

Tuesday's Touch ...#42

...from Pastor Ed ...November 10, 2009

Drawn to Christ

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Acts 16:31

All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and he who comes to me I will never cast out. John 6:37

No one can come to me, except the Father who has sent me draw him... It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught by God. Everyone therefore who has heard, and has learned from the Father, comes to me. John 6:44-45

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. John 12:32

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 1 Corinth 2:3-4

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance... 1Thess 1:5

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God. Eph 2:8

Much of the gospel being proclaimed today has become a caricature of the biblical message, exaggerating certain parts and greatly diminishing (or eliminating) others. There has been a tragic shift from a God-centered message of grace to make the gospel a man-centered human endeavor. God is often made to be an anemic old grandfather begging his children to come back to himself with no ability on his own to gather them. Or he is presented as the great Santa Clause with a bag of goodies to get people to acknowledge him. The truth of the mighty power of the Word of God with the effectual working of the Holy Spirit to raise the dead is lost in a quagmire of humanistic methods and enticements.

Jesus plainly says, *No one can come to me, except the Father who has sent me draw him.* The 'outer' work of the gospel is the proclamation - the preaching of Christ and his saving grace, but the inner work must be the enlightening enlivening power of the Holy Spirit through which the Father draws men to his son. The Word of Christ and the work of the Spirit are the central means of the gospel. Christian good works and demonstrations of love may be used by the Lord to "prepare the way" (Matt 5:16; John 13:35), but they cannot save. Moreover, today we have moved far beyond good works and love to "get people saved."

Often, instead of trusting that the gospel of Christ alone is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16), the *enticement of the flesh* is deemed absolutely necessary. The unregenerate must be made completely comfortable "in church" with its Hollywood sets and professional programming. The gospel must be always entertaining, but never offensive. People no longer need to be saved from sin but from low self-esteem.

In other instances, the *playing on emotions* is key to "getting a confession of faith." Tear jerking stories or extremely emotional narrative provide an atmosphere in which people are moved to "come forward" or to "say the sinners prayer." When removed from the excitement and emotion of the gathering, many find themselves again empty and devoid of any reality of God in their lives.

In more conservative circles it is often the *pressuring of the will* that evokes a response. Every effort is made to press the individual to "make a decision." It is believed that anyone at anytime may choose to have faith if the right facts are presented and enough pressure is placed upon them. As a result,

professions of faith are often extracted from individuals in whom there has been no witness of the Spirit, no drawing of the Father, no dawning of grace within.

It may also be that the *enticement of the intellect* causes some respond. A systematic set of religious truths can offer a sense of security and safety in a world of relativism and chaos. For some the engagement in intellectual religion is little more than a cleverly disguised pleasure of the flesh. Great biblical knowledge, as desirable as that may be, does not always translate into faith.

The *security of belonging to a religious group* or organization, the *fascination of external signs* or miracles, or *the desire to be accepted*, all can be spurious paths to false professions of faith.

The question is, have you been *drawn by the truth and the Spirit* to trust in the *person* of Jesus Christ. Has faith within caused you to turn from a life without God, full of idols, to serve the true and living God, and to wait for his Son from heaven (1 Thess 1:9)? If not, are you now moved to seek Him? Search the scriptures; attend to the preaching of the gospel; ask God to reveal Christ in you, until the truth comes not in word only, but in renewing, regenerating power as his Spirit bears witness with your spirit that you are a child of God (Rom 8:16).

As Christians, let us return to the complete faith and confidence that *only* the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16; 1 Corinth 1:18); that faith comes by hearing, and the hearing of faith comes by the Word of God (Rom 10:17); that it is the Spirit who quickens, the flesh profits nothing (John 6:63).

As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, 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 1:12-13

God of all Grace,

As we examine ourselves, as to whether we be in the faith, grant that we should make our calling and election sure. (2 Corinth 13:5; 2 Peter 1:10)

Amen

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