



GLOBAL GRACE NETWORK

GGN is a teaching resource for ministers and churches all over the world. We advocate the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ - Jesus alone, grace alone, faith alone. Our purpose is twofold: to help the Church rediscover Jesus and to take this message to the world.

APRIL 2010

God loves ^{1st} first!

Some stories we hear stick with us for a lifetime. I once heard the following story, and I have no count on many times I have shared this story while teaching and preaching the Word around the world.

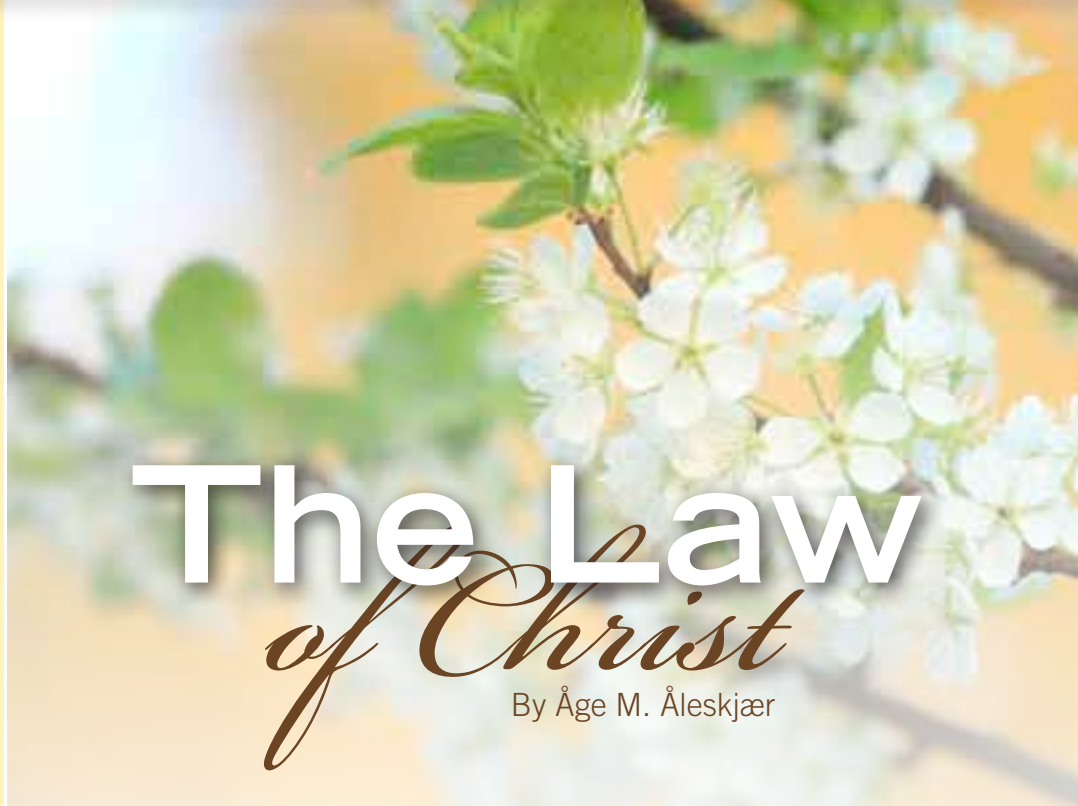
It tells about a couple that came to their pastor for counselling. "My husband doesn't love me anymore," the wife complained. The husband replied, "No, Pastor, that is not true. I love my wife!" "No, he doesn't love me," she insisted. "Yes, I love her! But I just want her to cook the food and clean the house. Is that too much to ask for?" the husband asked. "See? He doesn't love me", she answered, "because I want him to love me even if I don't cook the food and clean the house. For that love will then give me the strength and joy to do all those things."

This is a wonderful truth! 1 John 4:19 says, "We love him because he first loved us." The love of God FOR us and IN us causes our lives to be radically changed.

We pray that you will be encouraged and increase in revelation by reading the two articles presented in this newsletter. Take time to carefully study the teaching from Pastor Åge M. Åleskjær on how the Law of Christ works in our lives. Some think that when we say we are not under the Mosaic Law, we say we are lawless. However, that is not so, as in the New Covenant we have the Law of Christ, the Law of Love. It has a higher standard than the Mosaic Law, but it works in a very different way.



Mary Felde
Editor



The Law *of Christ*

By Åge M. Åleskjær

A Study of the Law of the New Covenant – the Law of Christ.

