

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

IN CHRIST JESUS.

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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THE LAW IS GOOD #1

For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted. (1 Timothy 1.6-11 NASB)

Paul declared that the law is good, but somehow many Christians have concluded that the law is either not good or it is no longer necessary. But this cannot be so because under the new covenant, God puts His laws into the minds and onto the hearts of His people, the true, spiritual house of Israel. If we believe He will do this, then we also must believe that the law is good and has purpose.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them: And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. (Hebrews 8.10-11 ASV)

I believe that this is the ultimate lot for all mankind when God is *All* in all, for it is then that all mankind shall know the Lord and all will experience His love. So the law is good, for when it is in the mind and on the heart, people will no longer have to be told or taught what is righteous, for they will know it without question because they will know the Lord their Righteousness.

Jesus said: **Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished** (Matthew 5.17-18 ASV). In other words, the law is still operative, unless you believe that heaven and earth have passed away.

Today, it is true that all who believe are under grace, but this does not negate the need for the law. We are under grace, but this does not negate the fact that God has a righteous standard by which He judges all mankind. By what standard are we to judge our own actions if there is no law of God? How do we know what to do to please our Lord? So the law is good.

Believers must understand the law in the spiritual sense. Paul wrote that the law is not only good but that it is holy and spiritual (Romans 7.12, 14). What is walking by the spirit, if it is not walking in accord with the law of God? As we walk in the spirit, we bear the fruit of the spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5.22-23). Who can deny that these nine fruits of the spirit, with love leading the pack, are not good? So the law is good. Let us be clear that the law of God does not mean that mankind will revert to animal sacrifices, circumcision, and other physical rites as ordained under the old covenant. For those who have received the life of Christ and the spirit of God, the law is meant to be applied spiritually, ***spiritual***

with spiritual. Writing His laws on hearts is done by His spirit. With spiritual sight, we see that there is no need for animal sacrifices year after year because the body of Jesus Christ has been offered once for all (Hebrews 10.10). He is the sacrifice for sin. There is no need for circumcision of the flesh, for under the new covenant we need a circumcision of the heart (Romans 2.29). There is no longer an elite class of priests that enter the holy of holies once a year, for today there is a new priesthood, the body of believers, who have a hope that enters within the veil (Hebrews 6.19). Further, God's law consists of His moral law, which is based on love. It is no longer an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, for the command is to love your enemies and lay down your life for one another (Matthew 5.38-48; 1 John 3.16).

Do you realize that the law is being written on the hearts of all who believe, for Paul tells us that **the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us** (Romans 5.5 NASB)? Further, Paul tells us that love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13.10). Jesus declared that the law itself rests on the whole matter of love.

And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”
(Matthew 22.37-40 NASB)

Just consider the Ten Commandments and you will see that love is the foundation of each one, or we could say, love is the way to keep each one of them. If you love the Lord, you will have no other gods before Him. If you love the Lord, you will make no idols or worship false gods. If you love the Lord, you will not take His name in vain. If you love the Lord, you will enter into His rest of the seventh day. If you love your parents, you will honor them. If you love others, including your enemies, you will not murder anyone. If you love your spouse, you will not commit adultery. If you love others, you will not steal from them. If you love your neighbor, you will not bear false witness against him. If you love your neighbor, you will not covet anything that is his. It should be obvious that the Ten Commandments are divided between love of the Lord God and love of others. For this reason, Jesus declared that there are truly two great commandments that sum up all the rest: **Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself.**

We could say that those of us who believe have been given the very foundation of the law, which is love, and as we love, in accord with God's love, we are fulfilling the law as well. It has already been written on our hearts in some measure, to be manifested fully when we are glorified as Christ is glorified and we are complete in Him, a mature man in Christ (Colossians 1.28; Ephesians 4.13).

Further, as saints, we will judge the world and the angels. On what basis will we judge, which refers to setting things right, if there is no law upon which to judge? But with the law written in our minds and on our hearts, we will be fully equipped to carry out our service in the Lord under His Headship as He sums up all things in the heavens and on the earth. We won't need books to refer to because the book will be in us. This should remind us of Paul's exhortation in his Colossians epistle: **Let the word of Christ (of the Lord) richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another** (Colossians 3.16 NASB). The word of God is being worked into our hearts in this day to be fully wrought in us in the day of our glorification. Today, we taste it; then, we will feast upon it. Again, the law is spiritual, and when the saints are glorified as Christ is glorified and we occupy spiritual, celestial bodies, we will have every capability to fulfill our service as the complement of the One completing the all in all (Ephesians 1.22-23 CV).

Dear saints, the law is good, for it is based on the love of God.