

Sermon Text Discussion 10/29/2017

Ephesians 2: "Grace Alone" by Dane Ortlund

Overview

1. The Problem
2. The Solution

Quotations

"God declares, that he owes us nothing; so that salvation is not a reward or recompense, but unmixed grace."
–John Calvin (*Commentaries on St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians*, on Ephesians 2:8–10)

"To add to grace is to subtract from it." –Dane Ortlund

"For you to lose your status would require someone bringing Christ down from heaven and back into the grave." –Dane Ortlund

Understanding & Application

- 1) Our outline above is brief! Read Ephesians 2:1-7 and summarize what is the problem and the solution.
- 2) Dr. Ortlund said, "The opposite of grace alone is not works alone; it is 90% grace." What are you tempted to add to God's grace to secure salvation?
- 3) Ephesians 2:4 describes God as rich in mercy. Dr. Ortlund shared a quote, I believe from Puritan pastor Richard Baxter, "Nowhere does the Bible say God is rich in anything else." Why might that be significant? Does God's mercy mean he has no wrath? What does the cross say about that question?
- 4) Dr. Ortlund shared a quote from Martin Luther taken from the following letter (written to his associate Philip Melancthon): "If you are a really a preacher of mercy, do not preach a fictitious but a real mercy. If mercy is real, then you must really be a sinner, it can be no fiction. God does not save fictitious sinners. You must be a real sinner, and sin boldly; but trust in Christ more boldly, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world." What did Luther mean by "be a real sinner" and "sin boldly"? What was his point in saying those things?
- 5) Consider the last quote given in the section above, about losing your status before God. Why would that be true? Do you believe it? If not, why not? What causes us to doubt our standing with God? How does the message of grace alone address those doubts?