

The Wednesday Word, April 17, 2013: Christ: Our Continual Acceptance Before God

As believers, one of the difficulties we encounter in the Christian life is that, if we are not continually bathed in the gospel, we quietly and almost imperceptibly begin to look for qualities within ourselves as being the ground and basis of our acceptance before God. But this is deception. Our exclusive appeal for continued acceptance before God is found in Christ alone!

We may be in Christian service and ministry, but we are not accepted because of our work for the Lord. Nor are we accepted because of the quantity of our prayers or the greatness of our faith. It is so liberating to remember that the only acceptance we have before God is Christ Himself! We are, "found in Him"(Philippians 3:9). This must mean that our own "self" has disappeared and instead, in the Father's eyes, there is Christ, the beloved Son in whom He is well pleased (Matthew 3:17).

Horatius Bonar observed, "Found in ourselves, there was nothing but wrath; found in Him there is nothing but favour." We are hidden in Christ (Colossians 3:3): we are complete in Him (Colossians 2:10). He is our continual acceptance before God.

As we grow in the grace, we recognise that although we are, within ourselves, unworthy of the Father's acceptance, we are actually accepted beyond measure. Also, gospel grace teaches us that we are totally loved in spite of being, in ourselves, totally unlovable. Gospel grace further informs us that we are totally accepted in spite of being, in ourselves, totally unacceptable.

Because we are in Christ, we no longer put confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3). Because we are in Christ, we are liberated from the search for acceptance with God through resolutions and vows to increase our dedication. The true believer knows that, in him, that is in his flesh, there dwells no good thing (Romans 7:18). He knows that compared to God, everything within Him is vileness and sin. The truth is, if man had the power to save Himself, he would not have the desire to do so; and if He had the desire to save himself, he would not have the power to do so. Apart from grace, he is ruined.

This is why the Holy Spirit always fixes our eyes on Christ (John 16:14). He never turns our eye in on our performance as a means of gaining confidence. He never leads us to get encouragement by looking at our own character or performance. No! The way by which the Spirit gives us confidence is to continually glorify and magnify the perfections of Lord Jesus Christ in our sight.

Are you living with something less than full assurance of your acceptance before the Father? Christ has died, Christ has risen and is even now seated in cosmic authority making intercession for you (Romans 8:34). Has unbelief caused you to distrust the abilities and will of your Saviour to save you? Do you doubt the truth of God's testimony? Do you honestly believe that the Rock of Ages is going to crumble?

John Bunyan said,

"Christ is all and in all" (Colossians 3:11). He who knows this knows what fully satisfies and cheers. He who knows this best has the deepest and truest peace: for he has learned the secret of being always a sinner, yet always righteous; always incomplete, yet always complete; always empty, and yet always full; always poor, and yet always rich."

For continued acceptance before God and a present, joyful assurance of salvation, we need Christ and His finished work plus nothing.

And that's the Gospel Truth!