

**General Topics :: The Tenderness of Christ - Full of Grace and Truth****The Tenderness of Christ - Full of Grace and Truth - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/1/4 18:29**

The Tenderness of Christ - Full of Grace and Truth

For 30 years I tried to live good enough to please God. I found though, no matter how much I did, there was the thought that suggested I could do more. No matter how much I didn't do, a thought suggested there was more I shouldn't do.

I couple of years ago, I heard Brennan Manning speak on the 'The Tenderness of Christ'. I liked many things he said but as he was emphasizing the tenderness part, my mind resisted it as I thought about, not only the goodness of God, but also the severity. But for some reason, I just couldn't let the thought go and decided to read the Gospels to see for myself if what he was saying was true. What I found has changed my life.

Right off the start I noticed Jesus spoke with compassion to masses in the Sermon on the Mount, and I thought, okay, here's the goodness part. What I was about to pick up on, I had never seen before. I had always wondered why Jesus had compassion on some and yet was so hard on others; for the first time, it was about to make sense to me.

He had compassion on the masses but He hammered the Pharisees. Why?

Mt. 9:36, 'When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd'.

Mt. 12:7, 'If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent'.

The Pharisees and teachers of the law, had become so consumed with following the letter of the law and demanded the same from the masses, they lost site of the fact they were supposed to be caring shepherds. Instead of helping, they heaped on more and more rules, making it impossible for anyone to measure up to a life that pleased God.

Where I used to wonder why Jesus had compassion on some and was so hard on others, I now know. I believe it was one of the reasons He came. He had seen it for hundreds of years and had all He could take. When He came, He immediately had compassion on those who had been harassed, and immediately lit in to those who had done the harassing.

So how did this change my life? As Jesus was against the harassing then, He is against it today. The thoughts that have demanded perfection for 30 years have not been Him. As the Pharisees harassed the masses, so satan harasses us. If he can keep our focus on all that we should and shouldn't do, we will be stuck in an endless loop. You cannot do enough that there isn't just a little bit more that you can do.

Mt. 11:28-30, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light'.

There is a rest from all the demands. It is the very thing that Jesus secured for us by enduring all that He endured. Until we find it, we feel it is on us to measure up. Once we find it, it is ours to enjoy.

In a recent thread (around 12-15-08 in the Articles and Sermon category), 'The New Birth' by T. Austin Sparks, he explains it this way:

It is not that I have decided that I shall not do these things, that I have drawn up a list of things which I should do and should not do, can do or cannot do, ought to do and ought not to do. It is simply that there has taken place in me something which has made these differences and I am following the law of another life which is at work within, and it is no merely legalistic thing at all.

When we come to Christ, not just once, but regularly, He puts on us, His yoke. His yoke is easy and with it there is rest. Satan would have us wear a yoke of legalism, but not Christ. He was against it then, He is against it now.

I write this in relation to recent threads, in which some seem to still be placing on others the yoke of legalism. Sad for two reasons: that they are trying to place it on others and that they themselves are still wearing it.

In the recent thread regarding makeup, though there were some very good comments, there were many that troubled me. Obviously it troubled Greg too, since it and a few others are locked up. I think that was good. I felt Paul West's first post, as he led with a quote from Chris was a gracious representation of truth. The following is a clip from that post:

If you don't feel right about it...then don't wear it...because you need to have a clear conscience before God. If you feel the liberty to wear it, then do as your conscience dictates as you direct your heart, mind, soul and strength with real Biblical modesty toward God.

---

I think this sums it up nicely. We have to be very careful when offering absolutes on non salvific matters, for the hills in this land are known for their slippery slopes. Personally, I don't tell believers what they can or can't do, whether they can dance or not, or wear blush, or use hair gel, or nice clothes or get earrings or grow a beard or lift weights. I point them instead to God, to ask God - that is, if He is their Father. These are all very delicate matters that God Himself, in time, speaks into the life of the believer. God, who is light, gives personal light on these subjects, and then it becomes a matter of obedience to the light in that particular segment of the school of God.

Not to be sarcastic, but maybe the example will emphasize the point of how that thread went down hill. I could not help but to think of the story of the woman who was caught in adultery and brought to Jesus by those wearing the yoke of legalism. I could see Jesus saying, 'neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more', and as she is walking away, Jesus says, 'wait, is that makeup your wearing'.

