NEW FOCUS

Strong Consolation For Believers

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True faith is not blind and firm trust and reliance of God's elect on their Saviour is never misplaced. True faith brings personal happiness to believers because it teaches us that God has already justified, sanctified, redeemed and reserved His chosen people for glory. In itself our faith does not do anything to accomplish or enable our salvation. The purpose of faith is to inform the elect of their inheritance and teach us to glorify the Lord who has secured everything needful for our deliverance and 'hath done all things well'.

Faith equips and informs

'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' Faith equips us to experience spiritual blessings, such as God's love, peace and presence. Faith informs our spiritual understanding by bestowing wisdom in heavenly matters. The happiness, comfort peace and joy of the Lord's people in this fallen world; what the writer to the Hebrews calls our 'strong consolation', comes through faith in the person, work and promises of God.

A strong consolation

In Hebrews chapter 6 the writer tells God's chosen people, 'Wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us' (Hebrews 6:17, 18).

Heirs of promise

Let us note some encouraging truths revealed in this passage. We are told the Lord has unalterably decreed the salvation of His elect, here called, 'the heirs of promise'. This is the immutable purpose of Almighty God. It will never be thwarted or prevented. We learn, too, that God has chosen to reveal to these 'heirs of promise' the absolute certainty of their salvation for the purpose of their personal happiness and comfort. The method used to convey this revelation are two equally unalterable and immutable sources of truth, God's word and God's oath.

Preaching the gospel

The writer to the Hebrews is telling us it is God's will that the elect understand their blessed state by divine mercy. God will not have us ignorant of what He has done for us. God declares sovereign grace in the gospel and gives His people faith to believe what He has spoken. He would have His people well-informed of His gracious purpose so that they might enjoy their happy condition as heirs of His promise. He purposefully intends that the gospel of free grace be emphatically preached for the reassurance of the elect and to confirm all His promises to be Yea, and Amen in Christ Jesus.

God who changes not

The gospel is a blessing and encouragement to the Lord's people for it points us as sinners to Christ alone. The source of much doubt and fear comes from looking inward rather than 'looking unto Jesus'. The gospel teaches us about the will and good pleasure of God, 'with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning'. God's constancy is our personal happiness in trusting Christ for salvation; our 'strong consolation' because all our sins are forgiven, removed and replaced with perfect righteousness. Despite our feelings of personal unworthiness the gospel of grace and the unalterable purpose of God in salvation is designed to be our ever-present comfort. The gospel re-assures our hearts and minds of the immutable love and mercy of our Father regardless of the trials and temptations we face, and despite the sins we commit.

The Lord will provide

Are we discouraged? Are there grounds for fear? Brothers and sisters, our great God has all these matters in hand. No more is inflicted upon us than is for our greater good. He has shortened the times of persecution for the sake of His Church. Speaking of just such times of trial our Lord Jesus says, 'that except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved. But for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days'. Christ further confirms the enduring safety of His people, in that He shows the impossibility of deceiving the elect, and our security in His Father's hand.

The Lord our Righteousness

There is no doubt and no question about the success of God's purpose and pleasure. It is founded in Himself and established in the covenant of grace and peace, 'ordered in all things and sure'. It is confirmed in the blood and righteousness of Christ, as a nail in a sure place, by whom our faith is upheld and our hope is secured. It is revealed through conversion for the people which are the heirs of promise; who are made willing, by the regenerating work of God the Spirit, according to Christ's covenant engagements 'in the day of his power'.

Looking unto Jesus

In our flesh we feel our weakness and it causes us shame. In our daily experience we confess to failure. What energises our personal happiness is not our successful Christian living but Christ's successful death and knowing that God's will to save and bless is not founded on any good in us. God's will to save is not subject to change due to the failures of man. His will does not depend on anything good or bad in the objects of mercy but upon the successful accomplishments of the God-Man; the beloved Son in whom the Father is eternally well pleased.

Unconditional grace

The blessings given to the heirs of promise are not given because we deserve them, or withheld because we don't. God's distinguishing mercy is all of grace and so we are told, 'For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said the elder shall serve the younger'.

Rejoice in the Lord

By His own immutability the Lord our God maintains the counsel of His will. He has done everything to ensure the heirs of promise are redeemed by Christ, blessed in Christ and personally happy in their Saviour. Just as the Lord Jesus will be everlastingly happy in Himself and in the company of His Bride whom He loves and for whom He died, His Bride shall be everlastingly happy in Him. 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.' 'As he is so are we in this world.'

'Fear not'

In His unchanging purpose and for His own good pleasure our God has provided everything needful for our salvation. He has granted to His elect sufficient grace for our present need and unalterable assurances for our future glory. For our day to day comfort and joy He has revealed to us the

gospel of sovereign mercy and given to us promises of blessings to come in heaven. We have it all! We rejoice as the Lord’s people in the great truths of scripture and the doctrine of our immutable God. Dark as it may appear we face the future with comfort, hope and full assurance of faith. Christ has said, ‘Fear not little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom’ and, quite simply, we believe Him.

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