

Pastors Thoughts of the Week

Graciousness

II Chronicles 30:9: For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

The Gnostic heretic, Marcion argued for a dualistic belief system which accused the God of the Old Testament as being a malevolent entity, devoid of mercy and grace and fashioned more along the lines of the Platonic concept of the Demiurge. As a result his followers rejected the "wrathful God of the Hebrew Bible" and jettisoned all the books of the Old Testament as well as many of the epistles, except for the writings of the apostle Paul. They must surely have missed the verse we have chosen to expound, not to mention so many other passages that bear incontrovertible witness of both testaments to the benevolent nature of our merciful Creator. Aside from the patent fact that "The LORD our God is one LORD" Deut. 6:4, it must be understood that He is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever".

Was the Lord not gracious when He found our primal parents hiding in the garden after their willful defiance? After the antediluvian civilization had corrupted God's way upon the earth, was it not Noah who "found grace in the eyes of the Lord"? When God revealed Himself in part to Moses, did he not proclaim "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"? Jonah lamented that God would spare Ninevah, "for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. These are but a few examples that we could cite in defense of the merciful nature of our Lord".

What is so often misunderstood about the wrath of God is that it is always conditional. He only executes it in response to man's disobedience ; and even then only after He has waited for a protracted season for man's repentance. Our text guarantees us God's grace and mercy "if ye turn unto him". God is not a sadistic masochist who delights in tormenting his children. On the contrary He tells us, "Ezekiel 33:11: Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

Graciousness has pervaded the Old Testament drama of God's dealings with sinful men, but the fullest manifestation of this attribute was embodied in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. His every word and action sprang forth from a heart suffused with this quality. And the enduring substance of this graciousness has survived two millennia to find its way to us, the willing and glad beneficiaries of such undeserved mercy.

Have a blessed week,

Pastor

Faith cometh by hearing: and hearing by the word of God Romans 10:17