

Lesson for August 2, 2009

Review of Our Spiritual Assets

Efficacious Grace, Eternal Security and Eternal Inheritance

Efficacious Grace

Grace, “charis” in Greek, is often defined as God’s unmerited favor or undeserved mercy, which are correct but simplified definitions. God’s grace is much, much more than simply unmerited favor or undeserved mercy. *Grace is all that God is free to do for mankind on the basis of Jesus Christ’s saving work on the Cross.* The grace of God is the expression of His character, His integrity, His love, His longsuffering, His justice, His righteousness and His perfection. The maximum expression of His grace is the Cross.

The word *efficacious* is defined as “having the power to produce the intended effect,” or simply stated, effective. Therefore, efficacious grace is effective grace - grace that has the power to produce the intended effect. When applied to salvation, efficacious grace is all that God does for people when they put their faith in Christ, that produces the intended result of deliverance (salvation). This is called *saving grace* because it saves the unbeliever from the condemnation of spiritual death (separation from God) and places that person, who is now a believer, in a permanent relationship with God. This permanent relationship sets up great potential for blessing from God, all of which is based upon His grace. (John 3:18; Romans 8:1)

Efficacious grace is dependent on the perfect character of God. It is God’s desire to be gracious to every human being. This grace begins at birth when God breathes the breath of life into each human being. His grace continues as God the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment in an effort to lead us to Christ. As long as a person is breathing, God’s grace is at work and there continues to be hope. In every dispensation, God’s grace has been operational and will continue to be operational throughout all eternity. If a person desires to have a relationship with God, it must be based on grace. (Isaiah 30:18-19; John 16:7-11)

In order for grace to be effective in the life of a believer he must become grace oriented. Being oriented to God’s grace means to be familiar with what God’s Word teaches about it, to understand it and to know how it applies to one’s life. Failure on the part of a believer to orient to God’s grace results in loss of blessings in time (i.e. a miserable life) and a loss of rewards in eternity (shame at the Judgment Seat of Christ). (John 3:36; Titus 2:11-14)

Eternal Security

The doctrine of eternal security is the Scriptural teaching that once a person becomes a believer in Christ, that person is secure in Christ *forever*. (I John 5:13) There is sound doctrinal reasoning for knowing that a believer is secure forever. The most important fact to note is that eternal security depends upon God's faithfulness, not man's faithfulness. It is the life of God (eternal life) that He imputes (credits) to every believer at the moment of salvation that assures us of an eternal relationship with Him. The Bible says that believers are guarded in the "hand of God." We are also given a guarantee in the Person of the Holy Spirit, Who indwells every believer. The Holy Spirit Himself is the seal that secures forever our eternal life. Since salvation is a grace function, and has nothing whatsoever to do with human effort or human merit, losing your salvation through sin would negate God's grace – a blasphemous thought. (John 10:28-29, 14:16-17)

If a believer could lose his salvation through sin, who is to be the judge of which particular sin cancels his salvation? If you merely have "eternal" life until you sin again, then you do not have eternal life. A lack of understanding or believing in the eternal security of the believer results in lack of confidence in God and His Word. Assurance of salvation should be dealt with in spiritual childhood and cease to be an issue once a believer has begun to learn and apply Bible doctrine. Confidence in God is a priestly function and is obtained by the consistent study and application of God's Word. The more doctrine you learn and apply, the more you know about God and the more confident you become in His plan and purpose for you. (Romans 8:38-39; I John 3:21-22)

Once you have gained confidence in your salvation, you can relax, knowing that regardless of what people or circumstances do to you that you are eternally secure in Christ. This divine viewpoint mental attitude has the result of confidence towards God and courage towards man. Since you are not trusting any member of the human race, including yourself, to secure your salvation, you can have complete confidence in the "powerful hand of God" to keep you secure forever. (Isaiah 41:10; John 10:28-29)

The power of God is unequalled by anything that man can invent or manufacture. In Greek the word is "dunamis" (from which we get the word dynamite). It is this power that is securing forever the believer's salvation. Translated in the Bible as *able*, God's power is His ability to keep the believer safe for all eternity. Since the believer has obtained an eternal relationship with omnipotent (all-powerful) God, nothing can separate us from this relationship. As a member of God's family, it is irrational thinking to believe that you can remove yourself from His family by some failure on your part. (Romans 4:21; 8:14-17, 31-39; Galatians 4:4-7; II Timothy 1:12; Hebrew 7:25)

Eternal Inheritance

Inheritance implies a family relationship and eternal is a permanent, everlasting relationship. This is certainly the case for every Christian. At salvation, every believer becomes a child of God. One of the amazing things is that as children of God, we also become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. This means that we share in Christ's inheritance. The Bible declares that it has not even entered into the mind of man what God has prepared for him. So the questions are, "What is this inheritance and how do we get it?" (Galatians 3:26; 4:26; Romans 8:17)

In eternity past, when God was designing a plan for your life, He included as part of His plan an inheritance. God was thinking of you in eternity past and predesigned a magnificent plan for your life on earth (therefore you could not have worked for it, earned it or deserved it). He has also designed a plan for you for the eternal state (also, you cannot work for it, earn it or deserve it). God's plans are always a matter of His grace. (Ephesians 1:11)

For the believer in Christ, God has become your father, not merely your creator. This family relationship is entered into by faith in Christ at salvation. Therefore, it is not something for which we have worked, nor is it something that we deserved. In other words, this family relationship is based on the grace of God. Therefore, our inheritance also is based on God's grace. As our Father, God desires only the best for His children. It is a divine decree from our Heavenly Father that we have an inheritance, and His decrees must be carried out. (Galatians 4:4-7)

Inheritance implies a family relationship even in the case of Jesus Christ. As the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus is the Son of God. It is this family relationship that Jesus has with God the Father that guarantees that He will have an inheritance. As a matter of fact, Christ is the inheritor of all things according to Hebrews 1:2. It is this inheritance that the believer, as a child of God, shares with Christ because he is in union with Him.

Eternal inheritance means exactly that – it lasts for all eternity. Our inheritance begins at salvation but will not be *fully* realized until we enter the eternal state. After the believer is evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ, his "escrow blessings" (those kept in his escrow account) will be conveyed to him to enjoy for all eternity. It is the realization of these greater blessings in eternity that should be a motivating factor in the life of every believer. This knowledge becomes part of our personal sense of destiny and the hope (full confidence) of a future filled *only* with peace and happiness.

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In God's grace He has provided for every believer for the eternal state. For those believers who execute the Christian Way of Life, the rewards will be greater. Nevertheless, all believers will be blessed in eternity and all believers will enjoy eternal happiness. Personal sins are not going to be an issue when you stand before the Lord Jesus Christ to be evaluated, because your sins were dealt with on the Cross. Only what you did or did not do with your Christian Way of Life will be evaluated.