

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

REMEMBER

And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing today. Deuteronomy 15:15

If any man in the scripture had reason to boast of his standing in CHRIST, it would have been Paul. He was a man who had a clear and startling conversion experience. (see Acts 9:3-18) He was a man acquainted with demonstrations of the power, of the HOLY GHOST. (see I Thes. 1:5) Left for dead and yet lived. (see Acts 14;19,20) Was beaten and injured for the cause of CHRIST and yet remained unbowed before his accusers. (see II Cor.11:23-33) Was caught up to the third heaven. (see II Cor.12:1-6) Saw the dead raised by his touch. (see Acts 20:9,10) Yet he confessed that he was the chief of sinners (see I Tim.1:15) and declared that the only reason he was what he was; was because of the mercy of GOD. *"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 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."* (1Cor 15:9-10) *"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy. "* (1Tim 1:13)

It is natural that men in the flesh should boast of their good fortune since they in general attribute it to their own effort in some measure. We are reminded of this when we hear "great" leaders and successful businessmen tell us how they picked themselves up by the bootstraps and made something of themselves. We are not surprised to see men operating in the religion of the flesh doing the same thing as they recount how they "let the LORD in their heart" or "decided for CHRIST". Men desire to be credited with having done something to secure their "salvation" as they might describe it. I heard a song on the radio just the other day wherein the singer said he was proud that he had sense enough to follow the way of CHRIST. Such talk as that reveals that a man has no understanding at all how it is that a man is brought to know the way of CHRIST.

The LORD set forth a principle before HIS disciples that was quite shocking. In fact it is so contrary to the natural thinking of man as to be thought ridiculous. No one in his "right mind" would ever embrace it. HE said, *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."* (Mat 5:38-44)

Peter (perhaps in a generous and charitable frame of mind) asked the LORD how many times he should forgive a man who had done him wrong, thinking that seven times was a magnanimous number. The LORD's answer was quite a bit more extensive than Peter imagined, telling him

“seventy times seven”. HE taught them the parable of the steward who was forgiven his own debt by his master only to exact every penny of a lesser debt from those who had become indebted to him. The master, finding out about his actions, had him bound and cast into debtors prison. The reason was that he had no regard to the forgiveness of his own debt which was the height of unthankfulness and ingratitude.

In instructing the Jews on the release of indentured servants from their debt after seven years the LORD told them to not only set them free but to give them, a portion of their own sheep, grain, and wine when they left. HE knew this would be an impossible thing for them to do cheerfully, so HE said, *“Remember that you were a slave in Egypt when I set you free”*. Then HE told them that the reason HE would have them forgive the debt of others is so that they might be reminded that they had been set free from the bondage of Egypt. How much more is that true for those who are set free from their sin by the work of CHRIST on Calvary. To this end Paul reminded the Corinthians of this when he said, *“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) We must forgive others in order that we might be reminded of HIS mercy.

A certain antidote to the pride of our religious flesh is to remember the place we were when the LORD found us. Ezekiel was given this admonition to deliver unto the nation of Israel, *“And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.”* (Eze 16:3-8)

May we ever remember that it is the LORD who redeemed us while we were yet in a place of rebellion and fighting against HIS every command. *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Rom 5:8)

May we ever remember that it is the LORD who sought us when we were seeking out our own pleasure and satisfied with our own way. *“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”* (Rom 3:11-12) *“For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?”* (Mat 18:11-12) HE brought us in a way which we knew not.

May we ever remember that, before we were slaves to sin, CHRIST became sin for us. *“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) Like the prodigal we had spent all and had nothing but filthy rags to show for it, yet HE has killed for us the fatted calf and taken us into HIS bosom.

May we ever remember that there is no place for boasting except in the cross of our LORD. *“things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”* (1Cor 1:27-31) We are reminded of HIS mercy to us each time HE enables us to show mercy to others. mam