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The Worker - A True Story, on: 2009/3/11 12:32

The following writing is fairly long (it will probably take about 20 minutes to read). However, if you choose to read it, I hope you will be willing to give it your full attention and consideration.

I originally wrote this to share with my friends from the past: however, I thought it would be appropriate to post here as well

You can read it in its intended format (www.makewayfortheeking.com/writings/theworker.htm) Here

Posted with sincere hope,
Jason Holman

At this same time six years ago, I was on staff at a larger Assemblies of God "church" (700 – 800 people). I was a full-time "children's pastor" who believed in what he was doing. Even though I often got caught up in and sidetracked by the general business of "church" life, at my core I sincerely wanted to make a difference in the lives of the children I came in contact with each week. I wanted them to understand and believe the "gospel" I believed, and with this goal in mind, I would often teach them the basics of that "gospel."

Whenever I taught the children the basics of this "gospel," I started by telling them that we are all sinners. I simplified this by saying that this meant we had broken God's rules. I then told them that since we had broken God's rules, we should, as a result, be punished. I explained that because God was completely just, he could not simply overlook our sins. I proceeded to tell the children that the punishment for our sins is death and separation from God in hell for all eternity.

After that portion of my lesson, I pointed out that that was some very bad news. With the foundation of "bad news" laid, I then proceeded to tell them the news I considered to be good.

The "good news" consisted of the belief that God loved us and didn't want to punish us. I explained to the children that because God loved us, he came to earth and took the punishment for our sins himself by dying on the cross through his only Son Jesus. I then told them some details about the crucifixion of Jesus and followed up with the good news of his resurrection.

After this, I told the children that they could receive the benefit of having their sins forgiven by believing in Jesus and accepting his free gift of salvation. I encouraged the children who wanted to receive this "free gift" to repeat a prayer that I would lead them in. This prayer usually consisted of telling Jesus that we recognized we were sinners deserving of punishment. We then ask him to forgive us of our sins and told him that we wanted to receive him and his gift of "salvation." We ended the prayer by asking Jesus to help us live for him all the days of our lives.

Once we were finished with the prayer time, I usually proceeded to tell the children that they needed to be faithful to pray and read their Bibles every day. Also, I stressed the importance of attending "church" so that they could grow and remain strong in their faith.

Finally, I told them that they should do their best not to sin, but along with this mandate, I also let them know that we all mess up from time to time. I explained that the important thing was to tell Jesus we were sorry and to do our best not to do the same thing again.

Even though it was fairly brief, in a nutshell you just read the message that I taught and the message that I believed. And yes! I really did believe it.

Throughout most of my life, despite my best effort to resist sin, the sin of lust seemed to have a constant hold on me. With my awareness of that sin, as well as the awareness of some of my less noticeable sins, I knew that I was a guilty man in need of forgiveness. For this reason, I strongly believed and held on to the "gospel" I had come to know throughout my life.

My belief and confidence in this "gospel" was so strong that I had no fear of death or judgment. I fully believed that on the Day of Judgment I would have a clean slate before God because the punishment for my sins had already been paid for through the death of Jesus on the cross. I believed that because of God's love for me and because of the death of Jesus on the cross, I would certainly be with God in heaven for all eternity. With these beliefs and convictions, I would have gone to my grave, but then...something happened:

In May of 2003, the Great and Mighty Creator of the Universe called my name. He said, "Jason, come follow me!" And so...I followed.

As I followed, the One whom I was following began to speak to me. He began to show me the error of my way. He told me that I was doing wrong in that I attempted to serve Him only because I wanted to avoid punishment (hell) and receive his gifts – mainly eternal life and rewards in heaven. He told me that I should serve Him not because I wanted his goodies; instead, He told me that I should serve Him simply because He is the Great, Mighty and Wise Creator of the World. He told me that I needed to repent and start giving Him all my love and loyalty without regard to what came of my soul in the end. And so: I repented.

After I repented, I grabbed my new Master as tight as I could and expressed to Him the new love and devotion I had for Him. As we walked close together, I looked down the path we were traveling, and from what I could see, it looked like a wonderful path to follow. Assuming that we would continue on this wonderful path, I grabbed hold of my God even tighter and promised that I would follow, love and obey Him for the rest of my existence no matter where he took me or what he asked of me. After I made this profession of faith and love, He looked at me and asked if I really meant it. Looking even further down the wonderful path we were on, I squeezed his arm as tight as I could and said without wavering that I meant every word of it. He then, to my surprise, stopped and changed directions. Because of the sudden change, I found myself staring down a path I didn't want to travel. It was at this point I heard His voice, and it said, "Will you follow me down this path?"

