

## **The Wednesday Word, Oct. 10, 2012: Cancelling the Simplicity of Christ!**

*2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

False teachers will always try to take us away from the gospel. They offer formulas for successful Christian lives, but, although they tip their hats to Jesus, He is neither the centre nor the circumference of their message. "If you do this" they boast, "then God will do thus and so for you." "Do and you'll get" is their theme. But this is legalism 'pure and undefiled'! Gospel faith, however, is the opposite of this. Faith, real faith, will cause us to give up our exhausting and ineffectual efforts to do or feel something good in order to coax God to bless us (Ephesians 2:8).

We often, unfortunately, stray from the gospel and feel that we need to make an extra special effort at godliness so that we can squeeze more acceptance from our Heavenly Father. We sometimes think that, if only we spent more time in Bible reading, prayer and witnessing then the Father would undoubtedly smile upon us. But to think in this manner is the very opposite of faith. It is serious unbelief. True faith always rests upon Christ alone to gain us full approval, acceptance and blessing before God. We were crucified with Christ and are already, from God's standpoint, seated in heavenly places in Him (Ephesians 2:6). Even though we look forward to Heaven there is a real sense in which we are already there. The Father looks at us and sees us in Christ, the God/Man and clothed with His beauty.

Then, there's the religionist. Like the false teacher, the religious, self-satisfied man always tries to get away from the simplicity of Christ. But, before we condemn and judge him, we ought to take a close, hard look at ourselves. Stupid as it may seem, we often trust in our own performance more than in Christ's (Galatians 6:3).

Furthermore, we would rather trust, not only our own performance, but also our own experience than trust in Christ's experience on our behalf. In doing so, we leave the gospel and fall headlong into works religion (Galatians 5:4). Remember this, the religious person doesn't mind adding the cross to his belief system, --- it becomes, as it were, one of his many collectable trinkets ---- but in making the cross something additional, he cancels its simplicity and reduces it to nothing. The cross, for him, is just something that he adds to, but the truth is, to add any kind of plus to the cross is to make it nonplussed.

Here are the facts; the Lord Jesus saves completely or not at all. We can never, therefore, divide the work of salvation between ourselves and Him. It is not our performance plus Christ's doing, dying and rising from the grave which gives favour with God (Galatians 2:21), it is Christ alone who saves. Faith grasps this magnificent truth. Faith adds nothing to the cross for faith sees the fullness and sufficiency of the work done there and brings us to rest on Christ alone (2 Corinthians 3:4-5). To paraphrase Horatius Bonar, "We do not come to Calvary to add anything, we come, by faith, to see and hear something. At Calvary, faith sees the glorious truth that all things have already been sufficiently and completely accomplished, and it also hears the 'It is Finished' of Christ Jesus the Sin-bearer (John 19:30). Faith, having caused us to see and hear, then causes us to say a hearty Amen."

And that's the Gospel Truth!