

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume VIII

Issue 33

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

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

THE MISSING INGREDIENT

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. *Mark 10:21*

There are few things more delightful both as to taste and aroma, than fresh, homemade bread. A most proficient baker can mix all of the necessary ingredients to make bread but it does not matter how precisely and carefully the other parts of the recipe are mixed or at what temperature it is cooked, if the yeast is left off the bread will not rise. The yeast is the most critical ingredient in the bread, even though it visually makes up the smallest portion compared to the other components of which the bread is made. (see Gal.5:9)

A rich young ruler approached the LORD with a seeming sincere desire to know what he needed to do in order to enter into eternal life. Not unlike many who profess to having a desire to escape an eternal hell. He seemed to have some awareness that he was not yet perfect since he posed the question. *"What lack I yet"* (Mat.19:20) He was not quite prepared for the response of the LORD JESUS since he assumed that he had it within his power to perform some deed of obedience which would insure his entrance to glory.

When he was confronted with the law, he was not taken aback at all, but just like all unregenerate men, he considered that the law was given for righteous men. He certainly considered that he was righteous because he was convinced that he could keep the law. He even testified of his own obedience to and observance of the law throughout his whole life.

The LORD had compassion on the man and demonstrated what Solomon wrote about in the Proverbs, *"Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."*(Pro 27:5-6) HE spoke directly to the exact need that the man had, though it was very painful to the man.

Most who look at this passage assume that the thing which the man lacked was giving up his riches. Some have even opined that if he gave them up and followed the LORD then he would by his actions gain what he sought. Yet that is not at all what the LORD meant when HE said *"one thing thou lackest"*. Riches are not evil, nor are this worlds goods, in themselves, something that must be denounced by those who are the inheritors of eternal life. Indeed there are admonitions and warnings to the sons of GOD concerning an undue consideration of them, but properly prioritized and used, these things are a blessing to the children of GOD. (see I Tim.6:6-11, Eph.4:28; Mat.6:33)

The young ruler's reluctance to part with his possessions was not the "thing that he lacked" but rather it was but a glaring symptom of what his true lack was. The "one thing" that he was devoid of was a knowledge of the "righteousness of CHRIST". The LORD confronted him with the wickedness of his own heart and he went away sorrowing. Perhaps he was brought to a repentance that needed not to be repented of, we have no way of knowing. But we do know that he lacked exactly the same thing that every son of Adam does by nature. That is a

perfect righteousness which can only be supplied by HIM who is pleased to “wound” HIS children, for their sin, and then to bind up those wounds by informing them (by the preaching of the gospel) of HIS power and purpose of imputing HIS righteousness to them.

This rich young ruler just like the multitude of religious zealots, erstwhile law keepers, and decisional regenerationists of our day, believed that he could somehow do something that would influence GOD to bless him. He (even as they) was ignorant that salvation is *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”* (Tit 3:5-7)

A man who does not stand clothed in the imputed righteousness of CHRIST alone, is an outcast from heaven’s glory and can in no wise enter its portals through any other means. Isaiah plainly labeled our righteousnesses (religious service, knowledge, obedience, etc.) as “filthy rags”. There is not one thing that a man can add to that which CHRIST has performed and provided for them for whom HE bled. HIS imputed righteousness is the missing ingredient in the salvation of any man. Yea, in fact it is the only ingredient upon which those who are redeemed by HIS blood find a place of acceptance in HIS righteous kingdom. *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* (2Cor 5:21)

As GOD is pleased to give HIS people faith to believe the gospel which HE has sent to be preached to every creature, they are made to rejoice that HE is their PEACE who has broken down all barriers between them and their Heavenly FATHER and has given them a conscience void of offence by the work of CHRIST their LORD. *“But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”* (Heb 9:11-14)

1 Not all the blood of beasts On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace, Or wash away the stain.
2 But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name And richer blood than they.
3 My faith would lay her hand On that dear head of thine;
While like a penitent I stand, And there confess my sin.
4 My soul looks back to see The burdens thou didst bear,
When hanging on the accursed tree, And hopes her guilt was there.
5 Believing, we rejoice To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice, And sing his bleeding love.

Isaac Watts #125 Gadsby’s Hymns

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:” (Heb 10:19-24)

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