

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

LAWFUL USE OF THE LAW

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.

1 Timothy 1:8

Paul writes to Timothy about some who desire to be teachers of the “law”. I would venture to say that among the religious people of the world (i.e.; those that profess faith in CHRIST), this is a fairly common trait. It is much easier and simpler to prepare a list of do’s and don’ts, and demand or at least recommend that men conform to whatever code of ethics that the specific teacher believes the Bible to set forth. Some have a very strict code while others are more lenient in what they might prescribe. Nonetheless the purpose is the same and illustrates the fact that by nature men do not believe the grace of GOD to be sufficient, for the sons of GOD.

In Paul’s day, many of these “*teachers of the law*” (mostly Jews) accused Paul of preaching a message which not only “allowed sin” but actually encouraged it. Regardless of Paul’s insistence that no such thing was the case, (“*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*” (Rom 6:1-2)), he continually dealt with this notion and found that men, in their religious flesh are much more comfortable with the preaching of the law than they are with the preaching of free and sovereign grace.

There will always be those who become nervous whenever such scriptures as found in Romans 8 are quoted. “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*” (Rom 8:1-4) They will sometimes spend more time telling us what it does not mean than what it does and they will use the word “but” quite profusely as they attempt to differentiate between what they call the “moral law” and “the ceremonial law”. We rejoice in the “law of the SPIRIT of LIFE in CHRIST”.

This verse follows right upon the heels of Paul’s description of the relationship of a woman (i.e. the bride) who is wed to CHRIST contrasted with that marriage she had with the Law, which is typified in that given to Moses. A woman is not married to her husband if he is dead; “*she is loosed from the law of her husband.*” (Rom. 7:2) Many think that Paul is teaching about marriage in the seventh chapter of Romans. It is true that we might learn some valuable lessons about that subject, but Paul’s purpose in this chapter is to point out that GOD’s people who once labored under the condemnation of the law are now wed to CHRIST. “*Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*” (Rom 7:4-6) Her allegiance is not to “him” who was once her husband (i.e.; the Law), but rather unto her living SPOUSE, the LORD JESUS CHRIST whose “Law” has forever set her free.

She is “*married to another*” in whom is her delight. To submit herself to this HUSBAND is not grievous, as Paul describes in Ephesians, “*For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*” (Eph 5:30) “*Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in*

every thing.” (Eph 5:24) While we learn much about the carnal relationship between husbands and wives, from this passage; the purpose of Paul’s writing is revealed in this verse, *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”* (Eph 5:32) What a glorious picture is manifested here of the relationship between the “bride” (i.e.; the Church, the people of GOD), and CHRIST.

To use the Law, “*lawfully*”, it is necessary to understand the true purpose of the Law in the first place. The Law is not given as a suggested rule of conduct for mankind. It is not a checklist wherein a man may gauge his faithfulness to the LORD. Neither is it a place wherein a man might glory or put himself on display as he goes about to establish a measure of righteousness which exceeds that of those around him who do not have the same regard to the Law as he does. Rather the Law is given to reveal the sinfulness of men. Any man who looks at the Law of GOD and does not weep at the sin it manifests in his heart and mind is yet in bondage to the Law.

Paul goes on to describe those to whom the Law is given, *“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.”* (1Tim 1:9-10) Do we not hang our heads in shame when we realize that we are guilty, guilty, guilty as we stand before it. If so, the Law has done its perfect work and we are convinced of our inability to gain the approval of the LORD by an adherence to its precepts. *“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”* (Jas 2:10) The Law is powerless to help a man out of his depravity and rebellion for it is the Law that ministers condemnation to all who are under it.

To use the Law, “*lawfully*” is to declare the perfect righteousness of CHRIST (which is the only acceptable righteousness before GOD) as the only MAN who has kept that Law perfectly. *“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”* (Psa 24:3-5) The Psalmist can only be speaking about ONE MAN, the MAN CHRIST JESUS who has not lifted up HIS soul unto vanity, was tempted (i.e.; tried or tested) in all points, had no guile in HIS mouth, and walked every day with a perfect desire to honor the ONE who sent HIM into the world to redeem that people which were given to HIM from the foundation of the world.

To use the Law, “*lawfully*” is to declare the complete redemption which the LORD JESUS CHRIST both undertook and accomplished for HIS elect bride without the aid of any. The redemptive work of CHRIST is a “law work” for by the shedding of HIS blood in HIS death on Calvary, HE completely “justified” HIS people in the sight of the Law. “Payment GOD cannot twice demand, first at my bleeding SURETY’s hand and then again at mine.” If CHRIST has settled the sin debt of death and condemnation which was rightly owed by those for whom HE died, then who might bring an accusation against them? *“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”* (Rom 8:33) Justification through the blood of CHRIST is the complete satisfaction of the Law.

To use the Law “*lawfully*” is to declare the complete “sanctification” (i.e.; setting apart unto the LORD) of the people of GOD, not through any endeavor of the flesh, or adherence to the letter of the Law, but rather in the fulfillment of all of the LORD’s “requirements” and “duties” by the performance of CHRIST in their room and stead as their SUBSTITUTE. Paul declared as much when he said, *“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law,* (i.e.; by my adherence to the law) *then Christ is dead in vain.”* (Gal 2:19-21)

Paul describes the freedom of those who are in CHRIST when he speaks of the work of the SPIRIT of GOD in them. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”* (Gal 5:22-23) GOD’s children are free to serve HIM without fear. Is there a child of GOD who does not desire to see this fruit abound in himself? *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”* (1Cor 10:31) *“He hath shewed thee,* (by the example of CHRIST) *O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”* (Mic 6:8) mam