

The Wednesday Word, March 10, 2010: Be Not Deceived!

It is impossible for flawed and failed sinners to use worship as a means to gaining The lord's acceptance. The unsaved cannot worship His way out of condemnation and into the welcome of God (Phil 3:4-8). Acceptable worship can only come from worshipers who have already been accepted, worshipers who have been declared not guilty-----worshipers whose sins have been taken away by the Lamb of God (John 1:29).

Furthermore, for the unregenerate, condemned, religious sinner to occupy himself with sacramental observances and good works in an effort to secure God's favor is the height of arrogant silliness. Instead of his worship and work being the acts of an accepted man, they are, to the contrary, futile attempts to gain God's favor. Because of this, his religious acts are damnable for they make a mockery of the gospel. Indeed, since his prayers are designed to impress God they become a putrid stench emanating from his mouth (Proverbs 14:12). It's not a pretty picture!

God is not impressed by feeble, faltering attempts to verbally flatter Him. Nor is the Lord sympathetic to religious actions, designed to make Him take favorable notice of the worshipper. On man's part, these are nothing less than manifestations of his abhorrent self-righteousness and, as such, are thoroughly rejected by the Lord. God cannot be bribed; He cannot be coaxed or cajoled by the prayers, works or worship of the unsaved (Ps 28:5). The Father, however, is thrilled and satisfied with the work of the Son on behalf of sinners. He, thus, frowns in severe displeasure and distain upon those who dismiss His free gift of Christ in favor of their fatally flawed efforts.

Since repetition is the price of learning, let's say it again, God has already paid the price to bring sinners to Himself and that price is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:20; 1Cor 7:23). There is, therefore, nothing more that we can do than has been done to win God's favor and acceptance. Christ's payment for our sins is enough! It is satisfactory (Rom 3:22-26)! To base our acceptance before God on our good works, good feelings, good plans or good praying, is to delude ourselves into thinking that we have right standing with God when there is none. To attempt to find spiritual rest by looking to our own character and religious actions is like a thirsty man trying to quench his thirst with sand and salt water. Our religious life is a treacherous foundation on which to rest. However the gospel believer can declare,

“Lamb of God we bow before Thee,
Humbly trusting in Thy cross;
That alone be all our glory;
All things else are dung and dross;
Thee we own a perfect Savior,
Only source of all that's good;
Every grace and every favor
Comes to us through Jesus' blood”

Even if there are many good things about us that can recommend us to others, our good deeds cannot wipe out our record of sin. Also, we should never forget God's verdict that declares what we are like by nature (see Jeremiah 17:9). This one verse alone is enough to make us flee to Christ

for shelter and salvation. Do not be deceived; the only righteousness that God accepts is that of Christ Jesus and the only way to make that righteousness ours is by faith alone.

As believers we are now accepted, not because of our efforts, but because of Christ's. He is our Saviour, our redemption, protector and security. His arms are underneath us and round about us. We are kept safe in Him. He has died, was buried, has risen again and ever-lives to make intercession for us.

Be careful, therefore, to avoid any self-made peace that comes from thinking good things about yourself and your efforts. Yes by all means, live for His glory, but be careful not to deceive yourself into thinking that your diligent efforts present the Lord with the secure basis for His acceptance. That is found in Christ alone.

And that's the Gospel Truth