

My Loved Ones:

In Psalm 103:18, God says, “to such as keep His covenant, / And to those who remember His commandments to do them.”

God says in the previous verse that His mercy of eternal salvation is on those who fear Him. And now he shows what “taking God seriously” really looks like: fearing God demonstrates obedience.

Loved ones, there is such a thing as “cheap grace” which is a false gospel. Let me explain. The real gospel is truths about God, man, Jesus, and our response of continual faith and repentance. There are some people who simply say that all you have to do is “pray and ask Jesus into your heart.” Now, that sounds really nice, doesn't it? I think I know what those well-meaning people mean when they say that. But simply praying a prayer doesn't save anyone! It's Jesus Who does the saving. And what does the Bible say are the requirements for salvation? Faith and repentance. Repentance is a requirement for salvation; it's part of faith in Jesus. When I'm really trusting, depending and relying on Jesus, it demonstrates itself in my life. My lifestyle is impacted. If there is no change, then there is no salvation. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says that if anyone is in Jesus, he is a new creature: old things are passed away and all things are becoming new. It's a process of change; we're all still changing and growing.

Jesus said, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don't do the things that I say?” 1 John says that we know that we are children of God if we keep His commands. Please don't misunderstand: it's not the changed actions that do the saving; it's Jesus Who saves. But the works are proof that there has been salvation. If there are no such works, then that person is not a child of God - it's demonstrated to be so. Jesus said, “You shall know them by their fruits.” I'm afraid for many people in our area who claim to have prayed a prayer, or joined a church, or gotten baptized, or gone to a Christian school, or any host of a number of things, but do not genuinely know Jesus as their Savior. May the Lord help First Baptist to be a lighthouse of the true gospel of Jesus!

We love you and are praying for you today, loved ones.