
The problem of the self; the solution of the cross

One of our foolish assumptions is that the deepest happiness comes from o _____ us.
Instead, the deepest happiness comes from inside, and makes its way outside.

Mark 8:34 Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

The human problem: we are *naturally* self-focused, self-serving, self-satisfied.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Key: page 1: Life; Bad; Self;

Page 2: Sinful; Deceitful; Godly; Deepest;

Page 4: outside.

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Desires, Pain, and Surrender

October 3, 2021

Dreams for our lives

*Proverbs 1:32 For the **waywardness** of **the simple** will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them;*

*Proverbs 9:6 Leave your **simple** ways and you will live; walk in **the way of insight**.*

Dreams meet reality

Genesis 3:17 “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

- This life is exceedingly difficult.

1 Cor. 4:11 To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. ¹² We work hard with our own hands.

- Bad treatment from people is exceedingly difficult.

1 Cor. 4:12b When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; ¹³ when we are slandered, we answer kindly. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world—right up to this moment.

- Dealing with self is exceedingly difficult.

Romans 7:18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want

Shattered dreams and unmet desires

Four different kinds of desires:

- Sinful desires.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

- Deceitful desires.

Ecclesiastes 2:10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. It was meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

- Godly desires.

Romans 8:5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

- Deepest desires.

Ecclesiastes 6:2 God gives some people wealth, possessions and honor, so that they lack nothing their hearts desire, but God does not grant them the ability to enjoy them, and strangers enjoy them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.

Psalms 37:4-5 Take delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord and He will make your paths straight.

Isaiah 26:8 Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts.

Pain is the necessary teacher

*** Our working assumptions had been:

1. We really didn't need God, not at least in a daily, functional way.
2. We could produce the kinds of feelings that brought:
 - A. Great and lasting satisfaction, and
 - B. Delightful and growing relationships.

Pain is the divine surgery to un-Velcro our hearts from the foolish assumptions that mess up our lives.

Romans 5:3-5 More than that we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character and character produces hope and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Romans 8:28 We know that in everything God works for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

1 Peter 5:10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.
