

The Wednesday Word, March 3, 2010: The New Experience and the Gospel.

We've talked in previous weeks 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 perhaps are unaware that the Bible plainly states that, "The Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and you shall not prosper in them" (Jeremiah 2:37). They reject that a sinner's resting place is wholly outside of himself in the person of Christ (Eph 1:7). They freely refuse Christ, choosing instead religious observances, good works, prayers, and devotions, thinking that by being upright and decent 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 an equally serious deception. They think that by receiving a second blessing, or a series of such, that they find fuller acceptance from God than the rest of us. Their experiences, they say, bring them to a new level of spirituality and thus make them more favored by the Divine Majesty. By their religious rigor and excitement they think they have made themselves more acceptable in heaven than other mere mortals who have not entered into the same type of blessing. They now think they have advanced beyond the rest of us because, unlike us, they are so open to the things of the 'Spirit'. By this kind of thinking they leave the gospel!

An inward 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" they are now resting on something within them as gaining them favor before God. No spiritual experience, however, can furnish the foundation for acceptance before God. Neither regeneration nor second blessings, nor baptisms, no matter how profound and supposedly life transforming, can be the ground of approval before God. Unless the Lamb had shed His blood we would be entirely and eternally lost and unaccepted in heaven. However, because of the blood, all blessings such as redemption, peace, forgiveness, justification, and admission into heaven come to us (Eph 1:3). This rules out spiritual experiences as being the thing that God requires of us to gain His acceptance. The good news means we are already accepted in Christ apart from good works and experiences.

How quickly we tend to forget the gospel and move on to other things! We also forget the depths from which we were rescued. In the Old Testament, the King's displeasure could land you in jail. We read in 1 Kings 22:27 "Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace." We, however, were worse off than this. Because of our sin and unbelief we were all inmates of death row! We were under righteous wrath and damnation! But 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 paid for us. The blood of Christ has met all claims against us and has brought us to God (Eph 2:13). Acceptance with God is now spelt with five letters----JESUS! We are accepted because of Him alone, not our experiences and feelings.

"Tis not for good deeds, good tempers or frames;
From grace it proceeds and all is the Lamb's;
No goodness no fitness expects He from us;

This I can well witness for none could be worse.”

No spiritual experiences can match the experiences the Lord Christ had on our behalf. 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!