

## Reflections on the message by Mike Kerry on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2010

### “Saved by Grace” Acts 15:1-11

The Jerusalem Council established that believers are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. At first the church was totally Jewish, until Cornelius and his household were saved (Acts 10:1-48). The Jerusalem Council considered whether Gentiles have to go through the same ritual as Jews to be saved. Some of them had not realised the full impact of what had taken place. We, as Christians, can do the same thing. We can fail to realise that impact of the cross.

If you have to keep the Law (or Torah) to be saved, we would all be doomed, as Peter admitted. The Jews as well as the Gentiles would be lost. We don't keep the Torah today, nor can we live up to the moral standards in it. All that needed to be done was done at Calvary and we can add nothing to it.

The Jews do not need to reject their Jewish traditions and culture to believe that Jesus is the Messiah. The Messianic Jews have Bar-mitzvahs and keep the Shabbat, but they still believe in Jesus (they would call Him Yeshua) as their Saviour.

Ephesians 2:8-10. You can only be sure of eternity by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and not in our own righteous deeds. They can't remove sin or its penalty of judgement and hell. It is like when someone commits a murder. None of the good he did before, or that he did afterward could alter the due punishment that would be meted out for act of murder.

God's grace is His unmerited favour. God offers to pay sin's penalty through the sacrifice of Jesus. Then faith comes in as we accept this offer to apply it to ourselves. Jesus raised the bar, the standard of the Law (Matthew 5-7). There is no other way to salvation than through the blood of the Lamb. You need to repent. Repentance is not just being sorry but also being determined to change your way of life. Jesus told people to “sin no more”. One who is truly saved will be determined to put down those things that caused a barrier to God.

Judgement is something we need to know about because one day we will stand before Him. Will we hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant” or “Depart from me”? We need to know that we are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

“Jesus paid it all”, as the hymn says, for each one of us. We have a responsibility to recognise it. It is not a tacit acceptance but faith is to embrace Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Then you will have a new position in Christ, and have new interests and attitudes.

All around us people are worshipping other things. Some worship their jobs, pursuing them with vigour and passion. Or perhaps material things like cars, houses, computers and TVs. Some worship football, like Bill Shankley who said, “Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I assure you, it's much more serious than that.” In the light of eternity, none of these things will matter. If you follow the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart, soul, mind and body, it will make a lasting difference to your life and death. The promise is the same that Jesus gave to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:32-43).

Mike wants people to have an encounter with God in BFC. It is all about Jesus Christ and we need to declare it. There is a song, “Jesus be the centre”. Is it true for you and me? Is it what you want? You should want Jesus more than anything. Nothing else will make a difference to you.

Since Mike first believed he has not changed his mind about Jesus, even though there have been difficult times. What differences has believing in Jesus made to his life since then? It has made it more difficult to sin. It has affected the decisions he has made and his role in the family – to bring up his children in the fear of the Lord. It has required his service, becoming a leader in the church early in his Christian life. It has given him joy.

There is nothing you need but Jesus Christ. Religion and ritual will not save you. Declare that you will follow Him all the days of your life. You have a responsibility to live for Him.