

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

SAVING FAITH

And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. Luke 17:19

All of the religious endeavors of the flesh are designed to bring glory to the “faithful”. Modern day “evangelists” compass land and sea to make “converts”, glorying in the numbers that they can attract to hear them. They use many tactics to cajole their hearers into making “decisions for CHRIST”, which are supposedly evidence of many being “saved”, from the fires of hell, the evils of many vices, and the pathways of sadness. Many of them promise prosperity (of joy or money, etc) for those who will be “faithful”. There are some who claim to be able to heal them of their diseases of flesh and mind as long as they have faith. Of course all of these “endeavors” must have money to continue, so they are not bashful in most cases about reaching in the pockets of their hearers and claiming their cold hard cash. After all, they tell men that the LORD needs them to give or HE may not be able to “save” anybody else. In all of this I am reminded of something the LORD said, in upbraiding the Pharisees, *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!”* (Mat 23:14-16)

The main purpose of “preaching the gospel” is to magnify the NAME of the SAVIOR. Through that magnification, the LORD is pleased to bring the knowledge of CHRIST to those whom HE gives ears to hear it. *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 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.”* (2Tim 1:9-10)

The LORD will not share HIS glory with any. Any message which does not have the exaltation of CHRIST as its main goal, through the proclamation of that work which HE has performed for sinners, in obtaining eternal redemption for them, cannot be the gospel of the “glory of the blessed GOD” as Paul described it. The LORD spoke of both the death HE would die and of HIS subsequent magnification in the preaching of the Gospel when HE said, *“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”* (John 12:32)

We see this illustrated quite plainly as Phillip met the Ethiopian Eunuch, whose heart the LORD had prepared, *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”* (Acts 8:35) Just like those Jews that heard Peter on the day of Pentecost, this Ethiopian inquired about the course he should take. Phillip then told him the only requirement to being baptized in the NAME of CHRIST. And he confessed, *“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”* (Acts 8:37) This interaction is quite different than the modern day “persuaders” who present the gospel as an offer which a man may choose as easy as picking out a pair of socks at WalMart. They use every trick in the book to get folks to take them up on this offer, assuring them that their salvation depends upon their activity and not solely on that which CHRIST has done.

The underlying error in this travesty is an ignorance of the FAITH that saves. The common thought promoted by the “offerers” of salvation is that the faith which enables a man to be saved,

is an activity which arises out of his free will choice to follow CHRIST. They believe that a man is justified "when" he believes, making "faith" to be a subject which men are encouraged to produce.

The scripture is quite clear that the action of faith is the gift of GOD. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* (Eph 2:8-9) More importantly, though, by the grace of GOD we are made to understand that the action of faith, while present in all of those who believe, is not the actual basis or grounds of their justification. Rather the ONE who is the OBJECT of that faith is the JUSTIFIER. The sons of GOD believe that they are "justified by CHRIST", who is their SALVATION. The action of faith is wrought in the sons of GOD by HIM who makes HIS people willing in the day of HIS power. Just as Abraham, *"believed GOD"*, so too do all of those who are called out of darkness and into the glorious light of the Gospel, which they are made to hear and believe.

Abraham was not justified by the act of believing. Rather HE was justified by the ONE in whom he believed. Belief, in itself, is of no real value, if the OBJECT of one's faith is misplaced. Thus, the preaching of the gospel is not about trying to get men to "believe", but rather the exaltation of HIM who is both *"just and the JUSTIFIER"* of those that believe. We must preach JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified, for there is no other NAME under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. This is no open-ended offer, but is the declaration that JESUS CHRIST came into the world to save HIS people from their sins and HE has accomplished that very work. *"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."* (Heb 9:11-12)

The LORD healed the physical ailments of ten lepers in a village on HIS way to Jerusalem. HE sent them to the priests (according to the Law of Moses), where their healing was made manifest. Only one out of the ten, returned to give HIM thanks, glorifying GOD for his deliverance. He was a lowly "Samaritan", which people were despised by the Jews. The LORD recognized the singularity of his praise and thanksgiving, which was not to be seen from the other nine.

In this account we are taught the nature of saving faith. We see the nine receiving the blessing of the healing of their natural bodies, which no doubt they rejoiced in. Yet just like the carnal multitude that followed the LORD for the loaves and fishes, they were quite satisfied to consume these blessings upon their own lusts and desires. The LORD said *"Many are called but few are chosen."* in order that HE might teach the preciousness of HIS grace and the great privilege it is to be called the sons of GOD.

This one leper who returned to give glory to the LORD recognized from whose hand his healing had come. Perhaps the other nine just chalked it up to doing what HE told them to do. Many are those, who, when asked about the basis of their "salvation" will tell us that they believed when they were ten years old or they can recount some time and place when they "gave their heart to the LORD". It is rare however to find those who simply give glory to GOD for snatching them as a brand from the burning, confessing that apart from HIS mercy they would surely perish even now.

This one leper recognized that his healing was of greater value than simply being set free from leprosy, for he gave testimony that he was set free in mind and heart as he worshipped at the footstool of CHRIST without being told to do so. The work of the SPIRIT of GOD in him prompted HIS response and filled his mouth with praises and rejoicing to the ONE who set him free.

The LORD testified *"thy FAITH hath made thee whole"*. The other nine evidently "believed" that there was at least the possibility of their healing, as they went to the priest, just like the LORD told them to. Their "belief" however did not make them "whole". Only the one who returned, glorifying GOD, manifested that he did not simply "believe", but that he recognized the ONE from whose hand this healing came. The FAITH which made him whole was JESUS CHRIST who is the OBJECT of all saving faith. *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."* (Eph 1:11-14) mam