

RCC in the Word

Week of August 12

Galatians 1:3

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”

Do you have peace?

Most of you know that I suffer from a neuromuscular disease called Charcot Marie Tooth or CMT. Physically living with this disease can be trying as one learns to cope with decreasing muscle and nerve use in the extremities. While that has its opportunities, for me, the mental challenge is the one that most proves difficult for me. For thirty-two years or so, I was able to do about any physical activity that I desired to do. Amanda saw a glimpse of that when we first met as we could climb to the top of Mount Pisgah, I could wade in a trout stream, and play in the church softball league among other things. In college, I was once ranked in the top five of a student/faculty racquetball league on campus. I was extremely competitive in nature and participated in all intermural sports. At this stage in my life with CMT, I can no longer do many of these activities. I can still fish but from the bank and only if that has a gentle to no slope. I can walk on even ground but not uphill or downhill without extreme struggle. This has brought on many frustrations for me over the past few years and I find that frustration is growing as of late. It is easy to wish for a better situation. It is easy to want things to be, well, easy. And, it is easy to want to give up and retreat out of situations that might cause further frustration. It is easy to not pause and be thankful that I can still walk. I can still do some activities that some cannot. I should pause and be thankful that God has given me a team of doctors who can help curb the effects of CMT for a while to give me somewhat a quality of life that I have been used to. I should be thankful that God has gifted me with skills in the workplace that allow me to work at a desk.

In Galatians, Paul is writing to the church because they have allowed others to enter the church who are undermining the central doctrine of justification by faith (verses 6-10). The church in Galatia had adopted the belief that to be a Christian, one must first submit to all the Mosaic law. Later in his letter, Paul reiterates this in verses 15-16 of Chapter Two. ¹⁵“We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners. ¹⁶Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works no one will be justified.”

As we will see, Paul’s greeting in verse 3 of chapter one is setting up the whole point of the letter.

We know that justification by faith is a central doctrine of the Christian faith. It is not our works, nor our ability to follow the law that grants us justification in God’s eyes. No matter how hard we work, we can never achieve this. Why do we have such a hard time letting go of “works”? Perhaps works make us feel better about ourselves? Works place us in the forefront of others around us. It lets us post on social media how great we are. When we place our faith in our works, are we trying to please man or God? If we are trying to please man, then we can run into other issues such as envy and covetousness.

Have you ever considered that our sinful selves will often work as hard as we can to fix an issue, problem or to provide a solution for a need rather than rely on God to provide? In my case, will I have faith that God is in control of my body and the CMT disease or will I fall prey to frustrations and envy of those around me who have better physical health than me? When I do these things, I am adding to the Gospel. I may not be on a street corner preaching this to the masses that pass but my actions and my internal thoughts are saying that God is not enough.

So, I ask again, do you know peace?

When Paul said Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” he was asking that question. Do you know peace? If you are running around trying to fix everything in your life. If you are adding works to the gospel you will never find peace. It is impossible because we will never do enough works or enough of ourselves to ever have the peace to believe or know we have done enough. The enough comes from the complete work of Christ. God in His infinite wisdom decided to show Grace and spare us from eternal hell. The peace comes from knowing that Christ paid our debt in full.

How do we combat this sinful nature to doubt? A few verses below to help. Please share other verses that come to your mind with me and the congregation this week. Pray for me and others who are facing physical ailments that cause doubt, frustration, and envy. I know that my peace is found in Christ because God has granted me Grace. I need to be reminded of this and will till Christ returns. Then I will no longer worry about this old broken body.

Matthew 22:37-39 “And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment. And a second is like it. You should love your neighbor as yourself.”

Ephesians 5:20 “Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Galatians 2: 20 “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.”

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