

LIVING “AS IT BECOMETH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST”

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The church at Rome was under the wrong impression as to how grace worked. Chapter five of Paul’s letter closes with the thought that where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly (Rom. 5:20). The brethren at Rome thought that since grace abounded more abundantly, then the more sin they committed, the more grace they would have. Answering this wrong notion Paul wrote to them saying, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin” (Rom. 6:1-7). Justification from sin by faith does not encourage us to sin, but instead frees man from sin.

After having put the man of sin to death through obedience to the gospel of Christ through believing (Mk. 16:16), repenting (Acts 2:38), confessing (Acts 8:37), and submitting to baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 22:16), we are then to walk in a new life (Rom. 6:4). Paul speaks of putting the old man of sin to death, meaning we no longer live in sin but “walk in the light as He is in the light” (1 Jn. 1:7). If we do this, John says in the same verse that the blood of Christ continues to cleanse us of sin.

Once we begin our new walk of life after obedience to the gospel, we may have to change certain things in our lives. We may have to guard our tongues and change the way we speak, we may have to pay closer attention to our attitudes toward our fellow man, we may have to monitor our actions closer, or we may have to more closely notice the way we dress so as to be in compliance with the way that God would have us to live while on the earth.

Christ described His disciples as the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). Paul charged those at Colosse to “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech *be* alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:5-6). By walking in the light, as John commanded, we will always be good examples to people within and without the church. However, it is of great importance for us to be good examples to people that are not members of the Lord’s church. Paul talked about the importance of this when he said, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). Peter also talked about how one might convert another by his or her godly life style, “Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear” (1 Pet. 3:1-2).

If we live righteously “as it becometh the gospel of Christ” (Phil. 1:27), then we will live the purest life known to man. If we are not living righteously, yet proclaim to be doing so, we may cause many problems. Just imagine one that claims to be a member of the Lord’s church yet uses filthy talk, uses alcohol as his or her beverage of choice (claiming social drinking is acceptable), visits the casinos as a form of recreation, or dresses immodestly like those of the world, wearing tight or revealing clothing.

Actions such as these bring shame and dishonor to the very institution for which Christ gave His own life (Acts 20:28).

We should always ask ourselves if what we are doing is something that Christ would have participated in while he walked the earth. In order to gain heaven, we must be honest with ourselves as we monitor our lifestyles. If it is something that Christ would not endorse, we should love Him and our own souls enough to discontinue doing those things.

When we obey the gospel, we give our word to the Lord that we will live in the way He has asked us to live and not as the world lives. We truly should always live “as it becometh the gospel of Christ.”