

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



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Enemies of the Cross

Sin is repulsive. It was sin that made it necessary for God to go to extreme measures to redeem mankind. God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3). The conquering of sin, however, required more than the manifestation of God's Son in the flesh. Jesus had to be willing to die in our place. Thank God Jesus was willing to do this. On a cross just outside of the city of Jerusalem, in a place called Golgotha, Jesus was wounded for our transgressions (Isaiah 53:4-6). On that cross He paid it all for us. Surely we should glory in the cross (Galatians 6:14).

However, there are some enemies of Christ and the cross (Philippians 3:18). Who are these enemies? Let's listen to Paul.

1. Those who serve the lust of the flesh. In Philippians 3:19 Paul said that these people had their God in their bellies. In other words they lived for self-indulgence and sensual gratifications. So, those who serve self instead of Christ would surely be enemies of the cross. They make the sacrifice on Calvary vain in their lives by their disobedience. They encourage others to place a higher value on their own wants than they do on serving Christ. Certainly any who encourages others to sin, whether it be verbal encouragement or demonstrative, are enemies of the cross.

2. Those who conduct themselves shamefully. There are some things that are simply shameful to the child of God. We know as Christians what sin is - a transgression of God's law. It is missing the mark. Anything that runs contrary to God's will and opposes His law is sin, and we, as Christians, ought to stay away from such things. Those ungodly things that once delighted us should now cause shame in our hearts (Romans 6:20, 21). Enemies of the cross, however, have no shame (Philippians 3:19). They boast about their sins. Remember, Jesus died on the cross to remove sin; therefore, to glory in sin is to treat the cross and the sacrifice made thereon in a profane way.

3. Those who mind earthly things. Paul concludes his description of these people by saying they mind earthly things (Philippians 3:19). The heavenly calling has no attraction to them. They only think of and are interested in the baser things of this world. This again runs contrary to the purpose of the cross. Jesus died so that we might live forever in heaven. To emphasize the earthly is to suggest that the purpose of the cross was foolish.

Make sure that you as a child of God do not become an enemy of the cross.

Don

“My Grace Is Sufficient For Thee”

“**A** mazing grace how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! I was lost, but now I'm found, Was blind, but now I see.”

These might be the most popular words sung in the religious world today. We must never lose sight of the fact that we are saved by God's grace. This obviously doesn't mean that we are saved completely and totally apart from our own efforts. What we do certainly plays a role in our salvation (Philippians 2:12). But we still must know that were it not for God's grace, all of our efforts together to obtain salvation would fall short. It is from this standpoint that the Bible affirms that we are saved by grace. Jesus once told Paul, *“My grace is sufficient for thee.”* Paul did not have to be a superhuman to be saved. He didn't have to be rich or popular, nor did he have to live completely without sin to be saved. But what he did have to have was a healthy portion of God's amazing grace. The grace of God is sufficient. And when we consider the provisions that have been made for us by God's grace, we can readily see why this is so.

A sacrifice for our sins

The immediate question that comes to mind is, *“Was a sacrifice really needed?”* The answer is a resounding yes because, first of all, we have all sinned (Romans 3:9, 23). And second because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). We needed a sacrifice, i.e., someone to die in our stead. Now the animal sacrifices of the old testament were insufficient (Hebrews 10:1-4). Mankind sinned; therefore, the sacrifice had to be a man. Someone says, *“there were plenty of human beings from which to choose . God did not have to provide a sacrifice.”* But once again it must be pointed out that any sacrifice wouldn't do. It had to be a sinless man. If a sinful man died, it would simply be one man paying the price for his own sins. No we needed a sacrifice without spot or blemish. But since all had sinned, God was faced with a situation. He could either leave man in a sinful and condemned state, or He could provide for us a sufficient sacrifice. Thank God that, by his amazing grace, He chose the latter, i.e., He sent His Son to be the sacrifice so desperately needed (John 3:16; Philippians 2:5-7; Hebrews 10:5-13).

The blood that would cleanse our sin

Merely taking on flesh wasn't enough if Jesus was to save us from our sins. His blood had to be shed. There is a poster that can be seen in some doctors offices that says, *“There is no substitute for blood.”* We all know that this is a physiological truism, but we should realize that it is a spiritual truth as well. It is an immutable principle that without blood there is no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22). It is the blood of Christ that *justifies, sanctifies, and redeems us* (1 Peter 1:18, 19; Romans 5:9, 10). And the power of the precious blood of Christ is accentuated even more when we consider the fact that it flowed backwards from Calvary, cleansing the old testament saints as well as the new (Hebrews 9:14, 15; Romans 3:25, 26). Yes, every person from Adam to Moses to each one of us, who will be in heaven after while, will be there because of the grace of God that provided the blood of Christ.

Instructions on how to live

It is not only by the grace of God that we have fellowship with Him, but it is by His grace that we maintain that fellowship. You see, fellowship with God is maintained only by living right (1 John 1:4-7). But how do we know how to live right before God? Listen to Paul (Titus 2:11ff; Philippians 2:12, 13). Therefore, whatever we do in our labor for God, we owe it to God's grace (1 Corinthians

15:9, 10). Obviously, these facts should remove any ideas of boasting on our part. We are Christians because God has taught us how to be Christians. We are members of God's family because by His grace God has adopted us. Surely we owe all of our blessings in Christ to God's grace.

Yes, the grace of God is sufficient. It has worked for us in the past, it is working for us now, and it shall work for us in the future, as long as we humble ourselves to receive it.

Don