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OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE

JULY 2019

What is a "Relationship" with God?

The Lord be with you.

It is very trendy to say I have a "relationship" with God in popular American culture, both Christian and otherwise. Sometimes this "relationship" is placed in opposition to regular corporate worship ('I don't need to attend worship services, I have a "relationship" with god.'). Sometimes this "relationship" is placed in opposition to membership in a denomination or local church ('I don't need to join a church, I have a "relationship" with god.'). Sometimes this "relationship" can be placed in opposition to baptism ('I don't need to be baptized, I have a "relationship" with god.'). Sometimes this "relationship" can be placed in opposition to subscribing and believing in basic Christian and biblical truths, like those expressed in the ancient ecumenical creeds ('I don't need to know or believe what the creeds say and teach, I have a "relationship" with god.'). In fact, I've heard this "relationship" put in opposition to most everything revealed in the Bible.

All this got me to wondering how the word "relationship" is used in the Bible. My search was not surprising to me, but it might be to some.

- The *English Standard Version* of the Bible has no references using the word "relationship"
- The *King James Version* of the Bible has no references using the word "relationship"
- The *New American Standard Version* of the Bible has no references using the word "relationship"
- The *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible has no references using the word "relationship"
- The *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible has no references using the word "relationship"

In fact, I found only two editions of the Bible that are commonly used in America that have the word "relationship." They are the *New International Version* and the *New Living Translation*. The NIV has four references with the word "relationship:" Judges 18:7, 28; 1 Kings 10:1, John 1:18. The Judges references are about one group of people having no relationship with any other people; the 1 Kings passage is about King Solomon having a "relationship" with God, the John passage is about the Father's "relationship" with the Son. The NLT, a paraphrase, has eleven references to the word "relationship": Exodus 34:14; Leviticus 26:46; Joshua 22:28; Psalm 24:5; Luke 12:21; Romans 2:17; 4:13; 5:11, 18; Colossians 1:28; 2 John 1:9. All of these references are about our "relationship" with God.

Below is each passage from the Bible versions that has the word "relationship" and the same verse in the esv. The esv translation is listed first. Omitted are the two references in the NIV from Judges, as they are not referring to our "relationship" with God.

1 Kings 10:1

esv: "Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions."

niv: "When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relationship to the LORD, she came to test Solomon with hard questions."

John 1:18

esv: "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

niv: "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known."

Exodus 34:14

ESV: "(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God)"

NLT: "You must worship no other gods, for the LORD, whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you."

Leviticus 26:46

ESV: "These are the statutes and rules and laws that the Lord made between himself and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai."

NLT: "These are the decrees, regulations, and instructions that the LORD gave through Moses on Mount Sinai as evidence of the relationship between himself and the Israelites."

Joshua 22:28

ESV: "And we thought, 'If this should be said to us or to our descendants in time to come, we should say, "Behold, the copy of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you.'""

NLT: "If they say this, our descendants can reply, 'Look at this copy of the LORD's altar that our ancestors made. It is not for burnt offerings or sacrifices; it is a reminder of the relationship both of us have with the LORD.'"

Psalms 24:5

ESV: "He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

NLT: "They will receive the LORD's blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior."

Luke 12:21

ESV: "So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

NLT: "Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God."

Romans 2:17

ESV: "But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God"

NLT: "You who call yourselves Jews are relying on God's law, and you boast about your special relationship with him."

Redeemed

Reconciled

Restored

Romans 4:13

ESV: "For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith."

NLT: "Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith."

Romans 5:11

ESV: "More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

NLT: "So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God."

Romans 5: 18

ESV: "Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men."

NLT: "Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone."

Colossians 1:28

ESV: "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ."

NLT: "So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ."

2 John 1:9

ESV: "Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son."

NLT: "Anyone who wanders away from this teaching has no relationship with God. But anyone who remains in the teaching of Christ has a relationship with both the Father and the Son."

Clearly, in the above texts, the use of the word "relationship" is a dumbing-down of the biblical text and you lose significant truths. In Psalm 24:5 the gift of our righteousness and salvation becomes a "relationship." In Romans 4:13 our righteousness of faith becomes a "relationship." In Romans 5:11 our reconciliation becomes a "relationship." In Romans 5:18 our justification in Christ becomes having a "relationship," and so on. In each case we find that the word "relationship" is inadequate as a translation.

In the same way, saying I have "a relationship with God" is inadequate. It is just too vague, even though it is true. After all, even the devil has a "relationship" with God, just not the type of relationship I want to have! Some questions that need to be asked are: What is your relationship with God? Who is the "God" that you have a "relationship" with? On who or what is the relationship founded? There are other important questions, to be sure.