In an earlier article ("Rightly Dividing the Word of God"), I mentioned the three different groups of people that the Bible speaks about, and the laws that govern each group. The Jews are under the Mosaic Law, the Gentiles are under the law of conscience, and we, the church of God, are under the law of Christ. What is this law of Christ? The Bible uses many names to describe it, and it contains only one commandment: to love. In this article we will use some time to study this law of Christ, which is the only law that brings liberty!

The love that has been poured out in our hearts obviously wants to live a life pleasing to God. This is why all the requirements that the Old Covenant announced will be fulfilled as we live by the New Covenant love. *So when some people think that we are preaching lawlessness, it is a big misunderstanding. We are preaching a higher law: the law of the New Covenant, the law of love, the perfect law of liberty, the royal law according to the Scripture, which only works when Jesus is living in you!*

Continued 

The love that has been poured out in our hearts obviously wants to live a life pleasing to God.

This perfect law exceeds all the requirements of the Old Covenant, but it all happens in the newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter. The Pharisees' business with the letter has been replaced by the wonderful fragrance of life that comes from the new life.

We have moved out from the narrow corridor of letter and into the glorious freedom of the Spirit. Hallelujah!

Of course the new life is flowing in harmony with the right and wrong standards of God. But this is more than the tree of knowledge dividing between good and evil - this is the tree of life, dividing life and death. Many Pharisees try to do and say the right things, but it is without life. There is no aroma of Christ, and it fills Christian churches with lifeless doctrines.

Oh, how happy I am that I have experienced the new life of the Spirit! In Norway the old Pentecostal believers used to sing, "Rejoice that I came over to the Hallelujah side!" To that my heart says, "Yes, and Amen."

The New Commandment

We are new creations; we live in a New Covenant with a new commandment. In the New Covenant we have one commandment instead of ten. This one commandment is not written "on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart" (2 Cor. 3:3).

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).

"And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment" (1 John 3:23).

The key to live in this new commandment is that "the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom. 5:5).

The Brilliant Solution of God

The new commandment is an impossible "requirement" if we are to produce this love on our own. Then we are back where we started. Then the new commandment is worse than the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai.

But the solution of God is brilliant! He Himself fulfills the requirement in us by pouring out His love in our hearts; He gives us a new nature when we pass from death to life. The new nature loves the brethren, just like 1 John 3:17 says. And therefore the requirement is fulfilled in us.

If we should be required to make the first initiative—that love should start with our effort—this requirement would be impossible to fulfill. It would be "mission impossible" if we were the ones who were to produce the love to fulfill the commandment about loving the Lord with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourselves.

So without being born-again, this commandment cannot be put into practice. It is when we pass from death to life that we receive the love, and then it is written on fleshly tablets of the heart. Love comes from God. We love because He first loved us. We forgive because He already has forgiven. He died for us while we were still sinners.

We Love Because He First Loved Us

Listen to this:

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves *is born of God and knows God*. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only be-

gotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, *not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:7-11).

"We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19, RSV).

This is the key to the new commandment. It is not us who loved God - it is *He who loved us! We love, because He first loved us*.

In the New Covenant we have one commandment instead of ten.

This kills the religion of works, and gives God all the glory. The result is wonderful. We love, we have that love poured out in our hearts, and we love the brethren because we are born of God. The whole miracle is founded on His work in us; our performance and our boasting are excluded! As we now live and do according to His good pleasure, and keep His commandment, it is the result of Him working in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Grace upon grace!

Jesus Introduced It, but the New Life Made It Possible

Even if Jesus introduced the new commandment in John 13:34, He knew that it was a prophecy of the time that was to come after Calvary. He knew that this would not work before the Spirit was given, because it was by the Spirit that the love of God was poured out in our hearts.

In John 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, Jesus is prophesying about the time after Pentecost. He is constantly referring to "when He, the Spirit of truth, has come," and He uses expressions like "in that day," etc. John explains it like this:

The new commandment is an impossible “requirement” if we are to produce this love on our own.

“Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but *an old commandment which you have had from the beginning*. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. *Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you*, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him” (1 John 2:7-10).

When John says that they had this commandment from the beginning, it might be that he refers to the fact that they had this commandment from the time they were newly saved: “an old commandment which you have had from the beginning.” But it might also be that he refers to Jesus introducing this commandment. However, *now* it is true “in Him and in you,” because it is *now* that the light is shining.

In any case, the new commandment is that we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in darkness.

One Commandment Instead of Ten

The Word explains:

“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has *fulfilled the law*. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm

to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (Rom. 13:8-10).

“*For all the law is fulfilled in one word*, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Gal. 5:14).

