

Sobering yet Comforting Facts

by Pastor George D. Cutler

Part One

Grace Gospel Ministry

In general, Mankind has been programmed to envision the existence of life as consisting of sequences that align with accomplishments according to human agendas. From this has arisen the belief that ones own innate inclinations, as they translate into varying actions; result in independent determinants of daily occurrences. Such is the expression of the terminology, "decisions and choices," as they are perceived to control and shape the course of things that transpire. In the formulation of this mindset lies the basis, which seeks to assert man's independence from God based upon his own efforts. Such thinking even seeks to establish the ability of mortals to produce a new man-made Eden on earth (both personal and collective)..... by helping God!

This has bought forth the thinking that has moved mankind to the practice of worshiping things and self and what one esteems to effectuate. In this view, humans (yes, even God's people) in effect create their own personal goals and glory in their perceived accomplishment. This unfortunate illusion does not take into account that God has a sovereign plan and purpose that He has already determined (worked out) from eternity. Many subconsciously and even some consciously practice the pursuance of such without consideration of what is God's goal, as though their intentions can trump God's will. In this sense, the assumption is that God needs mankind's cooperation to accomplish goals and that without such participation; nothing would or could be accomplished.

In this view, it is assumed that humans are "helping God," but in reality such posturing is only illusionary living. All of mankind (especially believers) must come to realize that no lives could ever be "fixed" or "influenced" apart from God through His design. Actually, nothing in this world will ever be "fixed" because nothing is actually happening apart from God's eternal plan and decrees and is only temporarily functioning according to the dictates of depraved creation. Some, who continue to misunderstand God's processes, live in the flawed confidence and esteem themselves instead of in God. In reality of course, such end up relying on, esteeming, looking to and prioritizing things in the humanistic-physical sphere. Thus, it is outrageous to assume that pitifully limited human beings could ever rise above their depraved self inspired efforts and create their own personal paradise on earth (individual or collective). Unfortunately, this is the mode of thinking that forms the underlined impetus to perceived human agendas independent of the purpose of God.

This mindset is merely a small step from assuming that one has no need of God and is in fact capable of exerting actions that are equal to His, which is the essential logic that flows from trusting in oneself. Within this cogitation lies the sub-conscientious assumption that ones view of this world and its life functions, is more realistic than what God has eternally purposed. This is indeed a flawed assumption, which in effect exudes the notion that independent human actions are absolutely necessary in assisting God though no one would ever venture to put it in these terms but that is what such cogitation amounts to. Hence there is the tendency to function apart from His will; as though the determination of things abides within the province of ones ability to "help God" in the formulation of agendas apart from what God has Decreed in eternity. It is in this sense that some are establishing goals and standards that they believe to be equal and maybe even superior to God's.

While this may seem to be not only an outrageous but unlikely mind-set, it is in fact the principle upon which the majority of the world's population is currently operating. In most of the social, political and religious realms, majority opinions deem that what they are doing is "good." In light of the divine

definition of the word “good,” it is patently obvious to the informed child of God that most of what is happening in the world is far from good. But most people and groups are adept at justifying their actions not on the basis of divine standards of truth (for the truth of God reproves, corrects and aligns according to His righteousness) but according to their own self-centered “standards.” These types of standards are generally flexible enough to bend to whatever fleshly desires that may be prevailing at any given time, which are innately diabolical from their foundation. It is critical to understand that it is God’s standards, which establishes what is good; conversely, just because something may appear to be proper does not establish such as the case.

Thus, all functioning should be based upon the truth that God's will is the issue, not human will; that God's righteousness is the perfect standard, not depraved pathetic self-induced standards. Hence the prioritized course of living must be invested in pleasing God but this is possible only according to His will. The truth of the matter is that the eternal purpose of God is the only realistic center and focus, as it exudes all God's manifested workings. This is the essence of what true living evinces. Agendas that run counter to and in opposition to God are designed to manifest denial to the exclusiveness of His essence, and are in rebellion to the entire purpose and plan of God for the lives of His people. This is true whether the issue is applicable to ones own personal life or the world in general.

