

Pastor's Ramblings for May 2005 (Grace of God)

The greatest joy I know is that the work of my salvation is complete, finished, done...all by the cross of Calvary! The peace that this gives is more than I can share in these few words. When I decided to pursue God in earnest, I discovered that grace was sufficient and that the completed work of God in His Son Jesus could and would set me free. It was in a hospital room in Chattanooga that I heard God say to me, I love you and you need not perform anymore for my approval...it is Finished! Now how does this practically fit in my life is probably more difficult to explain than this small space, but I want to try to get the sense of the thought before you. Hang in with me and take this journey, it is short but a valued read!

My love for God and my sense of Him is now more like a precious Father relationship. I now know him (*and I admit this is my current place in the journey*) as not a figure who heads the church, as the Creator of the whole deal; but rather, an unconditionally loving Father whom I call Abba or Father. I have not lost the sense of the majesty of God, the Great I Am; but, I now know Him as a Father who loves me based in what His Son has done for me...the work of salvation is the gift of God in His Son. The freedom that this gives is a peace that I do not have to feel good about what I do, but that I do feel good because of what I want to do, in response to His gift in the Son for me. It is in Christ that I joy and it is in Christ that I serve; yet, not to please for the reply of "good job", but rather that I am loved even if I am not at the place of being a massive performer of great and mighty works or deeds. The freedom of the knowing that God has done in me His perfect work and I am in the place of grace and forgiveness, not based in deeds, sets me free to respond to Him not out of guilt or shame or obligation, but rather gratitude for such as grace supplies. This is Freedom and this is the Gospel of the good news.

So, when I feel the need or pressure or compulsion to perform, I ask myself why and from where is this condemnation coming? My want to serve God comes from the freedom of the already blessed place I occupy, adopted sonship in the Kingdom; not by my works or deeds of righteousness, but His gift of absolute free grace. Now as to works being the necessary response to the Gospel...Yes and Amen! The fruit of grace is the natural response of the grateful heart and the works or deeds for Christ will outflow from the gift of the finished and complete work of Jesus on the cross. What is the freedom and joy of the Gospel; In Christ, the work of our future and our salvation is complete...Period! **The work is done!**

Pastor Bob