

The Wednesday Word, Feb. 16, 2011: The Danger of Our Strength

God is neither stingy with grace nor does He dispense mercy with eye drops. He's generous and doesn't feel put out when He has to send His Spirit to awaken the spiritually dead (Eph 2:4-6). He knows that because of our inbuilt hatred for the truth, it takes the supernatural power of the Spirit to convert us into believers. As Bonar says, "Believing is the simplest of all mental processes; yet we still need the power of God to believe from our hearts."

Have you realized that you can neither change your heart nor do any good thing to recommend yourself to God (Romans 3:10)? It's good for us to see the fix we're in apart from grace. However, most of us are unaware of the full extent of our helplessness and guilt and for this cause there is little rejoicing in the gospel. Our helplessness and guilt are far greater and far worse than we suppose (Jeremiah 17:9). The truth is this; it is because of our warped and imperfect view of ourselves that we continually attempt to recommend ourselves to God. At times we seem very unaware of our ruin, weakness and inability and thus fail to realize that our supposed strength will actually keep us away from God.

God commands us to rest in the crucified Christ (Matt 11:28). In the light of this command, to bring something we have supposedly done for Him as a basis of acceptance is to refuse the promised rest of Christ alone. It's sheer foolishness. Our consciences cannot be calmed by any of our works. If indeed our works have pacified our conscience, we have deceived ourselves for God is not propitiated by any of our efforts. May we put away all self-righteousness and approach the Father in the merits of Christ alone plus nothing.

Just as when we first came to Christ we came as undeserving sinners so we still cannot come to Him in our own name or righteousness----- even after many years of Christian service (Philippians 3:8-9). We continue to be saved by grace through faith, not by any efforts to induce the Father to accept us. The command to believers is to believe---to continue to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! He alone is our sufficiency. If we do not believe the record that God has given of His Son, we make Him a liar (1 John 5:10). To rest, therefore, in something other than the person and work of Christ alone is to walk in unbelief. To walk in unbelief is to believe the lie that something more needs to be added to Christ Jesus (Gal 2:18; Gal 2:16; 2 Cor 3:5)! To walk by faith, on the other hand, is to receive the truth concerning Christ and His accomplishments on our behalf.

The deceiver, the prince of darkness, would love to take us away from the hope of the Gospel. He's a religious sort of fellow, always encouraging us to establish an alternative righteousness to that which is found in Christ alone (Gal 2:21). If then you are building your hope on your own righteousness plus the righteousness of Christ your hope is not in Christ alone---- you are yet in unbelief.

Think about it; if our guarantee of salvation depended partially on our attainments, how could we ever be certain of salvation? How could we ever be assured that we had accomplished enough to secure our salvation (Gal 3:3)? But, the work of Christ was a work undertaken for those who could not attain (Rom 5:6-8); it was accomplished for those who could not save themselves. It was a work devised for sinners, undertaken for sinners, accomplished for sinners, finished for sinners, and received by God for sinners. And God has given assurance that this work is accepted in that

He has raised Jesus from the dead (see Acts 17:31).

And that's the Gospel Truth!