

The Goodness of Grace

Volume 1

By

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Unmerited Delight In Us

“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” (John 1:16)

Spiritual Cripples

Grace is not a New Testament concept. God is gracious! The New Testament differs from the Old Testament in how grace was appropriated and how the appeasement factor was made available and applied. Grace is as old as God’s visitation with Adam as He sought him in the Garden. After he had sinned, Adam was the one who jumped in the bush. God was the One trying to get him out, saying, “Come on out of the bush, and let’s walk together.” God was initiating this act of grace.

Adam’s response was, “I’m naked!” But God said, “I still want to walk with you.” God still pursued him because the Lamb had been slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). The price had been paid. Though a transgression occurred, reconciliation in the spirit realm had been provided. God has always related to man with a spirit of reconciliation, a desire to draw him back to Himself.

David had the same response of grace toward Mephibosheth. Remember the story of Jonathan and David, two young men whose hearts were knit together. Jonathan loved David more than he loved his own natural father, Saul. He saw David as a man after God’s own heart—not a perfect man, but a man who worked for the glory of God, a man who was quick to repent, a man who knew his own frailties. Jonathan was drawn to David, the man of grace, rather than to Saul, the man of works. As this friendship grew, the two cut a covenant.

Based on this covenant, David said in 2 Samuel 9:1, *“Is there yet any*

that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" That says it all. God is showing kindness to us for Jesus' sake. Can I share something with you? You're a spiritual cripple. You can't do anything for the kingdom. At your best, you are nothing more than an absolute dependent in the kingdom of God—worthless as far as productivity, a liability as far as your contributions. *"Fruit That Remains, Pt. 3," July 11, 1999, Sunday AM*

David sought out Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, who was hiding. When Mephibosheth heard that the servants of David were coming, terror struck his heart. He said, "Oh no! Here I am, one of the last ones left. I'm going to be snuffed out for sure!"

Mephibosheth thought that David was calling him to judgment. But David was showing mercy, based on the love that Jonathan had shown to David. If you'll read this account in 2 Samuel 9, you'll find that Mephibosheth was crippled in his feet. The implication is that Mephibosheth was incapable of providing for himself: he was helpless. Mephibosheth had also reproached and slandered David's name. He hated the house of Jesse, yet God (through David) reached out to him. The house of Jesse viewed him as a dog, but God mercifully drew him to Himself. Scripture makes it clear that he sat at the table of King David. One greater than Jonathan came to fulfill His part of the covenant and to give us bold access by His blood to the Holy of Holies. We can now be seated at the table of God and fellowship with Him! *"The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 3," January 3, 1993, Sunday AM*

It's interesting to note that David didn't just give land and servants to Mephibosheth, but he seated Mephibosheth at his own table. Think about that. Many times, we don't mind showing mercy to get people out of our way. We'll send them on their way with some money, but would we include them in the family or at the table?

David said that Mephibosheth could eat at his table continually. *“And he bowed himself and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?”* (2 Sam. 9:8). Mephibosheth was saying, “Who am I?” If David had responded truthfully, he would have said, “You’re a dead dog, that’s who you are.” But he was more than a dead dog; he was the son of Jonathan. That’s what gave him his worth. Mephibosheth was a nobody and had done nothing to deserve this love and kindness, but he received this privilege because of the love and faithfulness his father had shown to David. It is Jesus who has shown kindness and love to us. We are just a bunch of dead dogs that have been invited to live forever in the presence of God, to sit at His table, and to be called His sons.

“Then the king called to Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master’s son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master’s son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master’s son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king’s sons” (verses 9-11).

Written three times in five short verses is, “he shall eat at my table” and “he will be as one of my sons.” Verse thirteen ends, *“for he did eat continually at the king’s table; and was* [not miraculously healed so that he could do something for David, but was] *lame on both his feet.”* He never contributed anything. This was absolute mercy.

You’re a cripple; you have no strength to do anything for God, yet you sit at His table as a son, feasting on God’s grace and mercy. The fact

of the matter is, none of us like to be dependent or beggars—that's for other people. Until you see yourself as worthless and unable to do anything, you will never taste of the real mercy or grace of God. You will continually be frustrated in your works, and you will continually try to show that you have done something for God to merit this free gift.

