

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

A DAY IN THY COURTS

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Psalms 84:10

We have all read the bumper sticker that says, "The worst day of fishing is better than the best day at work." This is something of the sentiment that is captured by David as he writes "a day in thy courts is better than a thousand (elsewhere)." This is the heart and mind of a man who is hungering and thirsting after righteousness and eschewing this world and all of its charms. There is no way to embrace both. How a man prioritizes his life is always an indicator of his true desire. The LORD said, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Mat 12:34) and "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Mat 6:24)

This world in which we live in is full of many substitutes for true spirituality. We see a veritable smorgasbord of doctrines and orders from which men might make their religious selections according to what will fit in with their lifestyles and desires with the least bit of interference. There are churches for cowboys and Indians, modernists and traditionalists, sports lovers, motorcyclists, those who like to hoop and holler, and those who are more sedate. There are selections for those who like a diet of milk, and for those who prefer meat (usually greatly tenderized and often unidentifiable), as well as those who only want dessert.

Yet that man in whom the SPIRIT of GOD dwells cannot be satisfied with any of these religious masquerades nor is he interested in fitting in a bit of religion into his busy lifestyle. He can only find true peace and fulfillment as he is given grace to dwell in the presence of the LORD. Job confessed the weakness and emptiness of his former religiosity contrasted with that vision which he had been given of the true and living GOD saying, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5-6)

Paul confessed the same thing, saying, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." (Phil 3:8-10)

The awakened child of GOD is not content with anything less than a close communion and fellowship with his LORD. This is his meat both day and night, as the SPIRIT of GOD works in him both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure. He is then as the bride in the Song of Solomon, who said, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye

tell him, that I am sick of love (i.e.; with love)." (Song 5:8) The quest of the LORD's children is to find the place where HE dwells and to enter therein. This is what moved David to write, *"How amiable (i.e.; lovely or desirable) are thy tabernacles, (i.e.; the tents of thy dwelling) O LORD of hosts!"* (Psa 84:1)

Stephen declared that *"the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet."* (Act 7:48) quoting from Isaiah the prophet who said, *"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"* (Isa 66:1)

There are many well meaning religious groups who have assumed that they are the repository of HIS truth and can insure the presence of the LORD in their midst by clinging to certain traditions, decorums, and rules of order, etc. as if this is what defines the dwelling place of the LORD. While all of these things may have some value yet it is clear in the scripture that the dwelling place of the LORD in the earth is with those who are of an humble and broken heart who tremble at the mention of HIS name. *"but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."* (Isa 66:2)

The beauty of the LORD's dwelling place is not in the shade of fabric from which its walls are made, or the type of carpet on its floor. None of the things which men can make or perpetuate can add anything to the beauty of the LORD's dwelling place. HE alone is the light of that city which needs neither the sun by day nor the moon by night, and it is HIS beauty and not those external trappings which make this a place where the free born sons of GOD delight to have their own dwelling with HIM.

Religious men will always prefer those places which are designed according to the standards of which they approve. They will ultimately choose those places in which they can exercise control even as the Pharisee's rejected CHRIST because HE threatened their seats of "authority". They love being able to point with pride at their seats of power and spheres of influence and of the distinctives which set them apart from others or fit their lifestyle.

The LORD is in the midst of HIS people according to Matthew 18:20. This is why John said, *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."* (1John 3:14) The reason the true children of GOD love one another is because the LORD is pleased to dwell in them. If we look at one another and begin to magnify each other's faults, we would soon depart from one another. Yet because the LORD is in the midst, then that place where GOD's people are gathered is a most delightful place to be. Prized above rubies and more precious than gold which perishes.

One of the greatest mysteries to me in all of the world is how some can profess to love JESUS CHRIST and live quite content without assembling themselves together with GOD's people. Or how they can continually pursue after other interests without regard to this assembling. How can a man love ONE whom he has not seen if he does not love those whom he has? *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* (John 13:35)

- 1 How pleasant, how divinely fair, O Lord of Hosts, thy dwellings are!
 With long desire my spirit faints, To meet the assemblies of thy saints.
- 2 Blest are the saints who sit on high, Around the throne of majesty;
 Thy brightest glories shine above, And all their work is praise and love.
- 3 Blest are the souls that find a place Within the temple of thy grace;
 There they behold thy gentler rays, And seek thy face, and learn thy praise.
- 4 Blest are the men whose hearts are set To find the way to Zion's gate;
 God is their strength, and through the road They lean upon their helper, God.

Gadsby's Hymns # 369 by Isaac Watts

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