

**Monthly Grace Fellowship
Milford, July 2, 2017**

**“Basic Bible Doctrines:
Good Works Under Grace”**

Tit. 2:11-15

Theme Verses:

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Rom. 4:5

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” Rom. 7:24-25

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” Gal. 3:19

“. . . looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Tit 2:13-14

Review:

- ***What was the Law all about? In summary, he has written extensively (and we considered many scriptures over the past several months) . . .***
 - ***Concerning the indwelling sin nature (Rom. 7), regarding our salvation (Rom. 4:4-5), and finally in reference to our sanctification (Gal. 3:11-14)***
 - ***Regarding all three, Paul’s answer is a negative. It does not relate at all. And this is true even for Jews!***

- ***A central teaching on the Law is given in Gal. 3:19-26:***

Gal. 3:19-26

19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

- *The revelation of the promises to Abraham and his seed had not been well received by the nation of Israel as demonstrated during the nation's weeks in the wilderness after the Exodus. Therefore the Law was given that they might know their sin much more thoroughly than before and that it might always be before their eyes, their consciences having become so hardened that they turned to idolatry and pagan religion in the Golden Calf rebellion. So the Law was given. And, through the Law, they learned that they were even "desparately wicked! This means that the Law was not given to the children of Israel as a blessing, but rather as a curse.*
- *Now there were also other aspects of the Law that were given to separate Israel from the nations. Circumcision was reasserted as well, having been passed down from Abraham. But that was not distinctive for Israel, of course. There was much teaching through Moses regarding the dietary regulations imposed on the nation of Israel. There were also rules regarding marriage and divorce, regarding the government God imposed under Moses, and, finally, the revelations about the priesthood and the ceremonial law.*
 - *The Law of Moses was given twice, once just after the Exodus (recorded beginning in Exodus chapter 20) and then again*

after the nearly 40 year wandering in the wilderness of Sinai (recorded in the book of Deuteronomy). A quotation or two from Deuteronomy are valuable for our understanding:

Deut. 6:24-25

24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.

25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

Deut. 11:1-28

1 Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway.

2 And know ye this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm,

3 And his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land;

4 And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the LORD hath destroyed them unto this day;

5 And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place;

6 And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel:

7 But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD which he did.

8 Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it;

9 And that ye may prolong your days in the land, which the

LORD sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

10 For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs:

11 But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven:

12 A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

14 That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

15 And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.

16 Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;

17 And then the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.

19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:

21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in

all his ways, and to cleave unto him;

23 Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

24 Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

25 There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day:

28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

- ***With that background, let us get back to our review. We spent some considerable time a while ago discussing the term used here: “pedagogue” (verses 24 & 25). There are many commentators who still try to cast this teaching in a purely positive light regarding the giving and purpose of the Law, as if the Law was given in order that the children of Israel might be benefited regarding righteousness by showing exactly what God required of them and therefore assuring God’s merciful acceptance of them and salvation. But just the opposite was the result as verses 22 & 23 highlight. The “pedagogue” kept the young person in bondage under his rules and regulations. That was his or her problem until the age of accountability. After that point the “child” was considered an adult with full rights and privileges.***
- ***Yes, a true believer living under that Law was able to rejoice in that law as is indicated often in the Psalms, in the Prophets and elsewhere. But the burden was a reality and there was no escape. Obedience WAS REQUIRED. Salvation “under the law” was therefore based on the promise given to Abraham as Paul shows so clearly in Romans and in Galatians. It was never related at all to the Mosaic Law. What the Law had to do with was the life of the children***

of Israel in the Land of Promise that the Lord God had promised to soon give them -- if they obediently obeyed the voice of the Lord after crossing the river Jordan.

