

The Wednesday Word, April 18, 2012: The Man Who Prayed in Reverse!

“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me I am a sinful man O Lord” Luke 5:8

It was only when the big fisherman, Simon Peter, was confronted with the awesome power and majesty of Christ that he began to see the extent of his wretched sinfulness. But look at his strange response to this awful discovery---he asked the Lord to depart. He's the man who prayed in reverse. He prayed backwards!

What a strange gospel it would be if our sin caused the Lord to depart. It was our sin which brought Him here in the first place. Do we now think that our sin will drive Him away? Have we gone so far from the gospel that we imagine there is a throne of grace from which we must run and hide? Or do we imagine that we must clean and reform our ways before we are fit to approach the Master? Does our sin, like Peter's, make us want to avoid the Lord Christ? Unfortunately, this is often the case.

Instead of praying “Depart from me,” Peter should have prayed, “Lord come to me and let me come to you for I am a sinful man. I need you Lord. I'm a sinner, please forgive me, heal my conscience, remove my guilt and strengthen me.”

It is by learning to embrace the grace and mercy which is in Christ that the gospel believer becomes a prayer warrior. The gospel believer knows that his sin is so awful and God is so holy that there is nothing but the blood of Christ which can open the way to heaven. The gospel believer knows something of the power and authority of the blood. He knows that there is nothing but the blood which can bring Him to the throne (Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 10:19). The gospel believer can, therefore, confidently agree that the best place for him is with the Saviour of Sinners and not away from Him!

But in spite of knowing these wonderful gospel truths, our sin, like that of Adam's, tends to make us want to hide. Unfortunately, there's much truth in Shakespeare's line, “Conscience does make cowards of us all.” Sometimes we are too afraid to go to the throne of grace. We know we deserve, not favour, but frowns and we wonder how we can, as sinful people, go to God with boldness?

So how we do it? How do we go there? Here's the answer.

As justified believers we walk by faith. Faith sees that we have a great High Priest sitting, not on a throne of wrath and fury, but on a throne of grace. Faith then sees the Saviour of sinners on that very throne welcoming us. Faith sees that in our nature, and as our personal representative, the Royal High Priest lived a holy and sinless life. Faith sees that He was crucified and killed, yet faith also sees that He rose again, ascended and sat down on His throne in Heaven. Faith holds out it's hand and receives welcoming grace, mercy and cleansing. Faith brings us boldly to the throne of grace and not away from it.

Faith also sees that we are, not only invited to the throne of grace, but are actually commanded to come to it. Faith gives us confidence to go there for faith sees that Christ Himself is our confidence.

In Him we find, not man's mercy, but God's.

And that's the Gospel Truth!