

How are we to actually live? - Part 1 of 4- The Failure of Evangelism

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For years I have been trying to learn how God wants His People to live their daily lives. I have been an Evangelist, Church Planter and Pastor. This subject has nagged at me and won't let me go. I am a convinced 5 point Calvinist. I am thankful for the salvation of my soul. But I want to know how I am supposed to live my life as a Christian. I am not talking here about Salvation. I am not talking about saving the World or changing Society. I will say it again. I am concerned with how Christians are to live as Christians. As a Calvinist, I place great importance on the Doctrine of God's Sovereignty. What does God's Word reveal His sovereign will to be about Life itself, about the care and use of the Natural World (the environment), about Marriage and Family, about Economics and about Civil Government. That covers the basics. We say Christ Jesus is Lord of "all". He is and that means He must be Lord of these matters or He is not Lord of "all"!

I do not get excited about evangelistic outreach and Missions as much as I used to. I absolutely still believe in the necessity of sinners hearing the Gospel and responding to it with faith and repentance for their Salvation. But many years ago I became convinced that our evangelistic efforts have been woefully inadequate. The emphasis of most evangelism is on the well-being of the sinners and not on the Glory of the Savior. Traditionally, that "well-being" was understood primarily as the forgiveness of sins and Life as opposed to Death, in Eternity. ("Accept Jesus or you will go to Hell") In recent years, the "well-being" of sinners is primarily about a sinner being well within [him] self and with others, in the here and now. ("Have a personal Problem? Jesus is the Solution")

In both approaches the Evangelism is primarily person-centered, rather than God-centered. Calvinists will agree with that assessment because, they say, most evangelism is Arminian, i.e.- it is based on the free-will decision of sinners to process the Gospel and decide whether they want to accept or reject it. That, Calvinists correctly believe, does not glorify God. On the other hand, they believe their approach to Evangelism is God-centered because it is based on the premise that the entire process of becoming a Christian is the work of God- it is totally a matter of Grace. There is no free-will involved at all. Therefore, if a sinner is saved, God alone receives the glory, because He alone did the saving.