

# 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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## SINCERITY

*Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Ephesians 6:24*

The Apostle Paul was a man given a mission and would not be deterred from the accomplishment of that assignment. He told Timothy that his preaching was “According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust (i.e. given to me).” (1Tim 1:11) He recounted his calling to the Galatians, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:” (Gal 1:15-16)

There are many in the present day (and even since the beginning) who believe that men can decide to preach the gospel whenever they want to. They look at it as a vocation which a man chooses, prepares for, and obtaining the proper “credentials” then pursues just like any other profession which a man might undertake.

This notion is foreign to any example or instruction which is found in the scriptures. If a man is to be a proclaimer of the gospel, he must be called and equipped for it by HIM who says of HIMSELF, “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.” (Isa 46:9-11)

Many are those who have mistaken oratory for “prophecy” (i.e.; telling the truth) and charisma for calling. And there are multitudes of “teachers” (of various stripes) who have sought a following and pursued their supposed calling by selling themselves to the highest bidder. Paul is an excellent example of one who had no concern for payment for his “services” but had as his first priority preventing any hindrances to the accomplishment of his purpose. “Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.” (1Cor 9:12)

He clearly taught that it was only right that those who benefit from sound teaching should not neglect the source of that teaching, “Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.” (1Cor 9:9) Yet he chose not to use this “power”, since he was as much (perhaps more) concerned with the example that he set among the brethren as he was with the words which he spoke. “Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it.” (1Cor 4:11-12)

Thus he instructed the Ephesian elders with tears, “I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Act 20:33-35) This is the exact teaching which Peter also set forth saying, “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.” (1Pet 5:2-3)

We could characterize Paul's “ministry” among the saints as being done in true “sincerity”. The LORD JESUS said, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” (Mat 6:21-22) As

Paul ministered to the saints he expected that those who claimed to be the followers of CHRIST would be those who *“love the LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity”*. For such are the true disciples of CHRIST. Those who do not love HIM in “sincerity” are in reality false brethren or those who have a name that they live but are dead. (see Rev.3:1)

The manifestation of the SPIRIT in the sons of GOD will be done *“in sincerity”*. There are no still born sons of GOD, none who are misshapen, and none who despise the work which HE would perform in them. The Greek word which is translated as sincerity in Eph.6:24 literally means, “without corruption”. Its use here is akin to saying “without hypocrisy” or that which is true. Some scholars believe (though others dispute it) that our English word “sincere” comes from the Latin word “cere” (tr.; wax) and the prefix “sin” (i.e.; without) or “without wax”. They believe that this stems from the practice of repairing flawed sculptures. If a sculptor was not highly skilled and unscrupulous, he might break off a piece of the sculpture in the process and then he would use a special kind of wax to “glue” the broken piece back on or to patch a defect. Thus a sculpture that was “sincere” was said to be without wax. In any event the word sincere means pure and unflawed.

The work of the SPIRIT in the sons of GOD produces a love for the TRUTH of GOD. Those who do not possess this “love of the TRUTH” are described as *“them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.”* (2Thes 2:10-11) To reject the TRUTH and embrace a lie concerning the PERSON and work of CHRIST is to be without a love of the truth, and without the sincerity which Paul speaks of here.

The work of the SPIRIT in the sons of GOD causes them to recognize the truth, when they are enabled to hear it. *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”* (John 10:27) Paul describes the function of the preaching of the gospel as; *“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”* (2Tim 1:10-11) He describes his determination in this preaching, *“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”* (2 Cor 2:17)

The work of the SPIRIT in the sons of GOD produces an unfeigned (i.e.; sincere) love of their brethren in CHRIST. *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”* (1John 3:14-15) *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”* (1Pet 1:22)

The work of the SPIRIT in the sons of GOD manifests a faith which is also “unfeigned” or not corrupted. *“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”* (1Tim 1:5) He goes on to say that some have indeed turned from this “unfeigned faith”, demonstrating their lack of the SPIRIT’s work.

This unfeigned faith is discovered in saints of every station and calling in life and is the source of much encouragement of one to the other as each esteems the other better than themselves. *“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.”* (2Tim 1:5) This is why the saints are exhorted to bear one another’s burdens, *“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”*(Heb10:24-25)

This work of the SPIRIT in the sons of GOD produces in them the fruit of the SPIRIT just as Paul expresses his desire for them; *“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”* (Php 1:9-11) *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”* (Php 4:8) This is the demonstration of a “sincere love of CHRIST” who gave us HIS EXAMPLE. mam