

The Wednesday Word, March 4, 2020: Grounded in the Gospel!

Calvary assures us that the wrath which should have justly consumed us has fallen upon our Substitute (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Faith in Christ alone, therefore, rescues us from the bondage of having to perform to gain God's acceptance and welcome. In Christ alone, faith sees and embraces the Father's smile.

Though faith is not our righteousness, it fastens us to the righteousness of Christ and sees, as the old-time preacher, Solomon Stoddard, saw that it is now safe for us to appear in heaven.

Indeed, the only safe way to heaven is faith in Christ. Faith grasps that our acceptance before God is in Christ alone and not in our faith. Faith in faith saves no one. Genuine, gospel faith knows this!

Indeed, real faith grasps that our eternal standing in the ages to come depends, not upon anything in us, but upon the unchanging righteousness of Christ alone outside of us.

When we are not grounded in the gospel, we quickly make the mistake of looking within ourselves to determine whether or not we feel saved. Unfortunately, if we find what we consider to be the correct feelings, we then content ourselves that our faith is healthy and assume we are, therefore, eternity bound.

Conversely, alarm bells ring when we can't find those feelings. If these feelings are undiscovered, we then assume that our destiny is in doubt. When we live like this, we are unsettled and confused. We are not grounded in the gospel. We have not yet understood that anything subjective, whether it is the work of the Spirit in us or our feelings and experiences, can ever qualify as the object of our faith. They are not the gospel! Acquittal before God comes only through the person and work of the Lord Jesus. He alone is the sinner's plea for, "He that believeth on him is not condemned" (John 3:18).

"Lo! th' incarnate God, ascended,
Pleads the merit of His blood;
Venture on Him, venture wholly;
Let no other trust intrude:
None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good."
Joseph Hart

Faith is not the ground of our justification. Faith was not tried, found guilty and executed on our behalf.

Our justification is obtained in Christ, not in our faith. By faith we receive that which has already been accomplished in Christ. In other words, faith takes a hold of the justification obtained at Calvary. But faith does not justify us. Faith is not the basis of our justification, but rather faith is the means of receiving and resting on the doing, dying and rising again of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A justified believer has had their sins taken away but the taking away of their sins does not bring justification. Justification (acquittal) is the Father's declaration that our sins are gone, that we are not guilty, and that He considers us righteous.

Conclusion: The power to believe is generated by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:1). It is from the heart we believe (Romans 10:10). Yet this making alive by the Spirit does not justify us. Nothing within us saves us. We are entirely saved outside ourselves by a remarkable, past historic finished work. The Spirit has baptised us into Christ. He has taken us out of ourselves and placed us in

And that's the Gospel Truth!