

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Self- Examination

(Jerry Fite)

Paul had endured the false accusations said about him. Some questioned his integrity and authority as an apostle, despite the fact he had proven it, and would do so again (*2 Corinthians 12:12, 13:10*). Amidst the onslaughts, Paul turns the examination to a very personal exercise. He writes, “*Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves. Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate (2 Corinthians 13:5)*.”

It is easy to say that Christ is in us, and we are in the faith; but it is more difficult and more helpful to ourselves to prove it by examining the facts. But who, or by what is to determine the standard for this self-test?

The Corinthians had been applying the standard: “*measure yourselves by yourselves (2 Corinthians 10:12)*.” No wonder they easily commended themselves; they were their own standard. Paul did not have this in mind when he exhorted the brethren, “*try yourselves*”, for he says such

are “without understanding”. Yet many today are going through life relying on this foolish standard. Paul reminds us, “*for not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth (2 Corinthians 10:18)*.”

The standard by which we examine ourselves is the gospel of Christ. If we are to determine objectively that we are “in the faith” we will have to measure up to the message of the gospel of Christ which produces faith (*Romans 10:17*). If we are to determine objectively that Christ is in us, we will have to comply with the proclamation of the mystery of the gospel which is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory (Philippians 1:27, Ephesians 3:6)*.”

To properly examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith, we must do so with candor. We will avoid our “think-so’s” and measure ourselves by God’s “say-so’s”. Neither will we short circuit the important self examination process by cutting down others so we can be exalted. I will look at myself and apply the standard of God’s word to my ac-

tual conduct. It has been rightly observed, “*illusion often becomes delusion*”. If we are not honest with our actual conduct, or what God truly says – the facts, then our illusions will only produce delusions. We will be cheating ourselves, and jeopardizing our relationship with the Lord.

When we honestly examine ourselves by God’s standard, we will often fail the test, and need to change. We must then change in accordance to God’s standard. We must not be like the person who looks into the mirror and forgets about his actual appearance; but be he that “*looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh*.” James says, “*...this man shall be blessed in his doing (James 1:25)*.”

We should not neglect to examine ourselves because we are afraid of the actual results. At the judgment, the same standard will be applied (*Jn. 12:48*). However, it will then be too late for change. Examine yourself today! Are you truly in the faith?