The faithfulness of Jesus Christ and His redemptive work is the exclusive remedy and solution for mankind’s dilemma for deliverance from sin, evil, disease and death that characterize what the functioning of the world actually exudes. It is only through Jesus Christ’s glorious return and decreed Kingdom that this world will ever be straightened out. Those who claim to be able to accomplish such apart from God’s plan are abiding in illusionary folly. Such are convinced that they are able to improve a world that God in eternity marked for complete renovation, as this is the only plausible adduce for alleviating its problems entirely. In essence, to deny the decrees of God is to deny the need for a Savior and His solution, which in effect is to proclaim arrogantly instead that mankind is somehow able to “help God” shape the course of human destiny through human paltry activities.

The inner context of Romans 14:7-10 addresses this illusionary mindset. Verse 7 states, “For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.” In this sense, The Apostle Paul is saying that no one “of us lives and exists to oneself, which is true regardless of what ones intentions are. In this verse Paul projects that God’s purpose is actually the object of living even though many believe that their lives are immersed in themselves. It is a fact that the reason for our existence is not found in us. Paul expresses the same thought in Galatians 2:21, where he says, “no longer I live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself on behalf of me.” We in ourselves do not have a sufficient reason for living unto ourselves, for, if any good may be found in us, it is the gift of God and He should be given the exclusive credit and glory for it (Romans 3:9-18, 23; 7:14, 18; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Furthermore, as quite as it may be kept, “no one dies to himself.” In view of the future resurrection, when believers die they are referred to as having been put to sleep, not as being dead. The Greek verb which expresses this is always in the passive voice, which means that someone other than themselves put them to sleep, namely, God (I Thessalonians 4:13-15). This indicates that God is the one who determines our days in this flesh and blood body (John 21:18-19, 21—23). In the particular case of those who belong to the Lord, He puts “us” to sleep to and for Himself that we may be with Him now (Philippians 1:23) and in the future in resurrection-body form (Philippians 4:20-21).

Continuing in this passage, verse 8 states, “For if we may live, we live for the Lord, and if we may die, we die for the Lord. Therefore if we may live or if we may die, we are the Lord’s.” The trust of exegeting this verse is focused on the last clause, namely, that “we are the Lord’s.” Here Paul uses terminology of possession to indicate that we belong to and are owned by the Lord; in effect, we all are the Lord’s property (I Corinthians 6:19—20). Then it logically follows that He should be the object of both our living and dying. This was certainly the way Paul viewed his life in that he did not count his own life valuable to himself as he fearlessly fulfilled the ministry which the Lord gave to him (Acts 20:24).

So, since the Lord owns us, it follows that if we may be living, then we should live unto or with the Lord. Note the Greek verb *zw/men* (zo-men) translated “we live” may also be interpreted in the phrase, “for if we may live, we should live unto or for the Lord.” In the light of the context, this verb emphasizes the nature of our relationship with the Lord, namely, that if we may be living, it is a foregone conclusion that we will be living unto or with the Lord. Next, observe that “if we may die, we die unto the Lord.” Again this reinforces the basic premise that we are owned by the Lord. He owns us while we are living and He owns us when we die. Paul briefly summarizes in the following words what he has said: “If we may live or if we may die, we are the Lord’s.” When Jesus Christ was made sin for the ones He died for on Calvary’s Cross, He redeemed and bought them for an eternal possession, which includes ones present physical life plus ones future existence beyond what is commonly known as physical death (II Corinthians 5:21). Thus since He has purchased us with His own precious Blood for eternity, then we belong to Him and are in his custody forever and neither life nor death can separate us from Him (Romans 8:38).

Continuing the text, verse 9 states, “For to this end Christ died and lived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.” Some of the Greek manuscripts add the phrase “and rose” between the words “died” and “lived” and as follows read: “For to this end Christ died and rose and lived that He might be Lord of both the dead and living.” The phrase *kai. avne,sth* (**keh ahn·ehs·tee**) translated “and rose,” simply explains more fully that the Christ who died, also lived again. Hence, “to this end” or for this reason, this is the object for which Christ died and lived again. On one hand, His going through the cycle of death and life makes it possible for Him to be identified with both the dead and living. On the other hand, what He accomplished necessitated His going through this cycle. The final purpose of Christ’s death and resurrection unto life, as stated in this verse, is that “He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living,” which exudes His mastery over or reign over death since the death of Christ is the payment made for our sinfully depraved nature and as a result He owns us, so it follows that as our owner He has the right to exercise lordship over us (I Corinthians 7:23; II Peter 2:1). Thus our life is dependent upon the fact that Christ lives.... oh how wonderful it is that He lives! From this we can rest in the fact that those whom He died for also lives! I Thessalonians 5:10 states that Christ “died on behalf of us that whether we watch or whether we sleep we shall live together with Him” (Romans 4:25).

