

Thursday—Let’s resolve some **apparent** contradictions in Jesus’ statements and actions (no true contradiction exists). Jesus was **one** Person, with **two** Natures (unfallen human nature + divine nature). During his earthly ministry, he laid aside the expression of his divine prerogatives (Philippians 2:5-8) and operated as a sinless human, in moment-by-moment dependence upon the Father for wisdom and power (which is what Adam failed to do). Referring back to the Chalcedonian Creed, note that:

- One nature does some things that the other nature does not do (“...the property of each nature being preserved..”), so for example: Jesus’ human nature can have ascended to heaven and is no longer in the world (see John 16:28; 17:11; Acts 1:9-11), but with respect to his divine nature, Jesus can affirm that he is everywhere present (Matthew 18:20; 28:20; John 14:23). Since he has two distinct natures, both of these things can be true about the **person** of Christ—he returned to heaven and **he** is also present with us!
- In his human nature, Jesus was weak and tired (Matthew 4:2; 8:24; Mark 15:21; John 4:6), but in his divine nature he was omnipotent (Matthew 8:26-27; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3). The one **person** Jesus could at the same time be weary and omnipotent!
- Jesus’ human nature **died** (Luke 23:46; 1 Corinthians 15:3), but his divine nature **cannot die**, and in fact, was **able to raise himself from the dead** (John 2:19; 10:17-18; Hebrews 7:16)! Yet the one **person** of Christ experienced death for us.
- In his humanity, he was tempted in every way as we are, and yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). His divinity could not be tempted to sin (James 1:13). Yet anything that **either of his natures** did, the **one person** of Christ does. Thus, “**Christ** died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3). Whatever can be said of **one** nature **or the other** can be said of the **person** of Christ. Is your head hurting yet?

Friday—Christ is now seated at God’s right hand. This is the position of total honor.

- The Old Testament predicted it. Read Psalm 110:1 and the New Testamental fulfillment in Christ found in Hebrews 1:3.
- Read Ephesians 1:20-21; 1 Peter 3:22; and 1 Corinthians 15:25.
- Have you ever heard anyone joke about Jesus, or use his name in vain? Reflect on that in light of what you’ve learned this week.
- Read Ephesians 2:4-7. **Who else currently is** “seated at the right hand of God”? How can that be?!
- See if these ten blessings are sufficient for your every need:
 1. In Christ Jesus you were chosen by God and given grace before the world was created. (Ephesians 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9).
 2. In Christ Jesus you have eternal life. (Romans 6:23).
 3. In Christ Jesus you are loved by God with an inseparable love. (Romans 8:38–39).
 4. In Christ Jesus you were redeemed and forgiven for all your sins. (Ephesians 1:7)
 5. In Christ Jesus you are justified before God and the righteousness of God in Christ is imputed to you. (2 Corinthians 5:21).
 6. In Christ Jesus you have become a new creation and a son of God. (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:26).
 7. In Christ Jesus you are being sanctified and made holy. (1 Corinthians 1:2).
 8. In Christ Jesus everything you really need will be supplied. (Philippians 4:19).
 9. In Christ Jesus the peace of God will guard your heart and mind. (Philippians 4:7).
 10. In Christ Jesus you will be raised from the dead at the coming of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Saturday—Read Colossians.

- List everything you learn about the incomparable Christ from Colossians 1:13—2:19.
- List everything you learn from Colossians 2:20—4:6 about **your appropriate response** to the incomparable Christ.
- After this week’s study, can you ever think of Christ in the same way? How will you now respond to him?