So we have been given one commandment instead of ten. Are you able to see it?

If you at the same time have the revelation of how you can receive this love, as we just looked at in Rom. 5:5, 1 John 3:14, and 1 John 4:19, then you have found the answer of how you can live a life pleasing to God.

Some Things are an Individual Matter

This commandment is written in our hearts, and because of this, some things become an individual matter to us, e.g. that some keep one day holy and others don't. But no part is allowed to despise the other. In connection to food it says that one believes he may only eat vegetables, whereas another believes he may have all things. Neither part is allowed to judge the other for all of us live to the Lord. You can find all this in Romans 14.

This chapter closes by saying that whatever is not from faith is sin. Consequently, the New Testament commandment is that we shall live in faith and love. The new commandment is love, and everything done apart from love is sin.

So you will find that God's commandment in the New Testament is that you shall walk in love, because then you will fulfill the law. The one who loves does not steal. The one who loves does not commit adultery. The one who loves does not lie. The one who loves does not murder. He who loves has fulfilled the law (Rom. 13:8-10).

The Perfect Law – The Law of Liberty

“Therefore, lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving

yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:21-25).

This is where the key is found!

The Word of God is like a mirror telling us who we are. Just think about all the verses in the Bible talking about “in Him,” “through Him,” “with Him,” etc. The Bible is explaining about who we are in Him because He lives in us and we in Him! When you look into this, like in a mirror observing who you really are, and after going away you do not forget what kind of man you are, but rather you continue to look into the mirror, then you will look into the perfect law of liberty and you will be blessed in your doing.

The whole miracle is founded on His work in us; our performance and our boasting are excluded!

Do Not Forget Who You Are

Let us look at this sentence again: “immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”

This is a common problem for many Christians. They forget who they are in Christ, and what they can do because of Him living in us. This is why we have to continue observing ourselves in the mirror, so that we may know “what kind of man” we are. We must know that we are now new creations in Christ, that we are dead to sin and have been raised to a new life. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing, healed by the stripes of Jesus,

...this would not work before the Spirit was given, because it was by the Spirit that the love of God was poured out in our hearts.

seated with Him in Heaven, the devil is under our feet, and He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world.

That makes you victorious. You are above and not beneath; the head and not the tail.

Many Christians have forgotten who they are, and this is why they are not experiencing being blessed in what they do.

The Law of Liberty

This is a glorious name of the law that governs the believer's life. There are many terms describing the laws that prevailed after Calvary. Here are some of them: the law of the Spirit of life, the law of faith, the law of liberty, and the law of Christ, which is the commandment of love.

The Word of God is like a mirror telling us who we are.

The law of liberty is called the perfect law or "the perfect law of liberty." This is the law that leads to complete freedom. It really is a name for the power that works in us when the Word gains control and we live in the fruit of the redemption. Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed!

Notice how the message of freedom runs

as a thread through the Word. He says:

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Then he is talking about freedom from living under the bondage of sin. Paul is teaching about freedom from sin throughout the entire chapter of Romans 6 and in Romans 7 he is setting us free from the law. In Galatians he is very concerned about the liberty we have in Christ (Gal. 2 and 5:1). The epistle to the Colossians speaks about freedom from bondage, traditions, man-made commandments, philosophies, and religiosity.

You are free from the curse of the law, free from the power of darkness, free from everything you were a prisoner to! It is this perfect liberty that applies now. The law of liberty is the perfect law.

The Liberty of the Individual

Let us look at another side of this liberty. There is a great difference between the position of the individual in the Old and in the New Covenant. In the Old Covenant one had to ask "the seer" (the prophet) to know about the will of God and receive God's guidance. It was the prophet who had the Spirit of God, and he could teach his neighbor and his brother and say, "know the Lord."

But now in the New Covenant every believer has received the Holy Spirit, and "for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them" (Heb. 8:6-12).

The New Covenant, which is established on better promises, has the advantage in that the individual has the Spirit of God and can be led by the Spirit of God.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom 8:14).

"But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teaches you; but as the

same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him" (1 John 2:27).

This does not mean that we do not need teachers, because God appointed teachers in the church. Rather it means that as an individual, you may "know the Lord" yourself. That is the privilege of the believer.

...as an individual, you may "know the Lord" yourself.

Unfortunately, the charismatic circles have sinned against this. The leaders have very often managed the life of the individual in a wrong way, and this leads to a control that binds the person. The worst thing is manipulating prophecies, where one prophesies people into ministries or asks them to do things or go places based on a prophecy. That is not the Spirit of the New Covenant at all!

