

The Wednesday Word; December 13, 2023: The Gospel and the Believer - Part 4

To grow in our Christian life, we must practice looking unto Jesus. He is the sovereign and exalted One who lived, died and rose again for us. There is no other way to successfully live the Christian life than by looking unto Him. (Hebrews 12:1-2).

But how do we look unto Jesus?

That's a great question.

The first thing that looking to Jesus means is that we must stop continually examining ourselves and our condition. There's room for a little of that but being absorbed with ourselves is not the road that leads to spiritual health. Dedicated believer-centered believers find it difficult to follow the instruction of Hebrews 12:1-2 for they are too busy looking at themselves.

To look, therefore, unto Jesus, we must take our spiritual eyes off ourselves and place them firmly on the One who has bought and paid for us with His blood! But the truth is, believer-centred believers cannot really look unto Jesus for they are too self-absorbed. They sometimes remind me of Oscar Wilde who once quipped, "*Come over here and sit next to me, I'm dying to tell you all about myself.*"

The believer-centred believer, you see, is captivated and obsessed by the great God Self!

Jesus, on the other hand, captivates the Gospel believer. Christ Jesus is now the One who is the centre of their lives. Gospel believers have the privilege of turning their spiritual eyes away from everything else and fixing them on Jesus. There is no one anywhere to compare with Him.

J-E-S-U-S—just a five-letter name ... but what a universe of power, grace and mercy is contained in that name.

What an amazing name ... 'JESUS'. It speaks of both mercy and grace ... it is the purest gospel-name of all. In that name, the door to God's presence is permanently open.

What a waste of time it is to continually focus and major on our condition and experience. Just think of the story of man's ruin and redemption. It teaches us that regarding this great matter of salvation, the focal point is not on us, but rather on events that took place outside of and apart from us.

Consider this; in Romans 5:12 we read, "*Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin and so death passed upon all men for all have sinned.*" We further read, "*For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many.*" (Romans 5:15). See how the entire ruin and redemption of sinners hinges upon the actions of two men, Adam and Jesus. Our experience and condition are not, therefore, the central issue of redemption's drama and should, therefore, not be the centre of our Christian life!

When the first man, Adam, sinned, we all sinned. We were ruined because of him. Ruination was

the legacy he left to all his descendants. What a rotten inheritance! We didn't become sinners when we first sinned; we were already sinners when we were born. The poison was already in our blood. This had nothing to do with our experience! We weren't alive when Adam sinned. However, as the head of the human race, he represented us and we were reckoned as being incorporated into him. When he stood before God, he stood not only for himself but also for us. It is vital, therefore, that we grasp that we neither became sinners because of something we did nor because of something we experienced. We became sinners because of something someone else did outside of us and apart from us.

Conversely, when God carried out our redemption, He did not redeem us by doing something within us. No, it was quite the opposite for He accomplished His saving acts outside of us. Just as the first man, Adam, got us into trouble so the second man, Jesus, got us out! *"Just as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"* (Romans 5:19).

And that's the Gospel Truth!