

# 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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## OUR EXAMPLE

*For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.* 1Peter 2:21

The LORD gave to King Solomon a gift of earthly wisdom that greatly exceeded that of his fellows. So much so, that even the Queen of Sheba, hearing of his wisdom and greatness, traveled many miles to question him. She then confessed, *"Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard."* (1Kings 10:7)

The LORD even gave him a measure of spiritual light in the midst of this wisdom. Yet in order that HE might demonstrate the limits of such earthly wisdom, we see that even Solomon fell prey to conduct that he had warned about in his own writings. Thus, he epitomizes natural man and the limitations which are upon him due to his corrupt nature. *"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."* (Eccl 7:20) Solomon, sadly, succumbed to his own lust in spite of his wisdom and the measure of understanding which was given to him.

If the wisest of natural men fell into idolatry and disobedience, is it any wonder that those of lesser stature should do the same? Men love to boast of their accomplishments and there is no shortage of those who seek to reinforce the errant notion that men are born as very noble creatures who are quite capable of great learning and even the ability to discern spiritual truth. There are multitudes who believe and declare that men can perform righteous acts simply as a matter of choice stemming from an innate sense of doing good and a free will which can incline one towards the same. To declare such is to blatantly deny the scripture record which is abundantly clear. *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."* (Rom 3:10-18)

It is ever quite amazing that the LORD JESUS would come into this dark and sinful world in the likeness of sinful flesh. (see Rom.8:3) Not only to be made like men, clothed in mortal flesh, but to dwell among those who had no affinity for HIM nor any delight in walking according to the precepts which HE laid down from the beginning of creation. Yet HE has indeed been born of a woman just as every man and been subjected to the same trials (i.e.; *"tempted in all points"* (Heb.4:15)) as each one. Even being pleased to taste death just as every mortal man must. (see Heb.9:27) HIS incarnation (i.e.; becoming flesh) is ever a great mystery, which defies human reason and can only be truly received and rejoiced in through the gift of FAITH from the storehouse of GOD's grace.

As HE walked and taught the TRUTH during HIS sojourn here as the SPOKESMAN of GOD, (see Heb.1:1,2) HE confronted the wickedness of men. The greatest religious men (i.e.; the Pharisees) of that day, (even as religious men do today) supposed that true wickedness is demonstrated by immoral men who go about to fulfill their own lusts. Yet the LORD never condemned the winebibbers, publicans, and harlots while telling the Pharisees that such would go into the Kingdom before (i.e.; instead of) them. HE did however condemn the self-righteousness and unbelief of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (see Mat.21:31,32)

Now we must not consider that HE in anywise approved of the conduct of adulterers, unjust tax collectors and drunkards. Though HE never condemned the woman taken in adultery, HE did tell her to go and sin no more. HE came to deliver HIS people from spiritual darkness and the bondage of sin which is the great ditch in which all men reside by nature, and from which springs the notion that men can present their own supposed righteousness before HIM to be approved. The rich young man who came boasting of his "law-keeping", (see Mat.19:20-22) was made sorrowful as the LORD taught him how far from the Kingdom he was. Those who are the heirs of ETERNAL LIFE, are always brought to repentance by HIM as HE is pleased to reveal HIS TRUTH unto them.

The Pharisees thought themselves to be righteous because of their fervent religious activity and as they trusted therein, they rejected the only TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS which has ever been demonstrated by a mortal MAN. They were certain that because they read and revered the Holy Scriptures, that they were set apart from the rabble and surely approved by GOD. Yet HE told them, *"And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And **ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.**"* (John 5:37-40)

So, it matters not what depths of immorality that a man (or woman) finds themselves in, nor even how often they may have considered themselves to have a form of righteousness that might make them acceptable in the LORD's sight, if the LORD is pleased to open their eyes to HIS TRUTH and grant unto them repentance unto LIFE, then they shall be saved. (i.e.; delivered) For CHRIST is the only RIGHTEOUSNESS acceptable in the FATHER's sight and all who are found "in HIM" are considered RIGHTEOUS because of HIM.

Those who are thus delivered, desire to be found clothed in HIS likeness and rejoice in HIS example, desiring to walk in HIS steps. This is the fruit of being "born again" and is the end to which they are "predestined". *"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* (Eph 2:10) Paul expressed his desire for such, *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* (Php 3:8-10)

CHRIST is our EXAMPLE as HE laid down HIS life for HIS brethren. *"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."* (1John 3:16) HE has demonstrated that self-sacrificing LOVE which is both pure and peaceable. *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."* (Php 2:3) This is true "self-denial".

CHRIST is our EXAMPLE as HE desired to give all glory to HIS FATHER. *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."* (John 6:38) *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."* (John 4:23)

CHRIST is our EXAMPLE as HE was a SERVANT of HIS brethren. *"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself."* (Rom 15:2-3) *"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel."* (John 13:4-5) HE demonstrated HIS own declaration. *"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."* (Mat 23:11) *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."* (Php 2:5)

"Jesus, Source of our salvation, May we now thy nature know; Then more bowels of compassion We to thy dear saints shall show. May the grace thou hast imparted, In relieving our complaints, Make us kind and tender-hearted To the feeblest of thy saints. When they are severely tempted, We their sorrows would assuage, Knowing we are not exempted From the tempter's furious rage. If by sin they're overtaken, We'd their faults to them declare; But in strains of much compassion, Lest we drive them to despair." (by R.Burnham; #258 Gadsby's Hymns)

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