**June 2014**

Freedom from the Leash

As a grace believer, I thank God for the wonderful freedom He has given me through His wonderful gospel of grace.  The Apostle Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 reveals **the** Gospel for this dispensation of grace*;  “Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have* ***believed*** *in vain.  For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ* ***died******for our sins*** *according to the scriptures; And that He was* ***buried****, and that He* ***rose again the third day*** *according to the scriptures.”* Paul, the Apostle to we gentiles, further reveals  that this wonderful salvation was a gift*; Ephesians 2:8 and 9  “ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast.”* Paul, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in Ephesians 1:13 had already declared that we are **SEALED** *“…….in whom also after that ye* ***believed,*** *ye were* ***SEALED*** *with the Holy Spirit of promise.”  WOW!  All I can say is “thank you Jesus Christ.”*

About a year and a half ago, my wonderful 94 year old dad went to live in a nursing home.  It was at this time that his dog, Molly, came to live with my wife and me.  Unfortunately, Molly was not one of those dogs that you could just let go outside and it would not run away.  As a result, we had to put her on a leash.  Her freedom, therefore, was determined by the length of the leash.  Sadly, many good brothers and sisters have allowed themselves to be put on a “spiritual leash.”  They will never know the freedom that Christ wishes them to enjoy until they free themselves from their leashs.  The cause of their restriction is a failure to rightly divide the truth ( 2 Timothy 2:15) and to understand that our “marching orders” come to us by way of the inspired writings of the apostle Paul( Romans through Philemon). Paul writes in 2Timothy 3:16 *“*All *scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” And again in Romans 15:4 “ For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*.”  As we study God’s Word to show ourselves approved, we must be aware of (1) who is speaking, (2) to whom is he speaking, (3) what came before and (4) what came afterward.  Without this approach, right division of the truth is impossible.  People are lead to believe that everything in the Bible is meant for and directed to them.  I recently heard a pastor say that “there has only been one gospel ever proclaimed in the entire Bible.  Wow!  (see Galations 2:7 for starters).  Many denominational preachers unfortunately confuse their congregations by failing to rightly divide the truth.  They preach that “you need to repent,” “ be water baptized for church membership”, “tithe,” “ be at church every time the doors are open,” “ask Jesus to come into your heart,” “ know that you know that you know.”.  Rather than rightly dividing the truth, these leaders “blenderize” truths pertinent to the gospel preached during the earthly ministry of Christ( the kingdom gospel) with the truths pertinent to the gospel revealed to the Apostle Paul by the risen Christ( gospel of grace). It’s no wonder that their congregations are confused and have doubts regarding their salvation as well as their mission.

So how can these brothers and sisters rid themselves of these depressing, restraining “leashs?”

It’s really not all that hard.  It’s simply coming to the realization that God does not lie.  God said that he will save us if we **believe** that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins (all of them!!!), that He was buried for three days and that He rose from the dead.  DO YOU BELIEVE GOD???  Either you believe God tells the truth or you believe that He lies. *“ For by grace are ye saved* *through faith….”* I love the definition of faith that Les Feldick expressed more than 25 years ago; **“faith is taking God at His word.”**  And that is where we are at today.  If you believe the Gospel and believe that God always tells the truth, then you are saved for eternity!  Your leash is gone! Jesus said on the cross IT IS FINISHED!  Don’t let anyone restrict your joy in God’s grace.  He did it all.  That is that! Please thank God for His wonderful grace and be about the job of becoming an ambassador and enjoying your secure life in Christ.

Yours in Christ

Phil