

CLASS 2–Ch.2

1. Clarity on life's experiences—2 Cor. 4:16-18

We acknowledge that Christians share in all of the sufferings, weaknesses, and inadequacies common to all of humanity. What we disagree over is why we have those experiences, how we should describe those experiences and what we should do about them. As Christians, we believe that the problems of this world are rooted in humanity's rebellion against a holy God. Our whole being—the inner and outer person—suffers tremendously due to the results of human sin. (22)

- Why we have those experiences?—life in a fallen world.
- How we should describe those experiences?—according to God's diagnosis
- What should we do about them?—seek to be conformed to Christ amidst them

2. Biblical language leads to biblical redemption—Romans 5:1-5

Why is it so important to use biblical categories in describing human problems? Because when we describe our problems using secular categories and labels, we tend to seek the solutions provided by secular wisdom. If our problems are due to the effects of the fall, there is always hope for us. We can turn to Christ who promises to make all things new. In Christ, the hardest struggles of life—whether from our own sins or the suffering that comes from living in a sin broken world—can be redeemed. But if we rely on secular labels and the solutions that are attached to them, our hope will rise and fall upon the temporary effectiveness of those solutions... [Those solutions are based on how] they explain the experiences of people as produced by other types of forces of influences. Problems are reduced to psychological or biological problems. (23)

3. Why Christ came—1 John 3:8b

We believe that Jesus was sent not only to save us from our sins, but also to empower us by the Holy Spirit to live a holy life, no matter what circumstances we face. This extension of the purpose for which Christ came enables us to recognize that all of life is to be lived under the lordship of Jesus... The call of the 'one another' commands in the New Testament provide clear evidence that the church, under the [lordship] of Christ, is to make everyone complete in Christ... This type of mutual care for one another makes us vulnerable to others and helps us to live in a way that promotes dependence on him... we are fully dependent upon the work of God to enlighten, convict, change, comfort, and keep an individual. Christlike care produces lasting hope and lasting change into the image of Christ and that is a work that only God can do by the power of his Spirit and through the word in the hearts of his people. (24, 29, 31)

4. Christ is the standard of soul care—Col. 1:28

...we recognize what is normal and abnormal based upon seeing how Jesus lived his life. The secular culture has no such way to delineate 'normal'; therefore they struggle to categorize what is abnormal. But we can define normal humanity according to Jesus. Christianity has an aim, a focus: that we be conformed to his image. This implies that in our natural state, we are abnormal. It is an assumption that we need change, we need help, and we are desperately dependent upon God to fulfill our true God-given purpose. This is why Jesus is central to soul care. (34)