



of Biblical Studies

Ephesians 2:4-9

Introduction to Grace

COURSE COMMENTARY



1 John 4:17

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Course Requirements

- 1) Read Course Commentary
- 2) Take Mid Term Exam
- 3) Take Final Exam
- 4) Submit Exams to Dr. Gray @ graceESBS@bellsouth.net
- 5) Dr. Gray will email you your Course Grade

Introduction to Grace

How well do *you* understand grace? That is a question that few Christians ask, but one that every believer should ask themselves regularly and often!

Have you ever seen those Magic Eye 3D pictures that look random at first glance but then reveal a hidden picture? Maybe there's a group of you looking and someone says, "Wow – look at that! It's a ship!" Then another person sees it and now they're both describing the picture to you. But try as you might you just can't see it. They try to encourage you. "Look – it's right there. It's huge!" But still you can't see it. You're starting to think there's no picture at all and they're all deluded when suddenly, revelation comes and a ship appears! If you're like me and you're usually the last person to see these things, you'll no doubt embarrass yourself at this point by shouting, "I see it!"

That's how it is for many people with grace.

I knew people who looked into the Bible and saw radical grace but I didn't. Sure, there were pockets of grace but there was a whole lot of other stuff as well. Then one day, revelation came and *I saw Grace!* He's right there on every page and in every book! How can you miss Him? He's huge! I now find myself reading old scriptures with new eyes and saying, "Look! This is speaking of Jesus! This is all about Him – I never saw this before." Now that I've seen Him once I see Him everywhere. I was saved decades ago and I have always loved God with my whole heart. But when I got this revelation of His amazing grace, it was like being born again, *again*.

A friend recently asked me, "How well did you understand grace before you understood *grace*?" Here's my answer: I thought I understood grace perfectly well. For as long as I can remember I've considered myself a testimony of His grace. But when Grace Himself came into focus, I was floored. I realized that I had barely understood grace at all. Looking back I can identify nine signs that showed I did not fully grasp the grace of God.

1. I understood that I was saved by grace, but not that I was kept by grace

I received Christ by faith and without doing a thing, but I was not continuing in Him by that same faith (Col 2:6). Although I would never have said it, I had taken out a little works insurance. Faith is a positive response to what God has done, but I liked to initiate things. And so my walk became “do, do, do,” rather than its “done, done, done.” There was no rest, only performance anxiety. There was always another meeting to lead, another plank of truth to teach, another stray sheep to gather. I thought this was normal. I could get excited about the idea of being saved and saving others, but I was not drawing from the wells of salvation with joy (Is 12:3). I was constantly stressed and I treated grace as grease for my engine.

2. I felt obliged to serve

Jesus had done everything for me, what would I do for Him? Of course I didn't use the word “indebted” – that would've alerted me to the poverty of my theology – but much of what I did was motivated by a sense of obligation. I thus cheapened the exceeding riches of His grace (Eph 1:7) by trying to pay Him back for His priceless gift. Inevitably this shifted my focus from Him and His work to me and mine. Instead of being impressed by what He had done, I was trying to impress Him with what I was doing.

3. I motivated others using carrots and sticks

Because my own motives were screwed up it was inevitable that I would preach rewards and punishments to others. Do good, get good; do bad, get bad. At the same time as I was preaching against legalism I was putting people under law! My gospel was like an ash-tray – full of “buts”! *God loves you but... Jesus died for you but... God's gifts always came with a price to pay. But grace is free – you either receive it or reject it but the moment you start charging for it, you've missed it. There's only one motive in the kingdom and that is love. The Son of Man didn't come to threaten us, judge us, or scare us, but to demonstrate love (Rm 5:8). I no longer believe that evangelism means scaring the hell out of people. The good news that the world needs to hear is that God is good and He loves us. The new covenant of grace is the formal expression of His unfailing love for us (Is 54:10).*

4. I saw myself as a servant rather than a son

My identity was in the things I did rather than in my Father. I saw myself as working *for* God (a noble cause!) rather than doing [the works of God](#). I would not have said I was justified by what I did for I knew that grace and works don't mix (Rms 11:6). Yet I was mixing grace with works like there was no tomorrow! But here's the strange thing. Even though I preached servanthood more than sonship,

whenever there was a crisis I was quick to relate to Him as Papa. It was only when I was strong and healthy that I was seduced by the religious need to *do something* for God. Happily, there were many crises!

5. I kept asking God to provide things that He's already provided

I knew enough about grace to approach Him boldly in my hour of need, but I didn't know that He has already given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). If someone was sick I would ask for healing when I should've just healed them (Mt 10:8). I would ask for more faith instead of living by the faith of the Son of God (Ga 2:20). Like the prodigal's older brother I felt that God would bless me as I did my part. I didn't realize that I was already blessed, deeply loved, and highly favored. In my ignorance I wasted a whole lot of time doing a whole lot of nothing. I thought I was being active and fruitful but in reality I was passive and faithless. God had already come but there I was face down asking Him to come again.

6. I was more sin-conscious than Christ-conscious

Like many Christians I was afraid of sin (keep it out of the camp!) and I was not known as a friend of sinners. I defined sin as bad works only and I taught that the solution to sin was repentance. I had read that the grace of God teaches us to say no to ungodliness (Tit 2:12), but I wasn't quite sure how that worked. So when preaching against sin I used inferior incentives like fear and punishment that led, at best, to temporary, will-powered changes in behavior. I emphasized what people must do (repent!) more than what God has already done (forgiven us!). I kept the focus on us when it should've been on Him and my preaching was powerless as a result. If anyone failed to experience victory over sin, I just figured they were unacquainted with God's transforming grace – even though I had given them none.

7. I always tried to do the right thing

Someone under grace says, "I trust Him from start to finish. He will lead me in the right path" (Ps 23:3). But in subtle ways I preferred rules to relationship. What I craved were clear Biblical guidelines for living. I thought I was choosing good, but then so did Adam. We both had an independent spirit that led us to eat from the wrong tree. I felt particularly good when people came to me for guidance. I thought I was giving them wisdom when really I should just have got out of the way and taught them to lean on Jesus (Jn 10:27).

8. I had a stronger relationship with the written word than with the Living Word

I did not read the scriptures to find Jesus (Lk 24:27) but to learn, *what should I do?* I read indiscriminately and was often [confused by scriptures that seemed to contradict each other](#). My solution was to go for balance: A little of this, a little of that, for all scripture is profitable. But by failing to filter what I read through the finished work of the cross, I unwittingly poisoned myself. I was mixing the death-dealing words of the law with the life-giving words of grace. Although I was zealous for the Lord, [in truth I was lukewarm](#). I was neither under the stone-cold reality of the law nor walking in the red-hot heat of His unconditional love and grace.

9. I knew I was righteous, but I didn't feel righteous

When I stumbled I would more readily confess my sins to God than allow the Holy Spirit to remind me of the gift of His righteousness to me (Jn 16:10). [I knew I was a new creation](#) (2 Cor 5:17), but in many ways I acted and spoke as if I was merely an *improved* creation. I thought honesty about my struggles was the key to getting more grace. But I probably would not have struggled so much in the first place if I had just learned to see myself as God sees me – redeemed, righteous, and holy.

I am convinced that grace comes by revelation. If you don't yet see it this post may sound like the ramblings of a man who is unbalanced. (Thank God I am! I'm done with balance!) If you do see Grace, then right now you will be resonating like a tuning fork. So let me finish with a few words for those of you in the first group. Please be patient with those of us who are leaping for joy. Don't walk away from the Magic Eye picture scowling, "I can't see it, there's nothing there." Just keep looking! Grace really is standing right there in front of you. And He's huge!

This course is all about Jesus. It is about His passionate love for you and His desire for you to experience success in your life. But before we go on, let me ask you this question: Do you believe that Jesus is interested in your success? Take a moment to reflect on this.

My Dear brother or sister, I am so glad that we have the opportunity to talk about this today because I want you to know that Jesus delights in blessing you. It is His good pleasure to see you blessed in every area of your life! Now, don't put a limit on His blessings in your life. The blessings of the Lord are not (as some may erroneously believe) just seen in material things. Jesus is infinitely interested in your total well-being. He is interested in your family, career, fulfillment in life, marriage, ministry, and boy, does the list go on! When it comes to your desires, hopes and dreams, there is no detail that is too minuscule, minute or insignificant for Jesus. Trust me, if it matters to you, it matters to Him! Even if you went to Him in prayer to remove that small pimple on your nose, He is not going to look at you and reply mockingly, "Hey buddy, don't you know that I've got a whole universe to run? Come to Me when you have a bigger prayer request." No way! A thousand times no! Jesus will never ridicule or deride your concerns as petty. He is never dismissive or condescending. He is not like some of your so-called "friends," who may delight in poking fun at your shortcomings. If it bothers you, it bothers Him.

Jesus is someone whom you can be completely real with. You can hang out with Him and be yourself, with no pretense and no play-acting. Jesus is ever-loving toward you and you can talk to Him about anything. He enjoys conversing with you about your dreams, aspirations and hopes. He wants to heal you of things in your past that you may be struggling with. He is interested in your present challenges. He wants to weep with you when you are down and rejoice with you in all your victories.

Jesus is love and tenderness personified. Be careful not to confuse His tenderness with the effeminate and weak images that you have seen depicted in some traditional paintings of Him. He is tenderness and strength wrapped up in one. He is meekness and majesty, manhood and deity, velvet and steel. You see, sometimes, when we attempt to be assertive and strong, we bulldoze over people's feelings and end up hurting them with our words. When we attempt to be tender,

we overdose on niceness and reduce ourselves to doormats to be taken advantage of by others.

Let's turn away from ourselves and look at Jesus. He could sternly force a pack of scheming Pharisees to back off in one instance, challenging them by saying, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."² In the very next moment, this same Jesus could look straight into the eyes of a broken woman caught in adultery, and with compassion resonating deeply in His voice, ask her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you? Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."³

This is our God!

He embodies all the heroic qualities that humanity longs for. But instead of seeking Jesus, many in the world have settled for a cheap Hollywood imitation of heroism. Jesus is 100 percent Man and at the same time 100 percent God. As Man, He understands and identifies with all that you have gone through, are going through and will ever go through in this life. As God, you are important to Him!

Do you know that you are important to Jesus? Know with full assurance in your heart that Jesus knows you perfectly, and yet accepts and loves you perfectly. When you begin to understand that, you will realize that it is truly that unmerited favor, that favor from Jesus that you know you do not deserve, did not merit and cannot earn for yourself, that will perfect every imperfection and weakness in your life. If you are facing challenges, such as lack in any area, addictions, fears, sicknesses or broken relationships, Jesus' Grace will protect, deliver, prosper, bring restoration to and provide for you. His Grace will transform you into wholeness, and it is the goodness of God, not your striving and self-efforts, that will lead you to live victoriously for His glory.

Now, you have a choice to make—to live your life based entirely on your own efforts, or based entirely on the unmerited favor of Jesus. There are only two ways—either you are depending on "deserved favor" through your self-efforts, or you are blessed by grace, which is unmerited favor, through the cross and the obedience of Jesus Christ! The first is the world's way. The second is God's way.

The world's way to success is based on meritocracy. God's way to success in the new covenant is in direct contradiction to that, and is based on His unmerited favor. You can't earn it. You can't deserve it. And you certainly can't merit it. It comes by way of God's grace and by the power of what was accomplished at Calvary. It goes against the grain of every world system you have ever learned or depended upon. God's ways are higher and they always lead to good and abiding success.

My Dear brothers and sisters, there is no middle road. You cannot mix your own efforts with God's grace. Choose His unmerited favor and all the glory rebounds to Jesus. Every success, opportunity, blessing or breakthrough, be it in your health, family or career—success in every aspect of your life—comes by His Grace (unmerited favor). It is never you!

In this course, you will discover the secret of God's way to reigning effortlessly in life! Man has developed many strategies, methodologies, techniques and tactics for achieving personal success. Just look in the bookstores today. In fact, you may be standing in one right now. If you are, take some time to look around. What do you see? You will probably find a large selection of self-help books. Let me declare to you that there is a higher way than relying on your own efforts to achieve success in life. The Bible says in the very first verse of Psalm 1, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly." Hence, while there is some "counsel" in "ungodly" resources, there is a higher way for the believer! Why rely on self-help when you can have direct access to God's help? The name of Jesus in Hebrew, Yeshua, simply means Savior. Let's call upon Him to save us, rather than depend on our own abilities to save ourselves. Unfortunately, there are believers today who do not call upon their Savior because they believe the lie that they have no right to do so. There are believers who think that their mistakes have disqualified them from calling out to God. Some may even believe that they are undeserving of the Lord's help because they have not attended church regularly, read the Bible sufficiently or prayed enough. My friend, when you are drowning, you don't need a teacher to teach you the right steps to take in order to swim and save yourself. You don't need a list of do's and don'ts. You need a Savior who is willing to plunge fearlessly into the water to save you regardless of what you know or do not know, what you have done or not done! You cannot earn by your own works His desire to save you. It is by His grace! Let's begin to acknowledge that in and of

ourselves, we cannot and do not have the ability and resources to save ourselves. In essence, we owed a debt that we could not pay, but Jesus on the cross paid with His own life, a debt that He did not owe. It is entirely His effort and His doing. Our part is to believe on Him and receive all that He has accomplished on our behalf. Sounds ridiculously simple, one-sided and unfair? Well, my friend, that is exactly what makes grace, grace! Grace is only grace when it is undeserved, unearned and unmerited. Are you ready to be tremendously blessed and transformed by His grace, and to give up on your own efforts to have success, wholeness and a victorious life? I believe that once you begin to take this journey of discovering His radical grace, your life will never be the same again. My friend, you are destined to reign!

Chapter One: Destined To Reign

You are destined to reign in life. You are called by the Lord to be a success, to enjoy wealth, to enjoy health and to enjoy a life of victory. It is not the Lord's desire that you live a life of defeat, poverty and failure. He has called you to be the head and not the tail. If you are a businessman, God wants you to have a prosperous business. If you are a homemaker, you are anointed to bring up wonderful children in the Lord. If you are a student, God wants you to excel in all your examinations. And if you are trusting the Lord for a new career, He doesn't just want you to have a job, He wants you to have a position of influence, so that you can be a blessing and an asset to your organization! Whatever your vocation is, you are destined to reign in life because Jesus is Lord of your life. When you reign in life, you reign over sin, you reign over the powers of darkness, and you reign over depression, over poverty, over every curse, and over every sickness and disease. You REIGN over the devil and all his devices! The power to reign does not depend on your family background, your educational qualifications, how you look or how much savings you have in your bank account. The power to reign is based entirely on Jesus and Him alone. My friend, this is not a cliché from some self-help book on positive thinking. The declaration you will reign is based on a promise that has been recorded for all eternity in the Word of God:

Romans 5:17

17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

The word "reign" used in Romans 5:17 is the Greek word *basileuo* where you get the English word "basilica". In ancient Rome, basilicas were used law courts. So it

refers to a kingly, judicial rule. In other words, to reign here is to reign in life as a king, to have kingly rule and to possess kingly dominion. The secret of reigning in life lies with receiving everything that Jesus has accomplished for us on the cross. If you are living a life of defeat, of being defeated by sin, by perpetual guilt and condemnation, by sicknesses, by anxiety attacks, by financial lack and by broken relationships, you are not living the life that God intended for you. Based on the authority of God's Word, you are destined to "reign in life" as a king, to have kingly dominion over all your challenges and circumstances. You are called to be above each and every one and not to be trampled by them. The time has come for you to stop abdicating your right to reign in life! Today, instead of seeing ourselves reigning in life, we see more evidence of death reigning in the world. The Bible tells us that it was because of "one man's offense" — Adam's sin in the garden of Eden — that death began to reign. It is important that you realize that our lives are wrapped up in those of our ancestors. If hadn't been your grandfather, you wouldn't exist! So we are sinners not because we sin, but because of Adam's sin. Many believers still think that they became sinners by committing sin, but that is not what the Word of God says. What it says is that we are sinners because of Adam's sin. By the same token, we are made righteous in the new covenant not because we do righteous deeds, but because of one Man's (Jesus) obedience on the cross. The secret of reigning in life lies therefore with receiving everything that Jesus has accomplished for us on the cross. Receiving Versus Achieving The Bible states very clearly that we are to reign in life through Jesus Christ just by receiving two things from Him: The abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. God's ways are contrary to man's ways. Man thinks that for You wouldn't exist God to bless him, he needs to deserve, earn and merit God's favor and blessings by his own efforts. Man thinks that God's blessings are based on his performance and good works. However, this is not God's way. His way is not about achieving, but about receiving. He promised that when we receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, we will reign in life. He did not say that when we achieve grace and our own righteousness, we will reign in life. But for some reason, many Christians continue to live based on a system of achievement!

