Protestants Don’t Celebrate Ash Wednesday, or Lent. We Are Protestant For a Reason.

-Timothy J. Hammons

I’m truly saddened by the number of my friends on Facebook who are celebrating Ash Wednesday and Lenten this year. The common denominator of course is that they were all educated theologically at Dallas Theological Seminary. I have other friends who did not attend DTS who are celebrating. I give them a pass. But the ones that did attend DTS, should repent of this heinous revelry immediately.

Once again, the seminary where I was trained is showing it’s bad fruit in that they really don’t teach theology well, unless it is Dispensationalism, or church history well. (Not the fault of the historical theology department. They do an excellent job, but are not given enough courses to make a long-term impact).

But that is not the point. The point is that for some reason, students can come out of that seminary and think it’s perfectly fine to celebrate Ash Wednesday and Lenten. Do they not realize that we are Protestant? Do they not realize that this is a tradition of men and condemned in Scripture? Do they not realize that these holy days are not prescribed by God, but by fallen men? Do they not realize that their participation in Ash Wednesday and Lent strikes at the gospel itself?

Why does it matter?

Catholics believe that by inflicting pain during this time and denying themselves of certain items they love, they are earning themselves merit with God. This strikes at the core of the gospel because we cannot earn an ounce of righteousness through our works or deeds. This was at the heart of the Protestant Reformation. We are save by faith alone, in Christ alone, which is by grace alone. We do nothing to merit favor from God, either before we are saved or after we are saved.
All that we need for our salvation was accomplished on the Cross by Jesus Christ and His atoning work. By participating in Ash Wednesday and Lent, we are saying that His sacrifice was not enough. We are saying that somehow we must add to what He did on the Cross. We are demeaning His work by doing so.

I know that many who do participate want more spiritual experiences. They feel the need to add something to our religion. It’s part of our fallen human nature. But we are to walk by faith and not sight, trusting in God’s means for our spiritual growth. Remember that He who began a good work in us, will complete it on the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). We must take this by faith that He will do so. Our adding to it, adds nothing to it but self righteousness.

Some might point out that we are also to work our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). Since this is so, how? Are we to invent holy days and prescribe things to be done on these days? This is just as heinous as those who tried to add to the gospel by having Gentiles participate in circumcision. Paul warns against those who do evil works (Philippians 3:2). They were adding to the gospel and its work.

So how are we to work out our salvation?

In the means that God has given us, through worship on the LORD’s Day, remaining under the preaching of God’s word, continue in prayer and fasting (when the Spirit leads, not when men lead), continue participating in communion and baptism, continuing on in the fellowship of the saints. These are the means God has given to us to grow spiritually. To say that these are not sufficient and to say that we need to add to these things, is to say that God’s ways are somehow deficient in their effectiveness. But the moment we do, we moved from the gospel of Christ, back to Roman Catholicism and every other religion known to man, because all religions of man are based upon works, and not faith in Christ.

Remember the true Gospel of Christ, we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone which is by grace alone from the Father. We add nothing to our righteousness by participating in man-made holy days. We just profane the gospel instead by saying the righteousness of Christ, given to us at the moment of our salvation, is not enough. I hope you can see how absurd that is.
Once again, please quit celebrating these man-made traditions and trust in Christ to see your salvation to its completed end. Otherwise, just go ahead and become Roman Catholic. Make the jump. If these things that I write are offensive to you, then you are already Roman Catholic. They will welcome you with open arms and you will quite being a thorn in the flesh of those of us who are trusting in God’s ways, not man’s ways.