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The Duration

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Last night I had been in prayer most of the evening and had stayed up late, even until eleven concerning myself with the things of God and of prayer. I have an unusual prayer life lately as God has been teaching me to walk by faith and not by sight. So it is like you are listening to a radio station and a song begins and God inspires you to dedicate that song to someone listening. And each time you do so you 'get it right' even if you wonder if you make mistakes sometimes. The deeper you get with God and the more you try to walk by faith the more he places you closer and closer to the proverbial 'walk on water' thinking.

For some business people today they teach them to walk on fire or coals as a way of 'freeing' themselves from fear and old traditions. Traditions are like laws that cling to us to such an extent that we preach about them and say "This is a law God gave me" but perhaps it was a necessary law but the real question is "Does that law or tradition hinder us in our walk with God simply because its a law."

Last night I was listening to a preacher who said that he was told by God not to go to movies or the theater since he was 13 and though his son can and his wife can he cannot. I have no problem because for him it is a law that is written on the heart and one that carries conviction with it. Yet when we study scripture on Peter who had the vision of eating meat from unclean animals he could not because it was against tradition and the 'law' though you won't find it in the ten commandments it was there in other laws that were written. If Peter could be hit like a ton of bricks to eat unclean meat then God could open up his thinking to hanging around unclean people who were unkosher. The Gentiles. The Gentiles were anyone who were not Jewish.

Now it may be hard to be a Gentile but frankly I don't mind being one. There are advantages to eating certain types of seafood and bacon. That probably offends some so for the offensive types I tend to eat turkey bacon these days. Anyway its not out of conviction or worry about what you think its because that's what I'm served at the breakfast or lunch meal.

Being a Gentile means that I should be free of the 'law' and the things of the law. Even Paul didn't want to burden the Gentiles with too many laws. So my question is, as a Gentile, why do we have so many laws now added to the Gentile church of what we can and cannot do. Did time change Gods mind? Did we as Christians get off base? Did we somehow lose sight of the freedoms that the early Gentiles had? For if they had the abilities to do almost anything their heart desired they must have been the most unpolitically correct bunch of Christians you would ever want to meet. Yet they were still Christians. Could it be that Paul discovered one of the reasons that the early church had so many problems is because they didn't have rules? Yet if the issue of grace is one of political usage then the church overused grace until grace became a common or unclean thought of the law. And that is really a scary thing.

For if we are to understand grace we have to understand the law. And the law is really a great contributor to the understanding of Gods plan for us. When Peter saw the vision of common and unclean animals coming down from heaven and God inviting him to come and eat Peter couldn't see it. He knew it was a vision from God but he couldn't figure out the value of breaking with the law.

The law is like a lawman that hovers over you day and night. He studies what you study, he observes your thoughts, your actions, your motives and all that you do. You 'feel' him there observing you. Much like Britain now where they say an average person is observed by camera 300 times. There is nowhere you can travel without having the law watching you.

That is the way the law is. It contributes to some folks well being but watch out if you want to live by grace. Because the law becomes hard on those who wish to walk away from it.

When living in Brooks I met a woman from the 7th Day Adventist church who had only one law she lived by and one law she taught. "Go to church on Saturday" and she emphasized it over and over and over and over and over and over. So that was her law and her overwhelming law. It wasn't "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" but one that proclaimed to her that the day of the Lord was greater than the God who made the day. Now I didn't have to know her heart to know her thoughts and those thoughts overwhelmed me so guilt came in. I had to fight guilt because guilt is of the law and of sin and not of grace. True

conviction would be God speaking to me and say "Listen to her". That never happened. So I was left dealing with her on my own resources. I had to choose what was most important.

Again the law rises up and places us in a predicament of the heart. We want to be free by grace but the law puts strictures and bondage's on us that was never God's full or even truest intent. The purpose of being a Christian is so that we might have freedom to live around sin and even with sinners without losing sight of our own understanding.

Now here is an important question. If we, as Christians, still live by some laws, are we then compelled to obey all the laws? Even those of tradition and of the days we worship? After all scripture indicates Jesus didn't come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. Fulfill can be seen as taking on the obligation of. So what we now have is a man/God who has the fulness of the power of the law on himself so that the law stretches from his hand, like a rod of iron to bring grace or to bring forth judgment. That judgment is the key to scripture where it tells us "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive what they have done in their bodies whether it be good or bad." In other words we people of 'grace' who have treated grace with disdain by continuing to dally in sin with little remorse will find that Christ will measure out the rod to the side of punishment rather than of grace.

Does this mean we are judged solely on the law? If Christ fulfilled the requirements of the law, as given by His father God, then Christ thus has authority to mete out punishment as he sees fit. The real question we might ask is "Is it Christ's or God's desire for men of the church to live by weight of the law so that we all become detectives searching out the inward part of man? God has revealed this to me in my dreams that lawmen of the church are everywhere.

The only problem with this is that unless they are appointed by God for this position all of them are out of the will of God simply because none of them have fulfilled the fulness of the law as Christ did. This fulfilling is something that he accomplished and to my knowledge few if any others. For all have fallen short of the Glory of God. So then why do they try to live life as discerners of failure? Some would say they don't but the Holy Spirit helps them. I would say with full confidence balderdash. The Holy Spirit has better things to do than make men feel guilty of everything. No, the Holy spirit convicts and directs and leads.

It is the law that makes us feel guilty and makes us feel the sting of sin and death.

I call it from guilt to guilt. We desire guilt but end up with the burden of the payment of guilt for we fall under the pressure of the law and then are burdened by sin. Now if we sin we know we have an advocate with the father named Jesus Christ. So if we live with our eyes towards the throne then that darkness of sin cannot hinder us with the power of guilt. Guilt is the weapon the enemy uses to oppress us. It makes us feel sick and as long as we submit to it the sickness remains. Conviction of the Holy Spirit is different in that is a Holy pressure to change for the better.

Guilt comes out of nowhere just because Satan raises up a thought of our past. It leaves us sorrowful and broken and depressed.

So in all things rejoice for the things of God are without repentance or continual hindrance. We walk in freedom of Grace when we spiritually overcome the law. But that is only possible when we walk in the truth of Grace and the understanding of what place the law plays in our life today.