"Fruit That Remains, Pt 3," July 11, 1999, Sunday AM

Unmerited Favor, Divine Enablement

The word *grace* literally means "unmerited favor," but grace is not limited to favor alone. Thank God for His favor, that while we were sinners He loved us. God favored us and desired us. He is the One that invaded humanity through the incarnation. He tabernacled in our midst in the body of Jesus Christ. Jesus proved that man could be free from sin and live by the grace of God in absolute obedience to His law. People say living free from sin cannot be done, but we know it has been done. Jesus lived a life of absolute obedience by the grace of God. As we study His unmerited favor, we thank God for the great price that was paid. While we were sinners, God loved us and redeemed us to Himself. *"The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 1," December 27, 1992, Sunday AM*

Grace is a spontaneous, divine favor given to each of us. The literal rendering of the word is "to take delight in." God delights in us because we are His kids. Go back and look at your school pictures, which only a mother can love. Almost all children go through an awkward stage, but God delights in us and loves us because we are His own.

It is important to understand what His blood effects and how God in His mercy and grace yearns for reconciliation. Every person born after Adam was born in sin and hated God, but they all had God's

blood in them. Mankind is God's offspring. The name *Adam* means "blood"; Adam was called the "blood of God." We need to see who man really is: a rebellious child who denies the love of a Father. Father is continually calling him to reconciliation, saying, "You don't need to go to a devil's hell, for I have a robe, a ring, and sandals to put on your feet." You need to acknowledge the depravity of your soul and that the only way back is through the free gift of Jesus Christ. "*Without-the-Law Righteousness, Pt. 2,*" April 16, 1995, Sunday AM

In addition to favor, the word *grace* implies a divine enablement. Grace is God enabling us to do what He has commanded. Because of God's grace, there is no excuse for disobedience or failure. The problem is that many people who teach grace teach it as favor but do not apply the enablement aspect. Concerning the subject of grace, we can choose one of two roads to follow in excess. We need to realize that grace includes both favor and enablement. Those of us who have a tendency to be legalistic can emphasize one more than we emphasize the other, even in the study of grace. We need to stay balanced.

Grace manifests the power of God, the ability of God, and the presence of God. Since no man has seen the Father, he cannot fully comprehend His love and grace. If we are to understand the grace of God and the God of grace, then we must understand Him through the Person of Jesus Christ. "*The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 1,*" December 27, 1992, Sunday AM

Man's Servitude To Sin

"There is none that doeth good, no not one." (Romans 3:12)

"For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression...."

(Romans 5:13-14)

Total Depravity

The first thing to understand in dealing with individuals in this hour is that man is depraved. When we talk about total depravity, we don't mean that every man is as outwardly wicked as a human being can possibly be. Some sinners are very moral, benevolent, and philanthropic. When we talk about depravity, we mean there is nothing in man that is acceptable to God. Total depravity means there is no worth in man compared to God's holiness. No worth or good in man can make him capable of communing, fellowshiping, and knowing God. In fact, Scripture tells us very clearly that man's righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God (Is. 64:6). Scripture makes it very clear that "*there is none that doeth good, no, not one*" (Rom. 3:12). If we are ever to relate to God and effectively minister to others, we have to understand what man really is. "*Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 1: Salvation,*" October 21, 2001, Sunday AM

The religions of the world—from Catholicism to Islam to Buddhism—are based upon a merit system of works in which man falls just a little short and needs to work a little more. The Bible doesn't say man falls a little short; he is totally depraved. As Christians, we have a whole different perspective on humanity, and people don't like our perspective. People like to think there is something good in them, but there isn't.

"The Way, Pt. 1," October 7, 2001, Sunday AM

There is no difference between someone who embraces the world and the person raised in Sunday School, who has trusted in himself rather than in Jesus Christ. A person is not depraved because of how bad he is, but because he is independent of the lordship of Jesus Christ. The problem a lot of us have is that we were “nice sinners” before we were saved. We grew up in Sunday School, never mistreated anybody, and may have even helped old ladies cross the street. We don’t see ourselves as being vile, but the power of depravity rises up in each of us. We will never be free until we see how vile our independence is and deal with it. *“The Nine Signposts Of Eternal Life, Pt. 2,” October 31, 1999, Sunday AM*

