

**The Long War Against God:
“The Preaching of the Kingdom of God by Paul - Part 3”**

Introduction:

Paul’s distinctive revelation for members of the Body of Christ regarding Christian living. This is all about what God is doing today, under grace, what therefore the kingdom of God is today. For the Kingdom of God is all about what God the creator, savior, and redeemer is doing now, today. And grace reigns today (Rom. 5:21).

Paul’s teachings in his letters reveal in detail how such a failure to fully grasp on to the dynamic of God’s working under grace may be realized. He shows us the only way that we may have hope regarding those powers that dwell within us and rule in the world around us.

He often writes about the life we have as believers which he calls in Romans “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). This is not merely a different way of writing about law keeping by adding the Holy Spirit as so many anti-dispensational writers are teaching.

Paul often does however bring in the law when writing about this subject. But he writes of it “negatively” in all cases. The most positive things he says about the law have to do with “love fulfilling it” in Gal. 5:14 & 1 Cor. 13:8-9 and that it is “good” in Rom. 7:12, 13, 16. Taken in their proper contexts we can properly understand what Paul means in these letters.

So we see that Paul’s exhortations and teachings on the working out of grace in the life of a believer are not rehashings of the law, whether the Law of Moses or the Kingdom Law as presented by the prophets in the O.T. or by our Lord and his apostles in the N.T. Rather Paul’s teachings show how the flesh which we still possess as believers today, a nature of sin still dwelling within each of us, is the source of so much evil in the lives of believers.

Paul’s revelation for members of the Body of Christ regarding CHRISTIAN LIVING UNDER GRACE, are distinctive indeed! We have considered this in our previous two fellowships in relationship to Paul’s preaching of the Kingdom of God. In the Bible the kingdom of God is all about what God is doing in this

world at that particular place and time and varies therefore greatly from one dispensational context to another. Today grace reigns and for us, at least, that should make all the difference (Rom. 5:21).

Paul writes about “newness of life” in his letter to the Romans (Rom. 6:4). When he does so he is not merely a different way of writing about law keeping by adding the Holy Spirit as so many anti-dispensational writers are teaching. This is one of the greatest errors in Bible teaching, ignoring to the detriment of God’s Body Church the dynamic empowering of the believer today by his abundant grace. The grace of Christ is ignored entirely or misstated leading believers today to assume that we are today living under a kind of “kingdom law” instead of grace.

Through his teachings, taken in the contexts in these letters, we understand that his writing on the subject of the Christian life under grace are not merely restatements of the law in a “post-Cross” or “new testament” sense, but rather that Paul’s teachings show how the flesh which we still possess as believers today, a nature of sin still dwelling within each of us, is the source of so much evil in the lives of believers.

I HAVE USED THE WORD SIMPLICITY RECENTLY IN THIS REGARD, EVEN -- THE SIMPLICITY OF JESUS CHRIST. FOR IT IS IN FACT REALLY ABOUT THE COMPLETED WORK FOR US BY OUR LORD ON CALVARY’S CROSS. AND THAT IS SIMPLICITY INDEED WHEN WE PROPERLY COMPREHEND IT. Paul’s teaching regarding the abundant life are so far different from what had been revealed for Israel under the Law that there is really NO COMPARISON. THIS IS SIMPLICITY INDEED!

Review:

- *We have seen how Paul challenged the Corinthian believers with these words:*

2 Cor. 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, **not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God**, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

- *My conviction is that most of the church and most believers therefore have not grasped onto the meaning of this because they are so focused on themselves and “their” obedience as their teachers and preachers continue to demand of them that the true GRACE OF CHRIST may not have even entered their minds.*
- *We further looked specifically at the teaching concerning LIBERTY IN CHRIST JESUS as Paul wrote of it in the great letter to the Romans:*
 - *The Romans contains much teaching on the Christian life and how to live life to the fullest, under grace, and NOT UNDER THE BONDAGE OF A LEGAL SYSTEM, WHETHER MOSAIC OR OTHERWISE. Rom. 5-8, 12, 13 etc. We spent nearly all of our time in our last fellowship there in chapter 6.*
- *Note the contrast here between the law and the liberty of the believer due expressly to the relationship between the law and the flesh or sin nature. Let’s break this down a little to see how the dynamic of grace operates:*
 - *Verses 1 & 2: The great question, “Shall we continue in sin?”*
 - *Verses 3 - 7: Our identification with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection -- it makes all the difference.*
 - *Verses 8 - 10: The basis for our hope is in his new quality of life and our participation in that.*
 - *Verses 11 - 14: Here the dynamic of living under grace is revealed. KNOW - RECKON - YIELD summarizes it.*
- *Because we are not under the law, we are free -- and the profound consequence of this is that the bondage of sin has been broken. However, the sin nature remains in us and if we place ourselves back under the law, the sin nature responds in power and our eventual defeat according to Romans 7:*

There are many other places in Paul’s letters where he addresses this most important subject, how to live under grace.