As ministers, let us rather help people to grow in the knowledge of the privileges and ways of the New Covenant, so they can grow and live accordingly.



Åge Åleskjær

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Member of GGN Board of Directors

A Word of Encouragement

By Pastor Bill Annis

As ministers of the Gospel, it is our privilege to bring good news and wonderful information to people who desperately need the Word we have.

It's most frustrating when we know we have revelations that will make a difference in people's lives and they refuse to heed it.

Luke 19:39-42 (Amp) provides insight as to how Jesus felt when this happened to Him. The scripture states He wept audibly over their inability to understand His teaching.

39 And some of the Pharisees from the throng said to Jesus, *Teacher, reprove Your disciples!*

40 *He replied, I tell you that if these keep silent, the very stones will cry out. [Hab. 2:11.]*

41 *And as He approached, He saw the city, and He wept [audibly] over it,*

42 *Exclaiming, Would that you had known personally, even at least in this your day, the things that make for peace (for freedom from all the distresses that are experienced as the result of sin and upon which your peace—your security, safety, prosperity, and happiness—depends)! But now they are hidden from your eyes.*

Our Source of Inspiration

These people, like many religious today, wanted to reprove those who believed in total freedom through the Gospel. Jesus stated that they did not know what was available for them in their day.

It is important that we know what is ours in this day and what we have to give to others. The Word of God needs to become our source of inspiration - not the negative or positive response of those to whom we minister. There is an interesting scripture in Jeremiah chapter fifteen.

In the 15th verse Jeremiah vents his feelings toward God's long-suffering concerning those who opposed him. In fact, he stated that he was suffering as a result. Have you ever been there?

But note the source of his inspiration.

Jeremiah 15:16 (Amp)

16 *Your words were found, and I ate them; and Your words were to me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart, for I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.*

Dear fellow minister, I know you may feel that your nation and your area is a challenge. I know what it feels like to feel alone. However, I have learned that His word is the source of my joy and it alone can bring rejoicing to my heart. This is

The Word of God needs to become our source of inspiration - not the negative or positive response of those to whom we minister.

especially true when those whom we love and want to help oppose the Word of grace and of faith. We may weep for them, but also rejoice that we all are called by His name.

I beg you not to allow adversity to birth despair in your heart.

Jeremiah 15:19 (Amp)

19 *Therefore thus says the Lord [to Jeremiah]: If you return [and give up this mistaken tone of distrust and despair], then I will give you again a settled place of quiet and safety, and you will be My*

His word is the source of my joy and it alone can bring rejoicing to my heart.

minister; and if you separate the precious from the vile [cleansing your own heart from unworthy and unwarranted suspicions concerning God's faithfulness], you shall be My mouthpiece. [But do not yield to them.] Let them return to you—not you to [the people].

You are the Hope of This World

I feel as I write that these are words fitly spoken for some of you wonderful ministers.

Heb 13:20-21 is my prayer for you:

20 Now may the God of peace [Who is the Author and the Giver of peace], Who brought again from among the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood [that sealed, ratified] the everlasting agreement (covenant, testament), [Isa. 55:3; 63:11; Ezek. 37:26; Zech. 9:11.]

21 Strengthen (complete, perfect) and make you what you ought to be and equip you with everything good that you may carry out His will; [while He Himself] works in you and accomplishes that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ (the Messiah); to Whom be the glory forever and ever (to the ages of the ages). Amen (so be it).

22 I call on you, brethren, to listen patiently and bear with this message of exhortation and admonition and encouragement, for I have written to you briefly.

Be encouraged by the knowledge that you are the hope of this WORLD.



Bill Annis

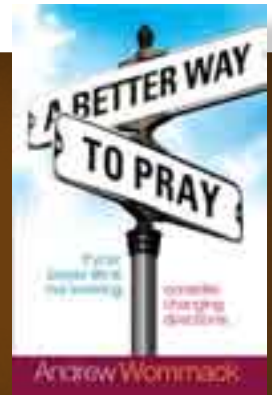
President, Faith Christian Fellowship, Canada

STUDY CORNER

You may be asking many of the same questions Andrew once did. Is prayer my Christian duty? Is prayer primarily about asking God to meet my needs and the needs of others? Is God's answer to my prayer based on the degree of humility and sincerity? Is answered prayer a sovereign decision of God or do I have the ability to influence Him?

Clear, scriptural answers to these questions and more could significantly change the way you pray. These principles may not be the only way to pray, but if you're not getting the results you desire, consider changing directions; maybe there is A Better Way to Pray.

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