

OUR LEGACY

In recent years it's become very popular for people to research their ancestry. They're very proud that one of their distant relatives was a famous military General or that they are somehow related to one of our former presidents.

But they don't like to mention that one of their distant relatives was hanged as a horse thief or was part of Al Capone's gang.

Some people accomplish great things in their lives. They are sometimes remembered by naming a bridge, a freeway or a stadium after them.

People's lives are made up of great achievements and also great failures. Everyone has a story. Those stories continue on by what people say about them long after they're gone.

Which got me thinking what story do we leave behind? What will people say about us after we're gone?

I've been a Christian since I was 12 years old. I've heard many people say, when I die I want to hear these words, "well done good and faithful servant," Which are from one of Jesus' parables in Luke 19.

When they say these things to other people, they typically get a lot of amens and positive comments about what a faithful brother they are.

This has never set well with me, because Jesus didn't die on the cross to forgive people's sins and create a large group of faithful workers. He came to redeem God's children back into His family.

The familiar story of the prodigal son was given to show how God relates to His children.

When the prodigal returned home, he said to his father, "I've sinned against you and I'm not worthy to be your son. Make me as one of your hired servants."

But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found." And they began to celebrate. Luke 15.21

The father's actions corrected the son's self evaluation that his poor performance disqualified him from sonship. He also corrected the older brothers faulty perception that his good performance entitled him to the father's acceptance.

The father made it quite clear, you're both sons because of me, not because of your performance.

The Apostle John also made it pretty clear that our relationship with God is based on our acceptance of Jesus's perfect sacrifice for us. It's not based on our human effort but on our supernatural re-creation by God.

He wrote, as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1.12

Jesus' words agree. He said,

"it is the Spirit who gives life; your flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Romans chapter 4 speaks of Abraham. It reveals the basis of Abraham's relationship with God. It reads,

For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness... Romans 4.3

This simple child-like faith in God and in His perfect sacrifice to redeem us back into His family, is the basis of our relationship with God. Jesus didn't come to give us a new religion to work at. He came to restore our original relationship with the Father.

Jesus told his disciples,

“No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. John 15.15

And after Jesus's resurrection, He told Mary in the garden

Go to My brothers and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’” John 20.17

Jesus' perfect sacrifice on their behalf, changed their relationship to God. They were no longer His disciples, they had become His brothers.

The gospel is not a religion. It's the supernatural work of God to redeem His children back into His family even though they have no ability to make that happen on their own. So He did it for us before we even asked.

These next two scriptures show God's intention for His children from the very beginning.

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Matthew 25.34

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ..... Romans 8.16

Every benefit that we receive as His children, is by inheritance. Good works, Bible study, and behavior modification will never make them ours. Only being born of the Father's Spirit qualifies us as His heirs, and joint heirs with Christ of all things.

Early in my Christian Life, I tried very hard to imitate what I read in the Bible by Jesus and His disciples. It goes without saying that I was an abysmal failure. I couldn't even fake it. Then the Holy Spirit gave me the revelation of being in Christ.

When I read 1 Corinthians 1.30, He gave me the revelation that I was in Christ by God's own doing. And because of that, He became my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, and my redemption.

Paul clarifies this in 2 Corinthians 5.17. It reads,

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a completely new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

God knew that I could never manifest His life with my own effort. So He did it for me and gave me the choice of accepting His perfect sacrifice for me, or trying harder to produce it with my own effort.

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not condoning a passive life of inactivity. I'm trying to show the difference between the eternal life that God has already given us and the relentless religious efforts of trying to acquire God's acceptance.

2 Corinthians 5 continues,

All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus told the Father, I have given them the glory You gave Me, so that they may be one as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfectly united, so that the world may know that You sent Me and have loved them just as You have loved Me. John 17.22

This ministry of reconciliation will come because of our Oneness with God. We take on this ministry of reconciliation because of our Oneness with God and our love for Him. It's not because of our natural determination to work for God.

Like Jesus said, it's the Spirit who gives life, your flesh produces absolutely nothing.

This is God's testimony about us,

God has given us His eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has the life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

We've been redeemed as His sons, by His perfect work.

The gospel is not a religion created by men. It's not the adhering to men's teachings and doctrines, or conforming to certain types of behavior behavior.

It's the supernatural work of God to redeem us into His family and transform us into the likeness of Christ by His Holy Spirit within us.

Romans 8:29 declares, that God has predetermined from the beginning that all of His children would be conformed to His first Son Jesus. He's done everything necessary for that to happen. He's asking us like little kids to say thank you Daddy, I receive it.

If we accept by faith His perfect sacrifice on our behalf, and accept our total oneness with God that He made available to us, we will be able to hear from God, at the end of our life on this planet, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." Matthew 3.17

We don't acquire it by our hard work. We inherit it by His perfect work for us.

God bless you.

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