

## **The Wednesday Word, Oct. 31, 2012: The Great Sin of the Self-Righteous, Self-Centred Man**

The great sin of the self-righteous, self-centred man is not his pride; it is his unbelief. In His unbelief, he refuses to rest on the Father's gift of the Son (John 3:18; 1 John 5:10; 1 Corinthians 16:22). This is his most heinous crime, carrying with it a more concentrated condemnation than all his other sins combined.

Jesus taught, "When he (the Spirit) is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment --- because they believe not on me" (John 16:8-9). Notice how the Master says that the Spirit will convince the world of sin because they do not keep the Ten Commandments." Woops! Did I just say that? It must have been me for it certainly was not the teaching of the Master. According to Jesus, the first sin that the Holy Spirit convicts us of is, not that we are lawbreakers, but that we do not believe on Him. The Spirit's priority is to reprove the world of the great sin of not resting on Christ alone. In other words, the essence of sin is not what we do but what we believe.

Here are the facts; not trusting in and resting on the Lord Jesus is the chief sin and root of all lawlessness. A lawless man is not resting on Christ alone. He may talk a good talk and attend church meetings, but if he is not trusting on Christ alone, he is in rebellion. Out of this sin of rebellious unbelief flow all his other sins. Immorality is a sin, and at its root is unbelief. The reason people commit various acts of evil, adultery, murder and theft etc is ultimately because they do not believe. A man who continuously lives in wilful sin such as adultery or fornication may claim to be a Christian but is not as he has not repented and rested on Christ.

The Holy Spirit also reproves of righteousness. He literally brings to light the uselessness of the world's righteousness. Notice, it's not unrighteousness that the Holy Spirit exposes (in this verse), but righteousness. The worldly, religious man thinks that he is righteous, but God strongly disagrees with Him (Romans 3:10 ff). Nowhere is this more clearly seen than at the cross. It was self-righteous, unbelieving, upstanding men who murdered the Lord Jesus. In their deceived and deluded minds, they thought they were acting righteously. In their self-righteous estimation, they were convinced that Jesus was wrong about both His doctrine and His identity. But after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended, the Spirit was sent to declare otherwise. In the light of the cross, self-satisfied, religious, prideful man was shown to be guilty. The cross, therefore, is God's settled verdict on the awful, sinful mass of filth that constituted man's righteousness (Isaiah 64:6). If ever the self-righteous are to be saved, the Spirit of God must show them that they need an entirely new righteousness---the righteousness of Christ Himself.

According to Jesus, the Holy Spirit also convinces the world of judgment --- not of their future judgment although, of course, that is coming to all Christ rejecters, but of judgment "because the prince of this world has been judged" (John 16:11). At the cross, Satan's grip over us was destroyed. Satan has been judged, and all who believe in Christ Jesus are now free from his bondage. This is good news.

We are saved not only by grace but by power. May the Lord cause us to see how worthy of condemnation, bondage and ruin we are. May He enable us to be thrilled by His lavish, powerful

grace (Luke 7:47b). Grace means that God has loved us for no other reason than that He has loved us! He who is all purity has loved us at our worst. Our guilt was met by His justice. Our well earned wrath was intercepted by the Lord Jesus who rescued, ransomed, redeemed and reconciled us. That's grace!

And that's the Gospel Truth!