Now, the Bible certainly affirms that a believer has a "relationship" with God, but it is never a warm, fuzzy, out-of-focus relationship. Some examples of our biblical relationship with God are:

- Relationship between those being justified and the One who justifies
- Relationship between those being saved and the Savior
- Relationship between those adopted as sons and the Father and our Brother, Jesus
- Relationship between those being redeemed and our Redeemer
- Relationship between those lost and the One seeking and finding them
- Relationship between those who worship and the One worshiped
- Relationship between those who are creatures and the Creator
- Relationship between those who are slaves and the Owner
- Relationship between those receiving the promise and the One who promises
- Relationship between those who are subjects and the King
- Relationship between those who are impure and the One who cleanses us
- Relationship between those who receive and the Giver
- Relationship between those who are baptized and the God who baptizes
- Relationship between those who hear God's word and the God who speaks in the Bible

Other "relationships" could be added. The point here is that our relationship with God is founded on Jesus and received through faith in our crucified and risen Lord. Like any real relationship, it is nurtured. In the case of the real God, it is nurtured through word and sacrament, which is found in his Church. If a person's "relationship" is not a relationship with the true, Triune God, achieved through the gift of faith in Christ Jesus, then it is a sham.

We need to be careful in adopting the patterns of speech in our culture. Let us, instead, conform our speech to the pattern of the Bible. Then we will speak of being adopted, redeemed, saved, found, baptized, etc, children of our Heavenly Father. Then we will speak of our relationship in terms that has real substance.

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor



Digging In The Nicene Creed Second Article, Part 2



And [I believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

Last month we began our consideration of this article by noting its accent on Jesus as our Redeemer. Now we turn to

a more careful consideration of the words.

Because this article identifies Jesus as both truly God and truly man, the opening little word "one" takes on great significance. We are not dealing with two different beings, one human and the other divine, but a completely unique being who is both 100% God and 100% human. This union happened at the moment of conception. So, for example, when Mary visited Elizabeth, Elizabeth could correctly say, "And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" This only makes sense if Jesus was already Divine. But Jesus was also human, as John forcefully points out in his Gospel prologue, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became *flesh* and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1, 14).

This union was not temporary. For example, divinity did not abandon humanity, leaving it on the cross. So, Paul could write, "None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8). Nor did the divinity abandon the humanity, leaving it in the grave at the resurrection. So, Jesus says to his disciples after the resurrection, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Luke 24:39). This union continues to this day and will so for all eternity. Peter, in speaking of the resurrected Lord, wrote, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him" (1 Peter 3:22).

A few other passages which impact on this union are:

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ... Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:13, 16).

... concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord ... (Romans 1:3-4).

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20).



Martin Luther, in a sermon delivered in 1534 on Jesus' baptism, preached:

In this way we also confess this article in our Creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ, His" (the Father's) "only son," etc. For with the term "only Son," we understand that He is His true, natural Son, begotten of His nature, that is, our Lord, whom we worship and call on (as God), begotten of the Father in eternity, and born of the Virgin in time or according to the human nature, so that two natures are united together in one person and called one Christ. This is what we believe and preach. Whoever does not want to do so, let him abandon it and go on being wise and instructing God how to talk. As for us, we will let Him teach and instruct us, and follow that, even if it does not agree with our own wisdom. [edited by Benjamin T. G. Mayers *Martin Luther on Holy Baptism: Sermons to the People (1525-39)* 41]

Though Jesus has these two natures, he is nonetheless "one" (1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:5). However, in this one Jesus Christ, neither his humanity nor his divinity is obliterated. How this can be has caused quite a bit of controversy over the centuries. So, we will continue with our examination of our "one" Lord Jesus Christ next month. Until then, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Amen.

Celebrating Freedom!

Through this man [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. Acts 13:38-39

For freedom Christ has set us free. Galatians 5:1

At the beginning of July, we celebrate our independence, our freedom. Freedom from what or from whom? Well, as



we learned in school, we celebrate freedom from tyranny, oppression and abuse by England in our colonial days. We are joyful and, therefore, remember the great and glorious sacrifice of our forefathers on our behalf that made us a free people and nation.

As Christians, we also celebrate our freedom. Freedom from what or from whom? As the scriptures above remind us, we have been set free from sin, death and the power of the devil. We have been assailed by Satan and his evil demons all our life

as he seeks to lure us to hell for all eternity with himself. We are joyful and, therefore, remember the great and glorious sacrifice of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who, for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, was born sinless, lived a sinless life, suffered and died at the hands of sinful men, in order to make us a free people, a holy nation.