At that moment, I entered into the greatest struggle of my life. It was so easy to profess my love and allegiance to God when it meant doing things my heart wanted to do and going places my heart wanted to go, but as I faced this undesirable path, I found it wasn't so easy. So for several days, we stood at this crossroad as I wrestled with my heart and will. While I couldn't even consider walking away from the One I vowed to love and obey, I also couldn't get my feet to take the first step down this new path.

Thankfully, the One I was following showed great patience with me. He waited by my side. Not only did He wait, but he also continued to talk to me. He continued to tell me about Himself. He shared with me His wisdom and his goodness. And finally, after several days of standing still, a light clicked inside my soul.

As this light clicked, my love and commitment toward my Leader seemed to multiply a hundredfold. When this happened, the apprehension I had of following Him down the path in question disappeared and it was replaced with joy. I then wanted to follow Him down the new path as much as I did our original path simply because I knew that I would be doing His will. Because of my strengthened love and trust for him, just the thought of doing His will brought joy. My circumstances no longer mattered. My joy was no longer in my circumstances; instead, my joy was in knowing that I was doing what my God wanted me to do.

With this new joy, my heart burst forth with words that rushed past my lips, and I said, "Yes! Yes! I will most certainly follow you down this path and any other path you choose for me – no matter what it looks like." And, I meant it!

So with a spring in my step, I began to move forward down the new path when, to my surprise, my Lord stopped me; then He turned once again towards our original path and said, "Let's go."

It was then that The One I loved said with delight, "You passed the test dear child! You passed the test!" He explained that He had no intention of taking me down that path, but that He was only testing the sincerity of the love and loyalty I professed to have for Him. Then He said once again: "You passed! You love and obey me not because you are seeking your own personal gain, but you love and obey me because you sincerely want to please me and bring me pleasure. And dear child, rest assured; your sincere love for me brings me great pleasure."

It was shortly after this that The One I was following proceeded to do something wonderful. He gave me a gift. He gave me the gift of son-ship. Through His own divine plan, he took this once rebellious and sinful man and made me His son – a son who would bear the same righteous nature as his Father, and – a son who would eventually be conformed to the image of his Father.

Foolishly, because I had been taught to believe so, I spent most of my life believing I already possessed this gift; however, once I possessed the real thing, it became quite clear that all I had really possessed up until then was a worthless counterfeit.

Dear reader, this which I just related you to is the truth. Though the terms I used may have been somewhat allegorical, the event itself and the final outcome were very real. God made me his son. When I turned to God with sincere love and loyalty, God for the first time in my life took pleasure in me. Because God found pleasure and delight in me, He wanted to do good things for me (just as many parents are compelled to do something good for a child who is loving and obedient). As a result of His desire to do good things for me, He did the best thing imaginable; he adopted me to be his son.

(www.makewayfortheking.com/writings/theletter) Here.

He accomplished this by bringing me to His Son Jesus. And just as I gave God my sincere love and devotion, I gave it to His Son as well. Once the Son saw my sincere love and trust towards him, he was also pleased. Because of the pleasure he had towards me he took me to be "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh" (Genesis 2:22-24 & Ephesians 5:29-32).

Through this miracle of being married to Christ (this is more commonly referred to in scripture as being "baptized into Christ"), I took part in his death upon the cross, I also took part in his burial and finally, I took part in his resurrection.

Through my death with Christ upon the cross, I was set free from my bondage to Satan.

My bondage to Satan existed because I was born into this world as a son of Adam. Because Adam willingly defected to the devil's kingdom, he brought all his children into the same bondage. This was the bondage I was born into. It was because of this bondage that I so often struggled with and gave in to sin. No matter how strong my determination may have been in the past to not give in to certain sins, Satan, who rightfully held me in his possession, would crack his whip on my shoulders until I could stand it no longer. Finally, my resolve would break, and I would end up doing that which I did not want to do.

But through the miracle of marriage to Christ, I died with Christ. And by dying with Christ, I gained freedom from my bondage to Satan (for how can someone own you when you are dead?).

Not only did my death with Christ provide my freedom from my bondage to Satan, but in addition to this, my death with Christ also enabled the penalty for my sins to be paid.

God in no way became unjust by ignoring the many offences I committed during my years under Satan's yoke. Instead, he punished me fully through my death with Christ. Though it was Jesus who felt the pain of the cross and death, it was my sins that were actually being paid for in that process. For through my marriage to Christ, I truly died with him and went to the grave with him. Because of this, the penalty for my sins was completely paid, and with my sins now paid for, I could join Christ in his resurrection.

Because Christ himself had never sinned, God could not rightfully leave him in the chains of death. So therefore, three days later, God raised Jesus from the dead.

