

REVIEW

Reviewing Last week:

1. Likeness versus Image
2. The Fall
3. Grace & Salvation



LIKENESS AND SIN

Likeness is about our “*moral-character.*” When we were created we were like God, easily loving, and doing good. Adam and Eve found it easy to love each other, and God. In this sense, we were (1) able to love, **and** (2) we chose to love. In the second sense we were **like** God.

Then we sinned – and the first addiction was born: **to not love.**

THE FALL

Fallen-Nature: We are still in the image of God, but our *likeness* to him is obscured by sin.

This is called “*concupiscence*” whereby each child is born with a *spiritual addiction to sin (pride)*.

This sin destroys relationships with God and with each other.

God wants to “save” our relationship with Him.



WHAT IS PRIDE?

Pride is when we put ourselves in the centre of the Universe. There are three main parts to ourselves:

1. **Our heart** (emotions and desires)
2. **Our mind** (the way we understand things)
3. **Our will** (the choices we make about beliefs and actions)

Pride says: my desires and feelings are more important than everyone else.

Pride says: everyone must agree with *my truth*, and *my truth* is all that is important.

Pride says: I choose what is good or evil, and from that I choose what I want.
We see this with Adam and Eve eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.



COUNTER-VIRTUE

Humility counteracts pride.

Humility says: “my desires and feelings are important, but so are others.”

Humility says: “I understand things, but want to learn from others, and be willing to be proven wrong.”

Humility says: “I don’t choose what the truth is, but I do choose to surrender to whatever it actually is.” (Discover vs Invent Truth)

SALVATION & FORGIVENESS

- Even though we sinned, God does not “fall-out” of love with us. He moves even more closely to us. He wants to save our relationship with Him.
- The Father sends His Son to become one of us, so that a “new Adam” can be created, and a new community born again. It’s a “spiritual-reset”
- God forgives us, but also gives us something called “grace” which helps us overcome our addiction to pride, so the relationship can actually be fixed.

grace

SACRAMENTS & GRACE

Detox for the Soul, Designed by God Himself

GRACE

- Grace means “**gift.**” Spiritual “gifts” are God giving us the ability to be *like* Jesus, thus restoring our “likeness.” We will talk about how that grace is given to us in Baptism. And what that means.
- Grace is not something we can earn. Like any gift, its not something we are “owed” but something that is given anyway.
- Although we cannot be owed grace, there is something called a “worthy disposition” to receive grace. This means we really want the grace for the right reasons. We do not feel entitled to it. If we are not sorry, but want forgiveness what we want isn't the “grace” of forgiveness but rather the acceptance of our choices. This is not a worthy disposition to receive grace.

WHAT IS SALVATION?

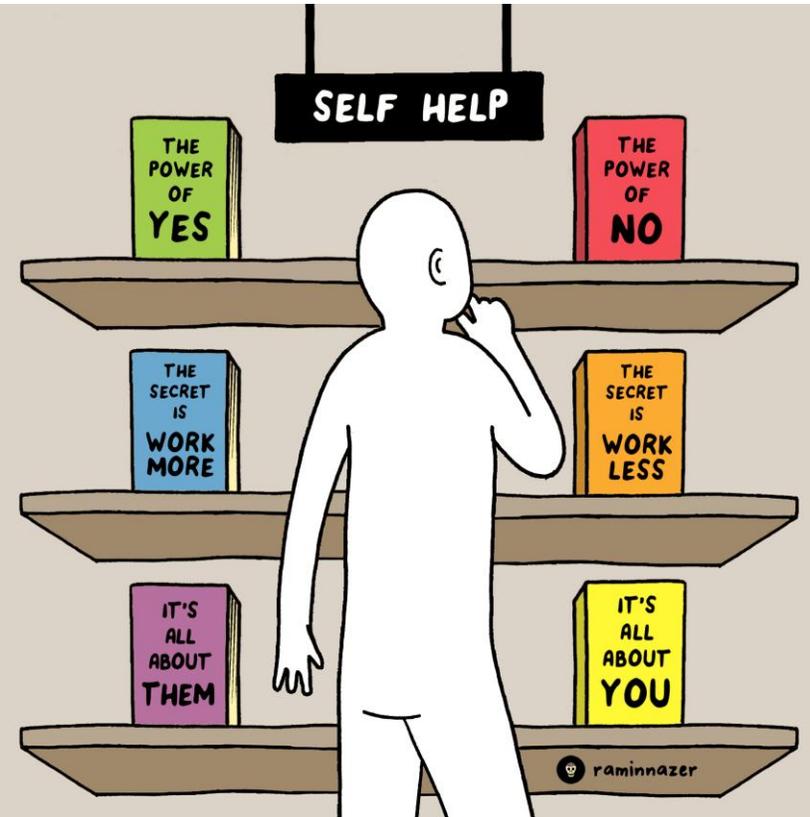
Saving can mean many things: saving money (preserving it), saving a life (like a life-guard does), et cetera.

