

Mission News—from Dick & Gloria

“It is by grace
you have been
saved . . .”

Ephesians 2:5

“ . . . and I give
them eternal life,
and they shall
never perish,
and no one shall
snatch them out
of my hand.”

John 10:28

“I am the way the
truth and the life.
No one comes to
the Father except
by me.”

John 14:6

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Theology . . . What's Happening . . . *Theology Matters . . . What's Up*

Eternal Security (John 10:22–30)

People suffering from hypochondria are overcome with fear that they have contracted a serious disease despite all assurances to the contrary. The stress and anxiety can be so acute that the fear of sickness can cause real symptoms.

The question of eternal security can induce a form of spiritual hypochondria. When people concentrate on their sins rather than our Savior, they can be overcome with fear about their eternal destiny. They begin to ask the question about themselves or others, “Would a true believer really do that?” But sin is a condition that afflicts us all. For our spiritual health, we should turn our eyes to the One who can heal us and assure us of our eternal destination.

Those who are truly His sheep know His calling and would follow only Him. They are still vulnerable to wandering, as sheep are prone to do, but they never forget the Shepherd. What's more, He never forgets them. (*verse 27*).

The process of salvation as Jesus described it is fascinating. The Father gives believers to Jesus, believers follow Him and it is Jesus who gives them eternal life. The security of the believer then rests entirely in the Almighty Grip of Jesus and His Father, who are one in unity (while remaining distinct persons). Jesus gives believers supreme hope that nothing can take their eternal life away while at the same time dashing the hopes of anyone who rejects Him. Our faith is not in the doctrine of eternal security—it is in the One from whose hand we can *never* be snatched! We are not saved by our lack of sin or our good works or anything other than faith in Christ Jesus. We believers are as secure as Jesus Christ Himself—Now that's secure!

What's Happening?

Colombia

As I mentioned in our April newsletter, I had just returned from the Bible Institute in Colombia where I thoroughly enjoyed experiencing 75 people in class who were happy to receive God's Word and who had great enthusiasm for more. So far, these particular students have had six 40-hour doctrine and theology courses, the last course being 'New Testament Survey'. Three courses remain to be taught this year (2009): 'Hermeneutics', 'Old Testament Survey' and 'Homeletics' with nine more following until graduation in May 2011.

Romania

The class of 22 students in Brasov, Romania has completed seven courses to this date, with eight more to be completed until graduation in 2011. The remainder of 2009 will have two courses taught: 'Bible Study Methods and Interpretation' and 'Spiritual Leadership and Discipleship'. I will attend the September course to meet with the students and their pastors and churches to discuss essential considerations for the current and future classes. Then I am scheduled to return in November (*Brrr!*) to teach 'Spiritual Leadership and Discipleship'.

Kenya

As mentioned in the April newsletter, we are conducting an important in-depth survey of the pastors who have graduated from the two Institute locations during the past 10 years along with their congregations in that country. The first surveys have been received and analyzed. We are more than gratified with the positive responses and the good suggestions for future classes. We look forward to being back with the next class as soon as all the surveys have been completed and any needed changes to the curriculum have been accomplished.

Theology Matters

*"The exalted Lamb didn't pay a small price
with a meager sacrifice for our sins."*

There's a large Gothic church in Brasov, Romania called the "Black Church." It's given this name because in the 1200's it caught fire and the large, very heavy stones turned black. After it was restored some years later, Martin Luther taught there. And so, I bring you a bit of history that is part of the foundation by which we stand in the Church of Jesus Christ.

In August of 1521, Martin Luther wrote a letter to his friend, Phillip Melanchthon. In it he said, "If you are a preacher of mercy, do not preach an imaginary but true mercy. If the mercy is true, you must therefore bear the true, not an imaginary sin. God does not save those who are only imaginary sinners.

Be a sinner and let your sins be strong, but let your trust in Christ be stronger and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death and the world. We will commit sins while we are here because this life is not a place where justice resides. We, however (says Peter), are

looking forward to ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ where justice will reign. It suffices that through God’s glory we have recognized the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. No sin can separate us from Him, even if we were to kill or commit adultery thousands of times each day. Do you think such an exalted Lamb paid merely a small price with a meager sacrifice for our sins?”

Raw grace can be considered dangerous stuff. At the least, it makes some people nervous. Others will be outraged. Tell folks that their sins are all forgiven and some of them will become incredibly offended by such good news. Tell them that there’s nothing they can do to separate themselves from the love of God and they’ll accuse you of preaching license to sin. Tell them Jesus has done it all and there’s nothing left for them to do to make themselves acceptable to God and they may say you’re preaching passivity. It’s a strange thing to see how much people often despise good news.

Share the truth in its purity and you’ll likely find that your enemies will hate you and your friends will worry about you. I’ve seen it first hand! Plainly and simply . . . If you are never misunderstood . . . If you are never criticized for your view of grace . . . If you never ruffle any feathers . . . Then you aren’t being bold enough in proclaiming the Gospel of Grace.

From the Apostle Paul and forward, everyone who has proclaimed pure grace has riled up self-righteous religionists. Remember, the greatest opponents of Jesus were the religious people. I don’t think we should try to be offensive, but the Bible calls the Gospel an offense; so if nobody is ever being offended by our proclamation of grace, we have to wonder how clearly we are presenting it in its purity.

Luther and others (both before and after him) paid a price for refusing to budge on the subject. May God raise up a generation of grace walkers today that show the same resolve. The need is great but the potential is staggering.

Be bold about grace. Don’t surrender by agreeing that it may simply be a matter of semantics when we discuss the subject. Don’t think for one moment that you can take grace too far. You can’t, because if you did it would stop being grace and shrink into disgrace.

As Luther said, “The exalted Lamb didn’t pay a small price with a meager sacrifice for our sins. The Trinity of Heaven spent every ounce of divine equity for our forgiveness and to bring us into the divine circle of life. Let us not insult such a great expression of love with a wish-washy testimony. Stand strong. Speak plainly and refuse to compromise. Too much has been spent and too much is at stake to do any less.”

What’s Up With The Sans?

Happily, I can report that Gloria will attend the September mission trip with me to Romania. The class at the Bible Institute has some female church leaders in it and Gloria will have opportunities to speak with them.

Some of you may have heard that I have been having some physical difficulties the past few months. That's true. In December 2008 I had a third hernia surgery. This latest surgery has had some complications that two subsequent surgeons tell me I will have to live with.

I also had cataract surgery last summer. After a couple of months, it seemed to have turned out great! But, a few months subsequent to the surgery, the vitreous covering on the retina of both eyes turned loose. This has caused partial blurring of both eyes. The condition comes and goes and, at times, is very annoying—not to mention making it somewhat difficult to see clearly. A doctor in South Carolina has provided some drops to try, which has made some improvement in the condition. There is a surgery for this but the doctor has indicated that not only is it a difficult surgery but is also a dangerous one.

God can heal both of these situations and I ever so much request your prayers regarding them. There's a lot of Kingdom work to be accomplished and we will keep going by the Lord's grace and strength.

Thank You

Thanks to all of you for your kind support through both prayer and financially, which encourages and enables us to "Go!"



serving Him always,

Dick & Gloria

P.S. A.W. Tozer said it well. "The greatness of God rouses fear within us, but His goodness encourages us not to be afraid of Him. To fear and not to be afraid—that is the paradox of faith."

I suspect that one of the great needs of the 21st century church in the West is a renewal of the fear of the Lord.