

The Wednesday Word, May 15, 2013: Our Obedience or His?

I was recently told by a professing Christian that we are not declared in right standing with God until our life is characterised by obedience. According to him, Christ's death on the cross was essential to right standing before God, but so also is our life of obedience. To which I say, "What a hodge-podge of confusion twice confounded!"

Although we strongly believe that the believer's life is characterised by obedience, our obedience is in no way part of the ground of our justification (acquittal before God)). To teach that our obedience constitutes any part of our justification, is to indirectly teach that Christ's doing and dying is not sufficient to take us to heaven.

Is our obedience as Christians the condition for receiving God's 'not guilty' verdict? No!

Do we yet need to add our obedience to Christ's to guarantee our admittance to heaven? No!

Does our Justification depend on our moral transformation? No!

If these things were so, then Christ's doing and dying would be rendered inadequate. But, if His doing and dying is inadequate, it means something is missing. If something is missing, it is not complete. If it is not complete, it is not finished! If it is not finished, then Christ lied and we are not saved (John 19:30; 11:25).

Let me ask you, are you trusting in Christ alone + nothing? Has he satisfied the demands of God's holy requirements on your behalf? Is He alone your righteousness? Is He alone your acceptance in heaven? "Yes," you say, "but I need good works." Hey, no one is arguing that good works are not a part of the Christian life, but can your good works compete with Christ's good works on your behalf? Good works are a fruit of our Justification, not the basis of it! Indeed, to add good works to the finished work of Christ is an anti-gospel error of the highest order (Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16; 2:21; 3:11).

But you say, surely Christ's doing and dying are not enough, we also need faith. Yes indeed, we need faith, but faith does not create our acquittal before God. Faith receives our acquittal, it embraces that which has already been accomplished, but faith is never reckoned as the basis of our justification (John 3:36).

"Ah but we need repentance," says another. Yes indeed, ongoing repentance is part of our growth in grace, but repentance is nowhere counted as any part of our justification. Our justification is based on the doing, dying and rising again of Christ + nothing, nada, zilch!

Let me ask, have you any other scheme for getting to Heaven other than resting entirely on the doing and dying of Jesus? Is your hope built on Christ alone? But let me warn you, if you are trying to impress God with anything other than the shed blood of Jesus, give it up. You are in danger of adding a "damnable plus" to Christ alone! He doesn't need your contributions to bring you to Heaven! He, alone is your qualification for heaven.

Ebenezer Wooten an earnest English evangelist of another generation was holding a series of tent meetings. The last service had been conducted, the crowd was leaving, and the evangelist was busy taking down the tent. A young man approached the preacher and casually asked, "Mr. Wooten, what must I do to be saved?"

“Too late!” said the evangelist, in a matter of fact way, as he glanced up at the inquirer. “You’re too late, my friend, way too late!”

“Oh, don’t say that, Mr. Wooten!” said the young man, “Surely it isn’t too late just because the meetings are over?”

“Yes, my friend,” answered the evangelist, “it’s too late! You want to know what you must DO to be saved, and I tell you that you’re hundreds of years too late! The work of salvation is done, completed, finished! It was finished on the cross; Jesus said so with the last breath that He drew! What more do you want?”

The truth is, the Lord Jesus has perfected and finished the work of Salvation at the cross and nothing, nada, niente, zilch needs to be added.

And that’s the Gospel Truth!