Just the other day I was speaking with someone who said the teaching was a real help to him. He remarked, “I really don’t think I am, or see myself as, a bad person. I’ve got my act pretty well together.” As long as we have that perception of ourselves, God will resist us. Nothing within us is acceptable to God. Depravity is our inability to do anything good without Him. Even though we may be moral or disciplined individuals, the origin of any apparent good is from the flesh and is as filthy rags in the sight of God. Our “good” will one day be judged and damned, because it was accomplished without the effectual work of the blood of Jesus Christ. We must see ourselves and others in this way if we are ever to experience the true grace of God. *“Pursuit of Grace,” October 15, 2000, Sunday AM*

Man likes to boast in his good works. After the World Trade Center tragedy, New Yorkers were patting themselves on the back. They were so proud of themselves for helping. I am not denying that there was a short-term rallying to help (and I won’t get into all of the psychological reasons why people respond in disaster like they do), but it wasn’t because they were innately good. Fear or guilt often motivates people. Man is capable of doing “good” things, but he can’t merit righteousness or a relationship with a holy God. *“The Way, Pt. 1,” October 7, 2001, Sunday AM*

There are no “good” sinners. Sinners are not seeking God, but God is seeking sinners. We need to understand that or we will never be able to minister effectively or really understand what true regeneration is. We will be duped like so many today by all the cheap “conversions” of people who say they want to know God. The truth is that they are really looking for a social club, for peace in a tormented mind, or for some formula to get rich, as did so many in the faith movement. We find many reasons why men are religious but not regenerated. Religious people seek self-gain and the self-life, often through the soothing of their consciences, but they are not seeking God. *“Biblical Regeneration, Pt. 1,” December 1, 1996, Sunday AM*

The first two chapters of Romans reveal what is really in the heart of unregenerate man. The lists in Ephesians, I Corinthians, and Galatians also show what resides in the members of unregenerate man. The sin that dwells in man’s members is ugly and nasty. We are absolutely vile, a stench in the nostrils of God, unclean, haters of God, unlovely in every way, and unacceptable through performance or worth. We have no good thing in us pertaining to the holiness and righteousness of God. Without Jesus, there is no good thing in us. *“The Fall Of Man,” Basic Bible Doctrines and “The Nine Signposts Of Eternal Life, Pt. 2,” October 31, 1999, Sunday AM*

If we defend ourselves against God, against the conviction of the truth, we have to become our own defense. We will become our own gods. It would be better to be vulnerable before the Lord and have God defend us. If we fall on the Rock and are broken, being truly pricked in our hearts with godly sorrow that brings repentance, we now have God as our defense. Then He won’t allow Satan or sin to ultimately destroy us. However, if we refuse to believe what we really are, then we have to defend ourselves and live by our own righteousness. Self-defense ends in total destruction. *“The Nine Signposts Of Eternal Life, Pt. 2,” October 31, 1999, Sunday AM*

Indicted as Adam's Child

The most righteous person who ever walked this planet is under the indictment of sin because he is Adam's child. James makes it clear that if we have committed one sin, we are guilty of all sin (Ja. 2:10). That scripture is not just referring to the commission of sins but to our identification with sin through Adam, our "federal head." (Theologians like to use the term "federal," meaning, "representative of all.") Sin is imputed through its very power and nature, even without the act being committed. Having been born into Adam's family, every one of us is guilty. We are all sinners. "*There is none righteous, no, not one*" (Rom. 3:10). "*Wherefore, as by one man sin [self-reliance, independence from God] entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*" (Rom. 5:12).

People say, "Man is not that bad!" In Adam, we are. We are guilty of every sin that Lucifer and Adam committed against God. The high treason of Lucifer and our father Adam is within us, and we deal with it every day. Once we are illuminated by the Word of God and set free from fear by the blood of Jesus, we can come to grips with how ugly we really are. We who are truthful with ourselves can then appreciate the mercy, the grace, and the free gift of Jesus. "*Another Gospel, Pt. 2,*" July 23, 2000, Sunday PM

The fact that you are Adam's offspring makes you accountable to God. Not only is sin the dominant factor in the unregenerate life, but Adam also passed on the knowledge of God, which can't be erased. Adam was the offspring of God; therefore, each of us has the knowledge of our Father—not of Adam, our father in the flesh, but of our spiritual