As God raised Jesus from the dead, He declared, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee (Psalm 2:7, Act 13:33, Hebrews 1:5 & 5:5)." It is through this declaration, that I too became a son of God. For when Christ was raised from the dead, through the miracle of being married to Christ, I was also raised with him. Because I am one with Christ, when God declared Jesus to be His Son, I too was declared to be a son of God.

As I was raised with Christ and became a son of God, I received the same Spirit (or nature) as my Father. Because I have His nature, my life now naturally produces fruit that is pleasing to Him.

And so it happened, Jason Holman was born again. I was born into the world as a son of Adam. Later through the miracle of being baptized into Christ (or married to), I went to the cross with Christ and died. I then joined Christ in his resurrection. At that time, I was born again. No longer am I a son of Adam, but now I am a son of God.

If what I just wrote is true (which it certainly is), then a good question to ask is this: why did it take 29 years for this to happen? After all, those of you who knew me well in years past know that I spent as much time (if not more) in "church" as any other person. I spent countless hours in Sunday School, Sunday morning worship services, Sunday evening worship services, Royal Ranger programs, kid's crusade services, revival services, youth services, and...etc,etc,etc. And not only did I attend all of this, I also took it very serious. I longed for the things of God (or so I thought). I took the sermons to heart. I prayed the prayers I was supposed to pray. I did everything I was taught to do. And yet, I find out 30 years later that I had lived my life as a son of Adam and had not been "born again." How could this have possibly hap

pened?

Actually, the answer to this question is quite simple; however, before I proceed with the answer, I really want to encourage you who are reading this to take your time as you read the last portion of this writing. If what I am about to write is true, then everything we (or at least I) have ever been taught is nothing but useless ideas. I don't ask or expect you to believe what I am about to say, but I do hope you will at least take time to fully digest what I am saying. Now back to the question at hand.

The reason I spent 29 years of my life without receiving the gift of son-ship and salvation, is because God did not choose to give it to me. Since God did not choose to give it to me, there was no other way for me to obtain it.

The gift of becoming God's son is just that – a gift. The holder of the gift is God, and because He holds the gift, He is the one who gets to choose who to and who not to give it to.

Based upon scripture, I now understand that God will not give this gift unless His heart desires to do so. If someone asks God for the gift, and God has no pleasure in that person, it is certain that such a person has no hope of obtaining that gift. One who desires God's gift can do anything and everything in hope of convincing God to give him the gift, but unless God is pleased with this person, his efforts are in vain. God will only give His gifts when He desires to do so.

For 29 years, God did not give me His gift because He had no pleasure in me. The reason He had no pleasure in me, is because I had no faith towards Him. Hebrews 11:6 confirms this by saying: Without faith, it is impossible to please Him (or bring Him pleasure).

Did I believe in God? Absolutely! But this was not faith (though a person who has faith will certainly believe in God). Did I believe that Jesus was the Son of God who died on a cross and rose again? Sure I did! But once again, this was not faith (though a person who has faith will believe this). Did I try to align my life with the teaching of scripture? Yes! Sometimes I even did this with incredible zeal, but that was not faith (though a person of faith will certainly do this, too).

I have done many things for God during my life time. However, in the end I found that God still had no pleasure in me. I can now see that His dissatisfaction with me was very justifiable. For though I couldn't exactly discern my motives; He could. He saw that I did not come to Him in faith, but instead, I came to Him as a worker who was expecting payment later on. Let me explain. . .

At some point recently, many of you who are reading this went to "work." What I mean is, you went and performed a certain task for a company or individual with the expectation of being paid at a later time.

It's unlikely that you go to your place of employment every day simply because you love your boss. And even if you do love your boss, I imagine that if he quit paying you for your service then you would quit performing the task that you perform.

You see? You're not getting up every morning and driving through rush hour because you are fond of your boss; instead, you are getting up and driving through rush hour every morning because you have hopes of getting paid. Therefore, you are going to "work." For thirty years, this is exactly how I served God.

From my earliest memories, I sincerely believed what my parents and teachers taught me about there being an eternal hell and an eternal heaven. Naturally, with such a sincere belief, I very much wanted to go to heaven, and I very much wanted to not be sent to hell. Because of this desire, I whole heartedly embraced what I was taught, which was that if I wanted to go to heaven then I needed to believe in Jesus. I was taught that he died for my sins and that he rose from the dead. I was taught that believing these facts was faith, and that God was pleased when I had this faith.

And so, from my earliest memories, I believed. I believed that Jesus died for me, and I believed that he rose again. In addition to this, I did the things that I thought "Christians" were supposed to do, and just the same, I did my best to abstain from the things a "Christian" was not supposed to do.

