

April 28, 2014

Our Complete Inadequacy

2 Corinthians 3:5 (NASB), ***“Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God...”***

One of the most difficult things for the non-believer to understand is that apart from God and His Holy Spirit we are completely incapable of salvation on our own. Most people spend their entire lives in the pursuit of meaning in their lives. Most religions in the world are based on this premise that man can somehow *do* something to give their lives greater meaning or to get closer to God. Two weekends ago, while I was in Steamboat Springs, I noticed a sign outside the Routt County courthouse that named all of the area churches. What I observed on that board was a wide range of religious options and almost all of them had to do with man’s pursuit of meaning and or God or whatever one chooses to call it. But the fact remains that despite our best intentions we are fully incapable of truly knowing God on our own.

Here in 2 Corinthians 3:5 Paul writes ***“Not that we are adequate in ourselves...”*** Paul understood the complete bankruptcy of our own efforts. The word ***“adequate”*** that is used here is translated to mean “sufficient, fit, able.” We are the opposite of ***“adequate”*** we are fully inadequate when it comes to matters relating to our relationship with God. All of man is in rebellion against the one true God and that rebellion is called sin. Romans 3:10-11 forcefully makes this point: ***“THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD...”*** Apart from the Holy Spirit we do not seek God, we may seek a form of god but not the one true God of salvation.

That being said we like to think otherwise don’t we? Verse 5 continues with the observation that we like to think that true spirituality comes from us. This is the attraction that so much false teaching holds for people in the world today. We do not like to think of ourselves as being people of Romans 3:10-11. Instead we want to think of ourselves as people who have the power to not only change our lives but change the world with our positive thoughts and words of affirmation. This is the danger in the prosperity gospel or word of faith movement that floods the airwaves today. You can’t just speak or think things into existence. This is why countless numbers of people become so disillusioned with this teaching and sometimes walk away from Christianity altogether.

The good news is that we are made adequate by God. Paul concludes this verse with these words, ***“but our adequacy is from God.”*** All that we need is provided to us by God. Please notice that I did not say “all we want” but rather “all that we need.”

In 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul writes, ***“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain...”*** Paul understood that all that he was and all of his ability in service to the Lord came from God. He was what he was because of what *God* had done to him on the road to Damascus. In 2 Corinthians 9:8 it says, ***“And God is able to make all grace abound in you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.”***

As we have established apart from God we are wholly inadequate to honor and glorify Him. Apart from God we are wholly insufficient in trying to give our lives meaning. But with God and His grace we have everything we need. What is this sufficiency for? This sufficiency which is in abundance is ***“for every good deed.”***

This gets to the heart of the problem for so many of us. We are “ME” centered when we are supposed to be Christ centered. Our salvation is not so that we will be fulfilled, so that our life will have some greater cosmic meaning. Our salvation is for the purpose of glorifying God. Ephesians 2:7 says, ***“so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*** We exist for Him, He does not exist for us. Once we understand this and understand our position in relation to Him we then begin to have a true knowledge of the Lord.