

Melva's Corner



Called To Service

March 5, 2007

(Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV)

Central Truth: God's grace makes us new so that we can do something significant by His power to display His glorious grace to others.

Christian young people today are leaving our churches in droves because they find church to be irrelevant at best, often contentious with non-Christians in the main, and totally lacking in concern for bigger issues of social justice, poverty, hunger, and modern slavery — estimates are that there are well over 25 million people enslaved in the world today, most of them children in horrible situations being forced to do despicable and often barbaric things. As churches squabble over internal differences, divide over denominational loyalties, and find themselves absorbed in the cult of media personalities, young people continue to leave in droves. They see few great works being done with commitment and passion that reflect the ministry of Jesus Christ.

I am absolutely convinced that this is partially the result of an impotent and non-biblical grace that has been widely taught. This "cheap grace" as Dietrich Bonhoeffer called it decades ago, is false grace. It calls people to quick and easy formula type of conversion that requires no repentance, no discipleship, doesn't talk about surrendering ourselves to the Cross of Christ, and does little to call people to follow Jesus as Lord.

Remember how the apostle Paul described grace:

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV).

This great passage doesn't end on the truth that we can't earn our salvation. Instead, it goes on to remind us that grace is God's way of working His artistry in us — we are His "workmanship." God's grace makes us new so that we can do something significant by His power to display His glorious grace to others. Put bluntly, grace is not just about saving us FROM the wrath of God, but it is also about saving us FOR God's purposes in the world.

Okay, so you're not the next Mother Teresa or someone who is going to give up your warm bed to live among street people in the dead of winter. Me either! But we can try to keep our giving and caring from becoming impersonal. We can actually be on-site occasionally. Give time as well as money. Have a conversation. Show real concern.

The emerging generation of young adults is looking for us to do more than come together in insular buildings and talk about moral conduct and celebrate that we've been saved from what is bad. They are looking for us to hear God's grace call us to the Jesus lifestyle of making real differences in the world around us. This high and holy calling is what we've been remade by grace to do — God planned in advance as our role in this world. So let's be more than reminded; let's be changed . . . let's recognize that God has great things for us to do by His powerful grace so that the world can see the church as Jesus in action.

Scriptural References:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV).