



The Kingdom Perspective

Ragamuffin Gospel

Hello, this is Pastor Don Willeman of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to The Kingdom Perspective.

The scandal of the gospel is that it's for the burn out, drop out and left out. It is not a gospel for those that deserve it but precisely for those who don't.

Why? Well, the gospel is not about our achievement but about God's acceptance. It is not about our performance but Jesus's performance for us. In other words, it is grace.

This is very good news not only for the outsider but also for the overachiever. Overachieving is often an addiction, an obsession to prove one's self—indeed, to save one's self. It stems from a deep idolatry—a drive to worship one's self and one's own achievements. In this way, it can often be the most secular of us that are the most “religious”—constantly trying to prove ourselves by our accomplishments and accolades.

Now, into this context the gospel comes and says something shocking. Jesus in His dying breath on the cross declared: “It is finished.” The gospel spells the end of all attempts to prove or justify oneself. It is the end to both religious and secular ladder climbing. As the writer Brennan Manning (1934-2013) put it:

“Our huffing and puffing to impress God, our scrambling for brownie points, our thrashing about trying to fix ourselves while hiding our pettiness and wallowing in guilt are nauseating to God and are a flat out denial of the gospel of grace.”

Now, to be clear, there is nothing wrong with striving and working hard. It's a question of motivation. What's driving your drive? Does it flow from God's acceptance of you in Christ or does it flow from an attempt to earn that acceptance by your efforts?

Something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

Matthew 11 (NASB)

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to infants. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this way was well pleasing in Your sight. ²⁷ All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son determines to reveal Him.

²⁸ “Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light.”

References:

The Ragamuffin Gospel by Brennan Manning (Multnomah Books, 1990).

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