So, let's celebrate our freedom! Not just the temporal freedom we enjoy as citizens of the United States of America, but as free people of God. Let's share that surpassing joy with everyone God brings into our lives – family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, store clerks, repairmen – that all may enjoy and celebrate with us a freedom that lasts forever!

The next meeting for our board is Sunday, August 4th; board members should make every effort to attend
Kitty Rickert, Evangelism Chair

The Not-So-Good Samaritan!

A Devotion from Ken Klaus



But a Samaritan, as He journeyed, came to where He was, and when He saw him, He had compassion. Luke 10:33

Good Samaritans and entrepreneurs -- those are two titles you don't often see together.

Maybe so, but 41-year-old Christopher Walls of Johnson City, Tennessee, qualifies as a Good Samaritan and an entrepreneur.

Well, sort of.

Let me explain. It's easier if I start with the Good Samaritan part. You should know Mr. Walls is a mechanic, a mechanic of some talent. Even though he wasn't at his shop or on official mechanic duty, there are a number of people in his hometown who can verify that when their cars unexpectedly broke down, Mr. Walls very courteously came forward and used his skills to help.

Yes, he charged them, but they were grateful a mechanic was nearby when their cars broke down.

Now, let me explain about Mr. Walls' entrepreneurial side. Apparently, business hasn't been very good at the shop where he works as a mechanic. Now a regular person might sit around and lament his fate, but not Mr. Walls. He is an entrepreneur and he took his fate into his own hands.

Mr. Walls went out to restaurant parking lots and used his mechanical skills to disable cars. Then, when the cars' owners came out of the restaurant, Mr. Walls – entrepreneur that he is – would come forward and volunteer, for a small fee, to fix the vehicle that he had previously . . . unfixed.

The police department of Johnson City, Tennessee, has arrested Mr. Walls on two counts of thievery. So far only two people have come forward to accuse him, but the police are sure more victims will join the list and make the world know Mr. Walls isn't a Good Samaritan after all.



Now there are a lot of ways this story can be used in a Daily Devotion. We could talk about the corruption of human hearts, or we could zero in on how there is help for difficult times. We might even use the story to warn Christians to be on guard against those who would deceive.

But we're not going to go those routes.

Instead, let us think upon Jesus, the ultimate Good Samaritan. Looking on our lost condition, Jesus came into this world to fix that which our transgressions had broken. Freely, willingly, unilaterally, Jesus gave His life to mend the bridge between earth and heaven, to mend the bridge our sins had torn down. We don't have enough money to pay

Him for His sacrifice and, if we did, He wouldn't take it, but we can say, "thank you" to our Savior who gave Himself to save us.

Arlen D. Besel – Ambassador

THROUGH THE WORSHIP WINDOW



July — The First Third of Pentecost:

The fourth Sunday of Pentecost introduces the sending of the seventy disciples on a missionary journey after the success of the twelve Apostles. Initially we read about the instructions Jesus gives them as recorded in Luke 10. After their return, they report on their successful work. They even had the ability to cast out demons. Jesus reminded them that the real joy was that their own names were recorded in heaven.

The story of the Good Samaritan follows this message and reminds us of the love we have in Christ Jesus and therefore should show to those

in need around us.

Jesus reminds Martha that the word of God is more important than physical matters.

Luke continues with Jesus' instruction on prayer with the Lord's Prayer. He continues by reminding by teaching us to be persistent in prayer.

The first Epistle lessons is from the end of Galatians. Paul's letter gives the church instruction on dealing with sins by the members by reminding them that they have been forgiven by grace and therefore they should forgive others. They are encouraged to remember "love covers a multitude of sins."

The rest of the Epistle lessons come from Colossians. We hear Paul giving thanks to God for their ministry and prays for their continued action and ongoing spread of the Gospel. He recounts his own suffering for the work and their recovery from paganism.

In July the Old Testament lessons include a portion of Isaiah 66 which is pure Gospel. It points to the joy and comfort found in the Messianic age.

Leviticus is one of the books of Moses. Our reading explains, a bit, what it means to "love your neighbor as yourself."

In Genesis we are told about Abraham's visitors who tell him that he will have a son who will be the father of a great nation. They also tell him of God's plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham pleads for his nephew Lot. God grants his petition and Lot and his family are saved.

Arlen D. Besel– Worship

Office Closed

Pastor & Kitty will be visiting their son, daughter-in-law & 5 of their grandkids 7/12-7/19. The office will be closed.

We Need You!

