

THE THEORETICAL CHURCH – LESSON 19 (ABC)

Luke 14:1-4

1 Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely.

2 And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy.

3 And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

4 But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go.(NKJ)

QUESTIONS

What is dropsy?

What features in this disease picture the theoretical church (the church that lives in abstract doctrine, not dynamic experience)?

What is the underlying problem in the common form of dropsy today and how does it relate to the theoretical church?

What is the consequence of theoretical bondage?

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ANSWERS

This is a condition characterised by water overload. Also referred to as oedema(edema), anasarca. The causes are CARDIAC FAILURE, RENAL FAILURE, LIVER FAILURE, LOW PROTEIN(MALNUTRITION).

THE COMMONEST CAUSE TODAY IS CARDIAC FAILURE(HEART FAILURE).

FEATURES

SWELLING

The person with this disease is swollen with water. This swelling can be seen in the face, arms, abdomen or legs. He looks bigger than normal. He is puffed up.

Water is a symbol of the Word. This is a picture of a person “overloaded” with knowledge of the Word.

1 Cor 8:1

Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.(NKJ)

Isa 47:10

"For you have trusted in your wickedness; you have said, 'No one sees me'; your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; and you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is

no one else besides me.'(NKJ)

1 Cor 4:18-20

18 Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.

19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power.

20 For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.(NKJ)

BREATHLESSNESS

The person with dropsy suffers with the disabling symptom of breathlessness as water accumulates in his lungs. These patients gasp for breath.

The breath is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The person with dropsy is picture of a believer who is filled with a theoretical knowledge of the Word of God but devoid of the Spirit. He knows the Word, but cannot walk in the Word because of his deficiency in the Spirit.

Gal 5:16

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.(NKJ)

Gal 5:25

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.(NKJ)

The theoretical believer is serving out of the oldness of the letter.

Rom 7:6

But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.(NKJ)

INCOMPETENCE

The person with dropsy is unable to perform normal physical activities because of breathlessness. He is physically incompetent.

The theoretical believer knows what to do, but cannot translate knowledge to practice.

Matt 23:1-4

1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,

2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

3 "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

4 "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.(NKJ)

The theoretical believer is powerless in his witness, because of his deficiency in the Spirit. He has not moved to the second phase of growth – THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Acts 1:8

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the

earth."(NKJ)

There is no strength in the inward man.

Eph 3:16

that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,(NKJ)

There may be enticing speech, but no demonstration of the "Spirit and power".

1 Cor 2:4

And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,(NKJ)

Rom 15:19

in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.(NKJ)

Neglects weightier matters.

Matt 23:23

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.(NKJ)

DEPENDENT

In view of his physical handicap the patient with dropsy is dependent on others. He requires constant nursing care.

Eph 6:13

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.(NKJ)

The person with advanced dropsy is unable "to stand" alone.

Because of deficiency in the Spirit, he cannot lead an autonomous life. He depends on alternate resources rather than the Spirit. The alternate resource is the arm of flesh.

2 Chr 32:8-9

8 "With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

9 After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem (but he and all the forces with him laid siege against Lachish), to Hezekiah king of Judah, and to all Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying, (NKJ)

Jer 17:5

Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD. (NKJ)

ALTERNATE RESOURCES:

WINE FOR JOY AND BOLDNESS RATHER THAN THE SPIRIT.
NUMERICAL STRENGTH RATHER THAN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.
RELIGIOUS LAWS, PROGRAMMES AND REGULATIONS RATHER THAN THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT.
DENOMINATIONAL STRENGTH RATHER THAN THE STRENGTH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
DOCUMENTAL VALIDATION(DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS) RATHER THAN VALIDATION BY THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.
THE DUTIES OF THE LETTER RATHER THAN THE LIBERTY OF THE SPIRIT.
THE VOICE OF HUMANISM(PSYCHOLOGY, HUMAN PHILOSOPHY, NEW AGE) RATHER THAN THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT.
THE POWER OF MAMMON RATHER THAN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.
THE EXCELLENCY OF SPEECH AND INTELLECT RATHER THAN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.
THE POWER OF POLITICS AND HUMAN GOVERNMENTAL INFLUENCE RATHER THAN THE POWER OF GOD.

Zech 4:6

So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.(NKJ)

HIGH MAINTENANCE

He needs a constant supply of oxygen from a machine and to be propped up in bed to assist with his breathing problems. In addition he needs a special diet and expensive medication to maintain fluid balance.

Theoretical believers require high maintenance. They drain the resources and anointing of the set man.

THEY REQUIRE CONSTANT EXPLANATION BECAUSE THEY CANNOT HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT.