Summary of the Pauline Teaching Regarding Law (the Verses):

- ***"The law was added 'because of transgressions'" (Gal. 3:19)***
- ***"The law entered that the offence might abound" (Rom. 5:20)***
- ***"The law encouraged the sinful passions" (Rom. 5:5)***
- ***"The law made sin to be fully known in all of its depth" (Rom. 7:7).***
- ***"The law was a pedagogue or 'child trainer' until Christ should come" (Gal. 3: 24)***
- ***"The law was never intended for the righteous -- but was given for sinners" (1 Tim. 1:9)***
- ***"The law was not intended to provide life, an inheritance or righteousness" (Gal. 2:21; 3:18, 21)***
- ***"The law never made anything perfect" (Heb. 7:19)***
- ***"The law provided only a shadow of good things still future" (Heb. 10)***
- ***"The law was the basis for God's curse upon the Jew." because of their disobedience (Gal. 3:10; Neh.10:29; Dan. 9:11)***

So the Pauline teaching should be clear. Since Paul so clearly has stated the purpose and intent of the Law, why are so many imposing it still upon us?

Gal. 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Your comments?

Our Key Question Last Time: "Works or Fruit - What Should Our Focus Be?"

To answer it, we asked another related question: What is the relationship today between the believer and "good works"?

Since we are not under the law but under grace, does it therefore follow logically that from God's point of view our works are irrelevant? Chapter 5, verses 16-26 answer those questions in a way we might not have expected. In fact, the expression "good works" is not even found there or anywhere in the Galatians letter although much teaching regarding this is found in Romans, Ephesians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Hebrews.

So "good works" is a major subject of Paul's letters. Paul simply exhorts that "grace" believers ought not to "forget" good works, for they are helpful to many, especially other believers. This is quite different from under the Kingdom Gospel and rule, for example, where good works are the central focus in the believer's witness to the lost. Titus 3:8!

The Key Scripture Passage On the Fruit of the Spirit:

Gal. 5:16-26

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
17 For [or, in that case] the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
18 But [or, indeed] if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do [practise] such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

The Teaching in Gal. 5 (Repeated from our last lesson):

- ***Verse 16: We find here an exhortation to "walk appropriately" and its consequence. But the correct interpretation of this verse is that it states a***

consequence that assumes that a condition has been and is being fulfilled -- that we are in fact walking by the Spirit. This is a profound statement and is in effect a promise. This truth is at the heart of the Christian life of the believer under grace.

- **Verses 17: This verse is the explanation (see the word “for” at the beginning) of verse 16. In that case (and in that case alone) as verse 16 indicates, the Holy Spirit defeats the power of the flesh providing liberty and the opportunity to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. Otherwise, the flesh dominates and its works are the result. Those works are never pleasing to God. Never!**
- **Verse 18: This is the condition of man: There is a great contrast between the life of the Spirit and the life under the law (remember Romans chapter 7). The two are fundamentally different.**
- **Verses 19-21: The works of the flesh are here enumerated (in part, and they cannot be listed in full, of course). These works are inevitable if one is not walking by the Spirit.**
- **Verse 22-23a: The greatest contrast to evil works is the fruit of the Spirit.**
- **Verse 23b: This is a profound statement regarding the law - our life in the Spirit is so different from what the law is able to produce that the two do not even relate, or, in Paul’s inspired words here, “Against such there is no law!”**
- **Verses 24-26: The essence of the abundant Christian life is powerfully outlined. May we take it to heart.**
- **There are essentially two possible interpretations here:**
 - 1) **A common non-dispensational or “covenant” view is that verse 16 is a combination of a positive and a negative with the latter part being a negative prohibition : “Walk in the Spirit and (in other words) you MUST NOT carry out the lusts of the flesh!” In other words, this is the regulation, the law of God, regarding the life of the believer. But there is no hope for victory then, at least not that is identified here. One somehow is to call on the Holy Spirit to provide a special and**

temporary empowering for victory over sin as an active thing. This goes contrary to the illustration given in Eph. 5:18 “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit . . .” where the connection with the Holy Spirit is not active but passive. Another similar passage is in Rom. 6 regarding the “reckoning”.

According to this view verse 17 of Gal. 5 states the permanent conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. Again, but there is no empowering here for victory.

