

The Wednesday Word, April 6, 2011: Is Christ Alone Enough? Part 1

OK, we've said it before, but it needs to be said time and time again, faith does not actually save, it is the object of our faith Who saves us. Our act of faith, no matter how sincere, is nothing apart from its resting place---the crucified and risen Christ . Our peace and rest cannot come from any performance or spiritual discipline (Eph 2:8-9). But deary me, we know the theory of this truth yet it doesn't often translate into real life. It seems that we have an unceasing ability to add things to the finished work of the gospel.

To grow in the enjoyment of gospel peace we need to focus much less on our faith, repentance and prayers etc, and instead look on Him, the Lord Christ (John 3:14-15; Num 21:6-9). It is in Him that salvation lies. It is in Him and His accomplishments that we find our resting place. Looking at our faith, on the other hand, is a disastrous exercise for it ministers either to our self-righteousness (if we are satisfied with our faith) or to our sense of despair (if we are not)!

If, however, we feel that we must measure the quality and quantity of our faith, before we can rest in Christ's work, then we have, without knowing it, concluded that the work of Christ is insufficient.

Someone asks, "Do you mean that our acceptance with God comes about without any sanctification in us?" Great question! Here's the answer: ----although we do not deny that the believer grows in grace and in the knowledge of God and will be careful to maintain good works, our acceptance with the Father is not based on any work performed within us or by us. In Christ we are already fully sanctified by the will of God for we read, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all-----For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:10, 14).

Our sins were purged and put away 2000 years ago (Heb. 1:3; 9:26). Eternal redemption was obtained for us 2000 years ago (Heb. 9:12). We can't improve on that---and better yet all this has been done according to the good pleasure of the will of God, to the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:5-8). It is God's pleasure to have a people cleansed of all sin who, in the name of Jesus, can approach Him without the slightest hesitation or doubt. The Father now sees us and welcomes us, not because of our appreciation of Christ, but because of His. He alone estimates the true value and power of the blood of the one perfect offering of Christ.

We must, therefore, learn to cease from all self-righteous attempts to perform any act, or do anything whatever, in order to maintain His acceptance and favour (Rom 4:4-5). May we always see that the one great work of the Son of God done upon the cross is sufficient (2 Cor 3:5).

As soon as the Holy Spirit shows us the entire sufficiency of the great wrath offering made for sinners (John 19:30), we will cease our attempts to act or work to gain the Father's acceptance. Instead of trying to perform, we will receive, by faith, that which Christ has done on our behalf. The Holy Spirit neither enables us to do something which saves us nor contributes to our salvation by some deep mysterious work within; on the contrary, His work is to detach us from our own effort and performance. The Spirit will lead us to be entirely satisfied with the salvation that the Saviour has already accomplished and finished.

And that's the Gospel Truth