Father, God. The knowledge of God is in man, but he does not want to retain God in his consciousness because sin is dominant in his members. *“The Fall Of Man,” Basic Bible Doctrines*

In Adam all died (1 Cor. 15:22). By one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin (Rom. 5:12). Then much more by one man, Jesus Christ, sin’s power has been broken, death has been overcome, and His righteousness has been imputed to our account. He was made sin with our sin, and we have been made righteous with His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). *“The Way, Pt. 2,” October 10, 2001, Sunday PM*

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20). If you could keep the law of God perfectly, you still would not be justified. Since you’re in Adam’s family, it’s no longer a matter of performance but of identification. Are you identified with Adam or are you identified with Christ? You could be the most moral person in the Adamic family, yet go to hell. In contrast, you could be a scoundrel but by the grace and sovereignty of God, in His proper application of mercy, make it to heaven. The whole issue is the finished work of Jesus Christ and our response to it. *“Another Gospel, Pt. 6,” August 2, 2000, Wednesday PM*

The Sin Nature of Fallen Man

Sin introduced a new nature in man. There are many different philosophies about the makeup of man, yet the Bible reveals that man is a triune being. He is a spirit who possesses a soul and lives in a body. When the spirit man is dead (out of fellowship with God) that man is bound in darkness. Satan has blinded his mind, lest he should believe the light of the glorious gospel (2 Cor. 4:4). *“Biblical Regeneration, Pt. 1,” December 1, 1996, Sunday AM*

Ephesians 2 says, “*And you [has He made alive] who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past [We all lived this way, for we are all children of Adam] in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*” (verses 2-3). We find that the nature of man is one of wrath, rebellion, strife, and enmity towards God. The Bible says the carnal mind is enmity against God (Rom. 8:7). Every unregenerate person is the enemy of God and hates God, even though he may act and speak well of Him. Fallen man blames God and wants Him to justify Himself. “*The Fall Of Man,*” *Basic Bible Doctrines*

This hatred doesn't always manifest in vehement warfare against God but in the rejection of Him. Placing self upon the throne of our lives, whereby pride and selfishness exalt self-will over the will of God, is an expression of our hatred for the Lord. God made His first creatures with a will so our worship, honor, and love would be voluntary. “*Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 4: Salvation,*” *October 28, 2001, Sunday AM*

People have different ways of manifesting their hatred. Some are very militant, as are the militant homosexuals, who are no worse than the apparently moral individual—clean-cut yuppie-type, Beemer-driving, take-his-kids-to-private-school, go-on-picnics hater of God. There is no difference in God's sight. Sinful actions are not the problem; sin is the problem.

Satan has perfected a system to appeal to the masses. Everyone can now accept whatever little niche he is in, justifying why he doesn't need Jesus Christ or believe the Bible. People have told me, “I don't believe

the Bible because it's full of contradictions." They believe that because they want to, not because there is any truth to it. "*The Nine Signposts Of Eternal Life, Pt. 2,*" October 31, 1999, Sunday AM

Servitude to Sin's Power

By the introduction of sin into the world, through Eve's deception and Adam's open rebellion, man is now under the power of sin. David said, "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me*" (Ps. 51:5). "*The Fall Of Man,*" Basic Bible Doctrines

Romans 6 shows natural man's servitude to sin's power that resides in his members, and the source of this power is Satan. This self-serving, self-sufficient, independent-from-God spirit dominates man. "*Another Gospel, Pt. 2,*" July 23, 2000, Sunday PM

"*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin*" (Rom 6:6). The word *serve* in this passage means "to be under the power" of sin. Sin's power is not just a power that controls our actions, but it is the power of ownership. It's not only in the behavior, but also in the relationship of belonging to the kingdom of darkness, being under the lordship of sin and Satan. The power of sin is in relationship, not in performance. "*Another Gospel, Pt. 3,*" July 26, 2000, Wednesday PM

More than being the power we obey in committing evil, sin is the power that gives us a high opinion of ourselves. It blinds us from seeing God for who He is in all of His glory and majesty. Like Satan did before us, we diminish God and exalt ourselves. That's the power of sin; and unless we are freed through the blood of Jesus Christ, there is no hope for us. "*Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 1: Salvation,*" October 21, 2001, Sunday AM

Consequences of Sin

Broken fellowship was a result of man's fall. God came to walk with Adam in the Garden, but Adam was hiding in a bush. When asked why he was hiding, Adam said he was afraid because he was naked. His nakedness had nothing to do with his physical state. In essence, he was stripped of his righteousness. Adam lost his "clothes," his righteousness, and was embarrassed to be in God's presence. As a result of broken fellowship, death made man fear God instead of love Him; it made him flee from God instead of commune with Him.