This is not (I must reemphasize) just a different flavor on the Mosaic and Kingdom legal teachings. That is a great error being propagated by so many. There is such a large difference between legal teaching and grace that we need

to start there with that today. We will then look at the Pauline teaching in more detail and finish up with some gracious exhortations again from the pen of the Apostle Paul. The profound and critically important teach Paul gives in his letters is not just style or emphasis, but a different teaching altogether because the work of God today under grace is NOT THE SAME AS the working of God under law. To confuse the two leads to bondage and purely religious works. That is NOT the essence of God's working under grace today.

I. Gracious Exhortations versus Legal Exhortations

- *The essence of law and legal promises and covenants is that obedience brings blessings and disobedience bring the opposite, judgments. Grace, on the other hand, is very different. In some ways it is the exact opposite, providing freely the blessings promised but then expecting fruitfulness based on those gracious provisions. Grasping this critical difference is so important.*

- **Compare with Moses Law:**
 - *Ex. 19:6* And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These [are] the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

 - *Ex. 23:22*
But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

 - **[READ] Deut. 28:45-47**
45 Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee:
46 And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.
47 Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all [things];

- ***God promised to Israel that they would themselves be in his appointed time “a kingdom” - this promise points prophetically far forward and awaits fulfilment at the second coming of our Lord Jesus to this earth.***
- ***If we move ahead in time some centuries to the time of King David, we see a further elaboration of these kingdom promises. The unconditional aspect of the kingdom promises is again mentioned but in addition there is a conditional requirement given.***
- ***THE BOTTOM LINE: Law in its very essence requires obedience or otherwise judgment will always follow in God’s timing, WHILE GRACE IS JUST THE OPPOSITE, GOD’S RICHES AT CHRIST’S EXPENSE.***

See Deut. 27-30 for the details of the Mosaic Law for the Jews. Chapter 29:29 is a fitting summary of all of this:

The secret [things belong] unto the LORD our God: but those [things which are] revealed [belong] unto us and to our children for ever, that [we] may do all the words of this law.

II. A Great Analogy Paul Often Uses - Putting on a Garment

- ***Gal. 3:27*** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
- ***Eph. 6:11*** Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- ***One of these references what God has already done for us while the other references what our response ought to be as we respond to what God has already freely done for every one of us. Praise the Lord for God’s abundant grace.***
- ***Compare with another gracious exhortation:***

[READ] Rom. 13:8-14

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if [there be] any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling of the law.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now [it is] high time to awake out of sleep: for now [is] our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof].

- ***The essence of law and legal promises and covenants is that obedience brings blessings and disobedience bring the opposite, judgments. Grace, on the other hand, is very different.***

- ***KEY EXHORTATION UNDER GRACE (Rom. 6:11-14: Know - Reckon - Yield***
 - ***Know: We must KNOW the identification truths or we cannot proceed to the next step.***
 - ***Reckon: Once knowing the identity with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection, we may RECKON by faith on (or COUNT ON) on these truths taking them as reality for us now and forever***
 - ***Yield: Then while reckoning, we may bear fruit as we actively PRESENT or YIELD our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God.***

- ***So UNDER GRACE, we receive by faith the finished work of Christ for us and in so doing, by the Spirit we bear fruit as Gal. 5 details. . .***

III. Paul's Teaching for Us Today Emphasizes the Holy Spirit's Work:

- **[READ] Gal. 5:3-6**

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

- *Here the apostle explains the critical difference between the Law and Grace.*
- *Note the reference to the Spirit here. But it is important to see that Paul is not explaining that the Law still demands our obedience and that we are obligated regarding it. Instead he says:*
 - *The consequence of the attempt to fulfil the law is very serious indeed. What a difference no doubt with what the false teachers were requiring of the believers who would submit to their demands. He selects circumcision for an example but references ALL the law and its requirements.*

IV. Some Examples of Gracious Exhortations:

- **[READ] Eph. 4:1-7**

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 [There is] one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who [is] above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

- **[READ] Col. 3:1-4, 8-17 [See also Eph. 4:22-24]**

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, [who is] our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

. . .

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new [man], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond [nor] free: but Christ [is] all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also [do] ye.

14 And above all these things [put on] charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

- ***Note that the Holy Spirit of God is in the center of all of these teachings. How Does the Holy Spirit Work in All of This? - Next time, Lord willing.***
- ***Note also that there is no reference to the Mosaic Law (or to Kingdom Law) and to the conditional necessity of obedience to that law. This is most important.***

[Your Comments / Questions?]

Some Closing Words:

- ***We could go on and on with all that Paul has written regarding this.***
- ***These scriptures we have looked at today launch us into the heart of Paul's teaching. The Law is effectively replaced in Paul's teaching with the Holy Spirit of God and his working under grace in the life of the believer.***
- ***Enjoy, all, as you constantly receive by faith the abundance of his grace and his power to live a life here truly to the fullest, and all by his grace. Life apart from the dynamic power of his grace is not reigning but submission to powers that will enslave you to the flesh. Life in the spirit will set you free! Enjoy!***

[Your comments / questions?]