For years I lived this way, and I took it serious all along. And though I wasn't sinless, I was very confident that my appearance before God would be a pleasant one because of what I believed. I never doubted for a second that all was well between me and God. But later I would learn just how wrong I was. For everything I did and believed was not associated with faith at all, but instead, it was nothing but work.

How was it work? Simple! It was work because I only believed the things I believed and did the things I did so I could be paid for it with eternal life in the end. I was doing something to get something. Pure love and devotion to God was not my motive, but instead, my motive was my own selfish expectation of payment. Because of this, God had nothing for me at all, for the gifts of God cannot be obtained because someone works for them. God does not bargain with people like that. A man can only receive something from God because God chooses to give that something to someone. Apart from God choosing to give that gift to someone, there is no other way it may be obtained. It cannot be obtained by believing facts. It cannot be obtained by obeying every word of scripture. It can only be obtained because God desired to give it to you. And the scripture is very clear that the only thing that compels God to give his gifts to anyone is His perception

ng faith in that someone.

So what is "faith" in the context of all of scripture? It's simply recognizing that God is God. It's recognizing that as "God," He is worthy of your complete and unwavering love, trust, and loyalty and as a result, giving him these things. If you truly have faith, then you are not doing these things to avoid hell, nor are you doing them to gain heaven, but instead, you are doing them just because you realize that as the wonderful God He is, He is worthy of these things. This is faith. And when someone has this faith, God takes notice. Not only does he take notice, but he receives great joy and pleasure from that someone's faith. And in response to his joy and pleasure, He will bless this person with the greatest gift imaginable— He will make this person His son and heir.

For 29 years I worked for Him. I believed what I was supposed to believe and did what I was supposed to do thinking that He would reward my decisions and actions with eternal life and rewards. However, He had no pleasure in me. To Him, I was nothing but a greedy little beast who was trying to obtain God's gifts with cheap little deeds. Fortunately for me, a day came in which God showed me my error. A day came in which He called me to love and serve Him for no other reason except the fact that He was worthy of my love and service. And as He called, I answered. I ceased worrying about my eternal outcome and began chasing after Him for the sole purpose of bringing Him pleasure. I came to a place in which I was able to honestly say, "God, if I serve you my whole life and you choose to send me to hell in the end, so be it. The only thing I want is for your will to be done." And then it happened: He was pleased with me, and I found favor (or grace) in His sight. Because of God's grace towards me, He gave me the gift of all gifts.

There is no lie in what I just said. It is the truth. It is what the whole context of scripture teaches. It is the way that I became God's child, and it was the way that every other child of God has come to be His child. But despite this fact, in every corner of the world, next Sunday untold millions of people are going to gather in various locations to hear various "teachers" and "preachers" tell them that they can have the gifts of God simply by sincerely believing certain facts and doing certain things. Though the details will vary from place to place, the central teaching that they can obtain sonship and eternal life by believing the facts of what Jesus did on the cross will remain the same. In response to this, some unsuspecting soul is going to respond to this teaching. They will admit that they are a sinner in need of forgiveness, and they will confess that Jesus died for them and rose from the dead. In addition to this, they will commit to reading scripture so that they can live their lives according to its teachings. When this is said and done, those around this unsuspecting soul will pat him on the back and congratulate him on his wonderful decision. The unsuspecting soul will then return home all smiles thinking that he escaped hell and gained eternal life in heaven. However, in all of this, God is not smiling. For all that God sees is just another greedy person trying to obtain His goodies by a cheap act that deluded people call "placing faith in Christ."

Now, I believe it is worth asking: how can this be? How can the institution that is supposed to belong to God, miss it so bad? I mean we are not talking about some non-essential doctrine here, but instead, we are talking about the very foundation of God's kingdom. And it's not just this generation that has missed it, but you can trace this flaw back to the very earliest "Christian" writings that exist outside of scripture. How could God let this happen to His "church?"

The answer to that question is really surprisingly simple; however, at this moment, that is not the important question to ask. The important question is this: are you working for God or are you coming to Him because you love Him for who He is.

May you find time to get alone to honestly examine your heart and motives. For if you are working for God, then you are wasting your time. He will not bargain. When you later approach Him to receive your payment, you will find that He has nothing for you. His gifts are just that— gifts. He only gives them to those He has pleasure in— those who trust and obey Him for no other reason than the simple fact that they love Him. Does God have pleasure in you?

With sincere hope and love for all of God's elect,
Jason Holman

Re: The Worker - A True Story - posted by growingly, on: 2009/3/11 15:03

may God bless you for posting this. this is the truth. this is HIS truth.

grateful for your sincere hope, may He make it blossom always ever greater.

what a beautiful story of Christ, thank you for posting this.