

The Wednesday Word, September 5, 2012: Faith the Great Acceptor

Our greatest need is for a sin-bearer (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23). Faith accepts this. However, if we are caught in the trap of looking to the quantity or quality of our faith to save us, we have no Saviour. Why? Because faith, no matter how pure and strong, is not the sin-bearer. Faith is unsuited for that department since it is neither qualified to remove guilt nor able to make an offering that turns away the wrath of God. No matter how intense and sincere our faith, it cannot pay the penalty of our sin. Faith cannot satisfy God's just and righteous demands; it cannot legally remove the accusing guilt of sin. Indeed, faith cannot provide, in itself, the righteousness by which we can stand before the Father. We are sinners, not partial sinners, but, by nature, ruined sinners (Ephesians 2:1). We, therefore, need Christ Jesus the all-sufficient One, to be our Rescuer and Saviour.

So where does faith come in? Listen to the ancient message that is never out of date. Faith brings us to Christ and sees in Him the perfect wrath offering (Romans 3:25), the perfect payment (Acts 20:28), the perfect cleansing (Revelation 19:8) and the perfect righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30). But faith, in itself, has no merit and no virtue.

Again we need to stress that faith is neither Christ nor His substitutionary life and death. Although it is utterly impossible to be saved without faith, faith is neither the blood, nor the final sacrifice for sin. Faith is not the mercy-seat. Faith does not work, but accepts the work which was done for us 2000 years ago. Faith does not wash us; instead, it leads us to the fountain which is opened for sin and uncleanness (Zechariah 13:1). By faith we can sing that,

“There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath the flood
Lose all their guilty stains.”

Faith always brings us outside ourselves to receive the worthiness of the Lord Jesus, but faith has no worthiness of its own. Gospel faith is not faith in feelings. In fact, to rely on feelings is just another way of relying on self. Since feelings are internal actions, relying on them is just another form of salvation by works! Faith, on the other hand, reaches out and knits us to Jesus, our infinitely worthy Saviour (Psalm 18:3; Hebrews 3:3; Revelation 4:11) and in so doing, presents us perfect in the perfection of Christ (Hebrews 5:7).

As He sees us in the perfections of His Son, the Father continually accepts us as being legally perfect. Faith accepts this and sees Christ alone as our hope. Faith accepts and rests on the fact that Christ has done everything required of us and has done it to perfection (Deuteronomy 32:4). Faith sees that The Lord Jesus has worked perfectly, prayed perfectly, worshiped perfectly and believed perfectly on our behalf. By faith, we accept this perfection as accomplished on our behalf and we now make a perfect approach to the Father, in the name of Jesus, clothed in Christ alone. Although we are a people zealous for good works (Titus 2:14), we know that the Father is more pleased with our resting in the doing, dying and rising again of Christ than with all our attempts at personal obedience.

And that's the Gospel Truth!