

The Wednesday Word, January 22, 2020: The Poisonous Fog of False Doctrine

Is there a difference between regeneration and justification? If we live in the poisonous fog of false doctrine we will answer...NO!

Some folks view regeneration (*being born again*) as being the basis and ground for approval before God.... But this cannot possibly be so. True, the Holy Spirit regenerates us, sets us apart and gives us faith. But this is not basis of our acceptance before God. This is not the gospel. The gospel is objective. It happened outside of us, in history. It is finished!

Much popular preaching, nevertheless, tells us that the gospel is about God changing the heart of the sinner. This theory, however, is but a regurgitation of medieval Roman Catholic teaching on salvation. It's alarming that our condition and state should once again be the overwhelming preoccupation of much of our thinking today!

The great truth of justification by faith, however, does not deal with the acts of God within the believer, but rather with the saving acts of God outside of us.

The first truth that must grasp us is the ground of our acceptance with God is sheer, unmerited grace. We weren't involved! Acceptance is all of GRACE!

We were, "justified **freely** by His grace" Romans 3:24.

The Greek word here translated **freely** literally means **without a cause**. So far from grace being a quality within us, the apostle declares that "*grace. . . was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*" (2 Timothy 1:9).

Grace is a quality in God's heart.

Grace is His disposition to be kind and merciful to those who are lost.

Grace demonstrates His love for the undeserving.

Grace means that God accepts those who are unacceptable.

However, God is not only gracious, He is also just. God must have just grounds to forgive and accept us as righteous. And here's the good news, those grounds of acceptance are entirely outside of us (*again, see Romans 3:24*). Christ's sinless life and atoning death are the sole grounds of God's being able to judge us and treat us as righteous.

The gospel proclaims that His people are saved by His objective, completed acts in history two thousand years ago. We rest on these facts for salvation. This is authentic Bible Christianity. All other religions are in the poisonous fog. They teach that salvation is found in some process within the worshiper, and consequently the worshiper's supreme preoccupation is with his own experience. What bondage! Christianity alone proclaims a salvation which is found in a finished event outside of the believer.

The basis of our salvation is not a subjective process. No amount of inward holiness can bridge the gulf that sin has made. No amount of list keeping can put us into right relationship with God. Acceptance with God cannot rest on an internal process of supposedly being made holy. Perfection is not something that God requires at the end of the journey. He demands perfection and absolute holiness before the journey begins. And this perfection and absolute holiness is found in Christ alone...not in ourselves!

Two thousand years ago there was an objective, concrete, historical event. God Himself broke into human history in the person of Jesus the Christ. He became our representative. He became so identified with us that all which He did was not only for us but was the same as if we had done it. He defeated sin, the devil and death and destroyed their power. He lived as our substitute as He fulfilled the claims of God's requirements. Because He is our substitute, the life He lived is credited to us. When He took the punishment for sin, justice saw us punished in Him.

As Spurgeon said, "We stand before God as if we were Christ because Christ stood before God as if he were us."

And that's the Gospel Truth!