

The World Owes Me A Living

“Depart from Me...I never knew you”

Matthew 7:23

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’”

Matthew 25:34 (NIV)

Many years ago when I was in grade 7, I was not a particularly intense student. When the final report cards were handed out in June of the year I was in grade 7, I read the notation about my placement for the coming school year. It read something like, “Promoted to Grade 8 (O.T.)”.

The “O.T.” designation puzzled me and so after school that day I went to my teacher and asked what it meant. Mr. Abel, my teacher, explained that the term O.T. meant I was promoted to grade 8 “On Trial”. The teacher went on to explain that if I did not perform well academically in the first term of grade 8, I would be sent back down to grade 7 for the balance of the school year.

You might well imagine that I had a lot to explain when I showed the report card to my parents. Growing up I knew the rule, that if I was in trouble at school I was in trouble at home. That fall I turned into a star student in grade 8 and only one person was ahead of me for the highest marks in my class. In 3

months I went from being the student with the lowest marks, right to the top of the class.

In Canadian society today there seems to be the notion that “Johnny can’t fail” in school. Students are pushed ahead from grade to grade whether they have truly passed the subjects or not. Developmental psychologists teach us that it would shatter poor Johnny’s emotional life if he “failed”. Having taught students at the post secondary school level I can assure you that some high school graduates I taught could not compose a sentence that made sense.

The sad downside to this effort to keep Johnny on the success wagon is that he ends up thinking the world owes him a living. The American writer Mark Twain (1835-1910) once said, “The world owes you nothing. It was here first.” That is a rather blunt response to the idea that the world does owe us a living, however Mark Twain’s comment does challenge our thinking.

Since our world has adopted a “no fail” mentality the mistaken notion has risen that nobody

will fail in God’s classroom either. The world thinks that on the Day of Judgment God will pass everyone so we all shall graduate into heaven.

Such a way of thinking is not only terribly wrong—it is lethal in the end. In His grace the Lord has provided a way for His righteous law to be satisfied and also to allow sinners to be free from condemnation. Jesus in His perfect life, substitutionary death for sinners, and His resurrection, is THE way for us to receive forgiveness and restoration into God’s favor.

We cannot “pass” the examination for entry to heaven if we do not accept the only provision for entrance that God Himself has provided. However, if we genuinely believe in Jesus and rest upon Him as our Saviour we cannot fail to go to heaven. God owes us nothing but is willing to give us everything if we come to Jesus. Come, and come now.

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