

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XI

Issue 5

*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*

---

## EXHORTATION

*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue* *II Peter 1:3*

From time to time those who preach the free grace of GOD in the salvation of sinners, are accused of not exhorting the sons of GOD to seek after virtue and godliness. Nothing could be further from the truth since it is only as a man has a proper understanding of the basis upon which the sons of GOD have their standing with the LORD that true exhortation can be given and properly received.

Even as Paul instructed Timothy, *"Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."* (1Tim 4:13) Without a reading of the scriptures one cannot know what the scripture says. Without exhortation, the reading of the scriptures is like faith without works, for knowledge merely puffeth up. Without sound doctrine, exhortation becomes another excuse for the exercise of the religious flesh, which has caused many to go shipwreck desiring to be teachers of the law but not understanding the very things that they affirm.

If a man does not have a clear understanding of the perfect relationship which exists between the ONE who has saved HIS elect children and those sons who are thus redeemed, (not with works of righteousness which they have done, but by HIS own blood) then it is impossible to exhort the sons of GOD to pursue after godliness without mixing human endeavor with that which is the work of GOD alone. This is no grace at all but is a mongrel religion which has its greatest appeal to the innate religious bent of the natural man.

Some seem to view the salvation of sinners as a cooperative effort between the LORD who justifies them by HIS work on the cross and that which men perform by receiving what HE has done for them by applying themselves to obeying the things which HE has commanded them to do. These same teachers usually describe this as the work of sanctification which is primarily an activity performed by men, (in their understanding) either under some influence of the SPIRIT or just a matter of rote obedience by men themselves.

In this view of things it becomes necessary to remind those, who are undergoing this "sanctification" process, of their ongoing moral responsibilities which are set forth in what is often referred to as the "moral law". We certainly have no objection to high moral standards nor do we in any sense not declare that the law is righteous, just, and good. However, we have never discovered any who have kept that law whether they be "sinner" or "saint".

We are convinced that the salvation which CHRIST has provided for sinners, is the only "salvation" that will do them any good at all and that this salvation is complete in HIM. HE has not left any part of it undone or lacking, whether it be in justification, sanctification, or glorification. *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."* (1Cor 1:30) There is no sanctifying that which is sanctified.

So what is the purpose of exhortation. Simply put; it is to remind the sons of GOD (who are constantly beset with the warfare of the SPIRIT and the flesh) of the joys and glory of the

salvation which is given to them in CHRIST JESUS, and which is presently being made manifest in them by the power of the SPIRIT of GOD, who works in them both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure. *“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (II Pet 1:3-4)*

The salvation of GOD’s elect is not simply to provide a place for them to dwell in the ages to come, but rather to deliver them from this present evil world even while they are yet present in it. To this end HE has seen fit to indwell them with HIS SPIRIT whereby HE has written HIS law in their hearts and caused them to have a delight in godliness and a hatred of the sin which they discover in themselves. (see Rom.7:19-25) Thus HE told HIS disciples, *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)* *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (II Cor 5:17)*

Peter sets forth one of the strongest “exhortations” to the redeemed and called out sons of GOD that can be found in the scriptures. In this first chapter of his second epistle, he goes on to say, *“Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” (II Pet 1:5-7)*

The key to a proper understanding of what Peter is saying is found as we look at the word “add”. The English word “add” appears in the New Testament six times. Five of those times the Greek words essentially mean to “add or join to”. Yet the Greek word which is here translated as “add” appears only five times and is only translated as “add” in this one instance. The word more clearly means “minister”. In fact it is translated as “nourishment ministered” in Colossians 2:19 where it is speaking about CHRIST strengthening the body by that which every joint supplieth. (see Eph.4:16).

In writing to the Ephesians concerning the love of a husband for his wife Paul says, *“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.” (Eph 5:28-29)* This is the same picture that we see concerning these traits and characteristics which Peter says we should diligently “add”. Is he telling us to add or join our effort to the perfect work which CHRIST has done? Not at all.

James says we are to receive the “engrafted word” with all meekness. This plainly indicates a word (or law) which is “written in the heart” of those who are born again by the power of the SPIRIT of GOD. These traits which Peter exhorts the sons of GOD to diligently nourish (i.e.;add) are being wrought in them by the SPIRIT of GOD. Just as a husband who loves his wife nourishes and cherishes her, so the sons of GOD nourish and cherish these traits and desire to see them more clearly manifest in themselves. This is the work of the SPIRIT that causes them to delight in these virtues and to lament the efforts of the flesh to weaken them and overcome them. They are greatly encouraged when these traits are clearly seen for this ministers unto them much assurance. *“For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (II Pet 1:8)* Those that lack them are in ignorance and ultimately despair. (see v.9)

So these exhortations are not given to the sons of GOD for the purpose of stirring them up to self improvement but rather to remind them of those things which are truly precious to those who are indwelt by HIS SPIRIT. We are called to “virtue”, which literally means “manliness”. We are no more children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine but rather are to be *“speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” (Eph 4:15)* *“Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.” (II Pet 1:13)* *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:10)* mam