

The Wednesday Word, June 6, 2018: Is Jesus Enough When We Sin?

God has never forced us to sin. To our shame, we sin willingly and gladly. If the truth were known, there's a part of us that quietly loves depravity. We may hate its consequences, but if left to our own devices we gravitate away from God. All of us have been smitten with the sin virus (Romans 6:6); it is, so to speak, lurking in our blood, continually spawning its foul children (sins) (Romans 5:12).

The awful problem with sin, however, is that it brings separation from God (Isaiah 59:2). God is holy and because He is holy, He hates sins and hates all workers of iniquity (Psalm 5:5). It may seem like a foreign concept to our ears to associate 'hatred' with the God of love but before objecting to this picture, let me warn against the subtle sin of idolatry.

Idolatry?

Yes, idolatry! When we reject God's self-declaration and substitute Him for the God we'd like Him to be, we have become idolaters (see Romans 1:21,25). Much as we would like God to be simply the God of love who is never angry at sin or sinners, we must not project this false picture onto Him.

Here's a word of warning that comes from antiquity; "If you believe what you like in the gospel, and reject what you dislike, it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself" (Augustine).

God refuses to fit our concept of who we want Him to be, ... in fact, He won't even try. He's got better things to do! As for us, the best thing we can do is bow before, worship and enjoy Him as He is and for who He is.

God is Holy, and we are not. This knowledge is where false religion finds a natural breeding ground as it germinates in the fears and guilt of sinful man. We really are laughable; we cannot create ourselves but think that by practicing some religion or other, we can save ourselves. Yet, no matter how involved we become in our religion, no matter how zealous we are, we are impotent to stop the tendency towards sinning ... and sins separate us from God.

Religion cannot remove the virus of sin. Although for the follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit will limit and restrain the production of sins, we remain sinners until the day we die. Remember this, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).

The good news for sinners (us), however, is that God is not only holy, He is also just. But how is this Good News? I can take some comfort knowing that He is loving, but surely there is no comfort in knowing that, in His unswerving justice, He will punish us and our sins? A just God will surely mete out punishment. This is far from good news. So then, how can God be just, and yet save me a ruined sinner?

Which brings us back to the Gospel, the best news, the old news and the ever-new news---Jesus!

Only in Jesus is God discovered to be both loving and just. Between the all-holy God and sin-filled believer, there stands the remarkable sinless person of the God/Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is enough for both the sinner, and the Father. God punished our sins on Him, the beloved son (Isaiah 53:10). In grace, He became accountable for us and poured out His blood for our redemption (Ephesians 1:7).

Jesus, the Lord of glory, became a surety (Hebrews 7:22) and substitute for His people (1 Peter 2:24). He took our place in his doing, dying and rising again. He then ascended to the right hand of the Father (the place of cosmic authority) for us. And now, because of Jesus and His accomplishments, not only love but also justice endorses our acquittal.

Jesus is Enough.

And that's the Gospel Truth!