

“The Essentials Of Our Faith”

Session XXXI

May 29, 2011

“The Church”:

The “Body” and “Bride” Of Jesus Christ!

Part Seven: “Grace Living And Grace Giving”

Introduction:

We are living in the “Dispensation of Grace” – the “Church Age”. On the Day of Pentecost God began to “**call out**” individuals from all nations and to place them into His Body, the Church. As members of the New Testament Church, Christians are to live by the principle of “**grace**”.

A. The “Grace” of God is the foundation of the New Testament Church → He has chosen to show undeserved favor and blessing toward rebellious mankind.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.”

Romans 5:1-2

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Ephesians 2:8-9

B. The “Grace” of God is the rule of life for the New Testament Church → He has chosen for the Christian to live in freedom rather than bondage to laws of behavior.

--Note: The history of mankind in relation to God is . . .

self-effort to reestablish right relationship with God → self-righteousness!

--Note: The history of the organized church has been to . . .

establish rules and regulations of personal conduct to maintain right relationship with God or to gain His blessing!

“It was for freedom (liberty) that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”

Galatians 5:1

“For you were called to freedom (liberty), brethren . . .”

Galatians 5:13

I. Grace “Living” in the Church.

A. N.T. Examples of Wrong Thinking.

1. Practices or behaviors which relate to salvation.
 - These practices represent requirements which are believed to determine an individual's salvation!
 - a. “Circumcision”, Gal. 5:1-4.
 - Is an outward act required for salvation?
 - b. “Baptism” (Baptismal regeneration), Matt. 28:19-20.
 - Is baptism required for salvation?

2. Practices or behaviors which determine spirituality.
 - These practices represent requirements which are believed to determine behavior which is “right” or “wrong” for a Christian!
 - a. “Eating Meats” offered to idols, I Cor. 8:4-8.
 - Does eating certain foods affect personal holiness?
 - b. “Special Rules or Decrees”, Col. 2:18-23.
 - Do the Scriptures require the keeping of certain rules?
 - c. “Observing Special Days”, Gal. 4:9-11.
 - Do the Scriptures require worship on certain days/occasions?

B. N.T. Statements of Right Thinking.

1. The Believer under “Grace”, not “Law”.
 - a. Romans 6:14-15.
 - Key: “Liberty” is not “License”!
 - Note: The Christian under grace is not “antinomian” – the belief that the “moral law” (Ten Commandments) is not necessary to living the Christian life!
 - b. Romans 8:2.
 - Key: The “Law” is powerless to control human behavior – it is _____!
The “Law of the Spirit” is powerful to control human behavior – it is _____!

2. The Believer under the “Spirit”, not the “Flesh”, Gal. 5:16-23.
 - Key: The “specific” application of Christian behavior to the real issues of life is enabled by the Holy Spirit's control.

C. N.T. “Checks and Balances” on Christian Behavior.

1. “Will my behavior _____ Jesus Christ?”
--Eph. 4:1; I Thess. 2:12.
2. “Will my behavior _____ another _____?”
--I Cor. 8:9-13; Eph. 4:29-32.
3. “Will my behavior _____ my _____?”
--I Pet. 2:12, 15.

II. Grace “Giving” in the Church.

A. The Pattern of Giving in the N.T. is not the O.T. “Tithe”.

-- The misuse of Malachi 4:8-10.

“Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test me now in this, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.”

B. The N.T. guidelines for “Giving”.

1. I Corinthians 16:1-2.

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed to the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collection be made when I come.”
I Corinthians 16:1-2

--**The Believer is to give as God “_____”!** (See: II Cor. 8:1-5)

2. II Corinthians 9:6-8.

“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.”

--**The Believer is to give from the “_____”!**