

The Wednesday Word, May 11, 2011: Gospel Grace

It is only through the gospel that we can live an abundant life (John 10:10) - a life that enjoys the grace of guilt free living informed by a conscience that is cleansed by blood (Heb 9:14). Now, as a result of the abundance of grace, demonstrated to us in Christ, we can learn, among other things, to be gracious one with another.

As we learn to be 'Gospel Driven', not 'Law Directed', we have the privilege to absorb ourselves in the powerful knowledge that God Himself came to this earth as our personal representative. As such, He substituted for us in both His life and death. When He was declared beloved, we were declared beloved. When He died we died; when he arose we arose. As He is accepted so we are accepted; as He is loved, so we are loved. Through the gospel we now have every benefit and promise gained for us by Christ,. We are now in Him and in Him have been adopted as Children of God. When He hung on the cross God's disfavour towards us rested on Him and now, because of Calvary, God's favour rests on us. Knowing then the immensity of the grace we have received, how is it that we can now be un-gracious and mean to those whom we feel have sinned against us? How strange we are! The gospel, however, when embraced, releases us to be kind one to another tender hearted forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32).

As we steep ourselves in the good news, the gospel and its applications, we come to appreciate more and more of the grace that has been given to us in Christ and because of this we ourselves become more gracious. By the gospel we are enabled not only to abandon our own righteousness, but also to see that because of grace alone we are now reckoned as being perfectly righteous with neither perverseness nor iniquity found in us (Numbers 23:21). May we be at least, helped do the same for those who have sinned against us and who are now seeking our forgiveness?

We are saved by immense grace and this immense grace of the eternal God has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11; Jn 1:14). Our redeemer is full of grace and truth" and "of His fullness we have all received and grace for grace" (Jn 1:16). Literally we have received grace "piled upon" grace. Just as there are continual arrivals of waves on the seashore so we are constantly receiving wave upon wave of God's inexhaustible grace in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the grace of God in human form. His grace is Glorious (Ephesians 1:6). Abundant (Acts 4:33); Rich (Ephesians 1:7); Manifold (many-sided,) (1 Peter 4:10) and Sufficient (there is never a shortage) (2Cor 12:9).

Surely then, in the light of these gospel truths we can learn to be gracious one to another? You see it's one thing to know the words of the song of grace, but quite another to know the melody.

The following is a great illustration of the application of gospel grace:

In the 1800's London had two famous preachers, Charles Spurgeon and Joseph Parker. On one occasion, Parker commented about the poor condition of children admitted to Spurgeon's orphanage. Word of this came to Spurgeon, but by the time it arrived, it was reported to Spurgeon that Parker had criticized the orphanage itself. Spurgeon blasted Parker from his pulpit and the attack was printed in the newspaper and became the talk of the town. Londoners flocked to Parker's church the next Sunday to hear his rebuttal.

Here's what Parker said:

"I understand Mr. Spurgeon is not in his pulpit today, and this is the Sunday they use to take an offering

for the orphanage,” Parker said. “I suggest we take a love offering for the orphanage.” The crowd was delighted; ushers had to empty the collection plates three times. Later that week, there was a knock at Parker’s study. It was Spurgeon.

“You know, Parker, you have practiced grace on me,” he said. “You have given me not what I deserved; you have given me what I needed.”

May we all have the grace to live as though the gospel is real and that grace has indeed arrived in the person of Jesus the Christ.

And that’s the Gospel Truth