

The Wednesday Word, May 26, 2010: Righteous Grace, Part 2

It's one thing to feel good about the Gospel, but it is quite another to really grasp its ramifications. I've met many professed Christians, for example, who are 'martyrs' to a bad conscience. They know the words "saved by grace," but suspect that grace means God's lackadaisical kindness. Not having understood that the grace which saves is righteous grace, they have no foundation and no peace. The gospel they know does not minister calm to their minds or conscience (Jeremiah 6:14).

For true peace we, as gospel driven believers, always find ourselves going back to the cross for answers. The conscience says, "I know I'm a rat and that God is merciful, but what if He grows weary of me and forgets to be gracious?" The cross answers, 'Christ Jesus was set forth as a wrath offering for sin, ----- you are saved as a matter of not only grace but also righteousness (Rom 3:24-26) for it is as the God of Justice that the Lord saves' (Isaiah 14:21).

Righteous grace is no new concept. In the Old Testament, the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled on the mercy seat. Justice and mercy were blended. The sinner was, therefore, saved, not only by grace, but saved righteously. Likewise, in the New Covenant, the God of the gospel graciously justifies the ungodly by ruthlessly punishing our sins in the person of the God/Man, Jesus Christ.

Although we are saved by grace alone the grace that saves is never alone for it is inseparably joined to righteousness. Our salvation and right standing with God now rest on the righteous and gracious work which God has already accomplished for us, outside of us, in the Person of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24).

Two thousand years ago there was an objective, actual, historical event. God Himself broke into human history in the Person of His Son. He became our representative and was so identified with us that all which He did was not only done for us, but was exactly the same as if we had done it ourselves. When He graciously bore the punishment for our sin we were righteously punished in Him. When He arose, we arose. When He was exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high so were we (Eph 2:6)! It is finished! We can be at peace.

Have you ever had a troubled conscience? Here are some scriptures, tailor made for you. You may find it very helpful to personalize them.

"Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor 15:3).

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isa 53:5).

"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb 9:28).

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us (Titus 2:14).

He was "delivered for our offences and was raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25).

He "gave himself for our sins" (Gal 1:4)

"Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom 5:6).

"He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9:26).

See also 1 Peter 4:1, 1Peter 3:18, 1 Peter 2:24.

Notice how the words, 'Himself' and 'He' appear frequently. This is because the gracious and righteous Lord Himself is our salvation.

Someone once asked Irenaeus, the defender of the faith in the 2nd Century, "Irenaeus, what has Christ brought that other religious leaders have not brought?" He answered, "He brought Himself." That's what makes our gospel different. God came here Himself to righteously and gracious deal with sin and sinners. This is good news for the troubled conscience.

And that's the Gospel Truth!