Oh, we have got to get the point where we are gracious. It is the love of God that constrains us. If there is something that God does not want me to do, He is able to let me know it. It is not my place to tell others they shouldn't do it. You would have thought Betty had asked if she could work the streets with her makeup.

There is so much more I would like to say, but I have intruded too much already on anyone's time who might possibly read this far. I fear if we do not get a grip on this, the SI forum could self destruct.

I think it would be a good discipline when we reply on a thread that involves a question, that we reply to the one who asked the question. If we want to have an additional comment regarding something that someone else said, it should be in addition to the comment we make to the original. I would hope part of our goal as we reply, especially to a question, is to engage the one who asked it into the discussion.

One final point; when a person posts a thought, let's not pick it apart. Paul West had a very good reply that got picked apart. There will be times we have to raise a little caution, but we are all here hopefully to learn and grow, but as there might be one thing to pick at there is usually several to highlight. There is much need, when our comments are read by who knows how many, for them to be full of grace and truth.

John 1:14, 15 'The Word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory... who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'

**Re: The Tenderness of Christ - Full of Grace and Truth - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/1/4 18:31**

The Master's Rage

For years I wondered of the Master's rage;  
the harsh response on Holy page.  
Where was compassion that others were shown?  
What was the difference? What brought it on?

He had His fill of all He had seen.  
The scales were tipped; He would right them again.  
He was harsh to the harsh and rightly so.  
They would finally reap what they had sewn.

They heaped and harassed so that none could attain,  
like wolves in the fold that unsettle and maim.  
They offered no mercy, just more and more rules.  
They had missed their purpose and in so became fools.

It is in this setting that the master comes  
with compassion for many, yet outrage toward some.  
There wasn't a struggle with how to react;  
He had seen it for years and came to attack.

It would cost Him His life, but oh what it bought;  
there was peace for His sheep and hope for the lost.  
Help us oh Lord to be careful with rules.  
Let mercy and kindness be our choice of tools.

MJ

**Re: The Tenderness of Christ - Full of Grace and Truth - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/4 23:45**

Hello Mike,

Thank you for what you have written. Maybe you can help me, for I have obviously missed something - or maybe the way I see things is just upside down from everyone else - which seems to be a continuing problem.

From my heart, and my viewpoint - I did not, nor do I desire, to tell anyone else what to do. If I did that, I am very sorry, for that is not what I intended. Nor do I look down upon others for what they do, or do not do - for their decisions are between them and the Lord. He has made each of us to be different, and has different things for each of us to do - and thereby there are different requirements for each person.

There were however, two things that happened in the thread that caused me great concern.

1) Comments were made that justified the use of makeup. Now to those that do not see it as a problem - this of course, is not a problem. But to me, whom the Lord has shown that it is sin - these comments become as a glaring license to sin - which is horrifying.

2) For me, what the Lord says is absolute. While others may not agree with what the Lord has shown me, it is incredible to me that others require that I change my "know" to a "think." To do so would be to deny His lordship over me.

Please help me to see where I am wrong in all this. Maybe the difference is in that I have never experienced what you have written below.

Quote:  
-----For 30 years I tried to live good enough to please God. I found though, no matter how much I did, there was the thought that suggested I could do more. No matter how much I didn't do, a thought suggested there was more I shouldn't do.

-----  
For me, God has always been my Rock. While others around me gave license to sin, I somehow always knew that what they were saying was wrong. But yet I got sucked in and committed grave sins. And then two years ago I found Jesus (or rather He found me) - and He cleansed me of my sin - and is taking all of my sins away - and I am happy, and I am free! Oh Hallelujah!

He is my life.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2009/1/5 0:01**

Quote:  
-----In a recent thread (around 12-15-08 in the Articles and Sermon category), 'The New Birth' by T. Austin Sparks, he explains it this way:

It is not that I have decided that I shall not do these things, that I have drawn up a list of things which I should do and should not do, can do or cannot do, ought to do and ought not to do. It is simply that there has taken place in me something which has made these differences and I am following the law of another life which is at work within, and it is no merely legalistic thing at all.  
-----

Amen on the Sparks quote. I would be a bit hesitant on brenden manning, his books are full of many deviations from true Christianity. But you are right on brother with this post. We need to allow Christ to make our hearts like His and be compassionate to others.