- 2) **Our view, on the other hand, is that Verse 17 is explanatory to verse 16 and states what is happening WHEN and ONLY WHEN the condition of verse 16, the “walking by the Spirit” is occurring. When we are “walking” as God intends (compare with “living” in verse 25), we are RESTING from the battle against the flesh since the Holy Spirit has at that point taken over the battle entirely. OTHERWISE, the battle would necessarily continue -- AS IT ALWAYS MUST WHEN ONE IS PLACING ONESELF UNDER A LAW, WHETHER THE LAW OF MOSES OR ANY OTHER LAW. This is clearly a radically different interpretation and one that fits the context of this chapter so well along with the teachings found elsewhere in Paul’s letters such as in Eph. 5 and Rom. 6 - 8.**

One further point to be added, is this: This passage does not give a “rule” or provide a “method” for victory in the Christian life over our enemies. If it did, it would encourage lawlessness, and be against true victory, as such things always short-circuit the working of grace in one’s life. Amen.

Discussion of the Essence of Christian Liberty:

- **Do we understand Paul’s teaching on fruit in contrast to the works of law?**
 - **If not, why not? What is the problem? The difficulty? Is it a personal history of having been taught a doctrine of law instead of grace and attempting to live up to that standard for so long, looking all the while for some new way to gain victory over the ever present enemies of the flesh, of the world, and of Satan and his minions?**

- **Paul never teaches that the Law of Moses Law as a means of gaining righteousness with God. He knew that it could not and was not so intended. It would be a great blessing of Bible teachers everywhere had learned the same.**
- **Grace is a very tender plant. We must be very careful to tend it with care and never feed it with religion and legalisms for, as the Apostle writes, they are most deadly. Amen.**
- **Your thoughts? Questions? Are we ready to go on?**

Good Works and the Believer Under Grace:

The Scriptures:

Paul mentions good works in a number of places in his letters. He does not mention it in Galatians, however, and only once in Romans. And, it is also not mentioned in 1 & 2 Corinthians, in Philipians, in Colossians, in 1 & 2 Thessalonians or in Philemon although references to works that are appropriate to the Christian life are often referred to in one way or another (see, for example, the 1 Cor. 3:11 passage, the Judgment Seat of Christ, where the subject is works but in that context, it seems, works especially in ministry).

The complete list of Pauline verses including the expression “good works” is this (eleven references): Rom. 13:3, Eph. 2:10, 1 Tim. 2:10, 5:10, 25, 6:18; 2 Tim. 3:17; Tit. 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14

There are two other main references as well in the New Testament to “good works”, and they are well known by many but are not Pauline:

- **In the Sermon on the Mount - this is the only reference explicitly to “good works” in Christ’s earthly ministry. The context there is all about obedience to the complete the Law of Moses:**

Matt. 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

- **There is also an application of this for the Jewish saints Peter that he was writing to in his first letter:**

1 Pet. 2:12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

That is the complete list of references except for one further in the book of Acts regarding Dorcas (Tabitha):

Acts 9:36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

Let's now select just four of the Pauline scriptures on good works to learn more of what Paul actually teaches regarding this important subject.

Eph. 2:8-10

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Tit. 2:11-15

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Tit. 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou **affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.**

Tit. 3:14-15

14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

- ***Eph. 2:10 is all about God's work in the believer under the fullness of his grace. The point of verse 10 is that the believer is energized by the creative power of God "unto good works". So it is the energizing of God's grace that has provided the basis and empowering for our walk under grace. Praise the Lord for a transformed life! The healthy tree naturally bears fruit, as the analogy so clearly teaches.***
- ***Tit. 2 & 3 are most blessed. They again, as in Eph. 2, speak of the grace of God and how it works in believers (or should).***
 - ***In chapter 2 we see that the work of God is that we have been "redeemed" from "all iniquity", and we have been "purified" "unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."***
 - ***Chapter 3 is a reminder to not forget those good works. We are to be reminded because "These things are good and profitable unto men" and also because there are some "necessary uses". This word "necessary" in the original Greek means "needful" or "closely associated", as with the "next of kin" (Acts 10:24).***
- ***Nowhere are these works stated as being "required" as they were under the message of the Kingdom. Over sixty times in the Pentatuch is found that requirement (and Gal. 3:10 provides the Pauline commentary on that requirement) with the consequence also made clear if obedience is not brought to pass. Often in the New Testament Jewish scriptures obedience is also said to be required. And the Jewish epistles say the same (1 & 2 John make this kind of statement multiple times).***

Some Final Words (not mine, but Paul's):

Rom. 6:14-15

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.