

Part Seventeen

In the last study we considered our relationship to the law and how, to follow Christ, we have to take up our own cross.

Before we start to study chapter eight I want to consider one point.

What is the difference between obeying God under the law in the Old Covenant and obeying God under grace?

In each case the ultimate purpose is to obey God.

To illustrate this, let us study a command which is found in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

Leviticus 11:45 [NIV] *“I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; **therefore be holy, because I am holy.**”*

In context to this command is a very long and very complex set of rules which are listed in the whole of chapter eleven **all** of which had to be kept strictly if we were to be Holy, **not** defiled or unclean before God.

This is but one of many laws of holiness that had to be strictly kept under the Old Covenant.

Under the Old Covenant holiness was designated to places, things, seasons and official persons each with a long list of laws that had to be kept to be Holy.

1 Peter 1:14-16 [NIV] *“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”*

A direct quote from **Leviticus 11:45**.

What is the response of faith to this command?

Jesus in us is our Holiness.

The active Holy Spirit in us makes us Holy.

Holiness means being totally devoted or dedicated to God, set aside for His special use and set apart from sin and its influence.

Our focus and priorities in life must be God's.

This is in direct contrast to our former life before we were cleansed by Christ's blood and credited with some of His righteousness [holiness].

Whenever Satan and his temptations come knocking at thie door of our mind we must let Jesus in us answer the door!!

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 [NIV] *“Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. **Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.** But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things, and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, so that no-one may boast before him. **It is because of him that***

you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

The reason God chose people like this is **so that He could give us His Wisdom, Righteousness, Holiness and Redemption.**

Our boast can only be **what God has done** in us **inspite** of what we were.

When we face a situation that needs wisdom, don't struggle on in our own limited human wisdom, say '*Jesus you are my wisdom, please take care of this problem*'.

When the Righteousness of God in us is challenged by some strong temptation, say to Jesus '*you are the righteousness in me, guard me from this temptation*'.

When we doubt our calling, say to Jesus '*in us you have purified me with your blood, you have set me apart for your purpose, you are the Holiness in me; you Jesus have redeemed me from death, I am your bond slave; I lay down my life for you to use*'.

Philippians 4:13 [NIV] "*I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*"

We can do **all** things [that show obedience to God] through Christ who strengthens us within by the active presence of the Holy Spirit whom He sent.

"Through" Greek preposition "en" what remains within me continually and emanates out as an instrument in fellowship.

Hebrews 12:10 [NIV] "*Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.*"

"..... that we may share in **His Holiness**"

It is **never** our Holiness but Christ's Holiness in us that makes us Holy.

We obey this command under the New Covenant by allowing Jesus to live his life in us.

This is something we have to learn.

It will not happen overnight.

We so easily try to accomplish everything in our own strength.

We have to humble ourselves before God and allow Christ in us to be our wisdom, righteousness and Holiness.

Psalms 19:13-14 [King James] "*Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*"

John 15:5 [NIV] "*I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*"

Believe these scriptures.

We tend **only** to turn to God with the big problems and try to handle the small ones in our own strength.

We need to learn to take everything to Jesus in prayer; for little problems handled with only our strength can easily become big problems.

Romans 8:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,”*

At last!! *“No condemnation”*

As long as there is any type of condemnation in our lives we cannot function in a life led and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of God through Paul in the chapters leading up to this statement is to eliminate any cause of condemnation in our lives.

“Condemnation” Greek *“katakrima”* to know something against, any judgement or adverse sentence against, with the suggestion of punishment to follow.

If we have faithfully followed, understood and believed what God said through Paul, we now stand before God with no condemnation. If we have rejected what God has been telling us through Paul we stand before God condemned.

I believe condemnation and the guilt which goes with it is Satan’s strongest weapon to make us discouraged and distressed and very negative.

I believe many Christians are still in the grip of condemnation and cannot experience the joy as one of the fruits of the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit.

How are we sure that we are without condemnation before God?

Paul condenses in a few verses just what God has done for us through Jesus Christ to bring us to this place of no condemnation.

All we have to do is believe and act on that belief.

Colossians 2:13-17 [NIV] *“When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. **These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.**”*

v13 All our past sins forgiven

v14 The law nailed to the cross. Beyond the cross the law has no more claims on us.

We who are dead with Christ are justified

v15 Satan and his demons are disarmed and are **not** able to dominate us

v16 “Therefore” let no person condemn us in judgement on how we conduct our spiritual life.

Paul does say we are **not** to observe the Sabbath Day.

That is a personal decision only **not** to judge and condemn in respect of these things.

This needs a lot of backbone for there a lot of religious people whose favourite occupation is to bring us under condemnation when we don’t conform with their religious protestations.

Colossians 2:17-19 [NIV] *“These are a shadow of the things that were to come; **the reality, however, is found in Christ.** Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and **his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.** He has lost connection with the **Head**, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.”*

If you judge those who do **not** keep the seventh day Sabbath and the Old Covenant holy days as **not** God’s people, **you have lost contact with Jesus Christ the head of the New Covenant church.**

Matthew 7:21-23 [NIV] *“**Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven,** but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, **‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’**”*

This group of very religious people had lost contact with Jesus Christ, the head of the church.

