

## **470 Prime Ministers, Dukes and Ambassadors**

Two men in lofty positions within our society, Boris Johnson as Prime Minister and Prince Andrew as Duke of York, are frequently in the news at present for all the wrong reasons. The outcome for each of them is not yet clear, but their respective roles as ambassadors of decency and good conduct in public life are badly tarnished, whatever arguments may be put up in their defence. That telling little verse in Numbers 32.23b is appropriate here: “and be sure your sin will find you out” (KJV).

This certainty of our sins “finding us out”, sooner or later, is a helpful reminder for us all, and not just for Christians. What a difference it would make to Britain’s crime figures if there still prevailed across society that widespread knowledge and fear of Almighty God, to whom each of us must give account one day (egs., Luke 12.2-3 / Romans 14.10b,12 (for the judgment only of our “works, eg., I Corinthians 3.13) / Revelation 20.11-15). That knowledge and fear used to be widely taught by word and example in a supportive mix of home, Sunday Schools, state schools and Parliament. How different are things nowadays.

Now the Good News for all Christian believers is that our sins, never hidden from the Lord anyway, are already forgiven by our faith in Christ. The consequences are precious! – we are already counted righteous in God’s sight, by His gifts of grace and faith (eg., Romans 4); and - “... being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5.1); and - “There is therefore no condemnation (that is, judgment) to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but by the Spirit” (Romans 8.1).

So by faith in Christ we are already “saved” and safe right now, counted righteous in His sight right now, at peace with God right now, and in fellowship with Him right now. Truly, “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2.9-10).

But we still have sins, which of course we are to acknowledge and confess before the Lord, asking for His fresh forgiveness by means of the blood of Jesus shed on our behalf (eg., I John 1.7-9). Those sins do not instantly drop us out of salvation, but they do drop us out of fellowship with the Lord until they are confessed and forgiven.

And then, as much as we are able in our fickle strength (egs., Romans 7.18 / Galatians 5.17), we are to “reckon ourselves dead to sin, but alive

unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (from Romans 6.11 / also Colossians 3.1-3 / I Peter 2.24-25). We are to “put on the new man ... (and to) walk in newness of life”, not allowing sin to reign in our bodies (Romans 6.4, 6-7, 12-13).

Such a life is lived not only for the glory of God in Christ and for the keeping-on-track of the Christian individual, but also as a witness - as an ambassador - displaying to others, we hope, an example of a God-honouring, Christ-serving, Spirit-filled life. Thus, as servants of the Lord we are to “show all good fidelity”, that we may - “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Titus 2.10, KJV). We are to be “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life ...” (from Philippians 2.15-16a / also eg., I Peter 2.9-17).

May our “conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ” (from Philippians 1.27a), our “speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (from Colossians 4.6 / also eg., Ephesians 4.29). May our thoughts be filled with matters of truth, honesty, justice, purity, loveliness, and “things of good report” (from Philippians 4.8).

It is helpful at times to stand back from our lives as much as possible, seeking to see ourselves as others see us – the Lord Himself, family, neighbours, church members, colleagues, other friends. Where necessary, we say our sorries, to the Lord and to others, asking for their forgiveness, and we set our wills to alter in our lives whatever needs to be altered. The Lord does not leave us alone in all this, for day by day in our Christian discipleship we have the great assurance - “For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6.14).

In closing this time we realise that no reader of these Weekly Reflections is likely to be a Prime Minister or a Duke; but we also realise afresh that every one of us is a full-time Ambassador – in the service for the Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5.20a).

Quite a thought, and quite a calling.

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