“Dr. Gray, if it's really that easy, why aren't more Christians reigning in life?”

I'm glad that you asked that question. In answer, let me first pose you a question of my own: Do you realize that most people believe that one needs to work hard to achieve success in life? The world's system of success is built on the twin pillars of self-effort and diligence. There are always some "laws" that you have to abide by, and some "methods and techniques" that you have to keep on practicing before there can be any results. Most of the time, any result that you may get will start to fade once you cease to follow through with the prescribed methods and steps. We have been taught to focus on achieving, on doing and on relying on our self-efforts. We are driven to "do, do, do", forgetting that Christianity is actually "done, done, done". The world tells you that the more you do, the harder you work, and the more hours you put in, the more success you will achieve. The world's way is to nag you to work harder, to forget about attending church on Sundays, to spend less time with your wife and kids, and to spend more time in the office working through the nights, weekends and holidays. I'm sure that you've heard that you need to "pay the price", after all, "no pain, no gain", right? What believers do is that they take the system of the world and apply it to their Christian life. Instead of depending on God's grace for His favor and blessings to flow, they depend on their self-efforts to try to deserve God's favor and blessings. Yet, God's way is not for us to be blessed by our own efforts. You cannot earn God's blessings by your performance. God's blessings are based entirely on His grace. His blessings over your life have to be undeserved, unearned and unmerited. In other words, there is nothing that you can do to deserve His blessings, for they are based entirely on receiving Jesus, and through His finished work, the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. God wants us to stop trying to achieve, and to begin receiving the favor, blessings and healing that Jesus accomplished on the cross. When He hung on the cross some 2,000 years ago, He cried out with a loud voice, "It is finished!"³ Everything that you and I require to reign in life was accomplished at Calvary on our behalf. That's why we call what Jesus did on the cross His "finished work"! He finished it. He completed it. It is DONE! The only thing that works is the finished work! Stop doing what's already DONE! Stop doing and start receiving what Jesus has DONE!

The Work Is Finished, Sit Down

A pastor was fellowshiping recently with his dear friend, who just happens to be Brian Houston, and Brian shared that his pet peeve when it comes to worship songs, are songs which try to plead for what Jesus has already accomplished for us on the cross. I agree with Brian completely, and I think we all agree that Brian is someone who knows what he's talking about when it comes to worship songs. Brian is the senior pastor of Hillsong Church, and God has truly anointed his church to write beautiful praise and worship songs that have impacted a whole new generation of worshippers in these last days. In fact, some of my favorite worship songs are from Hillsong. In my own quiet moments before the Lord, as I give thanks to Him for paying the full price on the cross for all my sins, sicknesses and poverty, my heart overflows with gratitude and I worship Him:

You are magnificent, eternally Wonderful,
glorious Jesus No one ever will
compare to You Jesus⁴

Isn't it wonderful when the Lord responds by filling my whole study with His tangible presence, and my heart begins to burn in the presence of my lover! I remind my church that we don't always have to feel His tangible presence, for that's not what we live by today. But when you do feel His presence, especially during times of deep intimate worship, enjoy Him, savor His love and allow His embrace to wash over you! Relish the times in His presence when He refreshes, restores and heals you. You don't have to wait till Sunday to worship the Lord. You don't need a five-piece band and a worship leader to worship your Savior. Right where you are, without instruments, you can lift up your hands, your voice and your heart, and worship Him and give thanks for His finished work and His grace in your life.

Hallelujah! He is so beautiful! I love worship songs that are full of the person of Jesus and His finished work. Every pastor of every church should commission their Worship Leader/Minister of Music to ensure that the songs they use in their church services are songs that testify of the finished work of Jesus. For example, under the new covenant, we don't have to keep on asking the Lord in our songs for forgiveness because He has already forgiven us⁵. I want you to say this out loud w:

"I am already forgiven!" Jesus' blood has cleansed all of us once and for all!

The Word of God declares this about the finished work of Jesus on the cross:

Hebrews 10:12–14

12But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God... 14For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

His finished work on the cross was offered as one sacrifice FOREVER, and when you received Jesus Christ into your life, you were PERFECTED FOREVER! And how long is forever? If you were to check the original Greek word for “forever” in this verse, guess what you would find? “Forever” means forever! You have been perfected forever by Jesus’ cleansing blood, not by the blood of animal sacrifices which can never take away sins!

You may be surprised to find out that there are many believers today who do not believe that they have been perfected forever by the finished work of Jesus Christ. They are still depending on their self-efforts to qualify themselves. Perhaps you yourself are wondering, “How can I be fully assured that all my sins have already been forgiven?” Good question! Notice that after Jesus offered His life as a sacrifice and payment for all our sins, He “sat down”!

He sat down at the Father’s right hand. Do you realize that under the old covenant, “every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins”⁶? But the Bible goes on to say that Jesus, “after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down”.

Jesus sat down to demonstrate to us that the work is indeed finished. Under the old covenant, the priest who served in the tabernacle of Moses never sat down, but “stands ministering offered His life as a sacrifice and payment for all our sins, He “sat down”! He sat down at the Father’s right hand. Do you realize that under the old covenant, “every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins”⁶? But the Bible goes on to say that Jesus, “after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down”. Jesus sat down to demonstrate to us that the work is indeed finished. Under the old covenant, the priest who served in the tabernacle of Moses never sat down, but “stands ministering daily” because his work could never be finished. The blood of

bulls and goats could “never take away sins”. In fact, have you noticed that in the holy place of the tabernacle of Moses, there is not a single piece of furniture prepared for the priest to sit on? You will not find a single chair in the holy place. You will find the altar of incense, the menorah and even a table of showbread, but interestingly, there are no chairs. This is because the work of the priest was never finished. Only Jesus’ work is a finished work. And not only did He sit down at the Father’s right hand, He made us SIT WITH HIM!

Ephesians 2:4–6 4But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ... and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Maybe you are wondering, “What is this business about ‘chairs’ and ‘sitting down’ all about?” Well, my dear brother or sister, “sitting down” in the Bible is a picture of the believer resting in the finished and completed work of Jesus. He has finished all the work on the cross on your behalf and is now seated at the right hand of God.

As it has all been accomplished on your behalf, this means that you can stop depending on your self-efforts to earn and qualify for God’s blessings in your life. You can sit down with Jesus at the Father’s right hand!

Stop depending on your self-efforts to earn and qualify for God’s blessings in your life. Now, listen carefully to what I am saying. I am not advocating a life of passiveness and laziness. You can take courses, read books, do your work diligently and so on, but your trust must not be in these things. It must be in what Jesus has done for you. So if you are a student, for example, by all means, study hard. Score straight A’s for the glory of God! But don’t trust in your intelligence or qualifications to bring you the blessings of God. God’s grace does not make you lazy and unproductive. On the contrary, it makes you labor more abundantly for His glory. Apostle Paul, a preacher of God’s grace and the finished work of Jesus, said that he “labored more abundantly than they all”⁷. In the new covenant, God’s way is to bless you first, and the knowledge of His blessing gives you the power to labor more abundantly. In other words, we do not labor to be blessed, but rather we have the power to labor because we are already blessed. Can you see the different premise for laboring in the new covenant?

Many believers are defeated today because they are struggling to qualify themselves for God's blessings by their own works. Self-effort will rob you of reigning in life by His grace. You cannot earn your salvation, your healing or your financial breakthrough by your own efforts. If the greatest miracle — being saved from hell — comes by grace through faith, and not by your works, how much more the lesser miracles, such as healing, prosperity and restored marriages.

My dear brother or sister, Jesus has accomplished everything on the cross. Our part is to trust in His perfect work, receive with open arms the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, and begin to reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ. Today, let it be your prayer that you will stop trying to earn God's grace and righteousness. Let the Holy Spirit teach you to start depending on Jesus' finished work and to start receiving by His grace.

This is God's effortless way to success, wholeness and victorious living!

Chapter Two: The Law Has Been Fulfilled

I heard about a conference a few years ago where one of the speakers got up to preach, he said with great conviction in his voice, “The greatest call in your life is to your family!” The crowd loved it, and the entire auditorium clapped and cheered in agreement. At the next session, another speaker got up and declared with fiery passion in his eyes that “the greatest call in your life is to missions”. This time, the crowd went wild and the entire auditorium reverberated with shouts of “Amen!” Then, it was time for the grace preacher to preach, and he prayed, “God, they have used up all the ‘greatest calls’. Give me something!” And when he stood up, the Lord put this in his heart and shared, “The greatest call in your life is to be a worshipper!” You see, long after all the missions have been accomplished on earth, and long after families are united in heaven, we will continue worshipping our beautiful Savior Jesus Christ for all that He has done for you and me, for all eternity.

It is all about Jesus! It is all about His finished work!

The more you appreciate the finished work of Jesus and all that He has done for you to reign in life, the more you will worship and glorify Him! Let’s look at the Word of God to see more of His finished work.

John 1:17 KJV

17For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Have you noticed that truth is on the side of grace, not the law? Notice also that the law was given. This implies a sense of distance. In contrast, grace came! Grace is personal and came as a person — the person of Jesus Christ. The law is hard, cold and impersonal. You cannot have a relationship with two pieces of stone. But grace is gentle and warm. Grace is not a teaching or doctrine. Grace is a person and you can have a relationship with a person. God is not interested in mere obedience and submission. He is a God of love and He longs to have an intimate relationship with you. This is what makes Christianity unique. Many of the world’s belief systems

are governed by moral codes, rules and laws. But Christianity is not about these things. It is about having a relationship with Almighty God.

Our God came, died a cruel death on the cross and paid the full debt of sin with His own life so that you and I can reign in life today. His sacrifice on the cross speaks of relationship. Jesus came to reconcile sinful man with a holy God. When you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are made holy and righteous by His blood once and for all. And you can enter boldly into the presence of Almighty God without any guilt, condemnation or expectation of punishment. Because of the cross, the price for sin has been paid, the judgment executed, the anger toward sin exhausted, the veil torn and the way to intimacy with God opened. Sin no longer hinders you from entering His presence. His blood has removed all vestiges of your sins!

Jesus Fulfilled The Law!

The moment you place the Law of Moses between you and God again, you are negating the finished work of Jesus, for if righteousness could come through the law, then Christ died in vain¹. Christianity cannot be reduced to an impersonal list of do's and don'ts. Jesus' death has fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law of the old covenant. The Word of God tells us that the "handwriting of requirements" has been nailed to the cross². Jesus came to fulfill all the requirements of the law on our behalf, so that the way to God is now opened. Hallelujah!

"Dr. Charles, you are saying that we are no longer under the law. But Jesus Himself said that He did not come to abolish the law."

That is exactly right my dear brother (or Sister), but you have to quote what Jesus said completely. He said, "I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it."³ Jesus did not sweep the law under the carpet. He came and fulfilled every requirement of the law perfectly on our behalf. All that we were unable to do, He did on our behalf. So by Jesus, the law has been fulfilled!

When you have fulfilled your debt to the bank for the mortgage on your house, you should stop sending in your monthly payments because the debt has already been fulfilled and you are wasting your money! If the bank sends you a letter demanding

more payment from you, all you have to do is produce the deed to your home. In the same sense, the debt that you and I owed to the law has already been fulfilled by our Savior Jesus Christ! Hallelujah! When the devil comes to accuse you with the law, and shows you how you have fallen short and failed, all you have to do is point to the payment that Jesus made on the cross. Christ is your title deed, which is why you are called a Christian today. You are not your own. You have been purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. The law has no hold over you anymore!

The Devil Has Been Disarmed

You probably know that the issue of “nuclear disarmament” periodically flares up as big news from time to time. But are you aware that there is someone more sinister who has already been disarmed? The Bible says that God has “disarmed principalities and powers”. We know from the book of Ephesians that “principalities and powers” refer to Satan and his cohorts⁴. So the devil has already been disarmed! But do you know what weapon he was wielding before his forced disarmament? Let’s see what the Word of God says about this:

Colossians 2:14–15

14having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Based on the context of the verse, the devil was armed with the “handwriting of requirements that was against us”. What “handwriting of requirements” was so powerful that it required the death of Jesus to wipe it out? On Mount Sinai, God wrote the Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone. The “handwriting of requirements” was thus a reference to the law that was written by the finger of God. The devil then armed himself with the law to accuse and condemn man! Now listen carefully to this: God didn’t give the law to arm the devil, but the devil, knowing that the law was against man, took advantage of it and has been using it against man.

You have been redeemed from the curse of the law.

The law always condemns and keeps man away from God. Hence, the devil uses it as his weapon to further alienate man from God. That's why when God nailed the law to the cross, He made a public spectacle of the devil and all the powers of darkness! Once the law was nailed to the cross of Jesus, God knew that the law no longer had the power to condemn man as long as he believed on Jesus. Therefore, when you know and believe that Jesus has fulfilled completely the righteous requirements of the law, the devil cannot use the law to condemn you every time you fail. Even if he uses the law and points to your sins today, you can point to the cross of Jesus and reject the condemnation. You may say, "No one can blot out God's handwriting." Yes, you are right. No man can, but God can! And God did it righteously. My dear brother or sister, you have been redeemed from the curse of the law. The devil and his crew have been disarmed. Hallelujah!

However, if you insist on being under the law, you are actually arming the devil again! God has nailed the law. He has

blotted out its requirements, taken it out of the way and disarmed the devil. But when you subject yourself to the old covenant system of the law, you are putting that weapon back into the devil's hands. Every teaching that says, "We have to keep the law to be blessed by God," is putting the weapon of the law back into the devil's hands. Instead of resting in God's disarmament, people are rearming and remilitarizing the powers of darkness!

Let me stress that the law is holy, just and good. Please don't misconstrue that I am saying otherwise. But even though the law is holy, just and good, it has no power to make you holy, just and good. You see, the law was designed to expose your weaknesses, your sins, and your inability to be holy, just and good. It is like a mirror that exposes your flaws — your blemishes and pimples. But you cannot take the mirror, and begin to rub your face with it to clean off your blemishes and pimples, because that is not the mirror's purpose! You need to understand that no amount of keeping the law can make you holy. Only the blood of Jesus can do that. Nevertheless, the law is holy. It is not from the devil. It is from God Himself.

The Purpose For The Law

God gave the law for one purpose, and that is by the law, the world would have the knowledge of sin⁵, and recognize their need for a Savior. Without the law, there

would be no sin⁶. For example, if there were no law on how fast you can drive on a particular road, that is, there were no speed limit, the state trooper cannot stop you and give you a ticket for speeding. In simple terms, no law equals no sin. No recognition of sin equals no need for a Savior! The law was given to bring man to the end of himself so that in his despair, he would see his need for Jesus. Because of the law, no man can say that he is not a sinner and no man can say that he doesn't need Jesus. That is the purpose of the law. It was not designed to make you godly, but to expose your ungodliness.

What the devil has done is to keep the law over people's heads all the time, so that they will constantly feel condemned and guilty. The devil is the master legalist who constantly reminds you of how unworthy you are. He is known as the accuser of the brethren⁷. Here are some of his common attacks:

“You call yourself a Christian?”

“You are a hypocrite!”

“Forget about praying. God will never listen to your prayers.”

“Look at your life. You dare step into church?”

My dear brother and sisters, these are lies, ALL lies! The devil is using the law to make you conscious of all your shortcomings. But through Jesus Christ, you are no longer under the condemnation of the law. The devil has been disarmed by the power of the cross! Jesus, who knew no sin, has been condemned on your behalf on the cross. Through Jesus Christ, you are now made righteous apart from the works of the law. So when you hear the voice of the accuser condemning you, remind yourself that you are the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ. Declare it out loud! Each time louder than the first:

“I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus!”

