

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## PARTAKERS OF THE BENEFIT

*And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.*

*I Timothy 6:2*

Grace is a great leveler of men and is that which strips men of any room to boast or lord themselves over another. It is no wonder that the natural man despises it and rejects it in favor of going about to establish his own righteousness in one form or another. A line from the poem "Invictus" states, "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul." This is the hue and cry of men in all ages but especially permeates our modern society and its philosophy of power through positive thinking.

We read about those who are "self made men" and those who "pulled themselves up by the bootstraps." They are lionized as those whose drive and desire caused them to overcome all odds and raised themselves triumphantly upon the trophy stand of life to receive the gold medal of achievement in this endeavor or that.

The vast majority of that which calls itself "gospel preaching" in the world today, is cut from this same piece of cloth. The most common message heard from pulpits, radio and TV is centered on telling men that they have the ability to choose to follow CHRIST whenever they make their minds up to do so. The scriptures are reduced by these bible thumpers to a book which describes a moral code by which men should shape their lives and a guide book to order their finances, marriages and practically any endeavor which they in their "free will" desire to pursue.

The Pharisees of CHRIST's day thought the very same thing. They were avid scholars of what the bible said and even wore scriptures upon their bodies much in the same fashion as we see folks parading around in Tee shirts with scriptures, religious slogans, or the ten commandments on them. If the Pharisees had thought of it they might even have put the name of their synagogue on their robes so as to "advertise" their assembly.

Yet the LORD told the Pharisees, "*Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*" (John 5:39-40) They were convinced that they were followers of the truth because they felt that they had it within their own power to perform acts of righteousness which would be pleasing unto the LORD, yet the LORD told them they were blind and naked because they thought they could see and do the will of GOD.(see John 9:41) They revered the scriptures but they missed the whole subject of the scriptures which is JESUS CHRIST.

I recently read a survey that said more than 60 percent of the population of the United States claims to be a church member of one sort or another. This is almost twice the number (percentage wise) of those who made the same claim at the start of the nineteenth century.

Yet we are as a nation almost totally ignorant of the true message of the gospel. Few of those who claim to be “christians” have any concept of the reality of what the “new birth” is. Most think that they can cause themselves to be “born again” by making a decision for CHRIST as an act of their own free will. They are led down the path of this darkness by a multitude of leaders who are ignorant of the gospel and think that CHRIST died to make salvation a “possibility for all” rather than an absolute purchase of redemption for some.

Paul (having been steeped in Pharisaism as a young man) could clearly see the necessity of grace, since being “slain” by the power of the HOLY GHOST while on the road to Damascus in order to imprison the followers of CHRIST. He was brought face to face with JESUS CHRIST the LORD of glory through no power or action of his own. Therefore he was compelled to write, *“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1Cor 4:7)* He went on to say *“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1Co 15:10)*

He plainly understood that it was the grace of GOD and nothing else that not only brought him into the kingdom of GOD but enabled him to do the mighty acts and deeds which were in reality wrought in him by the HOLY GHOST. (see Phil.2:13) Glorifying in oneself in any sense comes to an abrupt end when a man is taught that ALL of his salvation and its fruits, from beginning to end is the product of GOD’s grace. *“For 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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:8-10)*

It is with this principle firmly in mind that Paul writes to Timothy concerning the regard for one another, of those who are the called of GOD according to HIS purpose. If one is called in servitude or one is in a place of having servants they are both to treat one another with the utmost regard and respect due to the fact that they are all partakers of the same benefit. That is, they are all saved by the same grace and there is no “respect of persons” in the kingdom of GOD regardless of the station in which each is called or the gifts they may be given.

It is quite common for men to act in the flesh as though they have reason to consider themselves of greater value in the church than another. This was demonstrated in the epistle John wrote to the church in which Diotrephes was a member. He thought that since he was in a position of authority that he ought to be considered more highly than other brethren. (see III John 1:9). It is not uncommon to see those who have been given teaching gifts grow puffed up and think it acceptable to lord themselves over the brethren, often reveling in “titles” (such as bishop, elder, reverend, pastor, etc.) which give them some sort of distinction from those with “lesser” gifts (as they might judge).

Yet all of those whom the LORD sees fit to call are “partakers of the same benefit”, whether given the tongues of men and angels or only a small measure of faith whereby he struggles to digest the milk of the word and sometimes chokes upon the meat. Grace demands that he who would be the greatest must be the servant of all. He who would be a leader of the LORD’s sheep must do it by example and not decree. He who would be a teacher must be easily entreated, not impatient with those of lesser understanding, and never seeking to subjugate those who are inheritors of the same grace as he.

Grace is that which makes the wealthy as beggars, and beggars to be the wealthiest of men. It is that which humbles the proud and that which lifts the poor in spirit. Rejoice dear brethren, for if we are indeed the sons of GOD we must be “partakers of the benefit”.