Spiritual death was the initial consequence of sin: "*for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*" (Gen. 2:17). Though their sin had great consequences in the natural life, Adam and Eve did not physically die in the Garden. They died spiritually the moment they partook of the fruit. "*The Fall Of Man,*" *Basic Bible Doctrines 1504*

Sin's Culmination: Hell

We are all sinners, deserving judgment and the damnation of God. We should be cast into the sea of forgetfulness, where our sins have been put instead of us. Scripture says that in hell the wicked are forgotten. No one will ever remember they existed. There will be absolute torment—weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth—in that isolation, a place of outer darkness where the worm dieth not. This damnation is what man deserves, so it is right for every man to be judged and cast into that place. Romans says every man has the knowledge of God within himself and is without excuse. But God is not willing that any would ever perish.

Most people wonder how a good God can send man to the hell depicted in the Bible. Hell was not made for man, but for Satan and the fallen

angels. God did everything to prevent man from going there. “*Final Judgments,*” *Basic Bible Doctrines 1513*

The next time you begin to question the justice of God, remember the condition of man. Everything we have that is good is a free gift of God; it’s not deserved or earned. God is the Lover, the compassionate One, but He cannot go contrary to who He is and suffer either iniquity or rebellion to His sovereign being. “*The Whole Duty Of Man, Pt. 2,*” *September 22, 2002, Sunday PM*

God will bring up each man’s work on the last day. Man will understand fully how he made willful choices to reject God. God has made every provision for us to come home. He has the robe, the ring and the sandals ready for us. He has held nothing against us. Our account was cleared by the blood of Jesus Christ, yet some will die refusing to accept the free gift. Because of their unbelief and rejection of Christ’s appeasement, He will put the justice of His wrath upon them. What a powerful justification of the righteousness of God! “*Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 2: Salvation,*” *October 21, 2001, Sunday PM*

Judgment is based upon a person’s works, but the real condemning factor is his rejection of Jesus Christ. Man will be held accountable for his works, but what sends him to hell is his rejection of the lordship of Jesus Christ. Their works will determine the severity of their punishment just as our works determine the abundance of our reward. A price will be paid: all who reject Jesus’ lordship will be cast out of the presence of God. “*Final Judgments,*” *Basic Bible Doctrines 1513*

The Law:

Silencer and Schoolmaster

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to those who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” (Romans 3:19)

Debt, Works, and Law

A definition of grace that we are familiar with is “spontaneous, unmerited, divine favor,” but the literal rendering of grace is “to have pleasure or delight in; to grant favorable reward.” Grace is always in contrast to debt, works, and law.

The following scriptures contrast grace with debt:

Romans 4:4 *“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.”*

Romans 4:16 *“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.”*

We see it is “of faith, that it might be by grace.” Once we begin to get this principle in our minds, it liberates us from thinking we somehow have to pay this debt. We can’t pay it. Only faith is recognized by God and justifies us in His sight.

As long as you feel indebted (“I must do something to pay God back”), you are not receiving His grace. Whenever you try to appease God out of debt, you deny the appeasement factor, the propitiation that comes through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. You are essentially

saying, “I know Jesus’ blood was good, but I will just put something along with it to make sure I’m *really* accepted of God.” Can you see the horror of that? What an abomination! You don’t do it consciously, nor do you try to minimize the blood of Jesus, but any time you try to pay the debt yourself, you minimize Jesus’ blood. You are essentially saying, “Jesus’ blood was not sufficient to pay the price; therefore, I have to add my righteousness to it.” This deception causes us to deny the very thing we are trying to achieve—the likeness of Christ.

