

Clean Slate

"If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?"

--Psalm 130:3

There's a Christian chorus I like that quotes the verse above. That chorus opens by stating a truth that's very simple, and yet deeply profound. It says, "Only by grace can we enter. Only by grace can we stand."

We Christians who preach the gospel have no trouble remembering that it is only by grace that the lost can be saved and enter into the presence of the Lord; but sometimes, in practice, we forget that it is also only by grace that our salvation is maintained -- only by grace can we stand.

Since we forget that simple fact, we live lives more complicated by striving and human effort and stress than the Christian walk was ever intended to be. And when we fall, which is the inevitable result of trying to live holy lives in our own strength, we beat ourselves up emotionally, telling ourselves, "You failed once again. Another spiritual blunder. Another stumble. Another time of falling short of what God requires of you." Instead of celebrating the grace of our forgiving Lord, we wallow in despair in these moments, spiritually crippled by feelings of guilt.

Let it not be so in your life, my brother or sister. Human effort will not create holy character and actions in the saved any more effectively than it does in the lost. The same grace that was essential to your salvation is equally essential to your success in the Christian life. Only by grace can you stand. In your own strength, you will, like Peter on the night of the crucifixion, fall.

The good news is that when those falls have occurred it is not God's desire that you punish yourself for your sin. Your sins past, present, and future have already been punished once on the cross. They need not be punished twice. God's perfect justice has already been done, and now by His loving grace you can stand in faith.

He is not keeping a record of your wrongs, if you know Him. Were it not so, we would all be without hope, because sinless beings we shall all not be until we shed these carnal bodies for the glorified ones that we will receive in heaven, then clothed in the spotless garments of the redeemed.

Our Savior is not tallying up our sins to mark them and remember them. Instead, His mercies "are new every morning." Think about that. What wondrous grace! Every morning you can have a clean slate, a perfect record before a holy God, because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

So, each day, instead of wallowing in the failures, sins, and shortcomings of the one before, acknowledge the infinite grace of God. Simply confess your sins and receive His faithful and just forgiveness of them, and the cleansing from all unrighteousness that accompanies that forgiveness. When you fall, let Him stand you up again. Return to close fellowship with Him, determined that not by your own strength, but by His alone, by faith you will stand.

**"Only by grace can we enter
Only by grace can we stand
Not by our human endeavor
But by the blood of the Lamb
Into Your presence You call us
You call us to come
Into Your presence You draw us
And now by Your grace we come**

**'Lord, if you marked our transgressions, who could stand?'
Thanks to Your grace we are cleansed by the blood of the Lamb"**