

A good conscience

I have been looking at Paul's words in first Timothy for the last four posts. In the first verse he tells us that he was called according to the commandment of God. That charge or mandate from Jesus was to preach the Gospel of Grace in order to turn the hearts of the Gentiles from darkness to light, from Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who believe. Acts 26:15-18

Paul then tells Timothy to charge some that they teach NO OTHER DOCTRINE. (1Tim1:3) What doctrine are they to teach then? Paul's revelation of the gospel of grace. Then in verse five he writes...

1Ti 1:5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, 1Ti 1:6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, 1Ti 1:7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

The more I meditate upon this chapter the more I am seeing the battle of Law vs Grace and the Accuser's grubby hands at work in the lives of these ones who were going astray.

The Gospel of the grace of God is the commandment Paul was given to preach and he tells Timothy that it is through believing that Gospel, that love from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith is formed. That is Paul's stance, his foundation and starting point. But these ones going astray from his message have been listening to the Accuser.

I have been there many times, haven't we all?!

I find it odd that in Singapore there are two Mega churches within walking distance of each other. One preaches 'get born

again then obey to become holy' and the other is a grace church preaching a finished work. Over the years I have heard antagonistic words spoken during the preaching that suggest a battle of views is going on. This is what was happening in Paul's day and has been happening since Adam and Eve. There were two trees in the garden!

Adam was born of God but he chose to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to become more like God. This produced sin and death in his life and all of humanity thereafter.

That is still what is happening in churches and individuals who stray from the Grace message which is a tree of life. We get born again, born of God like Adam...and again we have to choose between two trees.(We only have to choose because Satan brings that choice before our minds) The moment we are born again through God's grace we ARE like God, for God has come into our spirit and made Himself one with us. 1Cor 6:17, John 17:20-23, John 14:20, Gal 2:20, Col 3:3,4 Because we are like God at conversion we start from a position of completion.

But the Accuser immediately, knowing he has lost his slave, begins to accuse us of not being like God, of being failures, having no love, having an impure heart, having much to confess, being unclean, untrustworthy, unfaithful, dirty, proud, etc etc etc. Satan does this so that we will look at ourselves through flesh eyes and see an unfinished work. He knows that if we continue to simply rest in the completed work of Christ living in us and as us...that we will enlighten many others. He must get us to set aside the grace of God by making us think it has not changed us.

Paul says that *the purpose of the commandment... is a good conscience*. The commandment he speaks of is his grace gospel. The purpose of the Law gospel is an evil conscience, one that accuses us all the time. These are the two trees in the garden. In being born again we are meant to eat from the tree

of life—which is within us! The Lord Jesus, the Spirit of Grace, is the Law of the Spirit of life within us. No outward laws are needed. As we feed on Him within us, seeing ourselves as He is, and seeing Him as us, we are changed from glory to glory into the same image.

The Accuser speaks to us through many preachers and especially to our own minds and he points out every thing about the outer man that is not like Jesus-(according to his religious views) He is saying to us that, *“we have not changed at all! We got born again, but we need to make sure we walk in self control and in holiness. We have the responsibility to be holy or else! If we want God to bless us we must obey Him!”* By this clever attack he is telling us that we are still separate from God, there is no tree of life in us...we must eat from the “tree of good and evil”, the law tree, if we are going to get closer to God. Listen to the words of the songs in church. Almost every song teaches you that you are separated from God and need Him to come down to you and give you something. The song writers have stepped away from the tree of life and gone out looking for God somewhere else. No beloved reader- He has come to dwell in you as one person with you- you are complete in Him.

The Accuser moves the born again person who has the Tree of Life inside, to look away from Him and agree with the Accuser. We look away from our person that God has made us to be by grace. We reject ourself. We view ourself as a sinner, as a problem to God, as proud, as filthy, as covetous, as a failure, etc etc. The conscience becomes defiled again through giving heed to the accusations of the law based message. We seek out a church or a message that agrees with the Accuser’s words. They preach self control, the need for personal holiness, the need to conquer the sin nature in us. The spiritual life begins to wither and dry up because we are not drinking from the Grace of God but that old system of works.

The churches that preach the need for obedience to the Law or

even a voice will find that sin and death characterises them. Paul said

Rom 7:9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

He was alive once without the law...Yes, when he first got born again. But then the Accuser brought the law to his mind and accused him of coveting. Immediately he fell for it and started to try to stop coveting. This only caused sin to revive and death was the result.

Churches that preach obedience to a voice or to a law will have the same result. The people will be good on the outside but inside they are struggling with habitual sin and death. No peace and condemnation and accusation. They will judge others and pull down those they think are doing better in their obedience. Or they put them up on a pedestal to find out from them how to walk holy like them in perfect obedience. They will judge Grace preachers and their churches by saying that they are giving the people a licence to sin, but it is law preaching that revives sin and brings death according to Paul.

When we got born again immediately we found indescribable peace with God and all things. Our conscience was appeased. The blood has answered every accusation of the Law. All was quiet in us. Rest. Jesus was so lovely, His grace so wonderful, His mercy unbelievable! This is the "good conscience" that we are to maintain every day by abiding in His grace within.

Heb 10:22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Our conscience is now a "good" conscience because we are now intrinsically good, holy and righteous. We are Good because He

is our new life, our new nature. He is the inner law of life. He is our righteousness, we are not trying to get any righteousness of our own by obeying. Our conscience will convict us now according to that life within us and not according to an outward written law.

The answer of a good conscience is, *"As Jesus is, so am I"* 1John4:17

The answer of an evil conscience is, *I am a sinner separate from Jesus in need of obedience to get closer to Him and become more like Him.*

The purpose of the commandment or Gospel is love from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. The sacrifice of Jesus has done all this for us and as we abide in Him seeing ourselves as one person with Him these things simply continue. But if we give heed to the Accuser and see ourselves as separated from God in need of obedience to some outward rules then these things recede and the flesh replaces them with harshness and rigour.

Choose life!