Howards Corner

Cheap Grace

If you have listened to much of the words of analysis about the Christian faith, then you probably heard the term "cheap grace". So today, so many have just assumed things about what it means to be a Christian. Some are thinking that to join a church is all that is required or to believe that Jesus came to the world to save all, or I have said a few words of confession and that does it or maybe believe that Jesus died for our salvation. Well, "not so fast".

While these things have some elements of truth if you read all the scriptures, you will find we are required to obey Jesus' commands. At one point Jesus was confronted by the pharisees about a woman caught in the sin of adultery and there was no argument from Jesus that it was not a sin but there must be mercy applied and not a hard heart of no compassion and "Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." Why we must not have a hard heart and not forgive is that we are all guilty in some manner and probably in many manners. He did not say, however, that all is forgiven and there is no responsibility from you but said go and sin no more.

So, there is a requirement for us to no longer continue in our sins. At some point we must make changes in our lives and stop our sins. This changing of our lives needs power greater than ours for we are operating in our sin nature but if you have become a follower of Jesus, you will find you are no longer comfortable in those habitual sins. Righteous actions will emerge from our weakness but only with the power of the Holy Spirit for we are called to be righteous. Sometimes He allows us to continue for a long time before we are called into account.

If we are true believers, then we will be troubled in our hearts about our sins but if we are counterfeit believers then we will have a hardening of our spirit and are no longer convicted of our sins and the need to change our ways.

So, then we are faced with the question of "cheap grace". Do we have a surface belief that we are saved from everything but do not change our behavior? So, this woman in the story was forgiven by Jesus and was told to go and sin no more. If

she continued in her practice of adultery and maybe other sins that were not mentioned, was she forgiven forever without changing? That is cheap grace!

There is always a price if we walk with Jesus. It may require you to make choices, in this following, that are painful, and the world may hate you like it did Jesus. Maybe you lose your close friends, or they will leave you because of your stance for Jesus or maybe a whole church will reject you or maybe you will be rejected by your family, and they are all painful. Do you stay the course or cave into the world view? Maybe you take a stand of right living to remind other believers that they are on the wrong path. You know it may cost you a friend, but they must hear the message, or they will be lost. It is hard so there is no such thing as cheap grace. If you are a true believer, it will cost you something and I pray you will endure it and persevere to the end.

So, you say you are a follower of Jesus – then there must be some fruit of light in you and there will be changes in you. You cannot walk with Jesus and then continue in your old ways. It may not happen suddenly but there should be a growing and maturing in faith and as the spirit enables you there will be changes. Jesus does save you as you are, but He will not leave you that way. You may say that I have a flawed spirit and use that as a reason to stay in your sin but there has been given to us the "balm of Gilead" which sets the sin sick soul free of that curse. It is not possible to stay the same. That balm is Jesus. It is your choice –the gate of the curse is broken but you must choose to open that gate. You will either take on the light that the Holy Spirit provides, or you will regress and return to the vomit you left.

So, I give you this reminder from Ephesians chapter 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the [b]Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather [c]expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are [d]exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says:

"Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." So, it appears we are on a journey that we cannot achieve on our own but through the power of the Holy Spirit abiding in us and by the shed blood of Jesus there is a way provided for us to live with righteousness if coupled with faith in the work Jesus performed for us. So, it is obvious we cannot achieve this on our own, but it is Grace by faith we will reach our destination, but it is not Cheap Grace for it will cost us something. It cost Jesus His life and rejection by the people He came to save.

So, I remind you the objective is to be righteous although we are not perfect and cannot achieve that on our own but is a gift from God so that we cannot boast for the Lord hates arrogance, but you are on a journey, and I pray that this journey will lead you to the righteousness of God. Submit to His discipline.

Howard