

America's Reached Isaiah 5:20 Tipping Point

What a mess our world is in. What a mess America is in. What a mess the church is in.

Depressed yet?

Isaiah 5:20 encapsulates, I believe, the cultural condition of much of the world, most of America and an alarmingly high percentage of those who belong, or at least claim to belong, to the body of Christ: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who exchange darkness for light, and light for darkness; who exchange bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

Calling evil good—that sums us up.

But, hey, "grace," right? I mean, you've seen the bumper sticker. "Christ's grace is sufficient," isn't it?

Well, yes and no. Christ's grace is sufficient to give us His strength in our own pathetic weakness and to impute his perfect righteousness to us, despite our own filthy and fallen nature (2 Cor. 12:9).

But strength to do what, exactly? Strength to continue sinning?

No.

To continue sinning in an unrepentant, guilt-free, "evil is good" manner leads to death. It leads to physical, emotional and spiritual death, whether you call yourself a Christian or not.

It leads to hell.

“Do you not know that to whom you yield yourselves as slaves to obey, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But thanks be to God, for you were slaves of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and having been freed from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh, for just as you have yielded your members as slaves to impurity and iniquity leading to more iniquity, even so now yield your members as slaves to righteousness unto holiness” (Rom. 6:16-19).

So, in order to be set free from sin, we must “obey.” To stop sinning is to obey. To continue sinning is to disobey. To disobey leads to death—it makes us “slaves to sin.” To obey, to stop sinning, leads to life. It makes us “slaves to righteousness.”

What does it mean to be set free from sin? Well, it means, as Christ admonished, that we are, among other things, to “go and sin no more” (John 8:11). Sin, with its associated chains of bondage, is over there. We are over here. Sin is behind us. We’ve “put off [our] former way of life in the old nature, which is corrupt according to [our] deceitful lusts,” and, thusly, are set free from sin (Eph. 4:22).

God said, “If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

“Hmm,” you might say. “I don’t recall my pastor ever saying anything about ‘turning from my wicked ways’ in order for Jesus to ‘forgive [my] sin and heal [our] wicked land.’ What did Christ mean by ‘turn from their wicked ways?’”

Well, after centuries of robust debate—a debate, mind you, that rages on even today within the body of Christ—an ever-so-

slight majority consensus has emerged that maintains the following, rather-nuanced and theologically highbrow thesis:

Jesus meant to turn from your wicked ways.

Best-selling Christian author Randy Alcorn once wrote, "Any concept of grace that makes us feel more comfortable sinning is not biblical grace. God's grace never encourages us to live in sin; on the contrary, it empowers us to say no to sin and yes to truth."

We can all agree that, when we repent and ask His forgiveness, Jesus forgives us our past sins. Still, there is a deceptive tendency in much of the church—and by "deceptive," I mean demonic—that suggests Christ came to set us, captives to sin without Him each and every one, free—not from sin, but rather, from guilt for that sin.

This, of course, is yak manure. Jesus did not come, nor was He tortured to death on a tree, so that, by His grace, He could kill our guilty feelings for ongoing, habitual and unrepented-for sins.

Jesus came to kill sin.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may increase? 2 God forbid! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Rom. 6:1-2).

It is hellacious error to say that, as Christians, we are not supposed to "feel guilty" when we sin. When you sin, you feel guilty because you are guilty. Feeling guilty, otherwise known as "being convicted" of our sin, is a painful symptom of a dying soul. Christ's grace is not spiritual Percocet intended to numb the pain of guilt. Guilt is the warning sign, sin is the cancer and Christ's grace is the cure.

There is a deceptive, deadly and evil brand of false "grace" out there, prevalent within the Christian church. It's a grace

that says yes to sin and no to truth, that calls evil good and good evil. A guilt-free, prideful, gay-affirming, gossiping, slothful, pro-choice, “kids will be kids,” “always use protection,” “God will forgive my abortion,” nicer-than-Jesus kind of grace that is leading millions of people who honestly believe they’re saved, born-again Christians straight to the flaming pits of eternal damnation.

Too much “hellfire and brimstone” for you, my friend? Well, sorry. I care about your soul. I care about your eternity—even if your false-teacher, likely-bound-for-hell-himself pastor, priest or bishop doesn’t.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not self-righteous. To the contrary, under my own power and in my flesh, I lack a righteous bone in my entire body. I’m the worst sinner of all.

Even so, through the amazing and perfect power of the Holy Spirit, I am able to call sin sin, evil evil and good good. I am able to recognize sin in my own life, sin in the life of our once-great nation, and sin in the life of the church. I can then repent and, with and through the Holy Spirit, “go and sin no more.”

That’s it. That’s what God requires. That’s true grace.

And *that* kind of grace is sufficient.

You’ve heard the old adage, “Love the sinner, hate the sin.” Some complain that it’s found nowhere in the Bible.

True, not word-for-word anyway. Still, this transcendent truth, this overall concept, is found throughout the Holy Scriptures. We are literally commanded to hate evil.

“Seek good and not evil, so that you may live; then the Lord, the God of Hosts, will truly be with you, as you claim. Hate evil and love good...” (Amos 5:14-15).

So there you have it. That’s grace. Love Jesus. Love others.

Hate evil. Repent and “go and sin no more.”

Now get moving.

And Christ be with you.