Finally verse 10 states, “but you, why do you judge your brother? Or also you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand beside the judgment-seat of God.” Here one must be very careful not to judge as to who belongs to the Lord and who doesn’t. Note that this question, “why do you judge your brother?” is also referenced in verse 3 wherein he asks concerning those who were judging the weak herb eating believer. In the previous verses in this chapter Paul has pointed out that both the weak and strong belong to the Lord, which leads him to call them brothers in this verse. He asks why some would persist in judging his brother, for he will have to give account for what he is doing before the judgment seat of God. Likewise, he asks other why they would persists in despising those who they considered to be weak brothers, for all will have to give an account for their actions before the judgment seat of God. The implication of impending judgment exclusively from God should remove all such faulty attitudes (II Peter 3:11).

Accordingly, it is crucial for God’s people to understand that the role of mankind is restricted to the operational aspect of functioning within God’s assigned course for each individual according to His purpose, as the comprehension of this truth effectively distinguishes human perceptions from divine facts. It is this integrated conceptualization of humanly perceived yet antithetical agendas that form the propaganda system for mankind’s implementation of human solutions for the world. Contrariwise, the impartations of truths according to divine factuality are essentially progressive and when accepted, serve to mutually reinforce the realities of life in lieu of the illusions of human imagination.

Mankinds attempt to arrests the fears and pressures of physical life are at its root counter-measured yet mitigated by the stability of God’s determinant purpose. Humans’ preoccupation with self-awareness evolves into self centered arrogance yet the only plausible basis is total acknowledgement

of the supreme power and authority of the Creator and determinant One. Mankind's feigned desire to prioritize things according to human standards inevitably transmogrify into fleshly desires that are driven by their subjective arrogance in the pursuance of world centered accomplishments. Incredibly, at its root, this is viewed as justifiably synonymous with "Godliness" and the standard of its essence thereof.

Therein abides the basis of mindset for mankind's world system. This is the acceptable cogitation and lie that have seduced the rank and file of mankind. This is the intuitive expression that exercises control over this world through the lie that seeks to ensnare all humans. The accumulation of common human responses to this propaganda is incited by greed, pride and self-righteousness; which has culminated in an integrated system of organized gross depravity and evil that is better known as the chaos termed "human history". Human history (as opposed to God's eternal plan of salvation for His elect, which He is manifesting in the course of time) is not really progressive at all from the divine point of view but actually and inherently regressive.

Human kind and civilization are accelerating on the downward spiral that has been its course since its manifested separation from God, as identified in the Garden of Eden. Any assumption that the world is now somehow better off than mankind of ages past certainly is not evinced from a divine or even a humanistic, historical moral point of view. True manifested faith in God is at best varied and in even more diluted form than ever before in the history of the world, as the progression of evil takes on more elaborate and tolerable forms and their widespread distribution and availability become more rampart and concentrated than ever before. According to prophecy, this trend will accelerate on into the dark tribulation period, culminating in the double-tier return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, so-called human "choices, decisions and agendas," are not effective components of determinants and do not exert control of occurrences, as human intellect boasts.

In mankind's search to extract information for the supposed purpose of shaping opinions and forging decisions and choices, there is more dependency on the collective thoughts of humanity and less reliance on the directives of Divinity. In essence, humanly perceived accomplishments have only served as operational components of mankind's alienation from God. This is displayed in mankind's exuberance in creating a false sense of mastery over the material world though death remains and suffering has intensified. Hence, for those who are not blessed to internalize the true spiritual realities of life (the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, first and foremost); it is all too easy to allay their dependence upon human agendas, which in turn undermines their reliance upon God. Such gives the flawed impression that human choices, decisions and operational functionality ultimately determine the course of life.

Plunging headlong into the myth that scientific, technological, social, cultural and human progress disembogues the ultimate value of life; ardently solidifies this illusionary mindset. Faith in technology and other phenomena (instead of faith in God) and hope in political solutions (instead of God's solutions) as well as prioritization for human cultural accomplishments (instead of for God and the sacrifice of His Son), are common variations on the carnal theme of working to make heaven on earth. In reality, any effort whose equation does engender the enablement of God exudes the impossibility of human accomplishments and is foolhardy. **Only God can satisfy the true needs of depraved humanity, which are in essence: forgiveness of the sin nature, spiritual peace and eternal life.**