

First Light Herald

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God Justified the Ungodly

Rom 4:5 "But to him that works not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Gal 3:8 "...and the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen or ungodly through faith..."

This may be the shortest article I have ever written. It may well be that way simply because the gospel is not and has not ever been confusing or difficult to understand. Yet I can personally guarantee letters and calls expressing disagreement because of how smart the wise have become.

According to Moses Law/Levitical law, God's perfect law, everyone, all mankind was found guilty. So everyone, all mankind qualifies for God's grace. Nowhere in all the five books of Moses do we read a command to throw grace at someone that has broken God's law. The Scribes and Pharisees were not picking up grace to throw at the prostitute when Jesus (God's Grace) knelt down and wrote in the dirt. No they were simply doing what their law allowed them to do, throw stones not grace. The word stone many times in the bible is referring to the law. They were throwing the law at her. I believe we get our phrase "Throwing the book at you" from that frame of mind. You break the law; the law keepers throw the book at you. The law, Paul said was the ministry of death in one place:

2 Cor 3:7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraved in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

In another he refers to it as the ministry of condemnation:

2 Cor 3:9 for if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

Now, it isn't hard to see in Paul's writings that in both references to the ministry of death as well as the ministry of condemnation were done away and replaced with the ministry of righteousness which brought with it more glory. The ministry of condemnation, (the Law) produces death and the ministry of righteousness, (the Gospel) produces life. The Holy Spirit has come to reveal our righteousness to us, not our sinfulness in Adam.

John 16:8 when he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of



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Special points of interest:

- Pastor Chima emailed us and let us know that they finally found a way to dig water wells and set pumps. They now have access to fresh water for their village. Praise God for answered prayer and diligent, hard working believers!

Justified.....continued

righteousness, and of judgment:

Yes the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, would reprove the world of sin but keep reading because Jesus goes on to define what sin the Holy Spirit would be revealing to the world.

John 16:9 "...of sin, because they believe not on me;"

The sin mentioned here was/is not lying or coveting. The sin was not believing on Jesus, not putting faith in the one man that accomplished what the world could never do. That's what the Holy Spirit has come to reveal to the world first.

After He, the Holy Spirit, has accomplished His job in our lives we are born-again. Then the second thing the Holy Spirit has come to reveal, Jesus said, was our righteousness. When we were born-again we were made the righteousness of God because we believed on Jesus, no works of the law were involved. Remember, God justified the ungodly not the Godly. If God justified the Godly there was no reason for Jesus to go to the cross. Remember; ALL HAVE SINNED, and are found guilty, there are no Godly men according to God's perfect Law, with the exception being Jesus who had no sin. God can now justify the ungodly because of His grace (Jesus) through faith in Him, not godliness or works of the law. God saw all the sin and failure of the entire world in the body of Jesus on the cross and then cleansed any and every sin with Jesus' blood forever. When God saw all sin at the cross and judged that sin by condemning Jesus and punishing Jesus in His body and soul all sin was taken care of. That is the final thing the Holy Spirit has come to reveal;

John 16:11 "...of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

The devil that was behind all sin has been judged, all the devil's strength is gone! What was the strength the devil had? The law!

1 Cor. 15:56 "... the sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."

The law was what the devil used to keep man in a consciousness of sin to cause condemnation. But thanks be unto God that He took the law that was contrary to us out of our way and nailed it to the cross!

Col 2:14 "...blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;"

Now that God has accomplished this in the final sacrifice for sin, Jesus, we should have no more consciousness of sin. The blood of bulls and goats could **never** take away a consciousness of sin but Jesus blood has the power to do just that. See **Heb 10**. Now, we that are born-again in Christ should allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to us our righteousness and awake to that righteousness and become skillful in the word of righteousness.

Rom 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Jesus was condemned for us...in our place. And God our Father did this because He loved us. That is the kindness and tenderness of our Father. Humans have a tendency to see themselves in the flesh but our Father sees us in Christ, a spiritual body, members one to another safe and protected in a finished work of Grace, His work not ours. We can trust

Him!

Bless the Lord oh my soul and forget not all His benefits!