In the Christian Tradition, **salvation is God saving individuals and a community of persons from an eternally broken-relationship with Him.**

There are two dynamics that need to be addressed by God in order to restore this relationship:

- 1) Sin
- 2) Our addiction to Sin

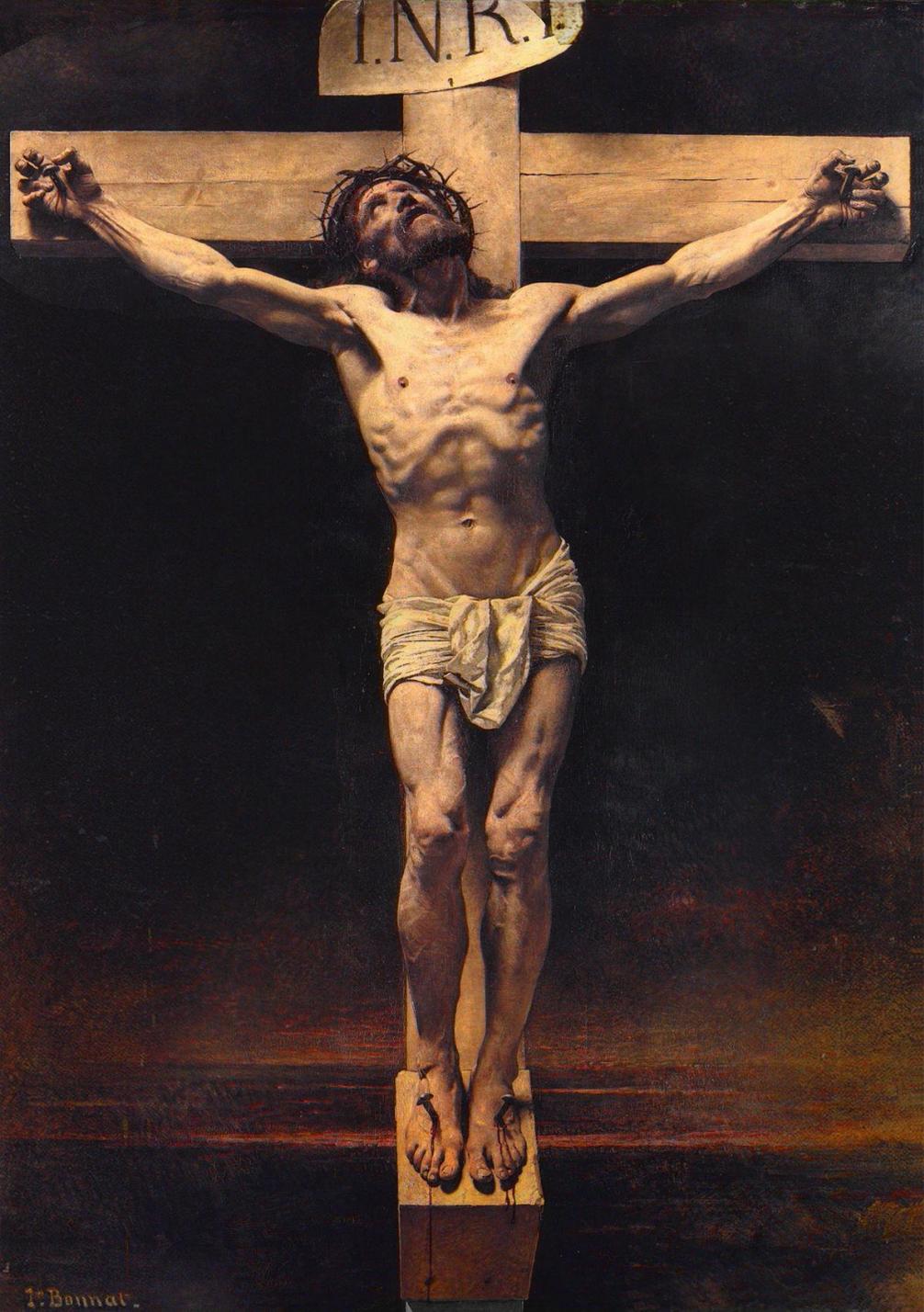
CAN WE SAVE OURSELVES?



