

The Wednesday Word, Aug. 26, 2015: 12 Marks of the Grace Believer!

1. Grace Believers trust that they are saved entirely and utterly by someone else, the Lord Jesus Christ. They believe that their sole qualification for salvation is found, not in their worthiness, but in their unworthiness. The Grace Believer sees Christ as his complete acceptance before God (Philippians 3:4-9). The Grace Believer holds that Christ alone is his saviour. He believes, like the faithful of other generations that, "There is no Priest but Christ, no Sacrifice but Calvary, no Confessional but the Throne of Grace and no Authority but the Word of God."

2. Grace Believers understand, along with the greats of the past, that to know Christ and Him crucified is not the minimum of spiritual knowledge but the maximum. The Grace believer knows that all doctrines find their hub in Christ Crucified. All doctrines indeed lead to and from the Christ of the cross. All teaching, responsibilities, and Christian activities find their centre in Christ Crucified. In Christ alone, the Grace Believer discovers the treasures of wisdom, knowledge and spiritual understanding (Isaiah 45:3; Colossians 2:3).

3. Grace Believers, as they grow in grace, rather than become self-satisfied and hard spirited, continue to develop in their understanding of their lack of worth. As the gospel-hammer breaks them, they increase in the comprehension that they receive favour, not because of themselves, but because of being in Christ! They understand that Christ's worthiness is the source of all their blessings (1 Corinthians 4:7).

4. Grace Believers know that they have the full favour of God, not because of any works they have done or are doing. They have the full favour of God because of Christ alone. By faith, they grasp that the Father is well pleased with them and indeed rejoices over them. (Zephaniah 3:17) Indeed, the Father cannot be more delighted with His people than he already is. Grace Believers know they are not accepted by having their own righteousness which comes by fulfilling rules and regulations. They are in Christ and have Christ's entire righteousness credited and reckoned to them (see Philippians 3:9).

5. As they grow in grace, Grace Believers refuse to make resolutions, vows and pledges to enable them to serve God in a fuller way. Grace Believers put no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3).

6. Grace Believers are not so foolish as to try self-improvement techniques. Instead, they focus on Christ and his glory. They know that change comes from looking outside themselves to the glorious person of Christ. They rejoice in 2 Corinthians 3:18; "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord".

7. Grace Believers are confident of God's past, present and future grace, yet they refuse to make a practice of abusing that grace. Grace, not Law teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Grace, not law, teaches them to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:11-12).

8. Grace Believers are learning to not get permanently discouraged with their performance. Instead, they are learning to focus on Christ and His performance on their behalf. One of the Grace Believer's theme songs could be;

"It is finished!" yes, indeed,

Finished, every jot;

Believer, this is all you need,
Tell me, is it not?
Till to Jesus' work we cling

By a simple faith,
"Doing" is a deadly thing—
"Doing" ends in death.
I'll cast my deadly "doing" down—

Down at Jesus' feet;
I stand in Him, in Him alone,
Gloriously complete.

9. The Grace Believer is so reduced by the sight of himself as a wretch ... a sight graciously granted by the Holy Spirit in a non-condemning manner ... that he soon discovers he has no room to practice arrogance and pride.

10. The Grace Believer holds that devotion to God arises, not from an obligation to repay God. On the contrary, the Grace Believer knows that we love God because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Devotion to God comes through the gospel.

11. The Grace Believer does not believe that blessings come as the result of our acts of consecration to God. That is to reverse God's order. That is to teach law and not gospel. The Legalist makes man's blessing depend on his personal dedication and devotion. Also, the legalist insists that the more we consecrate ourselves to God the greater will flow the blessing. According to his scheme, we move the hand of God by our works. To think like this, however, is to remove ourselves from the enjoyments of gospel blessings. This is to cease to look to Christ alone as our only acceptance before God.

12. The Grace Believer knows that grace has not made us a debtor to God. The Grace Believer does not try to repay the debt of grace he feels he owes. The Grace Believer holds that God, in giving His grace, did not put us into any contract with accompanying clauses and conditions. It is grace that saves and grace alone. It is faith alone which receives that which Grace alone in the person of Christ alone has accomplished. The Grace Believer does not serve God because he feels he owes God something. Rather, he serves God because He loves God and he loves God because God first loved Him.

And that's the Gospel Truth!