

### **The Wednesday Word, April 7, 2010: Adding to the Sufficiency of the Gospel**

When, as believers, we forget the gospel, we usually resort to futile and useless attempts to supplement the grace of God. We, almost unconsciously, do little extra things to try to secure the Lord's favor. But, this kind of behavior places us in direct opposition to the cross of Christ. It's just another way of snubbing the Lord. We, in actuality, by our efforts to show Him how worthy we are, are saying that the grace found in Christ's doing and dying is not sufficient for us.

In the Bible, God has declared himself to be gracious (Nehemiah 9:31) and has embodied this grace in the person and work of the Son (Titus 2:11). He has told us that gospel grace is for the ungodly, the unholy and the unfit, (Romans 5:6, 8,10). The more, then, that we know (A) the grace of Christ Jesus, and (B) our inability to produce any righteousness that will recommend us to God, the more we will thrive on the gospel and cease trying to impress God and others.

Here's some good news, we are already complete in Christ (Col 2:10). We may at times disappoint and devastate ourselves with personal failures and hardness of heart, but the greatness of our sin, although it may humble us, cannot remove us from the completeness that we have in the Lord Jesus. In fact, failure can actually help us by breaking us and making us wary and dissatisfied with anything within us as the supposed ground of our acceptance before the Lord. God is still the God of Romans 8:28!

May we never forget that our acceptance before God cannot come from our own efforts or from thinking inflated things about ourselves. We are too flawed; we must face this; even our best works are riddled with impure motives. Looking to our accomplishments or to ourselves, therefore, can never bring true peace with God. True peace of conscience comes from Christ alone and it is in knowing and trusting the character and work of God, as revealed in the gospel, that we are set free from the endless process of trying to secure God's favor by puny little useless efforts.

In Christ alone we encounter God and discover that God has done something about our sin and predicament. In the gospel we see that God is for us---this is astonishing! If God didn't care about our condition, we would have good reason to panic and despair. It would be a shattering and devastating truth to discover that God was against us! It would be a frightful thing to encounter God as an enemy and not as a friend! But, we no longer have to live in dread of the Almighty, thinking that at any time He is going to reach out of heaven and strike us down. As believers, we no longer have to try to impress Him or try to move His heart towards us by our furious religious activity. The gospel delivers us from such redundant thinking.

The Bible says that God is love, not hate! The good news of His love, grace and justice was fully revealed in the cross where the Lord Jesus took upon Himself the sins of His people (Matt 1:27). As believers, to think that we can now impress the Lord with our best efforts and thus somehow move Him to favor us is to fail to grasp the gospel. It is the very opposite of what the Bible teaches. We need to continually turn our eyes back to Calvary and from there to the Throne of Grace. As we do we will notice that there are no threats being issued against us from the Lamb of God.

And that's the Gospel Truth!