

All Grace Is Outrageous

Because Paul could not make himself righteous or acceptable to God through obeying the law – the law itself had shown him that it was too hard for anyone to keep – he had given up trying to keep the law, or as he says, he had died to the law. He no longer tried to respond to the demands of the law. When a person is dead to something, he no longer responds to its demands. Because of this being dead to the law Paul is free to live for God. Jesus supplies the will and the energy to live as God would have him to do. This is living by faith. This is real. Many people because they believe that God wants them to be good will seek the help of the Lord in being good so that God will in turn accept them and love them. God does not want this. God does not want us to seek good. That does not work. God wants us to seek God. Remember it is relationship, relationship, relationship. Even with God's 'help' we cannot be good enough to please God. When we seek God Himself, we automatically get better without hardly noticing it. That is the easy way.

The object of the whole thing is for us to change. In order to change we have to have life-changing power in our lives. Grace, outrageous grace, accomplishes just that. The secret is that we as believing Christians never get what we deserve. If we believe that we get what we deserve, then we are locked into a never-ending loop of frustration and failure. Even if we seem to improve and then fall back again, we are again locked into the loop of failure. With outrageous grace, which is the same as amazing grace or just plain grace, the loop is broken. It is just that we have to realize the amazing and outrageous nature of just plain grace.

[Php 2:13 For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.]

We get only what Jesus deserves, which is the very best of favor and goodness from God. When we fail and sin, we get what Jesus deserves not what we deserve which is condemnation and punishment. We have to root this out at the deepest levels, or rather the Holy Spirit has to root this out for us, but we need to realize His task and try to cooperate as much as possible. Our repeated failures are what defeat us more than the occasional ones. We feel that we deserve to be punished by God. Sometimes we actually feel like we want to be punished then we can feel that we have earned the return of God's favor. But we cannot play this game with two sets of rules. It is one or the other. If we try to change the rules away from outrageous grace, then the failure loop is in place again in our lives.

A loop, just as in computer usage, just brings us back around to the same place to start over again and again. There is seemingly no escape unless this loop is broken. The loop of condemnation and guilt only brings about more failure in us because we are expecting failure and we do what we expect. If we believe that we deserve failure, then we will no doubt fail. We will not measure up to God's desires for us or our own desires to please Him. Grace breaks the loop every time.

Actually, in God's eyes the loop was broken once-and-for-all when Jesus finished his work in the flesh and it broke the loop once-and-for-all for you as an individual when you accepted His work the first time. But the flesh re-establishes this loop again based on our experience of failure upon failure to measure up to our own expectations of growth and holiness. The person who does not want to please God has less of a problem here. I say less of a problem because his or her goal is not set to please God. But deep down they still know that they are failing their

creator. But the sincere believer is constantly faced with the record of his or her own failures.

[1 Cor 1:30 But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.]

So, we abandon outrageous grace because we reason that it did not work. In truth it is just not done working. We are not giving it long enough to work. How long does it need? As long as it takes. As long as it takes to change us. Never mind how long that is. It is not your job to decide when it should be done. God is not worried about whether it will work or not. He designed the system and has sent Jesus and then the Holy Spirit to make it work. Failure is not part of God's vocabulary. God has never failed. He has "all the time in the world." Time is not a problem for Him. God is master of time just as He is master of all other things as well. We cannot set the limit for when grace should be finished working in our lives. So, when you find the condemnation loop reactivated in your life, the guilt loop, the failure loop, the punishment loop, the only thing to do is to break it with the power of grace realized. You cannot reason your way out of this loop. You cannot manipulate your way out. You cannot shout your way out. Only grace can break it.

Be convinced that you ALWAYS get what Jesus deserves. He got what you deserve. He nailed it to the cross and allowed it to kill Him and then rose from the dead having conquered sin and destroyed the works of the devil. Even if you do good consistently, you will not get what you deserve but only what he deserves. In other words, you can take no pride in personal growth since it is His work in you but you do not have to take the blame either. The object of the game is change. You will change, you are changing by the power of grace. The thing is

once you do change you do not see it clearly because if you are really walking convinced of outrageous grace, you are not seeing yourself but Him.

That is why both the sheep and the goats in the parable do not remember their own works. The goats do not remember what they failed to do because they never got the original message in the first place. The sheep do not remember what they did do because when they actually managed to do it, they were so changed that taking credit never entered their minds. This is what it means by losing your life in order to find it. For too long this teaching of losing your life has been understood or misunderstood as the need to make painful and artificial sacrifices in order to please God. It is not just an initial doctrine of grace and then a miserable life. It is grace working in your life throughout your earthly existence.

It is outrageous. All Grace is outrageous. It works. It actually brings about change. You may think that it is taking you a long time to get better but it is not too long for God. He knew how big the job was when He took you on.