The Pattern

I remember as a young Christian reading about the yoyo nature of the children of Israel and then thinking of myself, “Gee, I would never do those sorts of things.” Wrong-o! After being a believer for close to 30 years now, I often see that I act just like the errant children of Israel. I find that if I “feel” like it’s taking too long for an answer to prayer I start to waver. Sure I look at myself first to see if I’m off, but I forget that the tempter imitates God and is just plain convincing. In the garden he chose to enter the most subtle of creatures in order to deceive Adam and Eve. So it is with him today. The adversary is sneaky, conniving and so twisted, but enough about him. The devil gets way too much press. I want to talk about my God, my Father.



This morning when I opened my bible I found myself in the Psalms. I began reading at Psalm 106 and ended in the first part of Psalm 108. (I suggest you stop now and read these Psalms.)

Psalm 106 recalls the children of Israel and their wayward path. Like a confused winding trail they wove in and out of God’s will. He is always present delivering them after they repeatedly stumble and fall. All through their lives He was there. Over and over He would let them do their best to obey, and each time they wandered off on their own path. It’s a good thing He has such a good vantage place from heaven or they’d never have found the Promised Land. So it is with us. It is **God** who is good and faithful in all weather. **He** is always there, ready with **His** heart of mercy beating full towards **His** delinquent children. In the midst of our stupidity and rebellious nature, **God** is there with answers and help. Halleluyah!

Philippians tells us that **God** is working in us both to WILL and to DO of His good pleasure. His throne is in our hearts and God must be allowed to work from there. By His Holy Spirit He communicates with us daily. How often does He speak and we just don’t hear His counsel? Way too often, but again let me praise God because it is HIM who is working in us, and not US in Him.

I can see Yeshua/Jesus doing all the signs and wonders we read in the bible. I then remember these words. “It is the Father who does the works.” He had a revelation that anything he would do APART from the will of God would be worthless. Yes, you heard me; Yeshua/Jesus would have been doing something worthless if it had been a creation made of his own plans, imaginations or ideas. He laid down his will and only spoke and did the will of God the Father. He had to make the decision to do what God wanted and not what he wanted. He had to lay down his will. (Phil. 2:5-8) Remember, he was tempted in all points like we are yet remained without sin. We are tempted to do our own thing, but MUST submit our wills to God’s.

When you’re tempted to give up just know that God is right there with the way of escape from the temptation. With every way of temptation He is there! That is exciting to me and I just want to thank Him for ALL He is doing in me. He will have the last say, the “omega” or “tau” word in my life. He started a good work in me and He will accomplish it. I have committed myself to Him and that means He committed to me FIRST! He never gives up, but is married eternally to the backslider! Hallelujah once again. Sure glad He’s God and I’m one of His kids. I will look to Yeshua/Jesus, the pattern and like him let God do His work through me. It just never works for me to try and measure up. Because of our Lord’s perfect finished work, I really don’t have to!

Psalms 46: “God is a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

The Pattern.....continued

Psalms 81:77 “Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.”

Psalms 91:14 “Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. 16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”

Genesis 8:22 “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

Times and Seasons

It’s the middle of spring and Jeff and I are watching our little vegetable garden sprout with new life. We invited a few of the kids we teach to come over and help us plant a garden. Jeff made a raised bed and fenced it off from the rascally rabbits who might think that our fresh veggies should be free. The kids got up early and came and helped us plant tomatoes, peppers, cantaloupe and strawberry plants. Then they sowed seeds for the remainder of the garden. The onion and shallot bulbs had already begun to sprout so they were peeking out of the rich top soil long before we would see a single speck of green from the seeds.



On the back of **every seed package is an approximation of when each type of seed will sprout**. There are also directions on how deep and how far apart the seeds should be sown. Because I had kids plant the seeds I gave them general directions. The children I invited had never planted a garden before so they needed a little more direction than I might have needed. I have planted a garden before (28 years ago to be more precise) so I knew to read the packages first.

