

The Gift - A Clean Slate

When we met earlier this last week with the Elders, **Dennis Parmer** made a comment that I found remarkable. He said that the Elders had wanted to give the church the gift of a "Clean Slate".

A Clean Slate...! What can be done with such a gift? What are the possibilities? How may we choose to respond?

*God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and God the Son (who is the living King of His Church), also **give** us choices. Recall from the times of the Babylonian captivity that God spoke thru the prophet Ezekiel about choices...*

Eze 33:10 "And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, '**This is what you have said: "Our rebellious acts and our sins have caught up with us, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?"**'"

How then can we live?

Given a Clean Slate, isn't that both the relevant question and the choice?

David writes in Psalms 32...

Psa 32:1-2 **How blessed is the one whose rebellious acts are forgiven, whose sin is pardoned! (2) How blessed is the one whose wrongdoing the LORD does not punish, in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

But further within the same Psalm...

Psa 32:8-9 **I will instruct and teach you about how you should live. I will advise you as I look you in the eye. (9) Do not be like an unintelligent horse or mule, which will not obey you unless they are controlled by a bridle and bit.**

God does have a sense of humor... He uses the age-old "Carrot and Stick" disciplinary method...! Like me, many of you know what both of those options feel like. :-)

How then can we live?

Well, what does the Stick look like...? The Apostle Paul writes in Galatians 5...

Gal 5:16-26 But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. (17) For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. (18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. (19) Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity,

depravity, (20) idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, (21) envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. **I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!** (22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (24) Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (25) **If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.** (26) **Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.**

Conversely, what does the Carrot look like...? Paul writes in Ephesians 4...

Eph 4:1-7 I, therefore, the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to **live worthily of the calling with which you have been called, (2) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, putting up with one another in love, (3) making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** (4) There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the one hope of your calling, (5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism, (6) one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (7) But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of **Christ's gift.**

How then can we live? A Gift, Christ's gift... A Clean Slate...

Please, study Ephesians chapters 4, 5, and 6. Observe this recipe for how to live...

- 1. Live in Unity**
- 2. Live in Holiness**
- 3. Live in Love**
- 4. Live in the Light**
- 5. Live Wisely**
- 6. Cherish One Another**
- 7. Put on the Full Armor of God - recognize the times, choose wisely.**