- An **error** pops up through history called “pelagianism” where Christians think we can save ourselves. We tend to think *our own effort is sufficient* to overcome our addiction to sin. In reality, we are likely avoiding opening ourselves up to help outside of ourselves because it's less embarrassing to do it on our own. Unfortunately this is a type of pride, called self-sufficiency.
- Listen to the Master Teacher:

*Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”
Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”*

- Luke 18: 26-27



WHO SAVES US?

As Jesus indicated, God saves us, for with Him all things are possible and in fact desired by God. But it's a bit more complicated than that, unfortunately. We aren't merely *Passive Recipients of Grace*. We have to "cooperate" with God's program of salvation. Why? Because it's a relationship – it's a two-way street.

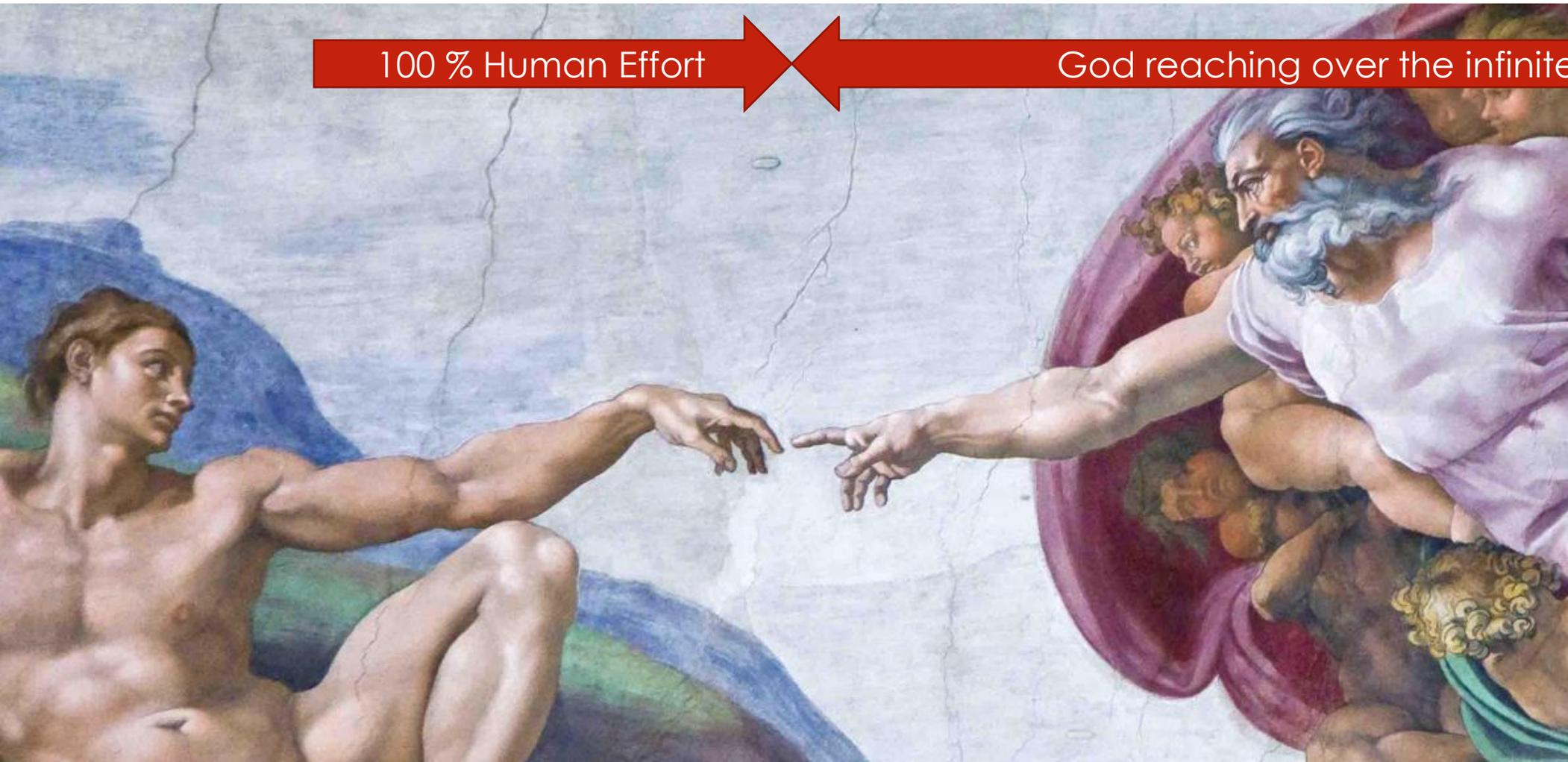
So we look at salvation like this:

