

# Pauline Ethics: Foundations

- Grace in Context
- Apocalyptic Expectation: Judgment Looms
- Criteria of Judgment: Works
- Hellenistic Anthropology
- Flesh vs Spirit
- Who Needs the Law?
- Pauline Ethics: Criteria for Behavior
- Righteousness by Grace and Faith(fulness)

# “Grace” in Context

- Problem of context: Paul was not a 21<sup>st</sup> century Western capitalist
- Grace is relational currency, the thing exchanged between two people in a relationship.
- Reciprocal “Favor”:
  - I do you a favor, now you owe me
  - The Godfather
- Loyalty, allegiance, faithfulness

# Apocalyptic Expectation: Judgment Looms

- For Paul, everything must be considered in light of the coming day of judgment, when God will judge everyone through Christ
- Ultimate concern: How can one ensure that s/he will be judged as righteous?

# Criteria of Judgment: Works

- Prime premise: God is just. Everyone gets what s/he deserves!
- Thus righteousness is not guaranteed by:
  - Having or knowing the Law (Scripture)
  - Being Ethnically Jewish
  - Circumcision
- In order to be judged righteous, one must truly be righteous (cf. Rom 2:13).
- How then can one be “justified”?

# Hellenistic Anthropology I

- Tripartite Soul:
  - Intellect/Mind/Reason (Head)
  - Will/Spirited Part (Heart)
  - Flesh/Appetitive Part (Belly or Genitals)
- In a righteous person, the will partners with the mind, which properly orders and directs behavior

# Hellenistic Anthropology II

- Reasons People Do Bad Things:
  - False belief (mistaken intellect)
  - Disordered Soul:
    - The will or spirit sides with the flesh against the Mind, leading to wicked behavior

# Flesh vs Spirit

- Rom 7: the disordered soul, knowing good but enslaved by the flesh
- Rom 8: God graciously provides a new Spirit, giving the person the means to be righteous
- Righteous people do righteous things
- Those who have the Spirit naturally fulfill the Law and will be judged righteous

# Who Needs the Law?

- Paul and his opponents agree that following the flesh leads to wickedness (shared anthropology)
- Paul's Opponents: Law is needed to restrain the flesh
- Paul: Only the unrighteous need restraint
  - Speed limits?
  - Paul's example: the Law as *paidagogos*



# Paul's Argument

- Paul: “Works of the Law” (like circumcision) cannot make a person righteous.
- Example: driving the speed limit doesn't make a person a law-abiding citizen.
- Righteousness only comes through “grace” and “faith(fulness)”

# Righteousness by the Spirit

- Following the Flesh → Wickedness →  
need for law to restrain unrighteousness
- Following the Spirit → Faithfulness →  
law unnecessary b/c of righteousness
- God's grace (=Spirit) makes unrighteous  
people righteous.

# Pauline Ethics: Criteria for Behavior

- Scripture: Law as *paidagogos*
- The Teachings of Jesus(?)
- The Example of Christ
- Love as the fulfillment of the Law
- Summary: Follow the Holy Spirit!

# Love Fulfills the Law

- The Love Command in Scripture (Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18, 34)
- The Meaning of the Term
- Contextual Application
  - Spiritual Gifts
  - Meat Sacrificed to Idols
  - Other

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