“I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus!”

“I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus!”

Righteousness is a gift. It is not a reward for perfect obedience to the law. You are clothed today not in your own righteousness, which is self-righteousness, but with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God sees you as righteous as Jesus Himself.

Only Grace Brings Hope

Only the radical preaching of grace brings hope to believers. Only the finished work of Jesus can bring us wholeness, completeness and shalom-peace. Some people say that the Christian life is very hard. My dear brother or sister, it is not hard, it is impossible! The only one who can live it is Jesus Himself, and He wants to do it in us today. That is why it is not up to our own efforts to fulfill the Law of Moses. It was fulfilled on our behalf and the price for our sins has been paid on the cross. Our part today is to believe in our Savior, and receive from Him the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. The Christian life is a life of rest in Christ Jesus and His finished work. It is time to rest from your own efforts and to enjoy Jesus! The devil hates the gospel of grace because it causes the believer to reign in life. And when you reign, the devil does not!

Only the finished work of Jesus can bring us wholeness, completeness and peace.

Chapter Three: Controversies Surrounding The Gospel Of Grace

Have you ever wondered why the moment you say the word “grace”, (let’s not even talk about the abundance of grace yet), people’s defenses go up? You will hear people saying, “Oh... be careful of that grace preacher. I hear that he’s coming to town,” or “You have to be careful now, too much grace is not good for you. It must be balanced with the law.” Have you wondered where all these fears and apprehensions come from?

Think of all the Indiana Jones movies that you have watched. Before the hero Indy can lay hold of any priceless relic, he must overcome the obstacles and traps surrounding the prized artifact. Fiery darts whiz by on his left. Poison arrows fly toward him from the right. Hidden pits filled with jagged spears lie in front of him and giant boulders hurtle down from above. So many obstacles have been erected simply because there is a treasure at the end.

The moment you learn to receive grace, you will start to reign in life!

For the same reason, the devil has erected so many obstacles and fences around the gospel of grace. He is well aware that the moment you learn to receive grace, you will start to reign in life! The devil comes to steal, kill and destroy¹. He wants to see you broke and broken. He does not want to see you reigning in life. So he has been working hard to prevent believers from receiving the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness.

Controversies — The Devil’s Strategy

The devil’s strategy is to surround the truths of God with controversies. To prevent God’s people from benefiting from the fullness of God’s promises, he erects controversies as fences around these truths. You can always tell how powerful a

truth is by the number of controversies the devil surrounds it with! The Word of God reminds us not to be ignorant of the devil's devices. When Jesus died on the cross, the serpent's head was crushed. God gave the devil a PHD — permanent head damage! So you will find that the devil's strategies are always lacking in creativity — what he has done in the past, he is still doing now.

For example, when God was restoring the truth of healing to the body of Christ, the devil put up a signpost that said, "Heresy!" For many years, the church looked at this signpost and backed off, saying, "Oh, that's heresy. That's dangerous and controversial. Let's forget about talking about healing in the church."

Instead of studying the Word of God to see what God Himself says about healing, the church backed off! It didn't matter that when Jesus walked on the earth, more than two-thirds of His ministry involved healing the sick. He went about healing the sick and all who touched Him were healed. The Bible records that "the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all"².

I wish that somebody in Hollywood would produce the scene that took place in Luke 6:19. (Mel Gibson, Roma Downey, Mark Burnett... are you reading this?) All who were sick, lame and blind came to Jesus, and bam! The healing virtue of Jesus was powerfully released as all who touched Him were healed! That's a powerful image to have in your mind whenever you are believing God for healing!

The world doesn't have the truth. They package fiction and present it as truth. They present creatures from outer space and make you believe that aliens are real! On the flip side, we believers have the truth, but we present and package the truth as if it was fiction. Come on! Believers, we have the truth. Let's proclaim the truth of the gospel of Jesus with boldness! Only the truth of Jesus' grace and power has the anointing to liberate and set people free. I believe with all my heart that God is raising up a new generation of directors, producers and scriptwriters worldwide who will present the truth of the gospel of Jesus in all its purity and power.

Now, when God was restoring the truth of prosperity to the church, signposts were again put up, calling it heresy. For many years, the church backed away from the teaching of prosperity because it was controversial. Again, it didn't matter that the Bible declared that Jesus Christ became poor on the cross, that we through His

poverty might be prosperous.³ The church backed off, saying, “Let’s forget about it. It’s too controversial.”

I don’t understand why some believers would fight for the right to be sick and poor.

Would you as a parent want your children to be diseased and living in abject poverty?

Why do you take your children to the doctor when they are unwell? Why do you give them the best education you can afford?

Isn’t it because you want your children to be blessed, healthy and to have a prosperous future? Do you think that your heavenly Father would want anything less for you? Do you seriously think that your heavenly Father will bless you with a meager hand when the streets of heaven are made of pure gold? Listen carefully: The streets of heaven are not plated with gold. They are made of solid gold! Think about this for a moment. If you on earth know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Father in heaven⁴!

Recognize that the devil has been using controversy as a device down through church history to prevent believers from having access to the most powerful truths of God. He built fences of controversy around healing, prosperity and grace to keep believers from reigning over sickness, poverty and sin. The more controversies you find around a truth of God, the more powerful that truth must be.

Pay close attention to what I am saying. Not all controversies are based on the truth of God’s Word. We have to test everything against what the Bible says.

Nevertheless, controversy is a tool that the devil uses to prevent God’s people from accessing His truths. He is a crafty liar and deceitful thief, so we have to base what we believe on the Word of God and test everything against the Scriptures. Don’t back down from grace just because you have heard that it is controversial. Study the Word of God yourself and see what it has to say about grace!

Deserved Versus Undeserved Favor

“Oh, Dr. Gray, so you are one of those ‘prosperity gospel’ preachers!” My dear brother or sister, there is no such thing as a “prosperity gospel”. There is only **one**

gospel in the Bible and that is **the gospel of Jesus Christ**. However, when you believe the gospel of Jesus, which is based entirely on His grace, it will result in health and prosperity. In fact, the gospel of Jesus Christ leads to blessings, success, healing, restoration, protection, financial breakthroughs, security, peace, wholeness and MUCH MORE!

God blesses you not because you are good, but because He is good.

God blesses you not because you are good, but because He is good. Grace is based on His faithfulness and goodness toward you. It is not contingent on your performance, but is based on His undeserved favor. If it were contingent on how good you are, then it would no longer be based on grace, and would instead be based on the system of the law. It would be deserved favor. This is the difference between the old covenant of law and the new covenant of grace:

Law is deserved favor — When you obey the commandments perfectly, you will be blessed. Grace is undeserved favor — Jesus obeyed God perfectly, and you will be blessed by believing in Him.

My dear brother or sister, which covenant are you under today? The old covenant of law or the new covenant of grace? Deserved favor or undeserved favor? If being blessed by God today is dependent on your doing, your ability to keep the law and your ability to make yourself righteous, then there would be no difference between being under the old covenant of law and being under the new covenant of grace. The good news would not be that good after all, since there is no real difference between the old and the new. Come on, my friend, God found fault with the old covenant⁵, and for a good reason!

Fences Around The Abundance Of Grace

A fellow minister once suggested to the dean of a reputable Bible school that “grace” be incorporated into the school’s curriculum. The dean replied, “You have to be careful when it comes to grace.” This apprehension toward grace is prevalent in many Christian circles. The moment they hear “grace”, they go on high alert!

Grace is not a just a topic — **grace is the gospel**. It is the good news! The word “gospel” simply means “good news”. Grace is not a theology. It is not a subject matter. It is not a doctrine. It is a person, and His name is Jesus. Grace should permeate everything that you believe. That’s the reason the Lord wants you to receive the abundance of grace, for to have the abundance of grace is to have the abundance of Jesus!

“Dr. Gray, How can you say that grace is a person and that person is Jesus Himself?”

That is an excellent question! Let’s look at what the Word of God says about this:

John 1:17, KJV

17For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Notice that the law was given, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The law was given, implying a sense of distance, but grace came! Grace came as a person and His name is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the personification of grace. Jesus is grace! It is important that you begin to realize that truth is on the side of grace, and not on the side of the law. The Word of God declares that if you know the truth, the truth will set you free. Well, my friend, grace is the (definite article) truth that will set you free, not the law of Moses. The law is on the side of Moses, but grace and truth are on the same side as our Savior. Yet, there are people today holding on to the law of Moses and preaching it as if it is the “truth” that liberates. My friend, the grace of God is the only truth that liberates. Truth is on the side of grace!

If the devil can keep you under the law, he can keep you defeated!

You never hear, “Oh, be careful of the Ten Commandments,” or “Be careful of that law preacher. I hear that he is coming to town.” Why is there no controversy about the Ten Commandments? This is because the devil wants you to be subject to the law. He doesn’t want you to know that Jesus has liberated you from the law. If he can keep you under the law, he can keep you defeated.

Interestingly, people are afraid that when you tell a believer that he is completely forgiven by grace, and no longer has to earn his right standing before the Lord via

the law of Moses, it would cause him to go out and live a life of sin and debauchery. However, the Bible is very clear that the “strength of sin is the law”⁶. It is not grace that gives people the strength to sin. It is the law! The more you are under the law, the more sin is strengthened! Conversely, the more you are under grace, the more sin will be depleted of its strength.

In fact, the Bible declares that “sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace”. Now, don’t just gloss over this powerful revelation. Read the verse again. It is from Romans 6:14 — “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” This means that the more grace you receive, the more power you have to overcome sin. In other words, sin shall not have dominion over you when you receive the abundance of grace!

Unfortunately, there are well-meaning people today who are preaching a completely different message. They preach that sin shall not have dominion over you when you are under the law. So when they see sin, they preach more of the law! That, my friend, is like adding wood to fire because the strength of sin is the law. Sin is strengthened when more law is preached! But the power to have dominion over sin is imparted when more grace is preached! So who is the one who switched the roles? Will the real gospel please stand up? The devil has pulled the wool over the eyes of God’s sheep! It is time to preach the truth. It is time to remove the wool from our eyes and break down the fences surrounding the gospel of grace!

Fences Around The Gift Of Righteousness

The devil has also succeeded in erecting fences around the gift of righteousness. Today, conventional theology teaches you that not only is there such a thing as “positional righteousness”, there is also something known as “practical righteousness”. They are saying that even though you were made righteous by grace, you now have to do right and keep the law to continue being righteous. They call this having “practical righteousness”.

My dear brothers and sisters, this is something that Apostle Paul never taught! There is only one righteousness in Christ Jesus. Let’s see what Paul says about those who are ignorant of this righteousness. He said, “For they being ignorant of

God's righteousness [that's what some people term 'positional righteousness'], and seeking to establish their own righteousness [now that would be what they call 'practical righteousness'], have not submitted to the righteousness of God."7 So it is clear that Paul is against any teaching that says that you have to earn and merit your own righteousness. You are either righteous or you are not. There is no such thing as first having "positional righteousness" and then having to maintain that through "practical righteousness". You are the righteousness of God in Christ, period!

Notice that the strategy here is to deceive the believer into believing that righteousness is something that you need to achieve by keeping the law perfectly. It all sounds very good to the flesh, but if that is so, then the promise of the gift of righteousness is completely thrown out of the window. The devil is very crafty. He has no problem with righteousness, but he wants to deceive you into pursuing your own righteousness through the law. He wants you to depend on your own self-righteousness, so he throws out the little word "gift" from the phrase "gift of righteousness". Then, he gives you a false impression that you are responsible for earning your own righteousness through your own works and self-efforts, instead of depending on the finished work of Jesus.

You are the righteousness of God in Christ, period!

There are many believers who are very sincere about keeping the law and earning their own righteousness, but I'm sorry to say this: They are sincerely wrong. God's way is by grace. Righteousness cannot be earned by good works. It can only come as a gift. A gift is no longer a gift if you have to work for it.

For example, if I gave you a brand new dazzling red Ferrari on the condition that you pay me US \$20,000 every month for the rest of your life, is the Ferrari really a gift? Of course not! How can it be a gift if you have to pay or work for it? That is double-talk! But that is what some people are preaching today. They say that God gives you the gift of righteousness, on the condition that you keep the Ten Commandments for the rest of your life to remain righteous. Now, is this a real gift? Come on, when God gave you the gift of righteousness, it was a real gift. Stop trying to earn it with your own works. God's gifts to us are unconditional!

Start believing that righteousness is a gift in the new covenant! Many believers are defeated today because they are trying to earn their own righteousness by their law-keeping and good works. My dear brothers and sisters, righteousness is a gift because of what Jesus has accomplished on the cross for you. All your sins — past, present and future — have been washed clean by His precious blood. You are completely forgiven and from the moment you received Jesus into your life, you will never be held liable for your sins ever again. You have been made as righteous as Jesus not through your behavior, but by faith in Him and His finished work on the cross⁸.

There is nothing that you can do that will make God love you more and there is nothing that you can do that will make Him love you less.

Perhaps you are saying, “But... but... I didn’t do anything to become righteous!” That is exactly right. You did nothing to become righteous. And Jesus did nothing to become sin. You are clothed not with your own righteousness, but with Jesus’ perfect righteousness. It is a gift that He purchased for you with His own blood! Therefore, righteousness before the Lord cannot be earned. Your righteous standing or right standing before Him can only be received as a gift. Today, your right to be righteous is a blood-bought right! There is nothing that you can do that will make God love you more and there is nothing that you can do that will make Him love you less. He loves you perfectly and He sees you clothed with Jesus’ righteousness. So begin to see yourself clothed in Jesus’ righteousness.

License To Sin?

“But, Dr. Charles, if you preach that one is forever righteous before the Lord apart from his works and law-keeping, won’t people go out and live a licentious life? Won’t it give people a license to sin?”

A really excellent question! Let me begin by asking you this: Have you noticed that people are already sinning without a “license”? We all have the same goal of wanting people to live a life of victory over sin. Allow me to make this explicitly clear in black and white, so that there is no doubt:

I, Charles R. Gray, II, am vehemently, completely, aggressively and irrevocably AGAINST SIN!

Sin is evil. I do not condone sin. A lifestyle of sin leads only to defeat and destruction. So while our goal is the same, where we differ is the “how” of getting to the victorious life. Some think that it is by preaching more law. I am convicted that it is by preaching the grace of God. When you visit some of the top grace church’s around the world(such as New Creation Church, Singapore) , you won’t find a congregation that, having received the good news of the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, wants to run off and start living in sin. Of course not! In fact, some of the top business people, management executives, entrepreneurs, lawyers, accountants and consultants in that country will attend that church, and you will find a congregation that is deeply in love with the person of Jesus. You will hear wonderful and amazing testimonies of how marriages have been restored, how huge debts that had run into the millions have been supernaturally cancelled, how terminal diseases have been miraculously healed and other awesome testimonies that the good news of Jesus brings!

Sin loses its appeal when you encounter the Person of grace, Jesus Christ, and realize all that He has blessed you with and done for you on the cross. You begin to realize that you have been given this great gift of righteousness and that you did nothing to deserve it. You did nothing to earn it and you did nothing to merit it.

Now, what happens? Does this encounter with Jesus cause you to want to go out and sin? Of course not! On the contrary, it will cause you to fall in love with Jesus all over again. It will make you a better husband, a better father, a better housewife, a better student. It will make you someone who desires with all your heart to guard the glory of our Lord Jesus by living a life that is victorious over sin, by His grace and strength! The preoccupation with Christ instead of with self, will cause you to start reigning in life through the one, Jesus Christ — that is the Gospel Revolution! The Word of God says, “Awake to righteousness, and sin not.”⁹ The more you realize that you are righteous, the more victory you will experience over sin! Wake up every morning and give thanks that you are the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ.

The Final Restoration

Down through the centuries, God has been restoring His truths to the church, and I believe that the last and final truth is the person of Jesus Christ and all that He has accomplished on the cross. The revelation of the finished work of Jesus will get stronger and stronger in the end times, and man will begin to enjoy the full benefits of the new covenant of grace.

Jesus did not die on the cross for us because any one of us deserved it. We all deserved hell's fire, but we have been redeemed by Jesus Christ. The word "redeem" literally means to buy with a price. The price here is Jesus Himself. He gave Himself up as a ransom for you and me. He gave Himself up, so that you and I can receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness to reign in life. It is all about Jesus!