There are so many talented & dedicated people in this worship family! Here are 10 ways you can serve God in this place: 1) help with communion setup &/or takedown; 2) clean the gutters; 3) fill a vacancy on our boards; 4) call people who miss church to see if they're okay; 5) sign up for church flowers; 6) take those church flowers to our home-bound & hospitalized after church; 7) walk the neighborhood on the last Saturday of the month & meet people; 8) attend the cleanup day & help spruce up the inside & outside of the church; 9) be a greeter, usher, lector or acolyte on Sunday mornings; 10) pray for



your neighbors & the church's neighbors

Digging Into The ORCHARD

So happy to report that we received our \$500 grant from RC&D! The 3rd grant money requires a bit more paperwork, but we will hopefully have that money by the end of summer/beginning of fall. Don't forget to look at the garden—some of us are already enjoying the fruits of our labors! It will be time to harvest so many more things soon & we will undoubtedly be giving fresh produce away; it will be first-come-first-served. We need someone who can build us a "Gleaner's Table" - someplace we can put our overstocked veggies that people can take. If you or someone you know is willing to build something simple & sturdy, let Kitty know soon! Thanks!



Bulletin & Newsletter Information Dates

Please have all information for the bulletin into the office no later than Tuesday of each week. Newsletter info is due no later than the 20th of each month to ensure its inclusion. Thanks!

Sunday School

The Sunday School class for our children will take a summer break until September.

Please Sign Up for Church Flowers

To date, no one has signed up for altar flowers for the entire month of September, except the last Sunday. Please consider signing up for flowers to beautify our sanctuary; if you don't want to keep the flowers, someone will take them to our homebound. Thanks.



Altar Help

Speaking of altar flowers reminded me that we need people to help with communion setup & takedown; it is not a difficult job, but it is a very important one. Bonnie or Robin or Carla will be happy to show you what needs to be done. Speak with them today & let them know that you are happy to be of service to Jesus, here in this place, in this way.

LWML News

Your LWML is sponsoring a church workday on Saturday, July 20th, beginning at 9 a.m.; those who come out to help will be treated to lunch! All hands are needed, both indoors & outdoors, as we will be cleaning, cleaning, cleaning! Speak with Kathy O'Malley for more information.

We will collect mite money the 1st Sunday of each month, beginning in August, so save your coins & dollars & checks! The mites collection box is on the counter in the narthex.



Mercy Basket

There haven't been a lot of reports in the news lately of disasters here in the US or in other parts of the world, but the aftereffects continue from those that have happened. Please remember to put something in the Mercy Basket (placed on the table just outside the sanctuary doors); those in need will appreciate your kindheartedness.

July Birthdays

- 2 Don Hartwig II
- 3 Ruth Hewlett
- 12 Pam Jalbert
- 27 Greg Fiske



8 Bill & Janet Stenner

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please call or email the church office with your info so we can celebrate with you! 302) 737-6176; secretary.orkde@outlook.com

JULY BIBLE READINGS

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Deuteronomy 32:1-4 1 Samuel 28-31 | 16 | Psalm 42 1 Kings 18-20 |
| 2 | Psalm 28 2 Samuel 1-3 | 17 | Psalm 43 1 Kings 21-22 |
| 3 | Psalm 29 2 Samuel 4-6 | 18 | Psalm 44 2 Kings 1-3 |
| 4 | Psalm 30 2 Samuel 7-9 | 19 | Psalm 45 2 Kings 4-6 |
| 5 | Psalm 31 2 Samuel 10-12 | 20 | Psalm 46 2 Kings 7-9 |
| 6 | Psalm 32 2 Samuel 13-15 | 21 | Psalm 47 2 Kings 10-12 |
| 7 | Psalm 33 2 Samuel 16-18 | 22 | Psalm 48 2 Kings 13-15 |
| 8 | Psalm 34 2 Samuel 19-21 | 23 | Psalm 49 2 Kings 16-18 |
| 9 | Psalm 35 2 Samuel 22-24 | 24 | Psalm 50 2 Kings 19-22 |
| 10 | Psalm 36 1 Kings 1-2 | 25 | Psalm 51 2 Kings 23-25 |
| 11 | Psalm 37 1 Kings 3-6 | 26 | Psalm 52 1 Chronicles 1-5 |
| 12 | Psalm 38 1 Kings 7-8 | 27 | Psalm 53 1 Chronicles 6-10 |
| 13 | Psalm 39 1 Kings 9-11 | 28 | Psalm 54 1 Chronicles 11-15 |
| 14 | Psalm 40 1 Kings 12-14 | 29 | Psalm 55 1 Chronicles 16-20 |
| 15 | Psalm 41 1 Kings 15-17 | 30 | Psalm 56 1 Chronicles 21-25 |
| | | 31 | Deuteronomy 32:1-4 1 Chronicles 26-29 |

