

The Gospel of Inclusion

Part Two Introduction and Chapter Four: The Gospel of Sin

Notes, Questions, and Reflections

In preparation for this week's discussion, please think about the [Basic Homework Questions](#) as you read it. Mark in your copy of the book or in your notebook which paragraphs pertain to these questions for you. Include your thoughts as to how they pertain to it. You'll be ready to engage in discussion with the Group.

Then come back to this page and check out the additional questions and thoughts from past courses that St. John's MCC people have had about the section that are listed below...

Chapter Four: The Gospel of Sin

On page 92, Pearson says:

In the end, Jesus (embodied in the Christ Principle) is the victor. By atoning for our sins and reestablishing our nature as divine, he has put the devil and the devil's legal system out of work. He takes all of humanity upon his shoulders and brings them home to his God. All nations and all people will fill the courts of eternity with the sounds of joyous worship and thanksgiving for the great wisdom and compassionate love of God.

How does this paragraph reflect Pearson's view of Sin?

In what sense does Pearson use the word "Gospel" in these chapter titles?

In Pearson's discussion of his aunt's arthritic condition, Pearson laments that he has "not been able to convince her how her gospel of sin invites, validates, and emboldens her need for pain and sickness." (p. 80) What does he mean by that? How could you explain it to someone?

Pearson says that "sin is an inappropriate response to a legitimate need." (p. 80) How does his definition of sin compare to your definition of sin?

"... Christ failed at redeeming the world back to God, as Scripture declares, and ... Christianity is essentially finishing what Christ said was already accomplished (John 19:30). This is the spirit of the Antichrist, though most Christians don't recognize it as such." (p. 81) Why do you think most Christians don't recognize the irony of their beliefs about sin and what Christ did about it?

"Religion seeks to resolve a presumed conflict between God and humankind that no longer exists and in reality may really never have, except in the minds of people who have been indoctrinated to believe such." (p. 81) If that is true, what are the implications of that for you?

"... the original Greek strongly suggests that many aspects of organized Christianity or the Holy Roman Empire fit the description of a then modern-day Antichrist." (p. 82) If the Antichrist was not, is not, or will not be a person, what does Pearson believe it is?

What is the mark of the beast? How can you use that mark to distinguish between people? (For more information about this, see Jim's [*The Gospel of the Revelation of St. John the Divine*](#) class.)

How is the Christ Principle different from what you were taught as a child? "... Jesus accomplished world reconciliation to God, and those of us who believe in Him should be proclaiming this reality not only through what we say but how we live and how we treat others. All people, no matter their beliefs, are reconciled to God because of a salvation they did not earn – and did not need to earn." What do you think about that?

What does Pearson mean when he says that faith in Jesus does not save a person?

"We all miss the mark, but Christ has forever resolved the offense of sin." (p. 84) Pearson also says: "I like to say it this way: you'll never know you are *free* from sin until you know you are actually free to sin and still be loved by God and advocated by Christ (1 John 2:1-2). How would that understanding help Pearson's aunt? How would that understanding change the way you think about yourself?

If you believed that, what would keep you from sinning?

What is the "fig leaf of deception" Pearson talks about? (p. 84) Pearson does not say that "organized religion" is the devil or the Antichrist, but could he be implying that? How would that change things you believe?

How does Pearson explain the "Problem of Original Sin" starting on page 86?

How do we use the "devil to personify our sense of right and wrong?" (p. 90) What good does it do us? What bad does it do us? Why do we keep using the devil in this way?