It is time for the church to stop backing away from grace and to stop worrying that it might be too controversial. Study the Scriptures and begin to see for yourself that this is the power of God to salvation. Stop backing away from grace!

Discerning The Gospel Of Grace

Let me teach you how to discern if the grace teaching that you are hearing is doctrinally sound. When you hear the new covenant of grace preached, it is always Christ-exalting. It always reveals more and more of Jesus. It always unveils the beauty of Jesus and the perfection of His finished work on the cross. Jesus is always glorified when grace is taught. There is no grace without Jesus!

So don't be too easily impressed just because somebody tells you that he preaches grace. The Word of God tells us to test everything. God wants us to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves¹⁰. Even as you read this book, I don't want you to take my word for it. I want you to crack open your Bible and study the Word of God for yourself, and see the grace of our Lord Jesus in the new covenant coming alive. Grace is not a doctrine. Grace is a person and His name is Jesus. Therefore, there is no grace teaching without Jesus Christ. You cannot separate Jesus and grace! If someone keeps dropping the word "grace" in his sermons, but there is no exaltation of Jesus and His finished work, it is not the gospel of grace.

Similarly, to further discern if what you are hearing is the gospel of grace, note that grace does not point to your efforts, your performance, or your doing. It makes

nothing of man's self-efforts and points completely to Jesus' efforts and what He has done. The law makes one self-conscious. It is always asking, "What must I do?" But grace makes one Christ-conscious. It is always asking, "What has Jesus done?"

Your part is to only believe on Jesus Christ, and when you believe, you are blessed and made righteous!

Under law, the burden is on you to perform. Under grace, the burden is on what Christ has performed on the cross. That is why Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest, for My yoke is easy and light."¹¹ Jesus was not speaking to people who were tired and weary from their secular jobs. He was talking to people who were weary and heavy laden by the requirements of the law of Moses. The yoke of the law is hard and heavy. Jesus came to reveal grace, and the yoke of grace is easy and light because it involves none of you and all of Christ. He has borne the burden of sin on your behalf. Under grace, your part is to only believe on Jesus Christ, and when you believe, you are blessed and made righteous! Isn't this amazing grace?

The new covenant of grace is so powerful that there have been attempts to pervert the teaching on God's grace. There are so-called preachers who are preaching a "grace" that is not of God! They believe in "universal salvation" and claim that because of God's grace, all will be saved, even without believing in Jesus. This is a lie from the pit of hell! No man can be saved except through our Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life¹². No man comes to the Father and receives eternal life except through Jesus! There is no grace without the person of Jesus. The teaching of "universal salvation" is a LIE that dishonors Jesus and negates His work on the cross! True grace always makes Jesus the center of everything. It is all about Jesus!

It is time for the church to tear down these fences of controversy around grace and start unveiling more and more of Jesus. This is the heartbeat of my ministry — the unveiling of Jesus and seeing more of Jesus, His loveliness, His perfection and His grace. It is all about bringing the "amazing" back to grace!

When believers don't understand that God's grace is His undeserved, unearned and unmerited favor, they will depend on their own efforts to keep the law of Moses to deserve, earn and merit His favor. Similarly, when believers don't understand that righteousness is a gift, and that it is about "right standing" and not "right doing", they will depend on their own efforts to earn this gift.

Pulling Down The Fences Of Controversy

My brothers and sisters, you are destined to reign in this life. It is our Lord's good pleasure to see your marriage blessed, family blessed, storehouses overflowing with more than enough and your body full of the resurrection life of Jesus!

Begin to see that the devil has entrenched fences and built strongholds that are so fortified that today, they are like thick walls. These thick walls surround the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. By the grace of God, we are going to pull down these thick walls, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds. Let's pull down these strongholds that have robbed believers of their destiny to reign in life. Start receiving the treasures that were purchased for you by the blood of Jesus, and begin reigning in every area of your life!

It is our Lord's good pleasure to see your family blessed, storehouses overflowing and your body full of the resurrection life of Jesus!

Chapter Four: Picture Of Pure Grace

If you were to ask a small child, say four or five years old, “What is a Bible?” He or She might reply, “It is a book that is all about Jesus, with a red string in it.” Oh, I love that! Isn’t it so precious to see things from a child’s perspective? They would not describe the Bible in religious terms that we adults are fond of. They just see the Bible in its simplest and purest form — a book that is all about Jesus, with a red string in it! Of course, you might want to explain to him or her that the red string is a bookmark. But you know what? There is indeed a “scarlet thread” that runs through this book, from the beginning in Genesis to the end in Revelation. It is all about Jesus and His finished work at the cross.

When new believers read the Old Testament for the first time, they might wonder what all the slaughtering of animals, sacrifices and sprinkling of blood are about. Well, when you understand that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins, you will begin to appreciate the value of the blood, especially the blood that Jesus shed for our sins.

The Bible says that after Adam and Eve sinned by partaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God “made tunics of skin, and clothed them”¹. The first time an animal was sacrificed to cover man’s sins happened right there in the garden of Eden. All the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament are shadows of Jesus Christ, who is the substance. The blood of bulls and goats under the old covenant all pointed to the substance of Christ, whose blood was shed on the cross of Calvary. As John the Baptist said, Jesus is the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”². In the book of Revelation, John heard a voice saying, “Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” but when he turned to look at the Lion, he saw instead a “Lamb as though it had been slain”³.

Everything in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation points to Jesus’ death on the cross. It is because of His sacrifice that we are under the new covenant of grace today. Everything in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation points to Jesus’ death on the cross.

The old covenant will always cause you to look at yourself, whereas the new covenant will always cause you to turn and look at Christ crucified. Old Testament prophets call your sins to remembrance, while New Testament preachers call your righteousness to remembrance. Old Testament preachers tell you what is wrong with you, while New Testament preachers tell you what is right with you because of what Jesus has done, in spite of what is wrong with you. The first miracle of Moses, who represents the law, was to turn water into blood, resulting in death⁴. The first miracle of grace was Jesus turning water into wine, resulting in celebration and life⁵. The law kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Pure Grace From Egypt To Sinai

When God liberated the children of Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt, He did not do so because they had kept the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments had not even been given yet. The children of Israel came out of Egypt by the blood of the Lamb.

The Lord began to teach me some things showed a number of years ago that ushered me into the Gospel Revolution. He taught me that on the journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to Mount Sinai was a picture of pure grace. Not a single Israelite died during this period although they murmured and complained.”

I had never heard anyone preach that before and neither had I read it in any book prior to hearing Pastor Joseph Prince teach this. So, I turned to that portion of the Scriptures, trying to see if someone who had died or not, so that I could prove Pastor Prince wrong! Have you been there before, trying to prove someone wrong? Well, I could not succeed. I could not find any Israelite who died even though the people murmured and complained. Even though God had rescued the children of Israel from their Egyptian slave masters by performing great signs and wonders, the children of Israel failed to honor God, and murmured and complained over and over again. When the Egyptian army came thundering toward them from behind and the Red Sea was before them, the children of Israel cried out to Moses saying, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?”⁶

That was a complaint against God, and murmuring and complaining are sins. But what was God’s response? He opened up the Red Sea and they crossed over to dry

land on the other side, safe from their enemies. Even after God had brought them safely to the other side of the sea, the murmuring continued. At Marah, they complained about the bitter waters. What was God's response? He made the bitter waters sweet⁷. In the wilderness, they cried out against Moses when they were hungry. What was God's response? He rained bread from heaven⁸. But still, the children of Israel complained. When there was no water again, they cried out against Moses, saying, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"⁹ What was God's response? He brought water out of the flinty rock.

Study the Bible yourself. You'll find that every time the children of Israel murmured and complained, it only brought forth fresh demonstrations of God's favor, supply and goodness. Why? Because during that period, the blessings and provisions they received were not dependent on their obedience or goodness. They were dependent on God's goodness and faithfulness to the Abrahamic covenant, which was a covenant of grace.

The Exchange Of Covenants At Mount Sinai

Then, something tragic happened right at the foot of Mount Sinai. In Exodus 19:8, your English Bible says that the people cried out to Moses, saying, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." In the original Hebrew text, this is actually a statement of pride. They were saying, "All that God requires and demands of us, we are well able to perform." In other words, they were saying, "God, stop assessing or blessing us based on Your goodness. Start assessing, judging and blessing us based on our obedience." So they effectively exchanged covenants, from the Abrahamic covenant which is based on grace, to the Sinaitic covenant which is based on the law.

All this while, God was with them and had fought for them. He opened up the Red Sea, rained manna from heaven and brought water out of the flinty rock, even though they kept murmuring and complaining. But the moment they said those prideful words, God had to change His tone. He told Moses to instruct the people not to go near the mountain, for "whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death"¹⁰.

Why do you think God changed His demeanor here? It was because man presumed on his own strength and entered into a covenant based on his obedience. This is what we call self-righteousness. Since the people wanted to be judged based on their performance, in the very next chapter, God gave them the Ten Commandments. From then on, since they boasted that they could do all that God commanded, God had to assess them based on His laws. He would bless them if they kept His commandments, but they would be cursed if they failed to do so. What the people did not understand was that they had to obey all of the Ten Commandments perfectly because if they failed in one, they would be guilty of all¹¹. You see, the law is a composite whole and God does not grade on the curve.

Now, let's see what happened when the children of Israel placed themselves under the law. After they boasted that they could fulfill all that God demanded of them, the works of the flesh were immediately manifested. They broke the very first commandment — “You shall have no other gods before Me”¹² — by fashioning a golden calf and worshipping it as their god¹³! Isn't that sad? So be careful when you boast of keeping or defending the law because the works of the flesh will follow soon after.

From that point onwards, every time the children of Israel murmured and complained, many of them would die. Observe this: Before Sinai, none died. After Sinai, the moment they murmured, they died. Before Sinai, every failure brought forth a fresh manifestation of God's favor. But now that the Israelites were under the covenant of law, sin had to be punished. Their blessings and provisions no longer depended on God's goodness, faithfulness and grace. Under the covenant of law, their blessings depended on their perfect obedience, and every failure and sin would result in judgment and punishment.

That is why the law of Moses is called the ministry of death and condemnation. It is an inflexible standard that had to minister death and condemnation to the Israelites whenever they sinned. You would think that after 2,000 years, people would learn, but there are believers today who are still using the same refrain as the children of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai. They are bragging, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.”

We Are No Longer Under The Old Covenant

Can you see what the Lord was showing me? The Israelites' journey from Egypt to Sinai was a picture of pure grace. It was not dependent on their goodness but His goodness, not on their faithfulness but His faithfulness. Before the law was given, they were under grace and nobody was punished even when they failed. But immediately after the law was given, nobody was spared when they failed. The good news is that we are no longer under the old covenant of law. We have been delivered from the law through Jesus' death on the cross. Because of Jesus Christ, we are now under the new covenant of grace, which means that today, God does not assess us based on our performance, but on His goodness and faithfulness.

If you are still trying to be justified by your obedience to the law, you are effectively negating what Jesus has already done for you on the cross!

Why are there believers today living as though the cross did not make a difference? Instead of enjoying the new covenant of grace, they are still fighting to be under the old covenant of law and the Ten Commandments. I declare to you that the cross of Jesus did make a difference. If you are still trying to live under the law, trying to be justified by your obedience to the law, you are effectively negating what Jesus has already done for you on the cross!

Under the old covenant, God said, "I will by no means clear the guilty."¹⁴ However, in the new covenant, God says, "I will remember your sins no more."¹⁵ Can you see the contrast? It is the same God speaking, so what happened? The cross happened, my friend. The cross made the difference. Today, God does not remember your sins or hold them against you because He has already judged them in the body of His Son. Believers get confused when they do not realize that the cross has made a difference. Consider this: If we are still supposed to be under the Ten Commandments as many argue, then what did the cross of Jesus accomplish?

Grace Has Done What The Law Could Not

"Dr. Gray, are you insinuating that there is something wrong with the law?"

No, of course not! There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the law. As Apostle Paul said, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law..."¹⁶ I am saying exactly the same thing that Paul said. It is through the law that we have the knowledge of sin,

but that is all that the law can do. It exposes your sins. It cannot cover, cleanse or remove your sins. The law was designed to show forth our sins to bring us to despair and lead us to the realization that by our own efforts, we can never save ourselves. It was designed to show us that we all need a Savior who can cleanse and remove our sins. That is the purpose of the law.

The law condemns the best of us, but grace saves the worst of us.

While the law is holy, just and good, it has no power to make us holy, just or good. Only Jesus' magnificent grace and the splendor of His love can make you holy, just and good. And His blood has already made you holy, just and good! God has already done what the law could not do. How? By sending His own Son to be condemned on your behalf, so that you could be made the righteousness of God. That is your position today — you are made righteous in Christ.

With the advent of the new covenant, the Bible says that God has made the old covenant obsolete¹⁷. Stop fighting to hold on to something which the Bible has declared to be obsolete! The law condemns the best of us. Even David was condemned under the law and I personally esteem him to be the best of those under the old covenant. The law condemns the best of us, but grace saves the worst of us. Under law, if you break one law, you will be guilty of all. By the same token, under grace, if you do one thing right, and that is to believe on the Lord Jesus, then you will be justified from all¹⁸!

The True Gospel Always Produces Peace In Your Heart

Let me share with you a story that a fellow pastor shared. He writes:

Several years ago, I had the privilege of counseling one of my wife's close friends. My wife had invited her to join us for what was supposed to be a simple dinner, but it ended up stretching over a few hours. Her friend was a young Christian who did not attend our church. Over dinner, she shared that one of her spiritual leaders had told her that the Christian life was difficult, and that she had to suffer for the Lord and pay her dues. She was told that she had to work hard, pray hard and make sure that she read the Bible every day so that God would be pleased with her.

We don't read the Bible to qualify for God's blessings. We read the Bible to find out about our blessings and inheritance in Christ.

*Once she shared all that with us, I felt that it was my responsibility to tell her the good news. So I shared with her that we do not read the Bible because we want to qualify for God's blessings. We read the Bible to find out about our blessings and inheritance in Christ. See the difference? I told her that if I stopped reading the Bible for a few days, I should not be feeling guilty, I should be **feeling hungry**. God is not pleased with us on the condition that we read the Bible, pray long prayers and pay our dues. No, absolutely not! He is pleased with us because our trust is in Jesus, who qualified us.*

The Bible never said that it is our works that qualify us. It says, "Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light."¹⁹ It is the Father who has qualified us, and He qualified us by sending His Son to save us. He has qualified us to be partakers of His favor, healing, prosperity, love, joy, peace and well-being in our families. All these blessings are the inheritance of the saints, purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. We partake of our inheritance by giving thanks to the Father for sending His Son.

I shared with this lady that she can wake up every day and say, "Father, I thank You that You have qualified me to walk in victory, healing and prosperity." I told her that she should not be racking her brains wondering what she must DO to qualify for God's goodness. His goodness is already hers! There are too many teachings today telling believers what they must do to qualify for this and that. God's way is for us to know that through Jesus, we are already qualified. At the end of the dinner, I said, "Test whatever I have shared with you about the goodness of God, His grace and Jesus' work at the cross, against what you have heard in your church. Which produces peace in your heart?" She replied, "While I may not understand everything about Jesus because I am a baby Christian, I know that all that you have shared has produced great peace and joy in my heart."

My Beloved brothers and sisters, joy and peace are the trademarks of the kingdom of God. God is not the author of confusion. He is calling His people out of confusion. Ask yourself this: What produces more peace and joy in your heart — hearing about His judgment and indignation, or hearing about His goodness and

grace? What brings abiding peace and joy — to know that God will never punish and condemn you again for your sins because Jesus has already been punished and condemned for you, or to hear that God is sometimes pleased but sometimes angry with you depending on how you perform? What produces true repentance — the fear of judgment or His unconditional goodness?

Your answer is found in His grace, not in your own doing.

