

The Grace of Warning

by Ted Trainor

In our Koine Greek class, the ninth graders learn the Greek word for gospel: euangelion (ew-ang-gae-leon). Literally translated, the term “gospel” is a compound of two word parts: “eu” means “good” and “angel” means “message.” The “good message” comes from the good messenger, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Christ summarizes His message in many ways; meditate on this one: “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matt. 11: 27-30).

Consequently, we understand that all who rest in Christ grow more Christlike as they actively learn from Him. The more a believer learns to trust, the more a believer finds his earthly burdens bearable and lightened. However, the gospel’s goodness inherently compels listeners to hear the underlying warning in this passage: “Without Jesus, no one can know the Father. Reliance on self leads to restlessness. Ignoring the commands of Christ leads to pride and torment. All other allegiances weigh down and harden you.”

I heard a preacher term this other-side-of-the-gospel coin, “the grace of warning.” Think of all the instances Christ warns the Pharisees, “Woe to you . . .” Essentially, the preacher

surmised that the gospel coin is two sided: humility or woe to the prideful, selflessness or woe to the selfish, rest or woe to the restless, life or woe to the deathbound. Being saved is being saved from wrath and death. Thus, grace without warning is not grace.

In Christian education,

of schools: families. And, who feels the pressure more on a daily basis with regard to the topic at hand? One may consider teachers, in the place of parents, spend a good bit of time on grace and warning. But, the modern technical teacher in the modern age-segregated classroom (as if octuplets are rare

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communicating the grace of warning to children by word and action is an immense challenge. Some Christian schools err when they emphasize one side of the coin only. For instance, the elitist-leaning school is austere, seldom flexible, my way or the highway, perfection with a byline in Latin which comes to mean, “Warning: Distinctively Classical and Christ-Centered or Else.” On the other hand, the roast-your-own-coffee-in-a-skillet set of Christian schools have simply asked people to pay what they can. After their typical financial demise, these schools and their constituents feel the sting from a misunderstanding and misapplication of mercy—the ideal of the other side of the grace coin: no cost, no sacrifice, all presumptive, willy-nilly, free ride, Christian utopia.

But schools are simply families doing life together, so when we look at schools under a magnifying lens, one sees the building blocks

enough in our day, who would ever invent schooling 16 or 20, let alone 30, first, fifth, or even eighth graders in one room!) wields a variety of tools to keep the institutionalized classroom machine running smoothly. Rather than teachers, the surer answer to the survey in question is: mom and dad. How much grace before a parent punishes? However, this is simply not even the right question. This question presumes reactive, angry, I’ve-had-it-up-to-here, you’ve-stepped-on-my-last-nerve parenting/discipleship. The proper question is: “How do I minister the gospel to my naturally sinful child in a way that clearly shows them the consequences of sin and law breaking?”

The key for answering this question means the magnifying lens magically morphs into a mirror. Are *you* prepared to model humiliation? Are *you* prepared to look at the log in your own eye? Do *you* take advantage of mercy yourself? Do you expect mercy? Do *you* enjoy submitting to authority? Do *you* consistently call out sin

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and enforce consequences for sin (e.g. laziness, disrespect, etc.)?

Ouch! I winced just writing these questions! Yet, I am compelled and convicted. Maybe, you are too. And, like you, I am perfectly imperfect and inconsistent. But, am I questioning my motives? Am I confessing my lack of faith and maturity? What do we do now?

First, bad habits often reveal sin and/or a presumptive view of mercy which cheapens the grace of God. Therefore, we start the process by humbling ourselves before the perfect Father in heartfelt repentance and confession, meditating on His mercy and reviewing His commands. This is the set-the-alarm-earlier wisdom which resets our spiritual clock for the day.

With this tone, we will confess our sin even when we wrong our children. Thus prepared, we forgo the yelling match between parent and child as the means for arriving at school on time. Then, parent and child spring from the car having given God the glory by delighting in obedience, joyfully submitting to authority, and edifying the other families of the school.

The utter challenge and consistent dilemma that every parent feels at home affects the school each day too. When children are visiting the headmaster's office at school consistently, when children are out of uniform consistently at school, when children are late for school consistently, when children are sitting out recess consistently,

when children are unprepared for class consistently, I begin to think it is time for the grace of warning. A temptation for all will be to cough, wheeze, and excuse the behavior due to "spring fever." Excusing sin is not grace. Excusing sin defaces grace. To truly appreciate the goodness God has provided in and through classical Christian schools, flip the grace coin over and heed the warning label!

Parents, we set the example; the children learn from us. Repentance, honest and sincere confession, and earnest fellowship are ironically the means and ends of the grace of warning. Grace without warning is not grace. Be graced by warning! And enjoy the fruit of the path of humility.

Education to What End?

by Dan Struble

Ideas have consequences¹. . . If we then ask the question, "Education to what end?," our answer will depend upon our answers to the great questions about the meaning and purpose of life, from which all the subordinate questions and answers flow. Across the ages, people have answered these fundamental questions in different ways, and the purposes and methods of education have changed accordingly. Let us now briefly trace some of the ways in which core beliefs have shaped the development of Western civilization, and likewise the development of education as we now know it.

The ancient world of Greece and Rome was pagan in its fundamental beliefs. People believed they were at the mercy of the gods, who were many, arbitrary, and powerful. The best

one could do was to be clever in appeasing the gods. Odysseus, the hero in Homer's *Odyssey*, was the archetype who cunningly played one god against another, but whose best efforts against, for example, the Cyclops or Scylla and Charybdis, still did not allow him to overcome fate, which had foretold that he alone of all his men would return to Ithaca. Honor was valued over life, such that a Spartan mother could say to her son, "Return with your shield [namely, with honor] or on it" [the Spartan way of returning the dead].

In the day-to-day world of these people, human life was tragic, cruel, and meaningless. In Sparta, the city council decided whether a newborn was big, strong, and healthy enough to live. If not, the baby was tossed off Mount Taygetus to shatter his or her helpless body, which would

rot on the jagged rocks below. In the more individualistic Athens, unwanted babies were placed in clay pots and left at the temples of the gods to die from the elements or to be consumed by animals.²

Inequality was obvious in the way of things. Slavery was normal. In Rome if a slave killed his master, all of the slaves of that master were killed. In one case, some 400 innocent men, women, and children were executed because of the misdeed of one.³ There was no sense of progress or direction in history, and no reason for hope; rather, life was a sad series of cycles, birth to death, and the endless repetition of seasons. And so life proceeded for many, many centuries.

Education in the pagan world focused on two main themes: physical training to prepare