

The Wednesday Word, May 13, 2009: Becoming Gospel Driven!

Jesus is the Good News! He is the sum and substance of the gospel! But what does that mean? Do these facts interpret how we approach life? In other words, are we gospel driven in our attitude to life?

To be gospel driven we need to know the entire gospel and its applications. In doing so, the gospel driven believer will not permanently camp on any one part of the gospel to the exclusion of the others. In the gospel, for example, we are presented with Christ Jesus, the God/Man. The gospel declares His incarnation and impeccable life. These are essential gospel truths, but we dare not stop there and make these facts the sum total of our gospel. There is much more!

By the way, if the Gospel stopped with the incarnation and sinless life of Christ then no one would ever have been saved! That God came to earth as a genuine, sinless human is precious gospel truth, but it is not the entirety of the good news! The incarnation in and of itself saves no one! The incarnation is the beginning of the good news; it is the Alpha, but not the Omega.

The gospel in its fullness tells us more. It tells us that Christ was born and lived sinlessly, but it also tells us that Christ was crucified; Christ died. Christ was buried; Christ rose again; Christ ascended to heaven. Christ sits at God's right hand as our "Advocate with the Father," (1 John 2:1) and "ever lives to make intercession for us" (Heb 7:25).

These are the great facts of the good news. They are so few and simple that children can learn and grasp them. They are brief statements, but God's wisdom, mercy and grace flow out of them. The gospel driven believer knows this! These are the things that God has done for us in the person of Jesus and on this person and work we rest our entire confidence. It is finished!

For a full gospel, therefore, we must have the entire gospel! However, simple as the constituent parts of the gospel are, we must not stop with them for there is even more to the gospel than these simple facts of history. For example, the gospel presents us with the person of Christ; but who is He? The gospel declares the answers to this question. The gospel teaches us that in the person of Christ we have a perfect representation of God for if we have seen Him we have seen the Father (John 14:9). In Christ we also have,

The Perfect Prophet,
The Perfect Priest,
and The Perfect King.

In Christ we have,
The Lamb and the Lion,
The Way and the Door,
Grace and Justice,
Mercy and Holiness,
The Friend of sinners and the Hater of sin,
The Life and the Light,
The Resurrection and our Destiny!

These are all gospel truths, but for the gospel driven believer, there's even more than these wonderful facts! To be gospel driven, we must seek to know and live in the applications of the gospel. We must know, for example, that Jesus not only came for us, but that He also came as us! This is an often forgotten truth! He not only lived for us, He also lived as us! He not only died for us, He also died as us. He not only rose for us, He also rose as us. When He ascended, we ascended. When He received the approval and the welcome of the Father we received it also! He is our man in Heaven. He is our representative. He has done everything as if we had done it ourselves.

This means that at this very moment God is thrilled with you! Do you believe that? He is well pleased with you! Do you agree with that? At this very moment you are accepted in the Beloved One! But you say, "This cannot be true for I am such a failure as a follower of Christ." That may well be the case; you may indeed be the hugest disappointment you have ever met! But in the light of that, there is no better time to preach and apply the gospel to yourself! This is one of the characteristics of the gospel driven Christian! He preaches the gospel to himself!

The issue with God today is not you; it's the Lord Jesus. You are not the center of all things, Christ Jesus is! It is the Father's verdict of Christ that is of central importance! And what is the Father's verdict? His verdict of Christ is "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased"(Matt 3:17). That is why today you and I are, "Accepted in the Beloved," the Lord Jesus! You may be dejected and distressed when you look at yourself, but preach the gospel to yourself and apply it. Speak to yourself, for example, in the words of the hymn writer and say,

"Arise, my soul, arise; shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears:
Before the throne my surety stands,
My name is written on His hands."

Because of the finished work, we have a high Priest in Heaven. God, therefore, does not see our sins and count them against us. What does God see? He sees our priest, His perfect Son, His perfect sacrifice and perfect blood! He sees our Priest's entire perfections and is more than satisfied with Him.

Yes indeed, God wants us to confess our sins, but we are not to make them the focus of our life. Instead, He wants us to focus on Christ and His finished work! By doing so, we have the surest way to grow in grace

And that's the Gospel Truth!