

## Tradition or Truth?

We've spent the better part of a year in this small space raising the question, "Which will it be - tradition or truth?" Will we live by what man says, "You've heard it said...", or, by what God says. "But I say to you..."? Are we attempting to relate to God, to live the Christian life, on the basis of salvation traditions or salvation truth?

One repeatedly tells us we are sinners saved by grace while the other says we are righteous ones inhabited by Grace Himself. One tries to convince us righteousness is imputed to us (it lies somewhere awaiting us in a bookeeping column in our heavenly bank accounts) while the other convincingly avows that the righteousness of God has been imparted to us (due to the fact that the Righteous One abides in us). Of course, one contends we are "positionally" righteous and "potentially" holy, while the other claims we are "actually" righteous and holy because the righteous and holy disposition of Christ lives within.

One promotes "fellowship", presupposing gaps between us and God (and man made religion certainly requires "gaps"! even though the other clearly proclaims "fellowship" (the unbreakable sharing of a life in common that overcomes every "gap"). One continues to promote a "living the Christian life" theology by trying to blend New Covenant grace with Old Covenant law, while the other roots every "living the Christian life" idea in the only One who could ever live it... "not I, but Christ." One is overloaded with propositional truths (the mastery of which will enable us to live more like Jesus); the other is simply loaded with a single mystery... "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

One is forever chiding or guiltting or bribing us to "try harder", "be more committed", "keep your promises", while the other challenges and encourages and even dares us to "trust Him", "rely on His commitments", "remember the Promise Keeper who lives in you." One strives to organize and manage a collection of individuals who share common beliefs or goals, who become caretakers of doctrines and programs. The other seeks to contribute to an atmosphere that allows a community, a family who share a common Life to become caretakers of being above all.

I know, some would say, "Aren't you painting these contrasts a bit too starkly? Aren't most churches a bit of both?" No, no more starkly than Paul did (see Galatians!). Yes, many are "a mixture" of what man says and what God says. Yet, that is part of the problem! For one, mixing God-spoken "wine" and man-made "wineskins" is not a good idea! (Matt 9:17). And two, we've lived with the "mixture" for so long too many of us think it is the Truth!

In light of Jo 8:31-32, 36, it is no wonder that we know so little freedom!

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# Happy New Year!

In Revelation 21:5, the One who sits upon the throne confidently declares, "Behold, I am making all things new." If that is true, I'd suggest we overlook no one, discount nothing in the year to come!

I'm fairly confident God does not consult our calendars or abide by a "Hallmark" timetable of faith. However, we are "time" creatures and function according to certain rhythms (some of us more so than others!). Any day is a good day to orient ourselves to God and His rhythms of grace. Yet certain times of the year call for a "re-set" -birthdays, anniversaries, holidays - an intentional consideration of focus, priorities, or essentials.

Although Jesus is never "off the clock", off the throne, away from His promises, we tend to drift, to lose focus, to neglect the "one thing needful" (Lk 10:42). His promise is to use the "all things" of our lives to get our attention, re-set our focus, and receive revelation that results in transformation (= the making of all things new).

One powerful way to "re-set" is to "thank God for all things" (Eph 5:20). "All" - big and small, pleasant and unpleasant, sad and joyful! Such an expression of faith is really a declaration of His faithfulness. It allows us to "see through" the appearances, set our mind on the things above, and be in the best posture possible to receive whatever He has for us.

Shall we make 2018 the year of "Thanking God for everything?" This is as good a time as any to make that choice!

## JANUARY

7,21,28 CCF  
9 Alachua Study  
11-14 San Antonio, TX (210-478-0618)  
30 Ocala Study

## FEBRUARY

16-18 Florida Retreat (\*\*see below)

APRIL 20-21 Grace Bible, Sebring, FL (staff retreat)

MAY 4-6 Waymont, PA

JUNE 15-17 Lancaster, PA

## 2018 Florida Retreat

### Tradition or Truth?

February 16 - 18, 2018  
Gainesville, Florida

**\$50 deposit due by January 16, 2018 (for guaranteed room)**

\$305 Couple - (meals and room)  
\$250 Single - 1 to room (meals and room)  
\$165 Single - 2 to room (meals and room)  
\$75 conference and meals (no room)  
\$20 conference fee (no meals, no room)

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