

The Perfect Law of Liberty

Harmony M.B.C., March 13, 2011 (Morning)

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James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

James 1:23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

James 1:24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

James 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Some people have felt that the apostle James was too much of a legalist. His writings seem to support that idea if we only look at what he has written with a kind of fixed mental view that when the bible mentions “law” it is talking about something that God has set forth which has in it a set of do’s and don’t for us to follow in order to obey Him. Now while we readily admit that the Ten Commandments are structured much like that, they do not cover every aspect of the biblical meaning of “law.” I think that we can understand some of the different references to “law” in the bible if we can just think about some things in our own world that relate to the that word.

When we think about a speed limit sign on the side of the road, we usually associate that with speed limit laws of a state. And so it is. In the same way, when we think about having to have a driver’s license to drive legally, or having a hunting license to hunt legally, we are thinking about the fact that there are laws that were made to demand that. But there are other laws that are not thought about so often. These laws are written into the behavior of the universe by the Lord and we see the evidence of them every day. When rain falls from the clouds in the sky, it falls down to the surface of the earth. What makes that happen? Also, when the sun comes up in the morning, it shows up first in the east. Why is that? We can think of multitudes of things that witness to us that there are laws which dictate the action of the universe. The Lord built these into the system to enforce the way things behave. Men sometimes call these natural laws. These laws are an expression of things that are fixed...things that happen with certainty. That’s how I want us to think about the perfect law of liberty that our text is talking about. This law is about something that has been fixed by the Lord Jesus Christ. He has passed a fixed rule that governs the spiritual universe. It is this law that makes certain that things happen to ensure liberty for the people of God. This liberty is unalienable...that is, someone else cannot take it away from us. Because it is a fixed law, set in place by the omnipotent God. So, let’s look at some things about the perfect law of liberty, and ask the Holy Spirit to help us really get an understanding and appreciation for what our Lord has wrought for us.

I. Why Is It Called The Law of Liberty?

- As I said, the law of the Lord guarantees liberty for the saints of God. So, that is why it is call the perfect law of liberty. So, let’s look at some things about the liberty it brings:
 - ▶ First Liberty: It frees us from the curse of the law
 - ▶ Second Liberty: We are made free from the bondage of sin (this is both the bondage of

being held in slavery to the end guaranteed by sin [the wages of sin is death], and freedom from the bondage of servitude to sin in the acts of our lives)

- ▶ Third Liberty: We are freed from the fear of death...we have liberty to really live:
 - **Heb. 2:9** But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.
 - **Heb. 2:14** "...that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
 - **Heb. 2:15** And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
- ▶ Fourth Liberty: Liberty to discover better things and pursue noble goals (to understand this fully, we need a good description of how it was with us before the Lord brought us under the perfect law of Liberty: Titus 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.
 - (Foolish) Liberty to learn and practice wisdom,
 - (Disobedient) Liberty to be obedient to the principles of God
 - (Deceived) Liberty to pursue understanding of the difference between deception and lies, and truth
 - (Serving divers lusts and pleasures) Liberty to serve the Lord in spiritual purposes, deeds, and goals
 - (Living in malice and envy) Liberty and capacity to be benevolent and forbearing
 - (Hateful and hating one another) Liberty to learn and practice Christian love

II. Last note the condition placed on getting the blessing of the perfect law of liberty

- I said in the introduction, that the liberty brought to us by Christ's perfect law of liberty makes our liberty rights unalienable. What I didn't say, was that though no one can take those rights from us, because they are built into the "system" that we have our life in...(that is the eternal system of God's salvation, and the system of God's sovereign kingdom) enjoyment or actually getting a mental ownership of those liberties is conditional. See what scripture says:
 - ▶ **James 1:25** But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he **being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.**
 - ▶ These are the principles for how we take ownership of the liberties we have under Christ's law. We have choice gold stored up in the promises of God, but obedience to the principles of how the law of liberty works is the only thing that will open the doors of the treasury and let us in.
 - ▶ We must consistently investigate and discover the principles of the law of liberty and operate consistently by them (looketh into...continueth therein)
 - Isaac Newton could avoid being hit on the head by a falling apple by knowing how the law of gravity worked. But he never thought about defying that law of gravity and by doing so launching satellites into space which would advance communications and other technology light years ahead of what he was thinking about gravity. In this same way, we can get elementary blessings from knowing kindergarten things about the perfect law

of liberty, but what advanced blessings can we get when we really delve into the amazing realities that lie within what liberties we truly have because of this law?

- ▶ We must both hear AND remember what the principles of the law of liberty say
- ▶ Both of these can be hard to do.
 - Hearing: How many of you can hear warblers singing in the trees in your yard in spring? How many of you can hear a whistle used to call dogs? I can't hear either. Why? Because I am tone deaf for high pitched sounds, so that even high-pitched bird songs can't be heard. This is the way it is sometimes for us with spiritual lessons. We are unable to hear the spiritual message in the words.
 - Remembering: Then, there's the problem with memory. It's one thing to sit and hear a lesson, but how well can we remember them? I still remember spelling lessons from the third grade...but I have forgotten a lot of math lessons I had in college.
 - A long time ago, I learned how to play a guitar. But since I didn't review what I had learned every so often, I forgot how. Now, I can't play a single chord on a guitar.
 - I am bad about selectively forgetting stuff. A lot of us are like that. Why? It's about attention and application of our brain to what we are attempting to remember, or what we were supposed to have learned.
 - Many people really have a problem with remembering spiritual lessons. If we don't remember a spiritual lesson about how God works, and how we take advantage of the liberty we have in Jesus, we can't very well use the information.
- ▶ It takes work (doer of the work) to purge out the old attitudes, the old practices, the old way of thinking, and give the new man freedom of expression. The bible contains scores of instructions that, by the very way they are worded, make us to know that we have both a duty and the liberty, the freedom, to be responsible for our own spiritual growth. Examples:
 - **Rom. 13:12** The night is far spent, the day is at hand: **let us** therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.
 - **2Cor. 7:1** Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, **let us** cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
 - **Gal. 5:26** **Let us** not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.
 - **Gal. 6:10** As we have therefore opportunity, **let us** do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.
 - **1Thess. 5:8** But **let us**, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.
 - **Heb. 10:24** And **let us** consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
 - **1John 4:7** Beloved, **let us** love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.