My Dear brothers and sisters, if you are honest, you know that the answer is found in Jesus and His finished work. It is found in His grace, not in your own doing. By trying to qualify yourself today for God's blessings with all your Bible reading, praying and hard work, you are saying together with the children of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." You are telling the Lord not to assess, judge and bless you according to His goodness and faithfulness. You are asking Him to assess and judge you according to your goodness and faithfulness. Is that what you really want? If not, then begin to put your trust in the finished work of Christ today and enjoy the blessings that flow from His unconditional goodness!

Chapter Five: Articles on Grace

8 Signs of Hyper-Grace Churches

Posted on February 7, 2014 by Paul Ellis

Charisma Magazine recently published an article entitled “[8 signs of hyper-grace churches](#).” Using words like “decline” and “distorted” and “sexually immoral” the article argued that churches built on the message of “free grace” are part of a “dangerous trend” that needs to be opposed and confronted.

What does a hyper-grace church look like? According to the article’s author, a hyper-grace church is one where the pastor only preaches positive messages, doesn’t insist on tithes, and key members of the church are living in sin. Hyper-grace churches are also known for promoting immoral people into positions of leadership, and by refusing to engage in culture wars, they are effectively condoning abortion and the killing of babies.

Honestly, for spouting such libelous nonsense it's a wonder Charisma Magazine hasn't been sued into bankruptcy. That they haven't surely speaks to the good grace and patience of those they slander.

In the interests of balanced reporting, I thought I might offer eight more-accurate signs of a hyper-grace church. But first, what is "hyper-grace"? Those who attack it rarely say. The author of the above article makes no attempt to define it but acknowledges those who preach it place "strong emphasis on grace." To this I respond, guilty as charged. Grace saves us, grace keeps us – it's grace from start to finish!

So what's the problem?

The problem, apparently, is we're not preaching enough law. We're antinomians with insufficient regard for the moral law of the Old Testament. In the Charisma article, the word "grace" appears nine times but the word "law" appears thirty times. This indicates a strong emphasis on the law.

The author writes, "The Law doesn't save us, but it sanctifies us." The grace of God gets us into the kingdom but it's our observance of the Law – with a capital L – which keeps us there, or at least keeps us from upsetting a temperamental God who is intolerant of our sin.

Consequently, we may contrast the two perspectives as follows:

- Hyper-grace – we are saved by grace and kept by grace
- Mixed-grace – we are saved by grace but kept by law

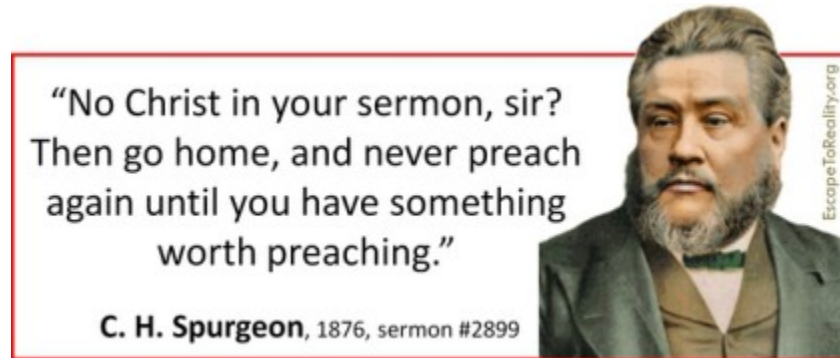
With these distinctions in mind, we can now identify eight characteristics of hyper-grace churches:

1. They preach Jesus and nothing but Jesus

Hyper-grace churches agree with [Spurgeon](#) who said, "A sermon without Christ as its beginning, middle, and end is a mistake in conception and a crime in execution." They understand that what this rule-obsessed world needs is not more rules but a revelation of the One who fulfilled the law on our behalf.

In a quest for holiness a mixed-grace church may preach a little law, a little self-help, or a little pop psychology, but [it's all just a flesh trip](#). In contrast, a hyper-grace church preaches *Christ alone*. Whatever your need, whether it's salvation or

sanctification, your supply is found in the One who promises to meet *all* your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Php 4:19). You don't need seven steps or fifteen keys or an intensive course of study. Your greatest need is for a revelation of Jesus Christ and what he has done on your behalf.



2. They reveal a God who loves you like a Father

Hyper-grace churches understand that what an orphaned world most needs is [a revelation of our heavenly Father who loves us](#) and cares for us and desires for us to come home. They follow the lead of Jesus who spoke again and again of "Our Father in heaven" (Matt 6:9). They understand that everything good in life is built on the revelation that "My Father loves me more than I know," and that *this* is the revelation that will change men and close abortion clinics and end culture wars.

A mixed-grace church, in contrast, seeks to balance this "teaching" with old covenant pictures of God as judge, jury, and executioner. They say, "Yes, he is a God of love but he is also a God of justice," as though God's justice could somehow be understood apart from his love.

The best picture we have of God's character is not found in a list of ancient laws handed down to a wandering tribe of ex-slaves. It is Jesus Christ. "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18).

3. They esteem the words of Jesus

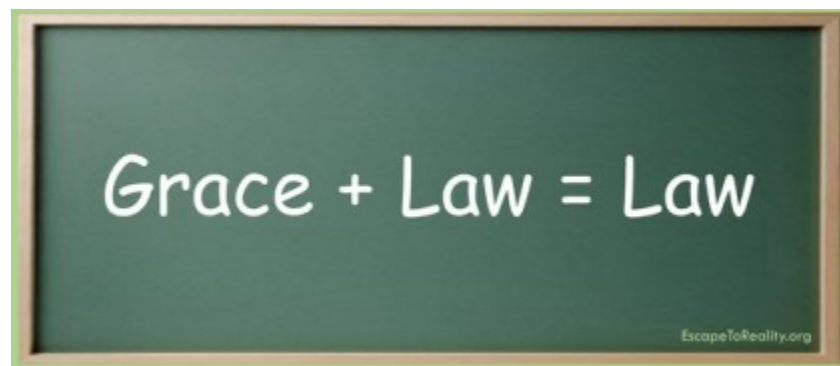
A common misperception is that hyper-grace churches disregard the teachings of Jesus. In point of fact, hyper-grace churches are the *only* ones taking Jesus seriously. When [Jesus is preaching law](#), we say that's serious law and when [Jesus is revealing grace](#), we bow in breathless gratitude. We would not dare to re-interpret his words with qualifiers and caveats.

In contrast, those who preach mixed-grace dismiss the hard words of Jesus as hyperbole and exaggeration. “Jesus didn’t mean what he said about [chopping off limbs](#) or [being perfect](#).” Like the Pharisees of old, a mixed-grace church picks and chooses those commands which are to be followed while disregarding others as metaphorical, unreal, and not to be taken seriously.

4. They esteem the law and the purpose for which it is given

Hyper-grace churches are often accused of being opposed to the law when, in fact, they esteem the law and agree with Paul who said “the law is good if one uses it properly” (1 Tim 1:8). They understand that the “law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers ... and those who oppose the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Tim 1:9-11). The law is for those who trust in themselves and their own righteousness rather than in Christ and his.

A mixed-grace church promotes the law as a guide and standard for righteous living. Under this perspective grace is reduced to little more than a lubricant for greasing the cogs of self-effort. Ironically, those who live this way reveal their disregard for *both* law and grace – law, since they cannot keep it yet pretend to, and grace, since they would rather trust in their own efforts than in Christ’s finished work. [Such a church is lukewarm](#). They are neither submitting to the cold and unbending demands of the law or the white-hot love and grace of their Father.

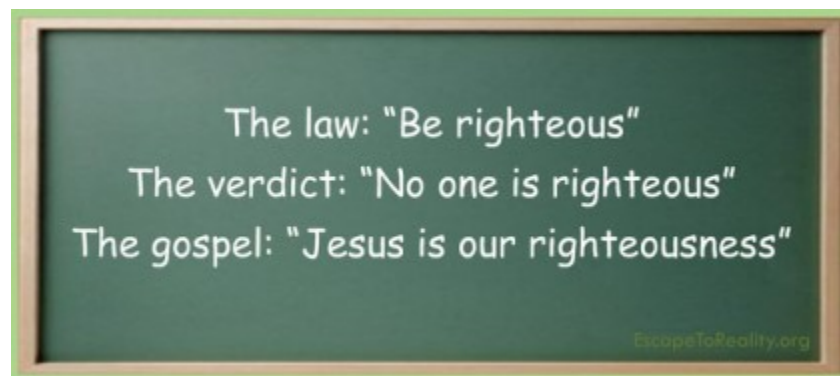


5. They understand that obedience is a fruit not a root

A mixed-grace church says you must obey God commands in order to prove your love but a hyper-grace church takes Jesus at his word: “[If you love me, you will obey what I command](#)” (John 14:15). They understand that [obedience is not birthed out of fear but love](#). Those who are resting in the unconditional love of their Father will trust him and do what he says without any conscious effort. They

don't need rules to tell them what to do for the Holy Spirit himself is their guide (John 16:13).

Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. *Now remain in my love*" (John 15:9). The issue is not whether you will do what he says, but whether you will remain in the quiet place of trust, resting in his love. If you don't settle this in your heart – that Jesus loves you as the Father loves the Son – you may run from your husband Mr. Grace back to your former husband Mr. Law (Rom 7:1-6). Someone who tries to mix law with grace is a spiritual adulterer. They're cheating on Jesus. While they may appear to be religious on the outside, their hearts are full of unbelief.



6. They empower people to overcome sin

If you sin, a hyper-grace church won't throw stones or shame you. Instead they will point you to the living Grace of God who [dealt with all your sins on the cross](#). They will say with the apostle John, "If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One" (1 John 2:1).

Stumble and sin in a mixed-grace church and the message you get will be, "Look at what you did!" But a hyper-grace church will say, "Look at what *he* did and what you can now do because of what he did!" Mixed-grace churches are [obsessed with sin](#) – resisting it, fighting it, avoiding it. In contrast, hyper-grace churches are [Christ-focused, not sin-focused](#).

A mixed-grace church would have you [turn from every sin until you're a dizzy sinner](#). But a hyper-grace church will release the supernatural grace of God that empowers you to sin no more. They will do what Paul did with the sinning Corinthians and reveal [your true identity in Christ](#). You are "sanctified in Christ Jesus... I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. In him you have been enriched in every way (and) he will keep you strong to the

end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor 1:2-8). We are not changed by our resolve and sheer determination. We are changed by beholding Jesus who lives within us.

Are We Completely Forgiven?

What does the Bible say...

No!	Yes!
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ex 23:21, 32:31-35• Lev 4-6, 19:20-22• Num 15:22-28• Deu 29:18-20• 2 Chr 6:19-39, 7:14• Mat 6:12,14, 18:35• Mk 11:25-26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acts 13:38, 26:18• Rom 4:7• 2 Cor 5:18-19• Eph 1:7• Col 1:14, 2:13• Heb 9:12,26,10:10-12• 1 Jhn 2:12

Prior to the cross, God’s forgiveness was conditional on your performance (your repentance, confession and forgiveness of others). But now you have been redeemed, reconciled, cleansed and brought near by the blood of the Lamb!

“Through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.” (Acts 13:38)

Good News from escapetoreality.org



7. They promote security and trust

Hyper-grace churches promote faith and confidence by proclaiming the promises of Jesus: “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them... no one can snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:26-27). We don’t stand on our promises to him, but on [his many good and great promises to us](#). Rest, be at peace, for it is God who keeps you firm to the end. The One who holds the universe in his hand, can surely hold you!

But in mixed-grace churches, your standing is based on *your* promises to God rather than his promises to you. Let God down and you will need to make new promises and work harder to keep them. Where is the security in this? There is none. No guarantees are offered or even desired for a measure of uncertainty is seen as an essential for keeping the sheep in line and under control. This way lies misery and despair.

8. They will look like Jesus, smell like Jesus, walk like Jesus, and talk like Jesus

A hyper-grace church is attractive to sinners and unappealing to the self-righteous. It is a place where the prodigals come home and the zealots stay out. It is a family where the broken are made whole, the captives are freed, and all are loved. It is the City come down, it is heaven-on-earth, and it is God's best advertisement for the kingdom of his grace.

8 Signs that a Church Doesn't Get Grace

Posted on July 7, 2016 by Paul Ellis



A while ago I listed [eight signs of hyper-grace churches](#). A hyper-grace church is one that is so focused on Jesus that it begins to look like Jesus, talk like Jesus, and smell like Jesus.

To highlight a positive it helps to accentuate the negative. So how do we get it wrong? What are the signs that a church is missing the grace of God?

Here are eight of them:

1. They are self-conscious

The message you hear is, “[You must nail yourself to the cross every day.](#)” So Christ’s sacrifice wasn’t good enough? “[You have to cleanse yourself and make yourself holy.](#)” You cannot succeed.

A focus on self and the things you must do to stay saved, get holy, and be blessed, is the number one sign you have missed the grace of God. Self says *I will*, but the gospel says *He will*.

Self cannot supply what God freely provides. We don’t need seven keys to success or fourteen steps to sanctification. We need a revelation of Jesus Christ and what he has done for us. Christ is our righteousness and holiness from God.

2. They’re not sure if God likes them

“Sure, he’s a God of love, but he’s also a God of justice. He sends earthquakes to punish cities. He takes away your children. [He trains you with sickness and](#)

scourging, so don't make him angry." What awful lies! What fear and insecurity this graceless teaching has brought to those whom God loves.

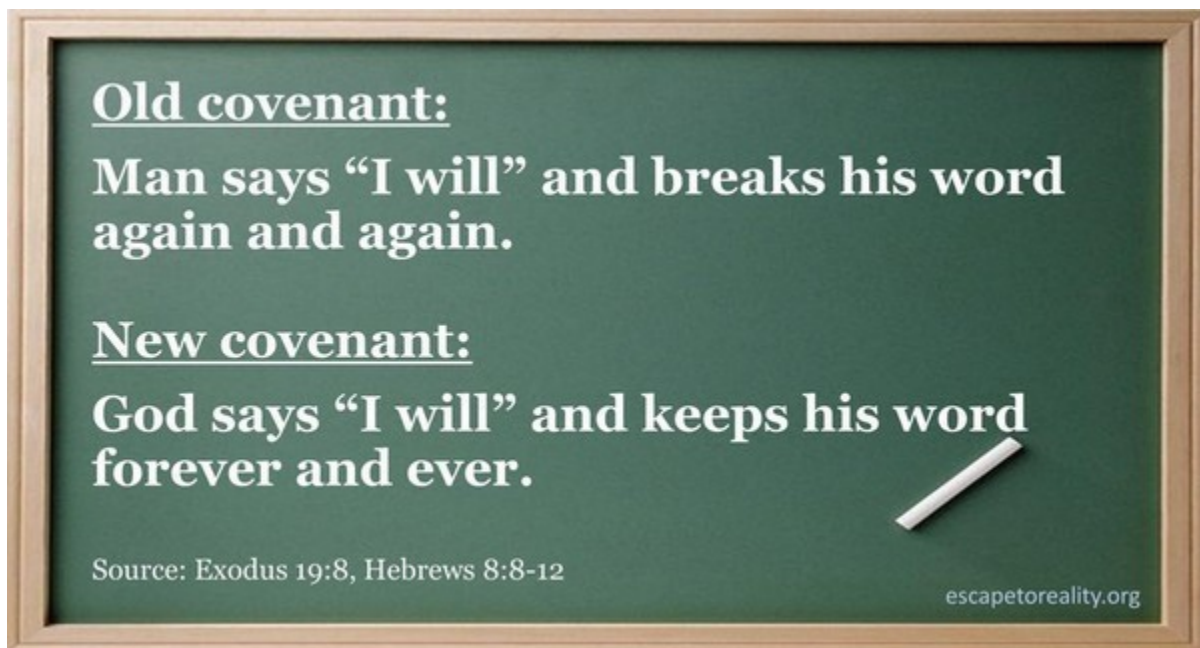
See the cross! If God did not spare his own Son, what won't he do to reveal his love to us? God is not mad at you, he's mad about you!

3. They speak (and sing) the faithless language of longing

A sure sign that some have missed grace is they ask Jesus to do what he's already done. "Oh Lord, come down." He already did. "Have mercy on us." Ditto. "Make us holy." "Come and cleanse us." "Bind the strong man." Tick, tick, tick.

Or they beg God to do what he never would do. "Lord, don't leave us." He said he wouldn't. "You give and take away." No, he doesn't.

