

### **The Wednesday Word, Jan. 9, 2013: The New Experience and the Gospel**

We've talked in the past about how self-righteous, religious people prefer their own work and character to that of Christ's. They place confidence in themselves rather than in the doing and dying of Christ alone! They reject that a sinner's resting place is totally outside of himself in the person of Christ (Ephesians 1:6-7). They openly refuse Christ, choosing religious observances, good works, prayers, and devotions, thinking that by such in combination with upright and decent lives they have a claim to the mercy of God if indeed they need mercy at all!

But there are also others who are gripped by a different but equally serious deception. These are they who think that by receiving a second blessing, or a series of such, that they find a fuller acceptance from God than the rest of us. Their experiences, they think, bring them to a new level of spirituality and, thus, make them more favoured by the Divine Majesty. In their religious rigor and enthusiasm, they imagine themselves to have supplemented the gospel and secretly think that, they are now, because of their experience, more acceptable in heaven than other mere mortals who are relying only on the blood.

Failing to grasp that when Christ is received, all is received (Ephesians 1:3) they now think they have advanced beyond the rest of us. By this kind of philosophy, they both leave and deny the gospel!

An inner experience is never a good substitute for the, outside of us, righteousness of Christ. Consider this; in their "new and enhanced" experiences of supposed new-found spirituality, these "Super Christians" are actually resting on something within them as the supposed means of gaining favour with God. No spiritual experience, however, can furnish the foundation for God's acceptance. Neither regeneration, nor second blessings, nor baptisms, no matter how profound and supposedly life transforming, can be any part of the ground of our approval before the Father. Unless the Lamb had shed His blood we would be entirely lost and unaccepted in heaven (Hebrews 9:12). However, because of the blood, all blessings such as redemption, peace, forgiveness, justification, and admission into heaven are ours (Ephesians 1:3). This rules out spiritual experiences as being the thing that God requires to gain His acceptance. We are already fully accepted by the Father because of the experiences of the God/Man on our behalf.

We are accepted because of the objective, concrete, saving acts of God, in Christ, in history. The Father has nothing more powerful in store for us than that which He has already done for us in Christ Jesus. For us, Calvary is a historical fact, but for God it is an eternal one. Christ Crucified has been the centre of His heart from before the beginning. The saving acts of God are so far outside of the sinner that they were both planned from eternity and accomplished apart from us two thousand years ago. This is Christianity. It is the only truly historical religion. All other religions teach that salvation is found in some process or experience within the worshiper. Consequently, in this set up, the worshiper's supreme preoccupation is with himself. What a disaster then to note the countless numbers of Christian songs and sermons that focus us on our experiences and heart condition. They are just another part of the slippery slope that seems determined to remove us from the gospel.

Gospel centred Christianity alone proclaims a salvation which is found in an event outside the believer. We are called, therefore, to occupy ourselves with Christ, the risen and exalted Christ, the crucified Christ who is now alive forevermore (Hebrews 12:2).

By grace alone, the blood of Christ has removed our condemnation, and in the Father's gracious, righteous and loving plan, the blood of Christ has both reconciled us and made us welcome. The blood

of Christ has met all claims against us and has brought us to God (Ephesians 2:13). Acceptance with God is now spelt with five letters----JESUS! We are accepted because of Him alone, not because of our experiences and feelings.

No spiritual experiences can match the experiences the Lord Christ had for us. No experience we can have can heal the breach between sinners and God. The only experience that brings us our acceptance before God is the unique, never to be repeated experience of the Lord Jesus on our behalf.

And that's the Gospel Truth!