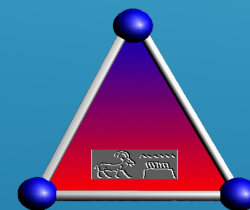


PERSPECTIVES ON PAUL

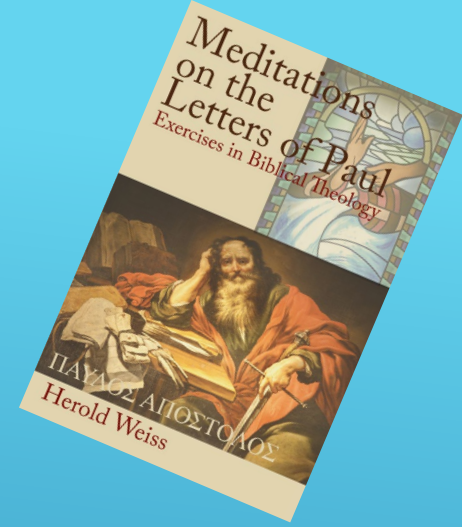
Session October 21, 2020, 6:30 PM Central Time

Discussing law in scripture.

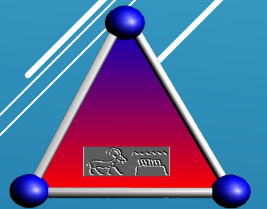


“ As far as Paul is concerned, salvation has always been dependent on god’s initiative alone, that is, on grace. It is God who calls, who loves, who justifies. It was so with Abraham and the patriarchs, and it is so to this day.

Herold Weiss, *Meditations on the Letters of Paul*, 113



”

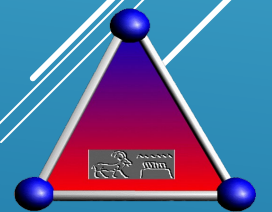


The questions around how much to give are too often reserved for “Stewardship Drives.” So we compartmentalize our giving and tuck it away for another year. In all the talk of stewardship, seldom does it go much beyond the pocketbook. Whenever stewardship is reduced to a program, something is terribly wrong, and congregations and individuals continue to struggle.

The apostle Paul revealed to us the key to successful fundraising in his appeal to the Corinthian congregation to assist in the collection he was taking up for the Jerusalem church. His formula:

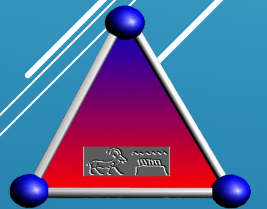
³For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, ⁴begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints— ⁵and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us,... — 2 Corinthians 8:3-5

The Macedonians, in spite of their poverty, begged to give to the Jerusalem church—even beyond their means—**because they first gave themselves to the Lord.** Sure, it is possible to raise a lot of money using sophisticated methods based on psychological triggers and emotional appeals. These are too often resorted to as substitutes for the Macedonian way. A congregation that first “gives themselves to the Lord,” recognizes their stewardship partnership, and everything they do springs from that commitment. So let’s not encourage tithing, that’s about money. Let’s encourage seeing all we have as God’s and act accordingly.



Stewardship – or any other work –
grows out of a relationship with God.

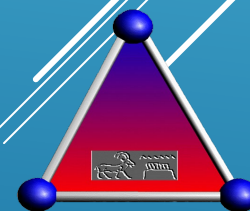
Our relationship with God does not
grow out of stewardship.



³¹ The days are coming, says the Lord, when I shall establish a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, a covenant they broke, though I was patient with them, [acted as their lawful lord – HN] says the Lord. ³³ For this is the covenant I shall establish with the Israelites after those days, says the Lord: I shall set my law within them, writing it on their hearts; I shall be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ No longer need they teach one another, neighbour or brother, to know the Lord; all of them, high and low alike, will know me, says the Lord, for I shall forgive their wrongdoing, and their sin I shall call to mind no more.

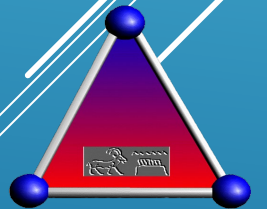
- Jeremiah 31:31-34 (REB)

THE NEW COVENANT



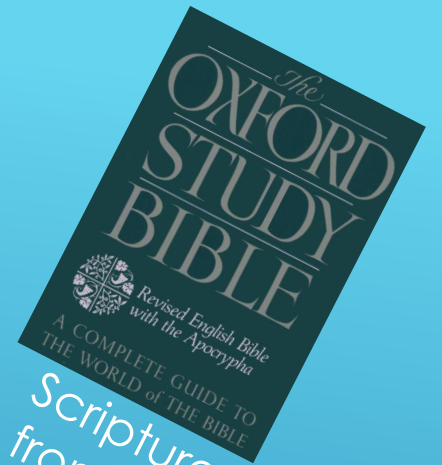
Earning God's love by following the law ends up separating us from the grace of God. God gives us everything, but we want to justify ourselves as if the cross and resurrection never occurred. We can't nullify God's grace by our dependence on Jewish law; but we can diminish our experience of grace.

- Bruce Epperly, *Galatians: A Participatory Study Guide*, 34

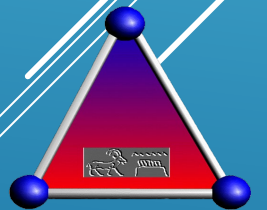


⁷ Had that first covenant been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second to replace it. ⁸ But God finds fault with his people when he says, 'The time is coming, says the Lord, when I shall conclude a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ⁹ It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt; because they did not abide by the terms of that covenant, and so I abandoned them, says the Lord. ¹⁰ For this is the covenant I shall make with Israel after those days, says the Lord: I shall set my laws in their understanding and write them on their hearts; I shall be their God, and they will be my people. ¹¹ They will not teach one another, each saying to his fellow-citizen and his brother, "Know the Lord!" For all of them will know me, high and low alike; ¹² I shall pardon their wicked deeds, and their sins I shall remember no more.' ¹³ By speaking of a new covenant, he has pronounced the first one obsolete; and anything that is becoming obsolete and growing old will shortly disappear.

Hebrews 8:7-13 (REB)

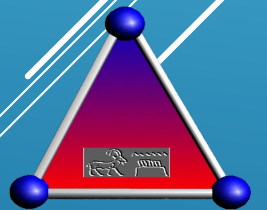


Scripture
from the
REB



Some ways of quoting Scripture:

- Allusion to an idea
- Allusion to words, probably paraphrased
- Using the words with no direct intention
- Quoting and expanding
- Quoting authoritatively within a theological system
- Quoting authoritatively directly



³ Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, 'This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: ⁴ You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I have carried you on eagles' wings and brought you here to me. ⁵ If only you will now listen to me and keep my covenant, then out of all peoples you will become my special possession; for the whole earth is mine. ⁶ You will be to me a kingdom of priests, my holy nation. Those are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.'

Exodus 19:6