The language of longing is the language of the old covenant. Good news: The wait is over. Christ has come! In him you are home. Everything you need for life and godliness has been provided. So change your tune and learn the new song of the new creation. It's a song of praise and thanksgiving (Ps 34:1, Heb 13:15).



4. They are sin-conscious

"I'm just a sinner saved by grace." "Let's examine ourselves for sin before worshipping." "Confess your sins to remain in fellowship with the Lord." What an

insult to the Spirit of grace. If the Holy Spirit chooses to remember your sins no more (Heb 10:17), what business is it of yours to remind him?

An obsession with sin is a hallmark of the old covenant, but it has no place in the new. Behold the Lamb of God who has taken away the sin of the world.

When you sin, a graceless church will shovel the shame. “Look at what you did.” They will reach for the stones instead of reaching for the only thing that can empower you to go and sin no more. Hint: it’s grace (Tit 2:11-12).

5. They are law-minded

“The law shows us how to please God.” No it doesn’t. “The law helps you overcome sin.” Actually, the law helps sin overcome you (Rom 7:9). “God gives us grace so that we might keep his commands.” No, God gives us grace because he loves us.

As Paul explains in Romans 7, running after the law is committing spiritual adultery. It’s cheating on Jesus. [A church that mixes law with grace is lukewarm](#) and nauseating to the Lord.

6. They think grace just is for sinners

“We are saved by grace, but kept by discipline.” Nope. It’s grace from start to finish (Heb 12:2). Grace is not one aspect of God that must be balanced against his other, less gracious aspects. Grace is everything. You are saved by grace and kept by grace. Grace is for everyone. Period. The end. Amen.

7. They treat people as resources

In a graceless church your value is determined by your behavior. Are you a hard worker? You’ll go far! [Are you divorced?](#) Forget about it.

In a graceless church visitors are valued as potential members, while members are valued as potential leaders. And because there are never enough people to fulfill the vision, everyone is busy, busy, busy. When activity replaces fellowship and friendships become task-based, when children are kept out of the way because they get in the way, real life has left the building.

8. They are insecure and anxious

A graceless church is an uncertain church. “Are you saved? Are you sure? Are you doing enough?” Instead of preaching the promises of Jesus, a graceless church promotes the promises of man. And since we can’t keep the promises we make, the result is failure and despair.

A graceless church is attractive to the self-righteous but unappealing to sinners. It is a place the zealots call home but the prodigals avoid. It is a place where the sheep are fleeced and the poor are exploited. It stinks of self and it is a terrible advertisement for Jesus.

But here’s the good news: God loves graceless churches! He loves the mixed-up people inside them and the misguided leaders who run them. I know this because I was a misguided pastor and this list was my testimony. But God has given me [a new and better testimony](#), a testimony of his grace.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, my friends. (Gal 6:18)

Is God's Love Unconditional?

Posted on May 17, 2011 by Paul Ellis

“How do you know God's love is unconditional? The phrase ‘unconditional love’ is not in the Bible!” This is a fair question that cuts right to the heart of the grace message. Grace says that God loves us with no strings attached but do a quick scan of the Bible and you will find that sometimes there *are* strings attached to the love of God. In one passage, [God refers to Himself as a jealous God](#) who loves those who love Him but punishes those who don't (Ex 20:5-6).

And yet despite these few passages that say otherwise (I will address these in my next post) I am 100% convinced that God loves us unconditionally. You need to be 100% convinced too. So let me give you seven reasons for concluding that God loves you unconditionally:

(1) Love, by definition, is unconditional

“God is love (*agape*).” (1 Jn 4:16)

You probably know about the different words for love in the Greek language. You might even know that *agape*-love refers to “[unconditional, self-sacrificing, and active](#)” love. But did you know that *agape* love is unique to God? It is not a human form of love. If your experience of love is limited to what you have received from people, chances are you have encountered frail love that sometimes comes with expectations and baggage. But God's love is not like this. As we will see, His love is unlike anything found in this world.

(2) Jesus demonstrates unconditional love

“But God demonstrates His own (*agape*) love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:8)

If you want to know what *agape* love looks like, consider Jesus. “For God so *agapao*-ed the world, that He gave His only Son...” (Jn 3:16). We did not deserve to be saved, yet He came for us regardless. That He died for us shows us that God loves us more than He loves His own life. We had done nothing to attract Him. We had not even repented. Yet our Creator hung on the cross that we put Him on and

forgave us as we killed Him. The cross is the single greatest demonstration of unconditional love the world has ever known.

(3) God's love is immeasurable

“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the (*agape*) love of Christ, and to know this (*agape*) love that surpasses knowledge...” (Eph 3:17-19)

When Paul wrote these words he knew full well that he was asking us to do the impossible. You cannot grasp the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love – they are ungraspable! Nevertheless Paul encouraged us to “Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights!” as Eugene Petersen says, because if you had even the smallest glimpse of how much He loves you, you would be undone. Selfishness and dead religion would wither. Your accomplishments and qualifications you would cheerfully count as rubbish compared to the awesome privilege and surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus your Lord.

(4) God's love keeps no record of wrongs

“(Agape-love) is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it...” (1 Cor 13:5, AMP)

Jesus knew the name of every soldier who beat Him, every person who mocked Him, and every Pharisee who thought He was the devil. Yet He still went to the cross so that they might be reconciled to God. It was as if God was not counting their sins against them! He wasn't, and neither is He counting yours (2 Co 5:19). On the cross, justice had a meeting with unconditional love and your peace with God was secured. Your transgressions have been blotted out as if you'd never done them (Is 43:25). Because God the Son bled for you, both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit have gone on record saying they will remember your sins no more (He 8:12, 10:17).

(5) God's love endures

“Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything. Love never fails [*never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end*].” (1 Cor 13:5-8, AMP)

You can take the love of God and nail it to a cross and He will still love you enough to come back from the dead and hunt you down just to tell you that He's forgiven you and loves you and wants to be with you forever. *Who does that?! Only God.*

(6) God's love is everlasting

“The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.’” (Jer 31:3)

Now there's a quote that should be on the wall of every believer! The Hebrew word *hesed*, which denotes steadfast love, warm-hearted generosity, and devotion, and which is usually translated as loving-kindness, appears 250 times in the Old Testament. As [Malcolm Smith](#) explains, this word captures God's heart towards us and is revealed formally in the covenant He made with us through our representative Jesus. So even if it were possible for God to have a change of heart and stop loving you, He would be bound by covenant to continue loving you for as long Jesus lives.

(7) God loves the unlovely

Perhaps you think God can't love you because of all the bad stuff you've done. If you're still not convinced that He loves you with an unconditional love, then consider those He loved in the Bible. He loved an adulterer and murderer called David. He pursued a persecuting Pharisee named Saul. When He wanted to portray His love for Israel He told the prophet Hosea to marry and love an unfaithful woman. When He walked the earth in human form He developed a reputation as a friend of sinners and told stories about prodigals who were loved even though they had done nothing deserving of love. He loved lepers and Gentiles, thieving tax-collectors and stinkin' Samaritans. At this point you really should stop and ask yourself *why?*

Why does God love us?

We have seen from scripture that His love for us has nothing to do with our loveliness nor our behavior, whether good or bad. He simply loves us because *He is love* and it's His nature to love. And thank God this is so, for there is no hope *except* that He loves us. If He did not love us unconditionally, He would not have died for us and there would be no new covenant based on His grace. But He does and He did and there is!

This is the good news that the whole world needs to hear.

The Test of your Gospel

Posted on May 8, 2011 by Paul Ellis

I once heard a preacher say that “80 to 90% of Christians are unacquainted with the gospel of grace.” I guess this estimate is not far off the mark as evidenced by the large numbers of believers who are still trying to earn what God has freely given them. If you were to ask these people about grace they would declare, “yes, I am saved by grace! I thank God for His grace!” But by their works they testify that God’s grace is not enough. Grace may have got them started, but now it’s up to them to finish. Having begun with the Spirit they are now trying to attain their goal by human effort (Gal 3:3). Instead of working out what it means to *be saved*, they are working hard to *stay saved*.

How does this happen? Usually someone tells them that God won’t accept them or bless them or be pleased with them unless they perform for Jesus. Dead religious works are sold with respectable labels like “responsibility,” “good works,” “mission,” “sowing,” and “investing.” I am not against these things! What I am opposed to is the diabolical lie that says God’s favor depends on me doing them.

Do you know that you are saved by grace *and* kept by grace?

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him. (Col 2:6)

How did you receive Him? By faith. How should you continue to live in Him? By faith! It's faith in God's grace from start to finish. Are you living by the faith of the Son of God? Or have you taken out a little works insurance? As Watchman Nee put it, the choice is between trying and trusting. You can try or you can trust but you can't do both. Are you a tryer or a truster?

I have proclaimed the [true gospel](#) elsewhere. I have also listed some of [the common ways the gospel is perverted](#) along with some [signs that you might be living under self-imposed law](#). What I want to give you here is a simple test to help you determine whether the gospel message you're trusting in is the same gospel that Jesus revealed and Paul preached. It's a simple test. Just ask yourself the following four questions. If your answers are all yes, then rejoice, for you are living on pure, undiluted grace!

1. Does this gospel cause me to fix my eyes exclusively on Jesus?

Does this message focus on me or does it cause me to fix my eyes on the Author and Finisher of my faith? Does it emphasize what I'm doing (or not doing), or does it emphasize His finished work on the cross? Does it make me introspective and anxious or Christ-conscious and grateful?

A true gospel preacher will always seek to reveal more and more of Jesus. It took me years to realize this. When I began preaching in the 1990s, I used to preach on the kingdom. I loved the kingdom and I still do. But I now realize that my love for the kingdom was really a love for the King. Now I just preach of this Great King who loves me and gave Himself for me. Now I just preach Jesus.

Preachers, do you need a message on healing? Then preach Jesus! Do you need a series on overcoming, giving, wisdom, holiness, faith, warfare, marriage, family life, outreach, helping the poor, deliverance, Leviticus, the Tabernacle, etc? Then

"God will answer all our questions in one way and one way only, namely, by showing us more of his Son."

Watchman Nee

The Normal Christian Birth, 1957, p.12

preach Jesus!

Whatever your need, your answer is found in Jesus and His finished work. That's why Paul resolved to know nothing but "Christ and Him crucified" (1 Co 2:2). Any message that doesn't reveal Jesus will likely be powerless substitute, a flesh-trip,

and a wasted opportunity. Jesus is the supreme manifestation of the character and purpose of God. Any message that diminishes Jesus, insults the Spirit of grace. Jesus is peerless and nothing compares to Him. He has become for us wisdom from God and I will boast (preach) of nothing else (1 Co 1:30-31).

2. Does this gospel increase my dependence on Jesus?

Jesus said, “apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). Sadly, much is being done apart from Jesus and most of it will amount to nothing! Instead of healing the sick, raising the dead and driving out demons – the very things Jesus said His followers would do – we’re doing *other stuff*. And because we’re so busy doing *other stuff* we’re worn out and missing opportunities to do the works and greater works of Jesus.

Let me put your mind at rest right now: I guarantee that in your own strength you cannot heal the sick and raise the dead. Don’t even try. But Christ in you can do these and greater things! Do you trust Him? Working out your salvation with [fear and trembling](#) describes the adventure of learning to do impossible things with Jesus. Here’s the test: The true gospel will always inspire you to take risks in His Name, but a false gospel promotes activity in your own name.

3. Does this gospel empower me to overcome sin?

There are two ways to deal with sin; (1) preach law or (2) reveal grace. A law-based message will stir up the flesh in a human-powered quest for a change in behavior. This approach is inherently flawed for the purpose of the law is to inflame sin (Rm 7:5). Thus, any “success” with this approach will only lead to the graver sins of pride, self-righteousness, and the truly fatal sin of unbelief in the grace of a good God. Ultimately the law is powerless to deal with sin because it leaves the heart untouched (Col 2:23). Worse, it releases condemnation ([which some mistake for conviction](#)) and ministers death, just as it was designed to do (2 Co 3:7,9).

Grace declares that Jesus conquered all sin on the cross (He 9:26). You are not holy because of your behavior but His (1 Co 1:30). A preacher of grace will deal very practically with sin by seeking to reveal your true identity in Christ. You are a new creation with a new nature. Your old sin software has been nailed to the cross and you are no longer sin’s slave (Rm 6:6,20). Appetites are dealt with by recognizing who you are in Christ and reckoning your old self as dead. Again, the focus is on Jesus, not you. Jesus was tempted in every way yet was without sin. As

you rest in Him, you will find grace to help you in your time of need (Heb 4:15-16).

“The old phrase ‘I’m just a sinner, saved by grace’ isn’t true! If you’re a sinner, then you need to be born again. If you were truly saved by grace, then you are no longer a sinner.”

Andrew Wommack

Spirit, Soul and Body, 2007, p.43

The law does not provide useful guidelines for Christian living. We turn rules into idols when we put our faith in them instead of Christ. The Bible is very clear; the law empowers sin (1 Cor 15:56) and only a revelation of God’s grace can teach us to say no to ungodliness (Tit 2:12). Here’s the test: a false gospel will keep you sin-conscious, but the true gospel will make you Christ-conscious. Which describes you? Are you sin-conscious or Christ-conscious?

4. Does this gospel release peace and joy?

The kingdom of heaven is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rm 14:17). If the gospel you’re listening to doesn’t reveal Jesus and the gift of His righteousness, then you will never experience the peace and joy that comes with it. It really is all about Jesus. He took our sin and gave us His righteousness (2 Co 5:21). This is what the gospel reveals – a righteousness from God that is received by faith from first to last (Rm 1:17). When you know that God has made you as righteous as Jesus, you will be empowered to reign in life (Rm 5:17).

This test is actually about righteousness: Are you resting in His or are you trying to impress Him with yours? A false gospel will seek to manufacture righteousness through works and holy living. By prescribing a course of action for you to take, it will instantly fail the above three tests. It will burden you with loads you cannot carry and expectations you cannot live up to. Before you know it, you will be as stressed and joyless as Martha.

Here’s the test. If you stopped doing the things you are doing for Jesus, would you feel guilty? What if you sinned, stopped giving, or skipped church? I’m not encouraging you to do any of these things – sin is stupid. But someone who knows they are clothed with His righteousness will never battle guilt and condemnation. Even when they sin they will sense the Holy Spirit convicting them of their continued righteousness in Christ (Jn 16:10). Conversely, one who’s bought into a

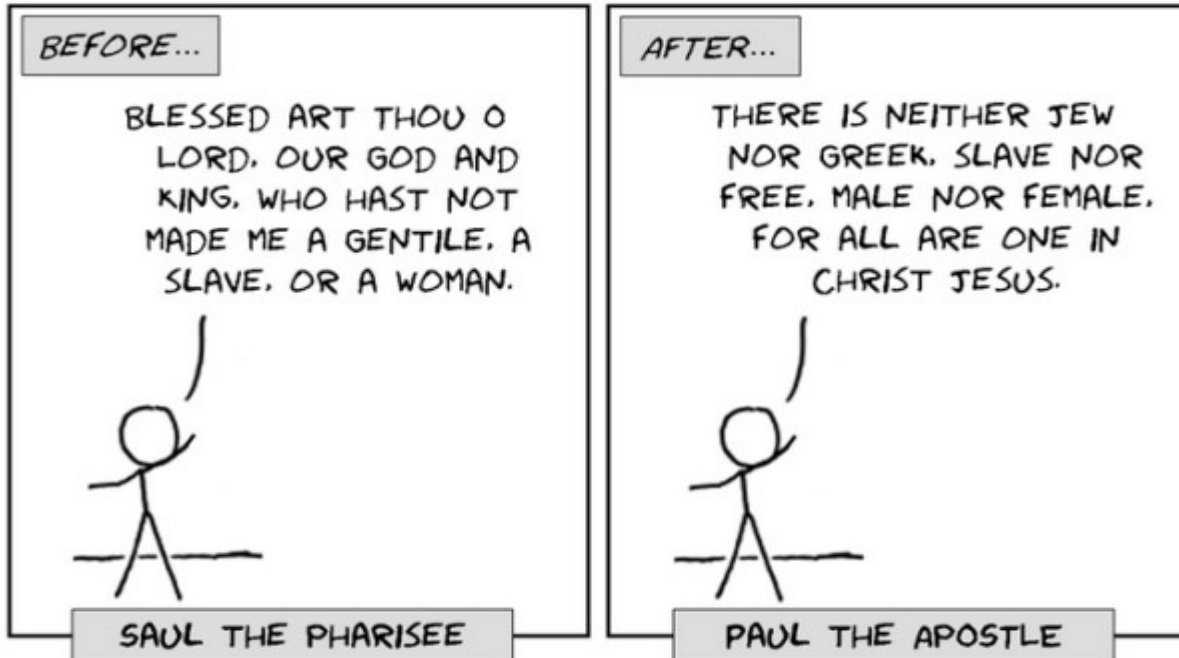
false gospel will never know lasting peace. Even when they've performed there will always be a sense of "but have I done enough?"