1. Man's effort is **necessary** for salvation, but **insufficient** unto itself
2. God's grace is **sufficient**, yet He makes **our effort** **necessary** to receive that grace

MEET ME IN THE MIDDLE

100 % Human Effort

God reaching over the infinite gap



HOW DOES GRACE WORK?

- This is too complicated of a topic to cover in the time that we have. But we can begin to speak about the sacraments which the Church deems as the “normative means of salvation.” In simple terms: sacraments are moments of specific graces, and our entry into these sacraments is part of our cooperation with God’s saving plan.
- Lets discuss what a sacrament is first:
A visible sign of an invisible grace, instituted by Christ.

Three things are mentioned here:

1. *Visible Sign*
2. *Invisible Grace*
3. *Created by God*

SACRAMENTS

Visible Sign – Something that is sensible. God created us with sensation (5 senses) for a reason. So he often tries to communicate to us through these senses. Signs are powerful. A hug can transmit love into the soul so that it can be felt, and experienced or “received.”

Invisible Grace – This is the meaningful gift given to us by God. If a hug is sensible the love is the grace. Each sacrament, while being an expression of God’s love, has a specific meaning to it in the relationship God is offering us.

Instituted by Christ – all of the sacraments find their basis in Scripture, especially by the working of Jesus. The way they are celebrated has changed over time, but the fact that they had different forms of celebration changes nothing.

FRUITFUL SACRAMENTS

The term “fruitful” is used by the Church to indicate whether the sacraments have the effect they are designed to have in us. If they do, they are saving us. If they don’t, they are received in vain.

“As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain.”

- 2 Cor 6:1

If we are just automatically or even rebelliously receiving the sacraments, they don’t have a fruitful impact in our lives. Its not a mechanical or magical exercise. **Its about a relationship!** For it to be fruitful we need not be worthy, but we do need a worthy-attitude (disposition).

BAPTISM

Baptism is HUGE:

1. We are no longer treated by God as His creatures, but loved by Him as He loves His Only and Eternal Son. (This means we inherit a greater dignity than all the angels combined, by grace)
2. Our identity shifts from merely being an image of God, to also being a “child of God.”
3. We inherit the prophetic mission, authority, and cross of Christ.

CONFIRMATION

- Confirmation deepens our baptism
- This means that God is affirming (confirming) our baptism
- This strengthens us to do even greater things, things greater than what Jesus did on this earth.
- The oil used by the priest/bishop is a sign of the anointing of Christ Himself
- We are given the same power to do all sorts of miraculous or simple yet profound soul-changing things in the lives of others. These are called “charisms.”

WHY DO THESE TWO SACRAMENTS SAVE US?

- Friendship with Christ makes us more like him in our mind/heart/will
- IF our problem is we've lost our "likeness" to God, becoming Christ will regain that likeness and move us to a newer height than was possible in the garden.

COOPERATING WITH THE SACRAMENTS

- Confirmation and Baptism are received once, but are living realities ongoingly in our soul.
- This means that the work of cooperation carries on outside of the Church-building
- We will speak about the two ways we carry that out in more depth next week: Evangelization and Personal/Communal Holiness