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APPRAISAL OF THE CONCEPT OF GRACE AND REPENTANCE IN LUKE 15

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ABSTRACT

This piece of work set out to appraise the concept of grace and repentance as perceived by Luke in the 15th chapter of "the Gospel According to Saint Luke)". The researcher used the materials from the Seminary Library to extract the facts that are embedded in the first gospel book to be written by a gentile. The Gospel according to Luke exhibits several differences from the other Synoptic Gospels. For instance, Luke is the only Gospel to have a sequel, the Acts of the Apostles. These two books are often referred to as a single unit called Luke-Acts. Another difference between Luke and the other Synoptics is the prologue (1:1-4). Not only does the prologue enable readers to better understand the purpose of the Gospel, but it also makes the destination clear. Unfortunately, and in a similar fashion to the other Synoptics, the author does not directly identify himself within the text. On the other hand there is enough internal and external evidence to conclude that it was written by Luke. Though Luke's experience may determine the extent to which he could perceive the Grace of God and the significance of Repentance, yet some other writers and apostles were also consulted and their sayings on Grace and Repentance were juxtaposed with the understanding of Luke. While Luke wrote from the gentiles' perspective, the works of other apostles like Paul, Peter, and John show that the grace of God cut across all ages, all generations and all races. It was discovered that repentance is a strong pre-requisite for one to have access to grace. It was also discovered that the grace of God is available for all and this necessitate the fact that all need to repent. In this chapter; (a). Each scene illustrates a different aspect of God's work: the Son seeks the lost as the Good Shepherd; the Holy Spirit seeks the lost with searching illumination; and the Father seeks the lost with open arms upon return.(b).Each scene illustrates an increasing severity of loss: 1% of the sheep was lost; 10% of the coins got lost; while 50% of the sons got lost.(c).Each scene illustrates a different way of being lost. The truth taught here is that: mercy stretches forth her hand to misery, grace receives men as sinners and it deals with demerit, unworthiness and worthlessness; and that those who think themselves righteous are not the objects of divine compassion, but the unrighteous, the guilty and the undeserving, are the proper subjects for the infinite mercy of God. In a word, salvation is not of merit but of grace.

5.2 Conclusion

God is gracious and offers forgiveness of sins to people who are willing to accept it. Living apart from God results in wasted potential. Joy comes to God, other people, and themselves when unsaved persons repent. Lost persons can repent of their sins and place their faith in Christ for salvation. All people who claim to belong to God's family should be glad when He offers His grace to individuals who do not deserve his favour. It's easy to imagine the Apostle Paul looking back at the loss of his worldly possessions and comparing them with the supernatural gains he realized through grace as he penned these words. 'But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ'. (Phi 3:7-8 NIV) It is the misery of sinners that they are afar off from God, from him who is the Fountain of all good, and are going further and further from him. What is hell itself, but being afar off from God? A sinful state is a spending state: There he wasted his substance with riotous living (v. 13), devoured it with harlots (v. 30), and in a little time he had spent all, v. 14. He bought fine clothes, spent a great deal in meat and drink, treated high, associated with those that helped him to make an end of what he had in a little time. As to this world, they that live riotously waste what they have, and will have a great deal to answer for, that they spend that upon their lusts which should be for the necessary substance of themselves and their families. But this is to be applied spiritually. Willful sinners *waste* their patrimony; for they misemploy their thoughts and all the powers of their souls, misspend their time and all their opportunities, do not only bury, but embezzle, the talents they are entrusted to trade

with for their Master's honour; and the gifts of Providence, which were intended to enable them to serve God and to do good with, are made the food and fuel of their lusts. The soul that is made a drudge, both to the world or to the flesh, wastes its substance, and lives riotously. One sinner destroys much good, Eccl. 9:18. The good he destroys is valuable, and it is none of his own; they are his Lord's goods that he wastes, which must be accounted for.

Therefore in conclusion, I do concur with other numerous New Testament Theologians and biblical scholars who are in agreement with Luke's theology of grace as discuss in the thesis. That no one can be justified before God by observing the law. And that any one who relies on works of the law is under a curse (Gal. 3:10-14). Since the law cannot save man but rather places man under a curse, therefore, God by grace through faith in Christ Jesus redeemed mankind from the curse of the law, thereby made available to man an imputed righteousness.

5.3 Recommendations

There are times when, as part of the forgiveness process, the Holy Spirit will tell us to do something. That may include going to the person and asking for forgiveness. We must be Spirit led in this process. It may be that the other person doesn't even know they have offended you. Your going to them to ask for forgiveness may be just a subtle way of showing them that they have hurt you. In other words, your motive must be right if you do go to someone. The Holy Spirit will always guide you if you just ask Him. There also will be times when there is no way that you can do anything beyond the act of forgiving. The trespasser may be dead or moved away. If this is the case, then you have done all you can do and you should rest in that. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repents." This shows there is a

bridge by which we might cross over into eternity. It doth, as it were, exhibit to us, certain magnetic wires which convey the intelligence of what is done here to spirits in another world. It teaches that there is a real and wonderful connection between this lower world and that which is beyond the skies, where God dwells, in the land of the happy. Man's heart is never big enough to hold either its joys or its sorrows. You never heard of a man whose heart was exactly full of sorrow; for no sooner is it full, than it overflows. The first prompting of the soul is to tell its sorrow to another. The reason is, that our heart is not large enough to hold our grief; and we need to have another heart to receive a portion thereof. It is even so with our joy. When the heart is full of joy, it always allows its joy to escape. It is like the fountain in the marketplace; whenever it is full it runs away in streams, and so soon as it ceases to overflow, you may be quite sure that it has ceased to be full. The only full heart is the overflowing heart. You bade the fathomless ocean drink in your joy; you spoke to the trees and bade them clap their hands, while the mountains and hills were invoked by you to break forth into singing; the very stars of heaven seemed to look down upon you, and you bade them sing for you, and all the world was full of music through the music that was in your heart would like to recommend to all, and Christians in particular, that the grace of God in our lives should be jealously guarded, because

:—A sinful state is a state of perpetual dissatisfaction.

—A sinful state is a lost state: This my son was lost—lost to every thing that was good—lost to all virtue and honour—lost to his father's house; they had no joy of him.

—A sinful state is a state of death: This son was dead, v. 24, 32. A sinner is not only dead in law, as he is under a sentence of death, but dead in state too, dead in