**Re: - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/1/6 0:09**

Heartsong,

I appreciate your post. I wanted to reply this morning when I read yours and Greg's but it would have been rushed. Having let a little time pass, I now feel it was good to do so. There are a few thoughts that have come to mind that might be helpful in clarifying where I am coming from.

First, in regard to the quote you included in your post, it is a very accurate description of what was true for me. Equally true for me was discovering finally and settling for sure (I am a slow learner) the source of these thoughts.

I would like to clarify something here. I have thought about your comment regarding people trying to turn your 'know' into a 'think'. In the previous years that I refer to, the things I chose to do and not do were somehow more related to what I felt I needed to do to measure up. But there was always something more. It took discipline and I was not always on my game.

It is different now. Where before, it was almost as if I, in one nature, was trying to live like I was supposed to in another. Somehow my nature has changed. My desires have changed. It is no longer me that is trying to or not do this or that; I no longer want to do this or that. I am consumed with Him and want nothing more than more of Him.

I say all that to make this point, when you 'know' like I am talking about here, it doesn't matter what other people try to convince you of. It is settled and it is non negotiable.

As much as any point I will ever make, I don't know that I will ever make one that hits the heart of all I am trying to say more than this: when we find God, at any level, we quickly attribute our finding to the things we have chosen to do and not do and in turn try to persuade others to do and not do so that they too can find God. It is backwards. I've done it for years.

I truly feel God let me go that long to prove to me that I could not do enough or avoid enough to know Him as He is able to be known. With me it is settled. It is non negotiable. I have found Him and all my pointing is to Him. The things do not matter. You cannot clean them up enough to find Him, but if you find Him they will get cleaned.

I cannot say that I have just now come to know God. I have known Him for 30 years. But somehow in His mercy, He has allowed me an incredible privilege of knowing Him like never before. In light of what I have found, I don't feel criticism toward those who do not live like I live, I have a burden for them to know what I know.

The SI forum is an rich feild of not only gems from which we might learn but a mission field of those who are searching. It is the burden and heart of this site to see revival take place. We have an oppportunity to assist in that process. When people come to view all that is written here, hopefully they will find the same tenderness that we desire from God. We al I need to learn in our zeal for proclaiming truth, to do it graciously.

**Re: Jesus' compassion - posted by prof, on: 2009/1/24 1:02**

MJones, my friend and brother in the Lord,

Your thoughts turn me to John 3:16-17 and then to His word to the woman caught in adultery in John 8.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have et ernal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you,"

The Word is clear! Jesus' mission here on earth was not to condemn us but to seek and save us who were dead in ou r sins. If Jesus mission excluded condemnation, then should not I refrain as well? "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus".

Yes, Jesus spoke harshly to the Pharisees. Why? Because of the hardness of their hearts in that they would not believ e the words of their own prophets who prophesied of His coming. They refused to believe that He was the Son of God. He warned them of their pending condemnation.

Jesus also set forth a principle in Matt 6:36-38 that is apt to the concerns you have expressed.

"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will no t be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, sha ken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

I know not anyone to whom I could call attention to the splinter in his eye but who could point to the log in mine. Mike, I am a sinner! If not a sinner, then I am equal with Jesus Christ who knew no sin.

Romans chapter 14 is good reading regarding this discussion. There Paul gives us some clear advice when he begins b y saying, "Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters." and he wraps up his ad monition with these words, "So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God."

I believe all of mankind seeks God, else every tribe and nation would not have a religion. He need not look further. God has revealed Himself in his son, Jesus Christ. Jesus calls us unto Himself, thus to God. We respond and He becomes our Lord. As we get to know Him better, through His word and the indwelling of the Spirit, we grow in our appreciation of His gift of salvation and the price He paid for it. Our love of Him grows for what He has done for us and for how He susta ins us. We want to emulate Him. Yes, Jesus is compassionate. And I want to be like Him! Will I ever be as compassio nate as Jesus? No, else I would be equal to Him and would no longer need Him to give me compassion for others.

Grace and peace. From my heart,

**Re: - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/1/24 7:33**

Such a gracious presentation of truth. Refreshing words from my good friend. Welcome to SI.