So He did not know them.

Why?

Matthew 7:24-28 [NIV] *“**Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine** [Jesus Christ] **and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.** The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. **But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.** The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching.”*

Such people had not applied the words of Jesus Christ to their lives, the rock.

They had foolishly built their lives on other humans who are dead, **not** the resurrected Christ.

Romans 8:2 [NIV] *“because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”*

Two laws in operation:

- a) The **law of sin** that pulls us **down to death**
- b) The **law of the spirit** which only operates in Jesus Christ that **lifts us up to life**

Romans 8:3 [NIV] *“**For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.** And so he condemned sin in sinful man,”*

The problem was **not** in the law but in our weakness due to our fleshly nature.

God solved the problem in Jesus, God in the flesh, as a sin offering to condemn and disposed of sin.

Hebrews 9:26 [NIV] *“**Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world.** But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages **to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.**”*

Christ once and for all time did away with sin [terminated sin’s power]

Hebrews 10:3 [NIV] *“**But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins,**”*

Talking about the sacrifices of the law given through Moses there was a **reminder of sin** year by year [they did **not** put away sin].

They only pointed towards Jesus who would come to once and for all time put away sin on the cross.

Romans 8:4 [NIV] *“in order that **the righteous requirements of the law** might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.”*

The righteous requirement of the law are fully met in us.

“Righteous” “*dikaioma*” the worked out requirements of the law - a righteous act.

What is the righteous requirement of the law?

Love!

Matthew 22:35-39 [NIV] *“One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, **which is the greatest commandment in the Law?**” Jesus replied: “**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.**’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘**Love your neighbour as yourself.**’”*

Love God and neighbour

Matthew 22:40 [NIV] *“All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

Love is the basis on which the law and the prophets were formed.

The whole purpose of the law and the prophets was to lead us to love God and our neighbour.

Romans 13:8-10 [NIV] *“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, **for he who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law.** The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbour. **Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.**”*

All law fulfilled by love.

Galatians 5:14 [NIV] *“The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”*

All law fulfilled by love.

1 Timothy 1:5-7 [NIV] *“**The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.** Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. **They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.**”*

The one thing we should be teaching by word or example is love.

Anything else is fruitless.

Note three requirements for love: (a) pure heart; (b) good conscience; (c) sincere faith.

The Christian church is often condemned in society today for not giving a right lead to the nation.

All too often that judgement is right; for the world does not see the distinguishing sign that Christ's church would exhibit to the world.

John 13:34-35 [NIV] *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

This is the “*sign*” of the New Covenant church, not the same as the Old Covenant, Sabbath seeking.

All too often the world sees division, squabbling. Immoral – self-righteousness, not love.

Why?

Because the preaching is **not** motivating the people to have love as their goal as Paul is urging Timothy to preach.

When Paul mentions love exactly what does he mean?

It is a supernatural love.

It can only come from God.

You cannot work it up.

Religion will **not** give it to us; it comes only through the new birth.

1 Peter 1:22-23 [NIV] *“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”*

Our ability to love in this way only comes from fact we have been born again.

Romans 5:5 [NIV] *“And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”*

Love of God poured out from our hearts by Holy Spirit which we receive on our new birth, to other people.

This is how God loves them, through us.

Love and obedience go hand in hand.

This love is **not** sloppy, sentimental sweet words but manifested in obeying Jesus in everything.

John 14:21 [NIV] *“Whoever has my commands [Jesus Christ speaking] and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”*

This is the proof of our love, obedience to the words of Jesus Christ.

Love is the motive for our obedience.

John 14:15, 23 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command.” ... “Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”*

If we do **not** obey Christ then we do **not** love him.

We are not motivated to love by fear of disobeying a set of rules.

Romans 8:15 [NIV] *“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”*

Not received from Jesus Christ the spirit of fear.

We can see this in the way we raise our children.

We can force them into obedience by enforcing harsh rules, but the end product will be a rebel.

But if we correct them, motivated and surrounded by love for them, they will continue to have respect to our wishes even when they grow up.

Love is a much more powerful motive than fear.

God bases His relationship with us on love.

Love is progressive.

Philippians 1:9 [NIV] *“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,”*

Love may abound more and more.

The more we extend our love to others the more sensitive we will be about the things that please God.

Parents know this.

The child that really loves us is sensitive to our smallest requirements.

This is the relationship we should have with God.

We will **not** love perfectly to begin with.

Do not give up, for our faith is still counted as righteousness, even if we fail to love as we should.

Abraham is an example of this.

Abraham made many un-loving mistakes after his faith was imputed to him as righteousness but God still reckoned him righteous, while he worked out these un-loving weaknesses and problems.

The love perfected by keeping Christ’s word.

1 John 2:5-6 [NIV] *“But if anyone obeys his [Jesus Christ’s] word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”*

Don’t try to feel loving.

Don’t try to work up love – focus on obeying Christ’s words.