

# 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*

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## CHEERFUL MERCY

*He that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:8*

Paul's exhortations to the saints are not accompanied with threats as if he was writing to those whose minds are completely contrary to those things which they are exhorted unto. Nor does he seek to stir them up in their fleshly minds to go about these things with a sense of duty or obligation. Rather, he encourages them to wait upon the LORD, and to perform deeds of righteousness as those who, "*Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" (Rom 6:11)

It is the constant reminder of the SOURCE of their power and the example which CHRIST set that serves as the backdrop and basis of these exhortations. Even in the same manner as Peter, exhorted the saints, "*If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*" (1Pet 2:19-25)

Those who would exhort the sons of GOD must do so carefully, waiting upon the LORD for the proper unction and appropriate manner. Not as those who would browbeat, coerce, or lay heavy burdens upon their backs. Just because a man has the gift of oratory or holds a particular office in the church does not give him free reign to badger the saints with this duty or that.

Waiting upon proper "exhortation" is much more important than the actual activity of exhortation even as "waiting upon teaching" is much more useful than the "teaching" itself. Simply, because a man might possess the gift of teaching does not mean that he is a proper teacher. More time should be spent in the closet than in the study. Even as Peter said, "*But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*" (Act 6:4) There are far too many "professional" preachers and church office holders, who delight more in the presentation of the word than they do in the "preparation" to preach it. And there are many more that do not realize that the LORD is able to use "ignorant and unlearned" men to deliver HIS truth even though they hold no office and have no title and did not receive their "unction" from the library.

James says "*My brethren, be not many masters, (i.e. teachers) knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. (i.e.; held accountable to a higher standard)*" (James 3:1) He had preceded this admonition with this exhortation in chapter one, "*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*" (James 1:19) That man who is anxious to tell people what he knows and what they should do, is seldom the man who has "waited" upon his exhortation and teaching.

It is an unfortunate fact that many who style themselves as "teachers" or "preachers", (as well as the "hearers") are more concerned with the technique, method and timing of their delivery than

they are with waiting upon the LORD for the proper word. I have known of some who even adopt mannerisms, voice inflections, and accents from other teachers whom they may admire, expecting that such makes them more useful. Paul decries this saying, *“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. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”* (1Cor 2:1-4)

The work of the SPIRIT causes men to declare a crucified and risen CHRIST, (see John 16:13-14), without regard to the working or ability of the flesh. HE produces genuineness and takes away ulterior motives other than the glory of CHRIST. Thus Paul describes the nature of giving which is the product of HIS work in the sons of GOD. *“he that giveth let him do it with simplicity (i.e. sincerity and singleness of mind).”* The LORD spoke of this when HE said, *“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.”* (Mat 6:3)

Now while the LORD was specifically speaking about the “giving” of money, the principle is applied to all sorts of giving, especially as Paul refers to it here. Whether one is giving of the gifts which have been bestowed upon him by the SPIRIT, or giving of one’s time in helping the saints, or in the bearing of one another’s burdens, let it all be done with simplicity, not motivated by any desire for recognition or to gain favor in any sense.

This word “simplicity” is translated as “singleness of heart” in Paul’s exhortation to the Colossians. *“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”* (Col 3:22-23) This serves to perfectly illustrate the sense of Paul’s exhortation for how GOD’s children are to give of themselves unto the brethren and forms the very basis of his exhortation to them, to show mercy with cheerfulness.

Paul writes to the Corinthians about the attitude that should prevail in those who are moved to give (in this case of their money). *“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”* (2Cor 9:7) The root word in the Greek for “cheerful and cheerfulness” is the very basis from which we get our English word, hilarious. One would not associate duty and drudgery with that which is “hilarious” and so we learn from the contrast between this and “necessity”, as to how we are to show mercy.

Mercy is never deserved or else it could not be called mercy. True mercy can only be dispensed by HIM who has declared, I *“will show mercy to whom I will show mercy”* (Ex.33:19) But HE has taught us by HIS example to be those who gladly show mercy unto others and has enabled us by HIS SPIRIT to rejoice in mercy. *“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; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?”* (Mat 5:44-46)

A man who claims to be born of the SPIRIT of GOD, holding grudges and harboring an unforgiving spirit towards his fellow man, and most especially his brethren in CHRIST is an anomaly in the kingdom of GOD. For the LORD said; *“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”* (Mat 6:15) May we be those who in the spirit of giving with cheerfulness, be those who show mercy with the same delight.

Many look upon forgiveness as a duty, when in reality, it is a great privilege to be chosen as a vessel of mercy that we might demonstrate the delight which our SAVIOR expressed in giving HIMSELF for us. *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy (i.e.; cheerfulness) that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* (Heb 12:2) mam