

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL OF GOD TO THE GLORY OF CHRIST

Paul's Example of Humility in Ministry

Exposition of Romans, LVI

Romans 15:14-21

Claude E. McRoberts, III, SENIOR MINISTER

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This combination of words and works, the verbal and the visual, is a recognition that human beings often learn more through their eyes than through their ears. Words explain works, but works dramatize words. The public ministry of Jesus is the best example of this, and after his ascension into heaven he continued 'to do and to teach' through his apostles [Acts 1:1]. It would be wrong to conclude, however, that 'works' means only miracles. One of Jesus' most powerful visual aids was to take a child into his arms, and one of the early church's was their common life and their care for the needy....Paul's only other use of these three words ['power,' 'signs,' and 'wonders'] is in relation to his ministry in II Corinthians 12:12, where he calls them 'the things that mark an apostle.' This is not to deny that God can perform miracles today....it is rather to acknowledge that their chief purpose was to authenticate the unique ministry of the apostles [Hebrews 2:4]. ~ John Stott

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CONCLUSION

JULY 3

Jesus paid it all! There are no bills due for your sin!
You are now free to simply trust and obey.

Stop trying to earn something from God. Stop trying to gain more of his acceptance. Stop trying to earn his favor. Stop trying to win his allegiance. Stop trying to do something that would pay for his blessing. Stop trying to morally buy your way out of his anger. Stop trying to reach a level where you will know lasting peace with him. Just stop trying. Just stop.

So many Christians load onto their shoulders a burden that they do not have to bear. They get up every morning and pick up the heavy load of trying somehow, some way to achieve something with God. They work hard to exercise what they do not have in hopes they can achieve what is impossible. It simply cannot work. So where does it lead? It leads either to the scary pride of self-righteousness—a culture of moralistic self-backslappers, who have no problem judging those who have not achieved the level of righteousness they think that they have—or to fear and discouragement—a culture of people who don't run to God with their sin because they're afraid of him.

Paul wipes out this distorted, debilitating “buy your way into grace” culture with a striking economy of words: “Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law” (Gal. 3:11). It is a statement that requires no preamble and no amendment. No one is ever accepted by God because he or she has kept the law. No one. That's it; no compromises and no deals are needed. They are not needed because, first, it is impossible to buy your way into God's favor because sin makes you a lawbreaker and, second, your bills were fully and completely paid in the single payment of the cross of Jesus Christ. Christ did not make the first payment on your moral mortgage; he paid your entire moral mortgage in one single payment so that you could live in relationship to God debt-free forever. God's law is not your payment plan because there is no payment plan when the demands of a mortgage have been satisfied once and forever in one single payment.

So stop trying to measure up to get whatever from God. Stop hiding from him when you mess up. Stop comparing yourself to other people, wondering if God loves you less because you're not as “good” as them. Stop naming the good things you do as righteousness that not only gets you closer to God, but also proves to others that you are. Just stop asking the law to do what only grace can achieve, and start resting in the fact that you don't have any moral bills due because Jesus paid them all on the cross. And when you sin, don't pretend you didn't, don't panic, and don't hide. Run to Jesus and receive mercy in your time of need, the kind of mercy he paid for you to have.

For further study and encouragement: Isaiah 53

Excerpt From: Paul David Tripp “New Morning Mercies.”

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