

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

PAUL'S LEGACY

*But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose,
faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,*

II Tim 3:10

We often hear various Presidents and other public officials speak of their concern for their legacy and how they will be remembered. A certain amount of self-centeredness (ego) is always going to be in those who seek public office. It is simply a part of the corruptible nature of man which the LORD does ordain and direct in a useful manner. Nebuchadnezzar was given a clear insight into the nature of those in places of high leadership as he recounts that which the LORD revealed to him. *"To the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."* (Dan 4:17)

While this trait of desiring remembrance is prominent in politicians, there is a bit of it in all men born of Adam's race. One only has to ride by a cemetery and notice the monuments which are there, marking out the place where each one of the dead reside, to see that this is true. I have been to many funerals and memorial services over the years and I have never yet been to one where the deceased was not a most upstanding citizen, devoted family man, or else wise all around good person. Sometimes I feel like the fellow that stopped a funeral, (where the parson was waxing eloquent on the virtues of the deceased,) and snatched open the casket to see if the fellow he thought was being buried was actually the one who was in it.

The natural man desires not to be forgotten and so he is willing to heap accolades upon the departed, hoping that the favor will be returned to him when his time upon the earth is done. This is in large part what drives the funeral industry and factors into many of the common practices which are found in most funerals. One cannot find any grounds in the scriptures for the majority of these practices. The only case that we know of, recorded in the scriptures, regarding the burying of the dead among the early church, is with Ananias and Sapphira. No pomp and show of any type was practiced. (see Acts 5:5-10)

In Paul's words here to Timothy, we don't see him desiring to be remembered for the things which he had done. Rather he seeks to encourage Timothy to a faithful walk in the gospel by reminding him of those things which he saw and heard in Paul. Paul desired no accolades nor sought any monument erected in remembrance of him. He recounted (to the Philippians) the very grounds upon which he could, in the flesh, have reason to glory, yet he summed all of it up as *"dung"*. (see Phil 3:4-8) Paul clearly understood that any good thing which might be discovered in him was simply the result of the work of GOD, in him, by sovereign grace. *"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."* (1Cor 15:9-10)

When a man has been acquainted with his own corrupt nature and is convinced that only the grace of GOD causes him to differ from another, then the only place for him to glory is in that ONE who does all things well. *"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."* (2Cor 10:17) *"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)

Thus Paul, in his exhortation to Timothy, is merely recognizing that grace which the LORD has been pleased to exhibit in him, and his purpose in pointing this out to Timothy is that the NAME of CHRIST might be magnified in all things. As he said to the Romans, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Rom 1:16)* Therefore he exhorts Timothy to recall those things that the LORD has demonstrated in himself, so that he might not turn aside as many others did, desiring places of preeminence and seeking out a following. *“Thou hast fully known”:*

“My doctrine”. No one else in the scriptures has been given a clearer view of the teachings of CHRIST as they are to be applied among the saints, in the preaching of the gospel, than the Apostle Paul. This doctrine (i.e.; teaching) can be summed up in what he said to the Corinthians, *“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” (1Cor 2:2)* and as he reiterated to the Colossians. *“Christ is all.” (Col 3:11)*

Paul’s “doctrine” was not with *“enticing words”*, but in a demonstration of the power of the HOLY GHOST. Anyone can memorize a few Bible verses, learn to recite a creed, and even regale us with snippets of systematic theology, but true doctrine is that which is applied to the innermost part of the heart and not simply upon the ears of eager listeners. Paul was not much concerned with how much men knew but rather with how this truth was applied to their soul.

“Manner of life”. Paul did not say one thing and then do another. In fact he was not ashamed to say, *“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” (Php 3:17)* He said this not because he desired a “following” but because he desired a benefit to those he loved in CHRIST. He sought out nothing from his hearers but only that he might impart unto them some good thing.

“Purpose.” Paul was indeed a man with a single eye, he was focused upon the ONE OBJECT of his affection. His “purpose” was to exalt and honor JESUS CHRIST. No other motivation is to enter into the mind of those who would “follow him”, most especially those who have been called to preach the unsearchable riches of CHRIST. Any preaching which does not give all glory and praise to CHRIST alone, cannot be the preaching of the gospel of CHRIST. If it is the purpose of GOD to glorify HIS SON, then we must do no less.

“Faith”. Paul understood the SOURCE of FAITH as well as its FOUNDATION. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” (Eph 2:8)* *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1Co 3:11)* Paul understood that there are many foundations which men rely upon in addition to JESUS CHRIST. Yet he also declared that to find rest in anything other than CHRIST alone, is to perish with that faith. There are many “faiths”, but only ONE which is eternal. *“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” (Eph 4:5)*

“Longsuffering”. The LORD JESUS astonished HIS followers when HE told them, *“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, 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 5:43-44)* This is HIS commandment for HIS people as they interact with the world in general, yet it has its greatest test most often among those who are brethren in the LORD. Thus Paul exhorts the Philippians, *“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” (Php 2:3)*

“Charity.” *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” (Gal 5:13)* Paul understood that every event was an occasion to demonstrate love for the brethren rather than himself.

“Patience”. Paul was taught by the LORD that HIS grace is sufficient in all things. Perseverance in the faith, despite innumerable obstacles is a demonstration of the operation of faith. *“We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” (Rom 5:3-5)* mam