

The Wednesday Word, April 27, 2022: Jesus: Our Right Standing Before God

Repentance is a vital truth: God does not open heaven without it! But let's get this straight; our repentance is not the basis of our welcome into God's presence. Repentance, properly speaking, is a profound change of mind about God and about sin, but again we must be clear that it is not the ground or basis of our right standing before God.

Likewise, **regeneration** is a work of the Spirit that gives us a new heart towards God, but this is not the foundation of our acceptance either.

Many professing Christians have false trusts. Some trust in their **reformation** and although the Holy Spirit will help us to grow in grace as we are bathed in the gospel, reformation of lifestyle does not give us our welcome before God.

And what about our **relationship** with God? Many things change because of the gospel. For example, we are adopted and receive a change of family and we now have a new relationship with God. Yet, powerful as these changes are, none of them are the basis for our welcome and acceptance before God.

People have such strange notions as to why God welcomes them. There's a story, about a man called Jim Bludso, a blasphemous, adulterous engineer of a Mississippi steamboat from many, many years ago. One night when his steamer caught on fire, Jim held the boat against the riverbank until every last passenger was safe on land while Jim, himself, gave up his life on the burning vessel. A poem was written commemorating Jim Bludso and the event: it has a stanza that says,

"He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing-
And went for it there and then,
And God ain't a going to be too hard
On a man that died for men."

Lovely stuff; but sheer nonsense! Without the shedding of Christ's blood, there is no remission and no welcome. (Hebrews 9:22).

God welcomes us because of one man and one man alone, the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is the ground of our right standing. There is nothing we can do that can move God to receive us. It has already been done. We are already embraced in the Lord Christ. No contributions from us are needed. When the Lord Jesus purchased us He paid for us in full. He gave us a new standing before God and made us "*accepted in the Beloved*." (See Ephesians 1:6). This means that nothing which we have (even as a result of the gospel) can possibly be the basis of our acceptance. As believers, we hold to the truth "*That a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ*." (Galatians 2:16).

God's way of acceptance is excellent! The crucified and risen Jesus, plus nothing, brings us to God. The crucified and risen Christ plus nothing reconciles us to God. The crucified and risen Christ plus nothing is the end of the law for righteousness. (Romans 10:4). Christ gave awful

evidence that the wages of sin is death, when He, by His own blood, opened for us the only way of salvation. (Revelation 1:5). Now through Him, the very worst, the weakest, the lowest and the most despicable of us are welcome.

It was by the blood that He accomplished our right standing. It was with the blood that He purchased our redemption. It was by His blood that He accomplished the divine purpose. If we want to understand the foundation of our acceptance before God, we must look away from ourselves to the Lamb whose blood has taken away sins. (Hebrews 12:2)!

*“Round the altar priests confess,
That their robes are white as snow,
'Twas the Savior's righteousness,
And his blood that made them so.”*

And that's the Gospel Truth!