

Hebrews 5.12

The First Principles of God

Last week we talked about the truth that there is an expectation of growth, that the Lord requires Christians to grow up. I want to look a little deeper at what the writer is expressing frustration over in this verse. He is concerned that the church in Jerusalem has lost the basic things that are the foundation and beginning of all spiritual truth and understanding. He uses a subtle play on words between "should be teachers" and "need to be taught", in the Greek it has the same root and the sound is very similar... it would sound like "you should be teaching, but instead you need to be taught". We could say, "You should BE teaching but instead you NEED teaching!" Because you are not doing your duty - you ought to be teachers, but on the other hand, you actually need someone to teach you. While you should be the highest of persons to be instructing the great truths of Christ, you instead need to return to kindergarten and be taught the basic colors and shapes. The first principles. It is this idea of first principles, first elements, the primary stuff that is the heart of his angst over the church.

I. NEED VERSUS WANT

a. Wants are optional

i. They are things which make life more pleasant, or enjoyable, perhaps they are conveniences... but if pressed, we can live without them just fine. But needs?

b. We need those things without which we cannot live.

i. Physically

1. Shelter

a. From the elements

b. Safety from attack

2. Fire

3. Water

4. Food

ii. Emotionally

1. Love
2. Support
3. Dignity
4. Respect

iii. Spiritually

1. Peace with God
2. Peace with self
3. Peace with fellow man
4. Purpose

iv. Morally

1. Obey what our God tells us
2. Fulfill the purpose for which He created us
3. Avoid what He tells us to avoid
4. Walk in His truth in every way.

II. YOU NEED TEACHING

a. There is a need - if you are not taught them, you will not know them.

- b. There is enough truth in creation to hold every man guilty, but not enough to overcome sin and save them.

Romans 1.16 - 21

- c. The writer of Hebrews tells us that they Actually NEED to be taught the basic first principles of the oracles of God again. Because they had forgotten and moved away from the truth of God's Word, creating their own rules instead.

III. WHAT ARE THE ORACLES OF GOD?

- a. The scriptures - normally in the New Testament this phrase is applied to the Old Testament. The OT supplies the basic principles that teach us of our need for God's mercy and grace. It CANNOT and DOES not save us!!! –

Galatians 2.16-21

- b. The OT is to be read with an eye to see Christ displayed, typed, shadowed and promised.

The Bible is the story of Jesus from start to finish and should be read as such. IF we fail to see Christ IS the heart of the OT as He is the Substance of the New, then we will fall into the trap of thinking that the OT is a manner in which we can be made right with God. That it is an alternate, that works will be accepted if they are good enough.

c. The need is to distinguish between the basic principles or elements of the world and the basic principles or elements of the truth of Christ. –

i. The basic elements of the world make much of us and our ability, worth and genius.

Galatians 4.3-9,
Colossians 2.8, 20

ii. There is implied a contrast and a tension between what we were naturally and what we are spiritually. Remember, the basic principles of the world cannot EVER impart grace, they cannot EVER bring a man to salvation. They can

lead us to understand that we NEED grace if God is merciful to us, but they cannot on their own ever impart life.

- d. What they need is the elements of the faith to be re-implanted in them.

IV. FIRST PRINCIPLES

What are the first principles that need to be restored?

a. Man's fallen nature,

- i. All have sinned
- ii. We enter into this life spiritually dead and separated from our God by our sin. –

1. Both original sin

Romans 5.12-14

2. And personal sin and rebellion

Ephesians 2.1-3

- iii. This fact ruins us on EVERY level. There is no part of us that is not effected and twisted by our sin. No man is able to do anything on his own that will please God.

Isaiah 64.6

Romans 3.9-18

Romans 7.13-25

- b. God's merciful providence –

- i. God promised a Savior

Genesis 3.15

- ii. God loved us and sent Christ for us

Romans 5.8-9

- c. The doom which we are under apart from this gift – wages of sin is death

Romans 6.23

- d. Faith in Christ alone –
 - i. confess with your lips Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart God has raised Him from the dead.

Romans 10.9-13

- ii. Works are worthless
- iii. Man is impotent
- iv. All our works are filthy rags

V. FUNDAMENTALLY –

Our need is MERCY

- a. It is God's mercy. He is the giver of it according to HIS free will,
- b. We do not initiate it, we do not initiate ANYTHING

- c. By definition we cannot ever DESERVE mercy.
Mercy says "I have no claim to what I am asking for"

- d. Mercy says much about God and nothing about us, or our intrinsic worth.

- e. Either God gives it freely, or we will not have it.