

### **The Wednesday Word, Nov. 10, 2010: Salvation, No Distant Thing**

In Christ alone God has brought his righteousness near (Isa 46:13), therefore, when telling others of His salvation we need to stress that salvation is not some distant and secluded thing. People need to know that they don't have to coax God to come near to them. They don't have to, for example, wait to have the "'warm fuzzies' about God ---this will not bring salvation any nearer than it already is. Insisting that we wait till we feel good about salvation before we receive it is just another form of law and works. We as gospel driven believers, however, see that there is no effort needed to produce salvation on our part: salvation has already been accomplished (2 Corinthians 5:21).

When we go 'gospelizing' (evangelizing), therefore, it's so important to talk about God's free love to us in the gift of His Son. It is God Himself who tells us to call upon His name (Ps 105:1) for to call upon Him is to believe on Him (Rom 10:13; Rom 4:24; Acts 16:31). In the gospel we don't offer people a long list of duties to do, or feelings to be formed in order to make God think well of us. The gospel is not our work; rather it is the good news of the work and person of the cross, apart from and outside of us in history. Our work is to believe on Him --the One who has accomplished salvation on our behalf (Jn 6:29).

God has brought His salvation near to the unbeliever. God is not in hiding—He has declared Himself in the person and work of His Son (Jn 1:18). When faith goes to work it actually causes the unbeliever to cease working to earn God's favor and to do nothing other than to rest on the fact that all has been already accomplished on His behalf. Faith, however, does not complete our salvation; rather it embraces the salvation that has already been completed. Faith embraces the fact that Christ alone has paid for us and has rescued us at the cross. Faith sees that this work has been successfully finished (Matt 1:21, John 19:30).

Again we must stress that salvation is not a matter of Christ plus faith (Acts 4:12). We must continually stress this truth because it is on this very point that so many are departing from the gospel. Such people are sincere, they call themselves Christians, but they are not in the gospel. They believe that their faith makes them accepted to God. It's a common error. Nevertheless, to believe in Christ plus faith is to nullify the finished work of God's chosen substitute and mediator.

So let's say it again, although we are saved through faith, faith is not our Savior. Our Savior is Jesus Christ plus nothing (John 14:6)! He is the object of our faith (Heb 12:2). He alone is our rescuer. What faith does is to take a hold of Jesus and His accomplishments and make them our own. Faith grasps that our righteousness is not in ourselves, but rather is outside of us in Christ Jesus. Faith does not bring salvation into existence nor does it produce the righteousness by which God justifies us. What faith does, however, is to take something that is already in existence and enables us to reckon it as being our own!

Some years ago an aging Christian lady lay dying in hospital. The new minister of a certain church came on visitation to the ward and mistakenly thought this dying lady was a member of his flock. Approaching her he said, "My dear lady, I'm here to absolve you of your sins," to which the woman sternly replied, "Let me see your hands" "My hands?" questioned the astonished priest. Reluctantly the priest proffered his hands and the old lady examined them. At length she

released them, looked at the man and said, “Sir, I perceive you to be an imposter: the only man who can absolve me of my sins has nail scars in his hands.”

And that’s the Gospel Truth