

'The Son of God and the Lord of Glory Series'

Sermons in the Gospel of John

Message 16 - 'What Grace Does' John 1: 42



In this verse we see another changed life, and the power of grace working in the heart of the individual. God's grace given through Jesus Christ is wonderful, and on this occasion, a man is transformed, his life is completely turned around and set on the path to wonderful things. But, that's what grace does, through the love, goodness, and workings of God a person is changed forever. Saved from their sin, and set on a course for glory. We look here at the Lord's dealings with Simon Peter and can see:

Grace Changes - As Simon approaches the Lord, the Scriptures state that Jesus looked at Simon, or 'beheld' him. It is clear that when the Lord beheld Simon, he was not just seeing the external appearance, but Jesus looked into the innermost being of Simon. This is so significant, as we see clearly a truth that prevails, that when Jesus beholds, or looks upon us, He knows us to our innermost place.

Firstly, the warning. When the Lord looks upon you He sees into the depth of your heart, He knows you. He knows your sin, there is nothing you can hide from Him. We have to be honest with ourselves, and under the gaze of the Saviour our sin is revealed. Our sin separates us from God, and condemns us. Yet, grace changes lives. The love of God displayed in Jesus Christ has made a way for man to be right with Him, and He grants it as a free gift.

Secondly, there is also great comfort. When the Lord beheld Simon, he saw his innermost being. Within that He saw his anxieties, his worries, his fears, his desires, his problems. When the Lord looks upon you He sees all of those things in you. He sees into the depth of your soul, and knows, and can meet all of your needs.

Thirdly, when Jesus beholds Simon, He not only knows Him intimately, sees His need of a Saviour, sees His desires, worries, and fears, but He also sees His potential. As the Lord addresses Simon, He says, 'You shall be called'. Christ is referring to what Simon will become by grace. The Lord was saying that he was going to take this self-centred, defensive, overbearing, and carnal man, and was going to transform him into a strong, solid, immovable, and an unbreakable rock for God. This is God's work in a life, taking miry clay, and transforming, refining into a vessel of worth. Grace can take a person even in the worst of conditions, and transform them, to make Him all that the Lord wants Him to be.

What's in a name? - The Lord Jesus Christ, Simon receives another name, Cephas, or Peter, meaning the Rock. The interesting thing is this, that even though the Lord had given him this name, he would continue to refer to him as Simon. Very often when we see this in the Gospels, the Lord speaks to him as Simon when Simon Peter had done something that needed correction or rebuke. The Lord uses these names as part of the process in Simon Peter's growth as a disciple. The name the Lord gave to him, was what he would become by grace, a rock. The grace of God had saved Peter, through his wonderful encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ, and grace prevailed on his life through the continuing work of the Spirit in his life, to conform him to be the person God wanted him to be. We can be encouraged by Peter's example, because really, he is like many Christians. The battle between the flesh and the spirit continues to rage. There were times when he succumbed to the habits of the flesh, and other times when he acted as only a man in whom God was at work could! See this, that the Lord didn't cast him off after the first mistake, no grace prevailed, because the grace of God, given through the Lord Jesus Christ changes lives. Once God has begun that work of grace in a life, He will see it through to completion.



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs