



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – August 22, 2010

Heart to Heart...

We can approach our lives in one of two ways: (1) we can be good people, doing good things, enjoy good relationships, living good lives and that's the basis of our existence as the church. A bunch of good people with no realization of purpose or needs. Let's just be nice. (2) We realize our goodness has nothing to do with our salvation and purpose. Our lives are because of Him, His love, His mercy and His redemption of us. That moves us into a deeper meaning of our purpose, existence and worship. We are to be drawing others into a relationship with the Lord. ***"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."*** (Ephesians 2:10) We aren't our workmanship!

Too many are approaching life believing they just need to be good people! I hear it often of someone speaking of another that they have a good heart. Many times it is referring to the fact they are just nice and want to be nice! Our lives become just mundane with little conviction and no real need to reach out with purpose. Our salvation given to us freely as a gift was NOT because we are good people. At our very best, we sinned! Let's understand that. ***"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*** (Romans 3:23) One little word from God: ***ALL***. ***"For there is none righteous, not even one."*** (Romans 3:10) One little word from God: ***NONE***. Sin created ugliness in us and mars us to the core of our beings. Sin uses us to spread its hurt and despair in the lives of others. (Look at how unforgiving some are. That's sin reaching through us.) Sin masters lives; traps people in alcohol, drugs, profane things, pornography and enslaves them to certain habits. (Ever wonder why it is so difficult to break a bad habit?) It deceives the hearts of people. Sin separates a man/woman from God and makes one its slave. How many have sinned? How many of us are really good?

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5) You aren't right with God because of your deeds and you don't remain right with God because you do good things! Our relationship is based 100% on the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. It took Jesus to break sin's hold on our lives. He who never sinned became what we are and died our death so we can live His life. He brings us to God, washed and holy. We stand before God pure and clean only and because the blood of Jesus covers each of us. If you believe it is your merit because you are a good, nice person and think God will accept you in your 'niceness', then you just by-passed Jesus which means you are still accountable for your sins! Sin is still your master! Jesus is our only redemption. Jesus is our means to God. Jesus is our life and holiness. We live for Him, praise Him and remember His Supper! What we lack and are not, He completes us before God!

Maybe Jesus was wrong! Maybe all that matters and is distinctive about the Christian walk is just being nice. I can understand non-believers thinking this and saying it but what is astonishing (and revealing) is for those in Christ who believe that the Christian faith is little more than getting people to live upright and moral lives! Maybe Jesus lied when He spoke all will die in their sins without Him. Maybe His dying in our place was not really for salvation but just for a bunch of good 'ole folks' to continue to be good 'ole folks!' What is our God given purpose as the church? Think about it!!!

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