THEY ARE CONSTANTLY INVOLVED IN STRIFE BECAUSE-

1 Cor 2:14

....natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

(NKJ)

Matt 23:24

"Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

(NKJ)

THEY DELAY THE CHURCH BECAUSE THEY ARE "HEAVY" WITH THEORETICAL REVELATIONS, BIBLE TRIVIA AND ABSTRACT KNOWLEDGE.
THEY REQUIRE CONSTANT CONSULTATION BECAUSE THEY ARE PUFFED UP WITH KNOWLEDGE.

THEY DEMAND CONSTANT ATTENTION FROM THE SET MAN BECAUSE THEY

FEEL THAT THEY ARE REFERENCE MATERIAL.
THEY ARE HEARERS AND SPEAKERS, NOT DOERS.

THIS IS A PHARISEE POSITION(NOTE THE PERSON WITH DROPSY WAS IN THE HOUSE OF THE PHARISEE).

DEATH BY WATER OVERLOAD

The water finally kills the individual with dropsy – death by drowning.

2 Cor 3:6

who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.(NKJ)

THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM IN DROPSY(THE COMMONEST TYPE) IS THE PATIENT'S HEART HAS FAILED.
THE THEORETICAL BELIEVER HAS HEART PROBLEMS.

The heart figuratively represents an individual's mind, emotions and will. it is the inward part of man that cannot be seen.

The problem with the theoretical believer is that his heart has become hardened. Hebrews talks about this condition.

Heb 3:6-15

6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice,

8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness,

9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years.

10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.'

11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' "

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,

15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."(NKJ)

THE HARDENED HEART HAS THE FOLLOWING DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA:

LIVING IN POSTPONEMENT

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice,

The person with a hardened heart cannot serve God today. He lives in the realm of postponement.

Acts 24:25

Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."(NKJ)

TESTING GOD

Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years.

Matt 4:7

Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'
(NKJ)

Acts 5:9

Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."(NKJ)

The nation of Israel saw the hand of God upon them during the 10 plagues in Egypt. They experienced the miraculous deliverance through the parting of the Red Sea, YET THEY STILL WANTED PROOF. They continually murmured and complained. This exposed an attitude of distrust.

A person with a hardened heart asks for proof because he does not trust God.

NOT KNOWING HIS WAYS

Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.'

There is total ignorance of the ways of God. They have to be told everything.

Ps 18:21

For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.
(NKJ)

David, the man after God's own heart, not only knew the ways, but kept the ways of God. (revise the mnemonic "RIGHTEOUS" – for clarity on the ways of God.

UNBELIEF IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

The person with a hardened heart cannot maintain a God-centred focus. He is often more focussed on gifts, manifestations and traditions.

DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Sin feels good. This is why it is deceitful. The person with a hardened heart is sentimentally attached to his sin. His actions are validated by his feelings. His feelings are not governed by the Holy Spirit.

INABILITY TO ENDURE

For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,

The person with a hardened heart cannot endure spiritual hardships. He gives up easily.

Heb 10:35-37

35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.

36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

37 "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry.

(NKJ)

THE CONSEQUENCE OF THEORETICAL BONDAGE

Heb 3:11

So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' "

(NKJ)

The person with a hardened heart will not enter the rest of the Lord. He will fail to finish.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REST OF GOD

Gen 2:2-3

2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

(NKJ)

The rest of God is a 7th day position.

MNEMONIC "REST"

R – RULE OF GOD

E – ESTABLISHED

S – SEPARATED

T – TRIUMPHANT

AMPLIFICATION

R- RULE OF GOD

This is a Spirit-controlled life. The individual ceases from his own works, ideas, ambitions and strivings and enters God's peace.

Matt 11:28-30

- 28 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."(NKJ)

Heb 4:9-11

- 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.
10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.
11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.(NKJ)

1 Pet 4:1-4

- 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.
3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles-- when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.
4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.(NKJ)

Gal 5:18-26

- 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.
19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,
20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,
21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.
24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.(NKJ)

E – ESTABLISHED

Established in the call and purpose of God.

Heb 4:1-6

1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest," although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works";

5 and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."

6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, (NKJ)

Heb 1:3

who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (NKJ)

Heb 10:12

But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, (NKJ)

Eph 4:14

that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, (NKJ)

This is a position of steadfastness where one is not tossed to and fro and is beyond seduction by the enemy.

Col 2:6-9

6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;(NKJ)

S – SEPARATED

Heb 4:11-12

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.(NKJ)

The individual is delivered from soulish, emotional control.

T – TRIUMPHANT

Mount Zion is the place of rest.

Ps 132:13-14

13 For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for His dwelling place:

14 "This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.(NKJ)

David triumphed over all his enemies from Mount Zion.

Ps 110:2

The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!(NKJ)

This is a position of victory.