

**Welcome & Intro :: Hello SermonIndex****Hello SermonIndex - posted by BenK (), on: 2007/9/7 12:25**

Hi :-D

I've been using SermonIndex and reading the message board for several months now. I've posted a time or two but I wanted to officially say hello to everyone here. I've really enjoyed and been challenged by the sermons here and the discussions on the board have helped to stir my heart towards the nature of true holiness and what it means to worship our great and awesome God in spirit and in truth. Thank you!!!

So, in the nature of getting my feet wet...

Ephesians 2:1-10 NIV

1As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—and 9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

After some time spent in painful confusion and prayer about what exactly is the correct way to go about preaching "the gospel" and what is God's role in the decision making process that leads to salvation, I believe He has shown me these simple yet easily misunderstood truths that may be obvious and known already to some of you, and rejected by others. This is by no means a completely clear or comprehensive dissertation, merely the tiniest thoughts of the smallest part of an all powerful, all wise, loving, merciful God that I can barely begin to understand!

As I've talked to people about Jesus over the last year or so, I've made it my purpose to share the gospel in all truth and honesty. But what are the best arguments? What are the smart, convincing things to say? What is the right formula? I know the Holy Spirit plays a part in all of this but, how much?

This passage in Ephesians addresses some of this. Paul says that before we come to Jesus, we are "dead" in our sin, living only for ourselves and "objects of wrath". But God had mercy on us,(if you are saved) and gave us two gifts. Yes, he gave us the incomparable riches of his grace through faith. But, he also gave us the faith itself. In doing this we cannot take any credit ourselves for the "works" of having the faith to believe. We cannot be proud in our decision to follow Jesus, because, God had mercy on us and gave us faith to believe something that we could not comprehend in our "dead" state:

Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

In this way, God gets the glory throughout the whole thing! Also, we are liberated from having to come up with "just the right thing to say" and instead, through simply being obedient and sharing the gospel, He will take care of the rest.

Philippians 1:29

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him

I think that this adds a whole new urgency to pray for the unbeliever! In the past, I have spent time in prayer for worldly friends, hesitantly stumbling over my request, unsure of how to pray. It is hard to ask God to move in someones heart if He takes a hands-off approach and it's all up to that person to believe. In that scenario, what would be the proper thing to ask for? I know that I will never be clever or clear enough to persuade people to Christ out of my own strength. What a relief to know that I can fall at God's feet, throw myself on His love and ask for Him to mercifully extend faith to the unsaved, then share His Word with the world knowing that the outcome is not up to me. It is His Spirit that will do the convincing

It appears that there is elements of Calvinism in all of this(actually, there is), though, I am not a Calvinist.

It might seem like free-will is not involved. Not true, we can certainly reject His calling.

Oh, and by the way, I'm not pretending that I completely understand all of this, I don't :)

I do know that God has revealed truth to me in all of this, and I am at peace because of it.

**Re: Hello SermonIndex - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/9/7 13:54**

Great to have you registered on the website. May the Lord bless you and encourage you as you seek more of Him. If you haven't yet do listen to these life-changing messages:

**Reality in the Christian Life by Zac Poonen**

<http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid=4272>

**Ten Shekels and a Shirt by Paris Reidhead**

<http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid=282>

**An Interview with Leonard Ravenhill (video) by Leonard Ravenhill**

<http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid=1702>

**Judgment Seat of Christ by Leonard Ravenhill**

<http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid=235>

**Re: - posted by BenK (), on: 2007/9/7 15:32**

Thank You!

I've read the Reidhead sermon, it's powerful.

I'm looking forward to checking out your other suggestions.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/9/7 15:34**

welcome brother ! i encourage you to listen to the sermons Greg posted, other than that welcome and be blessed, here is much for the hungry one....

May God bless and keep you

christian