Paul began every one of his letters with the phrase, "Grace and peace to you from God the Father." It is only a revelation of God's favor that brings true peace. Know grace, know peace. Worldly peace is temporary, but the peace of God – that sense that everything is coming together for good because you belong to Jesus and His favor rests on you – passes understanding (Php 4:7). It fortifies your heart and mind so that in all circumstances you find yourself overflowing with thankfulness (Col 2:7). No matter how severe your trial, you will be able to find rest – indeed, even joy – in His mighty, loving arms (Philippians 4:4).

Before and After

Posted on April 16, 2011 by Paul Ellis

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES GRACE MAKE?



[|<](#) [< PREV](#) [RANDOM](#) [NEXT >](#) [>|](#)

PERMANENT LINK TO THIS COMIC: <http://wp.me/pNzdT-NM>
WITH APOLOGIES TO XKCD.COM!

What Keeps Christians Weak and Unproductive?

Posted on December 20, 2010 by Paul Ellis



If you were the devil and you wanted to keep Christians barren, sick and ineffective, there is one simple thing that you could do: you would hide or distort the revelation that we have been totally and eternally forgiven.

Show me any Christian who is making a mark for God today, and I'll show you someone who knows they have been forgiven. Complete and unconditional forgiveness is the foundation of our faith. It is what separates Christianity from all the man-made religions of the world. Yet many sincere believers do not know for sure whether they are forgiven. And if you're not sure about that, you won't know for certain whether God wants to heal the sick, raise the dead and drive out demons.

When I started this blog [I wrote quite a lot about forgiveness](#) and how it's a gift that can never be earned. At that time I received many comments from sincere believers who objected to what I had to say about confessing sins. Confession seems to be a touchy subject. By confession, I mean reviewing your sins and shortcomings. I don't want to belittle confession but I do want to distinguish between [healthy and unhealthy confession](#). If talking and being open about things brings life to you, then do it. But – and this is a big but – if you think confessing sins is a prerequisite to receiving forgiveness, then you are in danger of setting aside the grace of God.

As we will see in this quick study, confessing-to-be-forgiven is one of the most diabolical lies that has ever been taught. It is also one of the most effective – just look at what it has done to us. Instead of disciplining nations we're cloistered in small groups trying to manage each other's sin. Instead of exercising authority over

sin and sickness, we're enslaving ourselves with the yoke of law. Instead of drawing from the well of salvation with joy and telling others the good news, we're weeping at the altar like a bad advertisement.

I want to draw some very clear lines in the sand, so in this short series I will outline 12 reasons why believers never, ever, have to confess their sins to be forgiven. If it appears that I'm preaching the negative, it is only to highlight the many positive things that the Bible says about your forgiveness – things that we can be certain about. I'm going to travel fast and light across a lot of ground. I will list scriptures but leave you to study them at your leisure. My hope is that you will come to a firm conviction about your forgiven-ness, that you will thank God for what He has done and live free. Then I hope you will go and tell others the good news of God's grace. Everyone needs the gift of forgiveness.

Without further ado, here are the first three reasons why we don't have to confess our sins to be forgiven:

1. It's not in the Bible

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 Jn 1:9)

This is the [only verse in the Bible where our confession is connected with His forgiveness](#). The Greek word for confess is *homologeō* which means to acknowledge, concede or agree with. In this passage John is writing to unbelievers who were deceived because they thought they were without sin (see v.8). How do I know that John is talking to unbelievers and not Christians? Because he is addressing people who are walking in darkness (v.6), who need to be purified from all unrighteousness (v.9) and who, by insisting that they have never sinned, are making God out to be a liar (v.10).

What message does John have for sinners who don't think they're sinners?

“Acknowledge your sinful state, turn to God and receive His gift of forgiveness.” There's only one thing that stops a sinner from receiving God's grace and that's unbelief. If you don't see your need for forgiveness, you are well and truly lost. You may claim to know God but He doesn't know you. There's only one way to the Father and that's through Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. God made provision for your redemption and forgiveness at the cross, but you will never see it unless you acknowledge (ie: confess) your need for a Savior.

And what message does John have for those of us who have already turned to Jesus? Do we need to confess too? We already have! Remember, confession means agreeing with God. When you first surrendered to the Lord, you might have prayed “thank you for forgiving me.” That’s confession. You were acknowledging that you had a sin problem and in need of God’s forgiveness. In the New Testament people sometimes confessed their sins when they were baptized (Mt 3:6). How many times do you need to be baptized before you are baptized? Just once. How many times do you need to say yes to God before you are in agreement with God? Just once. And how many times do you need to receive God’s free gift of forgiveness before you have received it? Just once. (And for those of you interested in Greek verb tenses, see [my note](#) in the comments below.)

2. You were forgiven 2000 years ago

“When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; He has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.” (Col 2:13-14)

We all need to forgive and be forgiven, but when it comes to sin, your forgiveness is a done deal. Jesus forgave all your sins at the cross long before you were born, long before you did anything. Your performance never came into it. I said above that 1 John 1 was written for unbelievers who don’t see their need for forgiveness. In the second chapter John writes for the saints, and what does he tell them? “Your sins have been forgiven on account of His name” (1 Jn 2:12). If your sins have already been forgiven, what are you confessing for?

3. You were forgiven through His blood

Under the old covenant law, there could be no forgiveness without the shedding of blood (Heb 9:22). What the law prefigured, Christ fulfilled. At the Last Supper Jesus explained the basis of our forgiveness:

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Mat 26:28)

Note the absence of any qualifiers. Jesus did not say, “...provided they confess first.” It’s His blood from start to finish. 1 John 1 may have given you the impression that sinners are only forgiven when they confess. But John makes it clear that it is not our confession but “the blood of Jesus Christ (that) cleanses us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:7). So why confess at all? Remember, Biblical confession is

not listing everything that's wrong with you. True confession is a positive response to something that God has already done. It is verbalizing faith. It is saying "thank you Jesus for your blood that was poured out for my forgiveness. Because of You, I am forgiven!"

Never forget that you are forgiven

What is the number one reason why Christians are barren and ineffective in their knowledge of the Lord Jesus? According to 2 Peter 1:9, it is forgetting that we have been cleansed from our old sins. To keep the church weak and impotent, the enemy only needs to get us to forget our forgiven-ness. Indeed, forgiveness is easy to forget when we sin. And that's why it is important to confess the word of God over ourselves. So the next time you stumble, don't get introspective but put your faith into action. Look at yourself in the mirror and declare with confidence that you have been forgiven by the blood of the Lamb!

In [Part II](#) of this study we will look at three more promises about forgiveness and three more reasons why Christians don't need to confess their sins to receive them.

Does God Use Correction Fluid?

Posted on December 8, 2010 by Paul Ellis



Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life? If so, are you worried that Jesus may blot out your name? It seems that many Christians are. They are afraid that they might do something that will cause Jesus to blot out their names from His Book of Life. It's like Jesus is sitting in heaven with a pen in one hand and a bottle of correction fluid in the other. Get saved, name goes in. Fail a test, name goes out. Re-commit your life to God, name goes back in. Phew! With all the re-commitments going on, you'd think Jesus was in danger of repetitive stress injury!

But seriously, do you fear that Jesus might remove your name from His book? Is this something that concerns you? It shouldn't.

The most important book in the universe

If you haven't heard, the Book of Life lists all those who are saved for eternity. Revelations chapter 20 speaks of a day when the books are opened and the dead are judged according to what they have done. But in terms of your salvation, only one book matters and it's the Lamb's Book of Life. If your name is not in this book, you're cooked:

If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:15)

I don't want to belittle this. It's very important to make sure that your name is recorded in this book. (If Jesus knows you, you're in!) But if your name is already recorded in His book, should you be worried about being blotted out? Under the old covenant, the answer seemed to be yes!

The LORD replied to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my Book.’ (Exo 32:33)

Under the old covenant, your performance mattered a great deal. You were blessed if you were faithful, but condemned if you weren’t. This meant that people were very conscious of their behavior. They knew that their sins could lead to dire consequences. Under the old covenant you might even pray for your enemies like this:

May they be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be listed with the righteous. (Psa 69:28)

But we don’t live under that old sin-conscious covenant. We live under the new and better covenant of God’s grace. Under grace, your performance affects your standing before God not one bit. Jesus did it all. We are not blessed because we are faithful but because He is faithful.

Mixing covenants

So why are Christians afraid that Jesus will blot their names out of His book? Their fear stems from an old covenant interpretation of a new covenant promise. I am sure you know the promise I am referring to. It is found in [the exhortation Jesus’ gave to the church in Sardis](#):

He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the Book of Life, but will acknowledge his name before My Father and His angels. (Rev 3:5)

Here Jesus gives us a wonderful assurance of our eternal salvation. He is promising that He will never blot out our names. Never means *never*! Yet some read this as if Jesus might yet do the very thing He promised not to do. (If Jesus has promised He won’t do something, but you think He might, isn’t that a bit like calling God a liar?)

Someone with an old covenant mindset looks at this verse and sees only conditions for salvation. They think, “I have to overcome to qualify. If I don’t overcome, I’m going to be blotted out.” To read the verse in this way is to dismiss the cross and make the grace of God of no effect.

But someone with a new covenant mindset looks at this verse in a completely different way. They think, “Jesus has overcome the world and now lives in me. I

don't overcome to qualify – I am qualified by Christ and I now carry His overcoming nature. This is not some test I have to pass, but a wonderful promise regarding my inheritance.” (See 1 Jn 4:4, 5:5, Jn 16:33, and Col 1:12.)

God has perfect knowledge. When He added your name to His book He knew everything you had done and everything you were going to do. There is nothing you can do that will surprise Him, nothing that would cause Him to shake His head with disappointment and say, “I made a mistake adopting that one.” The good news is that God doesn't make mistakes. When He added you to His book it was for all eternity.

The new thing

There's only one thing of yours that God promises to blot out, and it's not your name – it's your sins:

I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. (Isa 43:25)

God promised to blot out all your sins and He did that already. This was the “new thing” foretold by the prophet Isaiah (43:19). Under the old covenant, men's sins were counted against them. But when Jesus met all the demands of the law at the cross, all your sins were blotted out. Your sin is no longer being imputed to you (2 Cor 5:19). Why did He blot out your sins? He did it for His own sake, because He loves us, and so that we might be reconciled to Him.

If your name is in His book, you have nothing to fear on Judgment Day. If all your sins were blotted out at the cross, then there is no sin left that could get your name removed from His book. This is [the gospel of grace](#). It was new news for Isaiah, is old news for us, but is still good news for everyone.

Son, Servant, or Friend of God?

Posted on October 4, 2010 by Paul Ellis

How do you mainly identify with God? As a

- (a) servant of God,
- (b) a friend of God, or
- (c) a son of God?

When a friend posed this question on his Facebook page yesterday, I was so surprised at the results, that I decided to poll E2R readers on [E2R's FB page](#). (Before you read on, answer the question for yourself. How do you primarily relate to God? As a servant, a friend or a son?)

So far about 30 people have responded to the FB polls. To my astonishment, less than half picked (c) "son of God." And so, once again, Facebook has provided a brilliant answer to one of the world's most pressing questions:

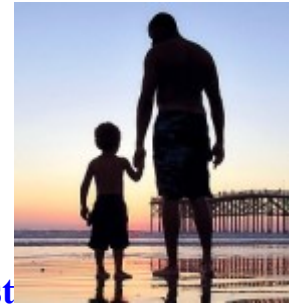
Why is the world still a mess, even though Jesus did everything He came to do, 2000 years ago?

The problem may not be what you think. It's not legalism, condemnation, or even sin. The root cause of the problem is that the majority of people do not identify with God as their Father. They relate to Him as something other than sons. That is, they have an orphan spirit. Those outside the church are like the prodigal son, while many of those inside the church are like the elder brother. Neither brother received their father's love. Both trusted in their own labor and had little confidence in the grace and provision of their loving father.

There may be only two kinds of people in the world: sons and orphans. Which are you? The devil's plan is to get you confused about your identity. He will sow doubt by asking, "if you are the Son of God..." (Mt 4:3). To the degree that you are uncertain about your sonship, to that degree you have an orphan spirit.

I will probably write more about this some other time, but the FB polls have fired me up. I couldn't sleep for thinking about it. So many of you are evidently victims of identity theft! I can't stay silent while the devil runs off with your birth certificates, so below are 10 reasons why (c) is the best response to the question above. Even if you serve a God who is your best friend, you are first and foremost

a son of God. And this applies equally to the ladies, for we are all one in Christ (Gal 3:28).



Top 10 reasons why you are a son of God first and foremost

- (1) The Holy Spirit says so. “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘*Abba, Father*’” (Rms 8:15).
- (2) Do you really need more reasons? Come on now! Paul thought no. 1 above was such an important truth that he said it *twice*. “God sent the Spirit of his Son into our lives crying out, ‘Papa! Father!’” (Gal 4:6, MSG). God *Himself* calls you son. (You wouldn’t want to call God a liar now would you?) He is the one who makes it possible for you to call Him Papa!
- (3) The Bible says so – in many places (see Gal 3:26, Rms 8:14, Heb 12:7, 1 Jn 3:1 for starters).
- (4) The Old Testament prophets longed for the day when God’s people would be called “sons of God” (Hos 1:10). They thought it applied to the Jews, but Paul says it includes “even us whom He also called” (Rms 9:23). Jesus came to reveal the Father (Mt 11:27). This is what makes the new covenant *new*. Sonship – not servanthood, not friendship – is the pinnacle of redemption. Not even Adam and Eve were identified as sons! [Because of Jesus we have come closer to God than when we started out in the Garden.](#) How awesome is that?!
- (5) We are to be servant-hearted, not servant-minded. Someone with an orphan spirit readily identifies themselves as a servant of God. It sounds noble, but it insults the cross and the Spirit of grace. Servants work for wages but we live under grace and there are no wages under grace. Sons are shareholders, not employees. We don’t work because we have to, but because we are wholly invested in the success of the family-business.

(6) A servant doesn't know his master's will, has to be told what to do, and then relates to God on the basis of what he does. If he does good, he thinks God loves him more. How sad, how utterly tragic to be enslaved to such a lie. A mature son is nothing like that. He has the mind of Christ (1 Co 2:16), is clothed with His righteousness (Is 61:10), and relates on the basis of the Father's love first shown to him (1 Jn 4:19). A servant waits on God. A son does what he sees His Father doing (Jn 5:19).

(7) Servants suffer from performance-anxiety. Even friends may worry thinking they have to pound on doors in the middle of the night merely to *borrow* something (Lk 11:5). But sons need not worry, for our "heavenly Father knows we need all these things" (Mt 6:32). Our Father – not our master nor our friend – delights to give good gifts to those who ask Him (Mt 7:11). You're not on the outside looking in. You're warm and secure in bed with your Papa (see Lk 11:7).

(8) True, Abraham was a friend of God (Is 41:8) and we are revealed to be friends when we do what Jesus says (Jn 15:14). This is a good thing and something to treasure. But sonship is better by far! Sons have "full rights" of access that friends lack (Gal 4:5). Sons have an expectation of intimacy that servants and friends do not enjoy. My kids are with me 24/7 (it's the school holidays). In contrast, I only see and enjoy my friends occasionally. Wouldn't you rather walk with God enjoying His presence continuously? As a son you have full rights to do so!