I’ve shared all this to say this: “Why am I so slow to realize there are times and seasons in every aspect of our lives?” I have let slip so much. I’ve heard it said of someone before, “He has forgotten more than we know.” This was said of a very intelligent person. I am quickly remembering that our minds are like our bodies, without renewal by God they are subject to decay and corruption.

In our lives we have dry and what seem like unproductive times. If we think about late fall and all of winter, life appears to be dead or dying. Under the frost or snow covered ground things appear to be dead, really dead. Like the person who sleeps so hard he doesn’t appear to be breathing or moving, the earth lays dormant. As winter seems to go on forever, we yearn for the first signs of spring returning. We crave the bright sun and its warmth to brush our cheeks. How we long for the gentle warming breezes to come so that we can open our windows and doors and allow the cleansing breath of spring to chase the stale odors of winter far away. But we need winters and we forget or just don’t know how vital they are.

I know at 50 that I get tired, I mean really tired. If I go and go for days without rest I will drop. I want to keep going like I was 10 years old, but I must sit. I have to pace myself. If I take little cat naps I am then able to go and finish the things I used to do without thinking or stopping.

Just like the earth needs rest to refresh itself for the new growth of spring, we need winter seasons in our lives. The creative mind needs to take a break, and the body needs sleep after long periods of activity. Spiritual life has winter times

Times and Seasons.....continued

as well.

Living in such a fast paced time as we do, we fail to realize the importance of winters until it's almost too late. You can't burn the candle at both ends without burning your fingers. You have to hold the candle somewhere and the wicks are burning towards your hand! Oh yes, I also want to remind you that you ARE that candle and your time clock is running while you are burning away, working feverishly!

When you look around and examine your life please consider that if it seems like none of your prayers are being answered, and it's taking too long for productivity to manifest, it might be a normal thing. You might just be experiencing the winter of the growth cycle. Yeshua/ Jesus told us that if we understood the parable of the sower sowing seed, we could understand all the parables or mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. It really is no mystery that winter happens. Winter rest is vital and we can't rush it. It will end and spring will come. (Oh, by the way; God determines just when the seasons begin and end. Wishing and even praying won't change that.) Just reread Genesis 8:22 if you need a refresher on that truth. If God has said it, IT WILL come to pass. Selah.

Bulldogged Tenacity

I remember the old commercial, "It takes a licking and keeps on ticking". I also remember the old clown punching bags. You'd hit them and they'd spring right back upright. You could punch those bags a thousand times and every single time they would spring right back upright. I also remember the wily coyote that would plot and plan over and over his catching the road-runner. He never gave up. He kept on going after his prey with a million different tricks and traps. He just never gave up no matter how many failures he had. These examples are natural ones, but natural examples can be good ones, especially if YOU understand them.



*2 Peter 1:3 "According as his divine power HATH (past tense) given unto us all things that pertain unto **life and godliness**, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are **given unto us exceeding great and precious promises**: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, **giving all diligence**, add to your faith virtue..."*

Let's take a real good look at these verses. I want you to meditate on them. I've shared this particular section from Peter's letter before, but it's more important now than ever that you understand it. Why? Pay close attention to the emboldened words below.

*2 Peter 1:10 "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give **diligence** to make your calling and election sure: **for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall**: 11 **For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**"*

*Romans 14:17 "For **the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.**"*

How many times have we fallen? I've lost count of the numbers of times I've fallen, but the goal is to stand and keep standing in spite of the darkness that surrounds us. Remember, God looked at the void, chaos and darkness of His crea-

Tenacity.....continued



tion and said, “Light BE.” He didn’t look at the darkness and say, “Gee it sure is dark out there.” He stood in faith.

You may say, “Yes, but that was God.” Once again I remind you that God’s children are like (or supposed to be) like God. We were made or are being remade in His likeness and His image. God’s plan or God’s will was implemented when He said, “Light be” and He didn’t give up even during the “dark ages.”

Our goal is the kingdom of heaven. We are headed towards a place of no darkness, no sin, no poverty, no sickness and no death! The kingdom is full of righteousness (right standing with God), joy and peace (where nothing is broken or missing) in the Precious Holy Spirit. The kingdom is supposed to be within us, but we also must have an entrance into that kingdom ministered TO us. It’s a great place and one to seek after continually.

