

The Wednesday Word, June 10, 2015: Grace Robbers Part 2

Grace Robbers are very subtle. They don't go around chanting, "Down with the cross, down with the cross." However, when it comes to preaching, they emphasise, not Christ crucified, but feelings and experience. Grace robbers will major on anything and everything but the grace of God in the gospel.

By the way, it's not that it's wrong to feel the presence of the Lord and to enjoy Him. God forbid that we should have a cold, dry, bare faith that does not affect the entire being. However, vast numbers of professing Christians are continually lusting after the excitement of a new experience. The gospel is not enough. They want 'The Release of the River of Life', or the 'Soaking of the Spirit'. They wish for something other than the gospel.

They fail to see the glory of Christ in the good news. They desire a richer experience than they feel is afforded to them by the gospel. They seem unimpressed that Christ has, by His doing, dying and rising again, gained a glorious inheritance for us. They do not stand in awe and wonder of His present day sovereign intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). It seems a matter of nothing to them to know that we have already received the Spirit of Adoption (Romans 8:15). They appear to be unaware that we are already in Christ and are already blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him (Ephesians 1:3). The Father Himself, as He beholds us in Christ, speaks well of us, but this does not seem to move them. In the search for a deeper spirituality, many have turned their eyes inward. To their detriment, the object of their attention becomes themselves and not the risen, exalted Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us (Colossians 3:2).

Here's the kind of thing that happens when the believer's focus is taken off Christ. Let's say someone feels they have had a great, new, spiritual experience. They then insist that everyone must have the same experience they have had. It must be duplicated among all and sundry!

But, this is just another form of anti-gospel, grace robbing legalism! This new supposed blessing now put itself in competition against the blessings we already have in Christ alone. Furthermore, this is not the New Testament, apostolic pattern. We read, for example, in 2 Corinthians 12:2 of how Paul visited the third heaven. Yet nowhere does the apostle promote that all of us need to have 'The Third Heaven Experience' to complete our Christianity. In fact, it's quite the opposite for he tells us that we are already complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10). In addition, Peter was praying and had a vision of a sheet descending from heaven and God spoke to him (Acts 11:5ff). This was doubtless a time of intense spiritual intimacy for him, but at no point did he ever call for people to come and be blessed with the Joppa Experience.

I remember, some years ago, being pressured by well-meaning people to go to Toronto, Canada, for there was a supposed blessing to be had at a church there. If you were without the 'Toronto Blessing', my friends inferred, you lacked spiritual insight and sensitivity. I don't know how the leaders of this blessing felt, but many of the followers (of the blessing) implied that they were the 'haves' and we others, who had not received this blessing, were the 'have nots'. We were the second-class citizens of the Kingdom, they the first-class. They were the grade A Christians...the rest of us were merely grade B.

But, this kind of thinking is grace robbing legalism. Why so? Because, in their eyes, they had not already been made Grade A Christians by Christ alone. They were made grade A Christians by having had the Toronto Blessing. They held that we needed the blood plus a second blessing to get a first class ticket to heaven. This is Legalism...impure, anti-gospel, grace robbing legalism!

Here's the Gospel Truth, because of the Finished Work, each child of God is already a 'Grade A' Christian. The cross has made every believer first class and entirely accepted. In Christ, we are already enjoying, the non-improvable, full smile of Heaven.

So beware of Grace Robbers. They will teach that if you are truly in tune with God, your experience will mirror theirs. They have had an experience and are, in their opinion, better off and more spiritual than are you. However, if you buy into this nonsense, you have fallen for the teaching of another grace robber.

And that's the Gospel Truth!