

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

THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH

Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth

Colossians 1:6

The writer of Hebrews (who we believe is most likely Paul) speaks about some who heard the word preached but were no better off by it. *"For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."* (Heb 4:2) We can conclude from this that gospel preaching, per se, is of no profit in and of itself to those under its sound, if there is not an accompanying work of the SPIRIT OF GOD attending it and granting the gift of faith whereby a man might both "hear it" and "believe it".

To this end Paul speaks to the Romans of this very scenario, *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"* (Rom 10:13-15)

In the present day the skill of "oration" is very often mistaken for the "gift of preaching" even as an appointment by a committee is sometimes, confused with being "sent by GOD". When GOD is pleased to "send" HIS word it will accomplish the desired task to which HE directs it. *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* (Isa 55:11)

The preaching of the gospel is never in vain even if it appears that none receive it. *"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"* (2Cor 2:14-16)

The primary purpose of preaching is not to produce "results" (which men can see or count), but is rather to magnify the Glory of GOD in the manifestation of CHRIST's redemptive work in the behalf of wicked sinners. Whenever the gospel is "sent" by GOD this will always be the central theme of that "preaching". This is why Paul said, *"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."* (1Cor 2:1-2)

While it is true that those who preach the gospel do not do so in order to produce results and that any results which may occur there from cannot necessarily be counted immediately; one would be in error to conclude that the true preaching of the gospel does not produce results when attended by the HOLY GHOST in those who are given the gift of faith. Even as Luke records for us in the book of Acts. *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."* (Acts 13:48)

As with all things having to do with men, faith too, must have a beginning. Yet one would be in error to conclude that the initial “*hearing*” of the gospel by one who is “*ordained* (i.e., marked out beforehand or predestined) *to eternal life*”, comprises the sum total of his “*belief*” in it. True faith is not temporary nor is it confined to certain times and experiences which mark the beginning of belief upon CHRIST. Rather, it is an operation which is begun and carried out in the sons of GOD over a lifetime by the power of the SPIRIT of GOD. This operation produces a condition which Paul describes as knowing the “*grace of GOD in truth.*”

What Paul expresses here has some similarities to that which the LORD JESUS CHRIST said to the woman at the well in Samaria. “*The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*” (John 4:23-24)

That worship which the LORD described to the Samaritan woman is not that which can be learned by following religious traditions. Rather this sort of worship is that which is the result of the LORD seeking out HIS people and causing them to worship HIM, by making known to them HIS presence. Instead of being taught by men to repeat various shibboleths and liturgies; the work of the SPIRIT in HIS people causes them to be taught by GOD HIMSELF. And so is brought to pass that promise and prophecy, “*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*” (Jer 31:33-34)

When a man knows “*the grace of GOD in truth*”, he will hunger after that truth. He will seek it out and count its value above rubies and gold. (see Prov.3:15; 8:10,11; 20:15) The Bereans are an example of those who buy the truth and sell it not. (see Acts 17:10,11; Prov 23:23)

When a man knows the “*grace of GOD in truth*” he will hunger after the grace of that truth. Paul said that he was in doubt (i.e.; extremely perplexed) about the Galatian’s faith (see Gal.4:20) since many of them had seemingly turned away from the grace which Paul clearly preached and were gone back to religious tradition and law keeping. There can be no mixture of grace and works in the minds of those who have fled for refuge to CHRIST. The law is not of faith, and if a man has known the “*grace of GOD in truth*”, how can he return to the beggarly elements of a fleshly religion. “*Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.*” (Rom 11:5-6)

If a man is ever taught the true condition of his natural heart by the revelation of the SPIRIT then he will have no confidence therein and will despair of any sort of salvation which is not owing one hundred percent to the grace of GOD. It is only then that he can be said to “*know the grace of GOD in truth*”. Such a man cannot help but rejoice in the message of free and sovereign grace as his understanding is opened and the glory of that grace is revealed in all of its fullness. This becomes the ground of his hope and he will be overjoyed in that which Paul declared saying, “*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (2Thess 2:13-14)

To “*know the grace of GOD in truth*” is to embrace the gospel of JESUS CHRIST without pretense. The affectations of religion with all of its external pomp and show cannot be that “*unfeigned faith*” of which Paul speaks. (see I Tim 1:5; II Tim 1:5) It is also to confess a hope in CHRIST without presumption or boasting even as Paul declared “*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 laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*” (1Cor 15:10)