I’ve said all of this to point out one single word; the word **diligence**. Here are some synonyms of diligence: assiduousness, persistence, industriousness, attentiveness, and tirelessness. It’s about laboring to enter into the rest (Sabbath) of God, the kingdom of God. If you look at the kingdom: righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. You will see that the work of the kingdom was ALREADY done or accomplished by Yeshua/Jesus. He did the work and said, “It is finished.” He is our righteousness. He is our joy. He is our peace. We must become skillful in the *word* of righteousness.

It takes bulldogged determination to keep going when all others lie down and say, “I give up.” It’s one thing to surrender your will to God’s. It is quite a different thing to lie down and die by giving up.

When you are tempted to give up on God I pray you will remember this single word, **diligence** and find the faith to pick yourself up and dust yourself off and start all over again. God is for you. God is love and love NEVER fails. He’s placed His faith in you. Think about that. Yeshua/Jesus told us to “Have the faith of God” or “Have faith in God.” Those are strong, faith building words. Meditate on them. Chew on them. Think on them. To those who will keep on keeping on, God has already given THE measure of faith. Sow your faith in God. Hold onto your faith in God. Don’t let the darkness or difficulty of these perilous times douse your light. You’ve been born to burn brightly on TOP of the table and not under the bed. You’ve been created to light the darkness. You’ve been created to bring savor to a tasteless world.

Quit Thinking OLD!



2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Matthew 18: 3 “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Yeshua/Jesus’ words)

John 3: 3 “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Romans 8:11 “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Psalms 92:13 “Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; 15 To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.”



Psalms 1:1 “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

We as children of God are eternal. Just because we wear old coats doesn't mean WE are old. In the natural we like old coats. They have familiarity and comfort. They are “worn in” just the way we like them. In the natural as far as flesh goes, we constantly want a new coat. We don't like this about our bodies or that. We go to beauty salons, plastic surgeons, estheticians, manicurists, pedicurists, barber shops and countless other services to look younger. We fiddle and fool around until some of us look just plain scary. God would have us remember that this body is temporal. This body is just a coat. We will one day let go of the body. It will go into the ground like the seed of some awesome new thing and be reborn into something completely new and different. For now, we must remember that we aren't our bodies. We are spirit and that means we are eternally new and renewed by the eternal Spirit of the living God. We should care for our bodies in that we should care for our coats and we don't get new ones when we're bored with the “old” one.

To continually think and talk old and about sickness and death is to create it in ourselves. We are made in the likeness and image of God. If God constantly looked at the darkness and chaos around Him and said, “Wow is it ever dark!” He would have plunged eternity into a state of that darkness. We have been given the power of life and death and it's in our thoughts and our words. You're going to say what you think about. What you say will become substance in your life. As a man thinketh in his heart SO IS HE. So why not think on something lovely, something of a good report? Why not renew your mind with the pure and lovely word of God? If anyone has the right to think old it is God. Does He? He is the ancient of days, yet you don't hear Him saying, “Gee I'm sure getting old; I better lie down here and feel achy and worthless. I don't have any purpose because I'm sooo old.”

You are eternal IF you have placed your trust in God through His son. Sure your coat is getting old, but one day you're going to be transformed in the twinkling of an eye. You need your present coat to last the full number of your days, so allow the Holy Spirit to quicken that mortal body of yours and go on and do God's will for your life.

Abraham lived a really long life. He considered NOT his dead body or his wife's body. He considered God and His faithfulness to do what He promised. Reread ALL the verses I have printed here in this newsletter. I don't put them here just to fill space but to give you an overview of what God is leading us to share. It's for YOUR advantage. Really, we do it on purpose! Meditate on the word. Keep yourself focused on the living, breath of God (His Holy Spirit). It's how you'll renew your mind and be quickened in body. Besides Jesus is working to keep you spotless (hey no age spots) and without wrinkle. (DID YOU NOTICE THAT?!?) No wrinkles!!! Compared to God we're all spring chicks and He's certainly not worried about age.

Psalm 91: 16 “With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”