

The Wednesday Word, Jan. 19, 2011: Faith Demanded!

God demands immediate faith from all who hear His gospel. This is only reasonable, for He is the author of the message. But not everyone greets His good news as welcome news. Those, for example, who would work for His favor or who assume that they already have it, disdain the truth of the only acceptable saving righteousness being found outside of them in Christ alone. But God gives no approval to the self-righteous or indeed to any form of self-righteousness. The sad truth is this ----- all who depend on a performance-based religion are under a curse (Gal 2:6; 3:10). Why so? Because no one can perform to God's standard. God, being perfectly holy, demands perfect holiness from us. God is the perfection of holiness and He thus bars all imperfect people from joining Him where He lives. Again, this is only reasonable for it is His Kingdom; He makes the rules! To dwell eternally with Him then, either we have to (a) be perfectly holy ourselves or (b) we have got to find someone who has been perfectly holy in our place. In the gospel, the good news, Christ is our perfection and sanctification: He is all our righteousness (1 Cor 1:30). Do you believe this?

But the self-righteous deceive themselves into imagining that their works are more vital for salvation than those of the Lord Christ. They imagine, for example, that God applauds them because they have performed an act of faith. However, mark this down, although salvation and faith are inseparable, our salvation is never found in our actual act of believing or trust. No one gets saved without faith or trust (Ps 16:1, Nahum 1:7, Rom 15:12; 2Cor 1:9), but the testimony which faith receives is not the testimony of itself. On the contrary it is the testimony that faith receives is the testimony concerning the Lord Jesus and His doing, dying and rising again in our place----- in which case, belief of the gospel and confidence in the person of the gospel (Christ Jesus) are inseparable.

Furthermore, when we receive the Father's testimony concerning His Son it is the very same thing as having confidence and trust in God Himself (John 6:29). Conversely, when we reject the gospel we reject God Himself. In some places we are said to be saved by the knowledge of God or of Christ. That simply means that we come to know God as He has made Himself known in Jesus Christ (Isa. 53:11; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 2:20). It is no wonder then that we read, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

The Scriptures speaks of trust or faith being the thing that saves us. In and of itself it does no such thing, but it saves us by taking a hold of the One who saves to the uttermost (Heb 7:25). Faith is demanded from the hearer of the gospel, but remember, salvation is not found in our act of believing itself. Salvation is exclusively discovered in the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus, the one who has conquered death and is alive forevermore.

"A man there is, a real man,
With wounds still gaping wide,
From which rich streams of blood once ran,
In hands and feet and side.

This wondrous man of whom we tell;
Is true almighty God;

He bought our souls from death and hell;
The price, ----His own heart's blood.

Salvation is never given as a reward for believing, rather it is the one believed upon who alone is our salvation.

And that's the Gospel Truth