

Wednesday, July 1, 2020

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."

Philippians 3: 8-9

I don't know how much you know about the Amish. They live pretty basic lives compared to us. They live without electricity and other amenities that you and I take for granted. The Amish do not own their own cars. They get around with horse and buggy. They are, however, allowed to ride in someone else's car. They just can't (or don't) own their own cars. But if an Amish person was to ride in your car, it would get them where they needed to go just as well as if it was their own car.

This is the way it is with Christianity. We don't have our own "righteousness." This means that on our own we are not right with God. On our own, our sin would create a barrier between us and God. Righteousness is the condition of being pure in the sight of God. In the reading above, the Apostle Paul readily and fully admits that he does not have his own "righteousness." He needs to depend on the righteousness of Jesus. This is like an Amish person needing to rely on someone else's car because he/she does not have their own car.

Paul refers to this righteousness as "the righteousness from God that depends on faith." It is likely that an Amish person, especially a younger one, would not even know how to drive a car. So an Amish person can't even borrow your car. They don't even have a driver's license. Being "right with God" is entirely dependent on someone else's righteousness. It's dependent on the righteousness of Jesus. Jesus lived His entire earthly life without committing a single sin! Never a sinful thought, word, or action! That's not the way it is for you and me. We have sinned countless times in thought, word, and action!

My sin would keep me out of heaven if it were not for Jesus. Perfect righteousness is needed for entrance into heaven. This means I need to depend on the One who actually HAS perfect righteousness – that is, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are simply passengers on the righteousness of Jesus. How great is that! Our salvation is a gift from God. This means you and I don't have to do a tally of our good deeds vs. our bad deeds and hope that our good deeds outweigh our bad deeds. Your salvation is a "for sure" thing because it's not based on your goodness, but on Jesus' goodness.

This is the great thing about Christianity. Every other religion in the world is based on EARNING one's way into "heaven," whatever heaven is for that religion. Christianity is all about relying on the certainty of Jesus' righteousness. It's okay to say you don't have a righteousness of your own. Nobody does! But you do have righteousness as a free gift through faith in Jesus.

God's peace!
Pastor Jim