(9) Sons are heirs. I have an inheritance and it's the entire planet (Rms 4:13). All the cattle on all the hills and all the blessings of Abraham are ours, paid for with Jesus' blood. Indeed, we are co-heirs with Christ (Rm 8:17). Our share is no less than Christ's!

(10) What will it take to fix this broken, poisoned planet? A revelation of the sons of God (Rms 8:19)! In the garden God gave us a planet to keep. We lost it, Jesus got it back, yet we still act like it belongs to the devil. It is OURS! "The earth he has given to man" (Ps 115:16). Jesus paid a high price to redeem this planet for us. Creation is not waiting for the church to rise up. Neither is creation waiting for God's servants or His friends to rise up. Instead, creation waits for the mature sons of God to rise up and say with authority "this is my planet; hands off devil!"

If you're still having trouble wrapping your head around this, look to Jesus. Did Jesus describe God as His (a) Master, (b) Friend, or (c) Father? That's an easy question. Under the obsolete law covenant, God was Master. Under the Abrahamic

covenant, God is our Friend. But under the new covenant in Jesus' blood, God relates to us as our Father!

And don't water this down by saying that God is "all of the above." He's no more "all of the above" than you are "all of the above" to your own children. My kids will serve many employers and have many friends, but they will only have one earthly father and that's me. I am thrilled beyond words to be identified as my children's father because it is my unique privilege. I hope they will be equally thrilled to be identified as my children. It makes my heart soar when they call me Papa. I'm less thrilled when they call me "your majesty."

He is your Father and my Father! Yes I serve Him and yes He is my closest friend. But service and friendship stem from my secure position as His adopted son. There's nothing I enjoy more than being with Him, knowing Him, walking with Him and talking with Him. Every day with Him is an adventure!

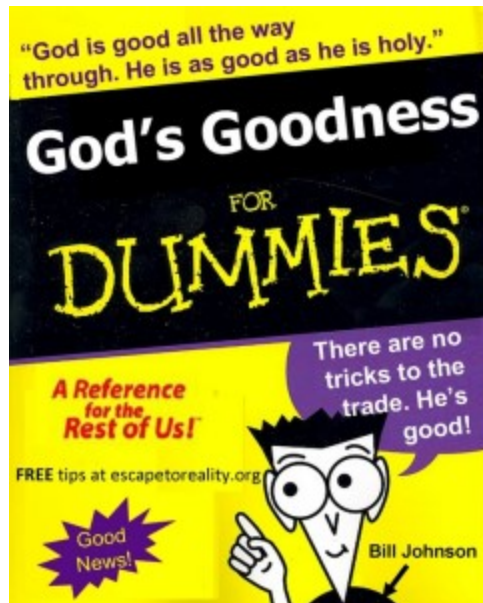
When you have a revelation of your sonship, it will change the way you pray. You will pray for the smallest things, because if it matters to you it matters to Him. But you will also ask Him for big things, because God has promised you the nations. You won't hold back like a waiter or a friend – you'll come running in to Papa knowing that He loves to give good gifts to His children.

Paul prayed, and so do I...

...that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power for us who believe. (Eph 1:18-19)

God Is Good, But How Good Is He?

Posted on April 30, 2010 by Paul Ellis



I read something on the weekend that hit me like a stone. It was in a book written by someone who is troubled that the church no longer fears God like in the good ol' days of the Old Testament. The problem, apparently, is the result of “overemphasizing the goodness of God.”

Think about that. We have “overemphasized” the goodness of God. That’s like saying, “He’s good, but He’s not *that* good. There’s a teeny, tiny part of him that stinks of badness.”

I beg to differ.

If I had just one adjective to describe God I would say He is love, but if I were given a second adjective I would say He is good.

Indeed, God is the very definition of good. Look up “good” in the dictionary and it says, “see God.”

The devil – who is thoroughly bad – doesn’t want us to think of God as being perfectly good. But He *is* good and everything He does is good.

The Jew says, “God is one,” and He is.

The Muslim says, “God is great,” and He is.

But the Christian says, “God is good” and rejoices!

It is the goodness of God that makes the good news *good*. Just as there is no bad news in the good news, there’s no badness in God.

Imagine where we would be if God were bad, or half bad and half good. We would live under a cloud of uncertainty, fearful of His mood swings. But God is not like that!

God never has a bad day, nor even a bad moment. He doesn’t have a bad temper. He never has occasion to say, “oops, my bad.”

Everything about Him is good and He is good all of the time.

All of His gifts are good. If you think you have found something good and it doesn’t have God’s fingerprints all over it, you are working with an inferior definition of good. God is the benchmark for what is good.

Perhaps you have never heard that God is good. Perhaps you don’t believe it. Then taste and see for yourself! His goodness will lead you to repentance. It’ll change your mind.

Make the Good Shepherd *your* shepherd. He will lead you from the front, while His goodness follows you from behind all the days of your life. If you don’t know where the goodness of God is right now, turn around. It’s right there next to His everlasting mercy.

It is simply not possible to overemphasize the goodness of God. You might just as well try and overemphasize His wisdom or try and grasp the breadth, width and depth of His love!

God is good. All the time.

But that’s just my opinion. What do you think?

Sources: 2 Chr 6:41, Ps 23:1,6, 34:8, Rms 2:4

God Doesn't Do Half-Jobs: Why Partial Forgiveness Is Completely Bogus

Posted on April 9, 2010 by Paul Ellis



There's a teaching going around that says that God has only half-forgiven us. If it sounds wacky, that's because it is. But partial forgiveness is what you have if you think there are things we must do to stay forgiven. Sure, Jesus forgave us at the cross, but to stay forgiven we need to forgive others or keep confessing our sins or do other stuff. The implication is that if we fail to do these things, we fall out of God's mercy and forgiveness.

Three arguments are usually offered in support of this teaching:

- (1) Jesus said, "If you forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you" (Mt 6:14), thus forgiveness is conditional on what we do
- (2) Peter refers to being forgiven from our "past sins" (2 Pet 1:9) implying that our present and future sins are yet to be dealt with
- (3) John seems to say that Jesus will only cleanse us from our sins if we confess our sins (1 Jn 1:9) – so if we don't confess, we don't get forgiven

Let's look at each argument in turn.

(1) Jesus said forgiveness was conditional

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer and finished by stressing the need to forgive others if we desire forgiveness ourselves. The Sermon

on the Mount is the most eloquent exposition of old covenant law ever preached. Jesus preached it before the cross to people who were living under the law.

Why was Jesus preaching law? Because the Pharisees had watered down the law diluting its power to silence the mouths of self-righteous men. The law was intended to break our pride and reveal our need for a Savior (Gal 3:24). If you think the law easy and do-able, you will not have a true appreciation of your sinful state and you won't see your need for Jesus.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus announced that He had come to fulfill the law. He then proceeded to preach about the pristine, standard of God's holy law. That standard is neatly summarized in his appeal to "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48).

Now how would you feel if the Sunday preacher said, "you must be perfect"? How would you feel if he said, "unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:20)? If your reaction is, "I'm in trouble, I need help," then you are closer to freedom than any Pharisee then or any religious person now.

The law is holy, righteous and good but it has no power to make you holy, righteous and good. When Jesus said you will be forgiven in proportion to the forgiveness you show to others, [He was preaching pure, unadulterated law](#). What He said is just, it is good, and it condemns you.

The truth is the measure of forgiveness that we need from God is infinitely greater than any forgiveness we could show to others. Thankfully, Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the law on our behalf when he went to the cross. In the very act of paying for the world's sin, He forgave us our sin! That's breathtaking. The very condition for forgiveness that Jesus preached on the Mount, He himself satisfied on the cross. Only in Christ do we receive the Father's forgiveness.

(2) Peter implies that only our past sins are forgiven

When Jesus died on the cross He did not cry out, "it is half-finished." No. God doesn't do half-jobs. Everything that needed to be done to satisfy the demands of justice was done by Jesus. His sacrifice was the once and final solution for our sin (Heb 9:26).

It's a simple truth, yet many people just don't get it.

Peter writes that the main reason why some Christians don't mature is that they have forgotten they have been cleansed from their past sins (2 Pet 1:9). Their knowledge of Jesus and what he accomplished is so limited that they are "ineffective and unproductive." They live power-less lives.

We have been reconciled to God not by dead religious works but by the blood of Jesus. A Christian is literally a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Our sinful life is in our past. Although we may continue to act like sinners in our unrenewed thinking, we are sinners no longer. Hence Peter says, "stop living in the past and grow up."

What brings forgiveness of sins? Jesus' blood (Mt 26:28). "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). As Jesus bled and died on the cross, God canceled the law that was against us and "forgave us all our sins" (Col 2:13-14).

You were forgiven 2,000 years ago. It's nonsense to say that God hasn't forgiven our future sins because when he forgave us all our sins were in the future.

(3) John says forgiveness depends on our confession

How do we receive the free gift of forgiveness? Repent and put your trust in Jesus. John writes that if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to purify us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn 1:9). Some take this to mean that we are cleansed from sin through our confession. But John makes it clear that it is the "blood of Jesus" – not our confession – that "purifies us from all sin" (1 Jn 1:7).

And did you notice John said "*all* sin"? Just in case we missed it, John says it again: Jesus cleanses us from "*all* unrighteousness" (1 Jn 1:9). All means all. All includes past, present and future sin. When you are cleansed by Jesus you are well and truly cleansed!

"The LORD says, 'Now, let's settle the matter. You are stained red with sin, but I will wash you as clean as snow. Although your stains are deep red, you will be as white as wool.'" (Is 1:18, GNB)

As I have said [elsewhere](#), John is not preaching a doctrine of human confession but a doctrine of divine forgiveness. Like every other writer in the New Testament John goes to great lengths to show that divine forgiveness is a God-thing from start to finish. If we respond to His overtures and acknowledge our sinful state and our need for a Savior, we are eternally, completely, perfectly forgiven!

When you sin, guess what – you are still forgiven! God’s grace is greater than your sin. Of course you should not sin and when you do [you should repent](#), but rest assured that nothing can separate you from the love of Christ.

Some people try to put limits on God’s forgiveness. They say that he withholds His forgiveness unless we do this, that and the other thing. They say that God forgives in accordance with our behavior or performance. But that is not what the Bible says.

“In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.” (Eph 1:7)

Just as you can’t put a limit on the riches of God’s grace, you can’t put a limit on His forgiveness. Now *that’s* [good news](#)!

Top 12 Blessings in the New Covenant

Posted on March 17, 2010 by Paul Ellis



In Christ we can participate in all of the blessings God promised to Abraham (Gal 3:14,29). We also get all of the blessings promised under the law covenant and none of the curses (Gal 3:13).

This is pretty amazing when you think about the blessings God offered in the Old Testament:

To Abraham and his descendants God promised greatness, fruitfulness, great reward, world-reaching blessing, and more (see Gen 12:2-3, 15:1, 17:4-8, 22:18).

To those who kept the law God promised long life, fruitfulness, abundant prosperity, protection, and more (Deut 5:33, 28:3-13).

In addition to these wonderful promises, there are at least 12 awesome blessings God promises to His people exclusively under His new covenant of grace. Here they are in no particular order:

1. God forgives all our sins (Matt 26:28, Acts 13:38). Our sins are not merely covered by the blood of bulls and goats, they are paid for and taken away by the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29). At the cross, justice was satisfied. His forgiveness is perfectly complete.
2. God remembers our sins no more (Heb 8:12, 10:17; Jer 31:34). In terms of justification it's as if we never did them.
3. God promises never to be angry with us again (Is 54:7-10). Unlike the obsolete covenant of law, the new covenant is an everlasting covenant of love and peace (Is 54:10, 55:3). God will never stop doing good to us (Jer 32:40).
4. God qualifies us (Col 1:12). It's no longer a case of what we do (under the law covenant) or who we're related to (under the Abrahamic covenant). It's who we trust.

5. Jesus takes hold of us and never lets go (Php 3:12, Ju 24). Nothing can separate us from the love of God (Rms 8:39). Consequently we can speak of our hope as a “firm and secure” anchor for the soul (Heb 6:19).

6. God credits us with the perfect righteousness of Jesus (2 Cor 5:21). Righteousness is not earned, it is received (Rms 5:17). Because of Jesus’ sacrifice our status before God is “perfect forever” (Heb 10:14).

7. God gives us the Holy Spirit to teach us (Jn 14:26), empower us (Acts 1:8) and remind us of our righteousness (Jn 16:10). We no longer need priests to mediate for us, for now we can all know the Lord (Jer 31:34). We are His royal priests (1 Pet 2:9).

8. God is for us (Rms 8:31)! God justifies us and there is no more condemnation (Rms 8:1). When we sin, Jesus doesn’t judge us, He defends us (1 Jn 2:1). His grace enables us to overcome sin (Tit 2:12). He abundantly supplies all our needs (Ph 4:19) that we might enjoy life to the full (Jn 10:10). God’s favor is unearned and unmerited.

9. God is with us (Ez 37:27)! Because of Jesus the door to the throne room is always open (Heb 4:16). We can approach Him with freedom and confidence (Eph 3:12).

10. God empowers us to overcome the enemy (1 Jn 5:4). We have His delegated authority over demons and disease (Mk 16:17). We live under His divine protection (Lk 10:19). We are destined to “reign in life” (Rms 5:17).

11. God offers us His rest (Heb 4:10-11). Under the old covenant it was do, do, do. Under the new covenant it’s done, done, done (Jn 19:30). We are seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph 2:6).

12. God gives us eternal life (Rms 6:23).

What must we do to inherit these promises? Trust in Jesus. Bet your life on Him. Take the crown off your head and lay it at His feet. Choose to believe what the Bible says about Him, that He died for the sins of the world – including yours – and rose victorious from the dead. Let others know that He is your Redeemer and King. Ask Him to fill you with His Spirit that you might know Him more.

If you’ve not done any of that before, how about right now?

Closing Thoughts

Throughout this course, I have endeavored to show you the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Scriptures as well as through the testimony of others. Because of Jesus' finished work at the cross, He will never be angry with you nor rebuke you even when you fail. So don't ever forget the main clause of the new covenant, which says that your sins and your lawless deeds, He remembers no more!

Many believers are defeated today because they do not know the God of the new covenant of grace. I believe with all of my heart that because you took this wonderful journey with me you saw for yourself, all the things concerning Jesus Christ and His finished work, your heart would now burn with His extravagant love for you. Jesus truly puts the "amazing", the "wonderful" and the "marvelous" back into grace!

Today, God is all about blessing you with His grace — His undeserved, unearned and unmerited favor — in every area of your life. Stop trying to deserve and earn your own acceptance before God with your own works and efforts. It will only frustrate the grace of God and nullify the effects of the cross in your life. My Dear brother or sister, Jesus already finished the work! Believe with all your heart that it is not about what you need to do today, but about what has already been done and accomplished on your behalf.

My Beloved brothers and sisters, I have proclaimed to you the gospel of Jesus Christ and am fulfilling the commission He gave me to bring Jesus back to central place in the church by rolling away the stone and opening people's eyes to reveal more of Jesus and His finished work. I know that if you have believed this good news of His grace, your life has begun to be radically transformed, together with the countless believers around the world who have already been impacted by the Gospel Revolution. I pray that this course has torn down the fences of controversy that the enemy has erected around the teaching of God's grace and the gift of righteousness, so that you may indeed receive not just grace, but the "abundance of grace", and receive not just righteousness, but the "gift of righteousness", and start reigning in life. Start reigning over sin, over sickness, over condemnation, over financial lack and over the curse of the law through the ONE, Jesus Christ.

All that I have shared works most powerfully and effectively within the environment of the local church. These truths are for the greater good of the body of Christ and should never result in you becoming a law unto yourself. Beloved, I want to see you enjoying the safety of the covering of a local church where there is accountability and submission. This is where our blessings are tremendously multiplied.

I thank you for taking this journey with me and for giving me the opportunity to unveil more of Jesus to you. You have been a wonderful traveling companion. We should do this again soon! In the meantime, until the next course begins, BE BLESSED!!!In His Grace, *Dr. Charles.*

I look forward to hearing from you about how our Lord Jesus has touched and impacted your life with His amazing grace.

It is all about Jesus and His finished work!