The following scriptures contrast grace with works:

Romans 11:6 *“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”*

Titus 3:5-7 *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

Romans 4:4-5 *“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”*

Nothing you do—not one good work, not the fact that you walked on water, raised the dead, or called fire out of heaven—can justify you. This verse says your “faith is counted for righteousness.” God will not be indebted to your performance. *“Without-the-Law Righteousness, Pt. 1,” April 12, 1995, Wednesday PM*

Have you trusted in something other than the work of Jesus Christ for your salvation? If you have trusted in works or in knowledge, then the

very law you've trusted in condemns you. Be willing to lay down your own righteousness and personal pursuits, and allow God to draw you. Say today, "I surrender; I empty myself and accept His free gift. I expect eternal life only because of what Jesus has accomplished, not because of anything I have done. I am fully persuaded that He is calling me at this moment and enabling me to partake, and by faith I receive it in Jesus' name. I choose life." *"Law, Liberty, and Lasciviousness, Pt. 1," November 17, 1996, Sunday AM*

We have a tendency to be haughty and keep score, thinking we are doing well (even better than others). We may question other people's faith because they are not as "committed" as we are. This questioning is self-righteousness and of the flesh, a works mentality that will ultimately cause us to fail. The more we are in the Word of God, the more we will realize that no one can be justified by the deeds of the law. Get it into your minds; get it into your hearts. Nothing we do can cause us to be justified in God's sight, no matter how good we are. *"Knowing Why and What I Believe, Pt. 5: Salvation," October 28, 2001, Sunday PM*

The following scriptures contrast grace with law:

John 1:17 *"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."*

Romans 6:14-15 *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."*

Galatians 5:4 *"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."*
"Without-the-Law Righteousness, Pt. 1," April 12, 1995, Wednesday PM

The law brings conviction, or a convincing of sin, but it can't save man. The law is good (Rom. 7:12), the law is perfect (Ps. 19:7), and the law is just; but man is incapable of keeping the law. Humanity cannot be reconciled to God through obedience to the law, because there is no perfect obedience in man. Jesus' perfect obedience in fulfilling the law bought us back and is the message of redemption. *"Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 1: Salvation," October 21, 2001, Sunday AM*

We cannot merit salvation through works (keeping the law); salvation is only by the work of Jesus Christ. None of the other religions of the world preaches grace. We need to be convinced that there is no worth and no ability in man to be reconciled to God. *"Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 1: Salvation," October 21, 2001, Sunday AM*

The Law: Moral, Ceremonial, and Civil

When we talk about law, we are referring to the moral law of God, the Decalogue, better known as the Ten Commandments. Second, the law is also referred to by different teachers as ceremonial law, or the Levitical ordinances. Third, there are laws referred to in Scripture as civil or social laws. The law shows God's standards and how He interacts with humanity, but also instructs man how to relate to God and to others.

The purpose of the law is to guide: first, to guide man back to God; second, to guide man in relationships. The ceremonial law and many of the social laws are no longer applicable to our lives. Many of these ordinances were to identify a people set apart for God through Old Testament sanctification. They were to cause Israel to understand what would be fulfilled in Abraham's Seed, Jesus Christ.

Many laws, such as the dietary and health laws, were to preserve

Israel for the glory of God as they wandered from Egypt to the land of promise. That which does not pertain to the eternal is no longer binding to us in the new and better covenant. For example, today it's not a sin for us to eat pork. If we believe that every aspect of the Old Testament still binds us today, then we shouldn't eat pork.

You are no longer obligated to build a banister around the roof of your house, a law applicable to that day. Yet we have the mandate that says if we are guilty of one, we are guilty of all (Ja. 2:10). Of which law is James speaking? He's obviously not referring to banisters. When Jesus speaks of our obligation to the law, He is always referring to the moral law. If the reference was to ceremonial or Levitical laws, then we have a big problem. Most of these laws centered on God's visitation upon the mercy seat, the sprinkling of blood, and the Day of Atonement. After the Babylonian captivity, the ark of the covenant was never seen again. Subsequently, keeping these laws was impossible because there was no ark. We need to make proper distinctions between moral and ceremonial law. *"Law, Liberty, and Lasciviousness, Pt. 1," November 17, 1996, Sunday AM*

The Law Shuts Every Mouth

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). We saw the purpose of the law was to bring about the awareness of our guilt. One sin in a lifetime makes us guilty of all the law, so none of us can be successful in fulfilling it. The law came to put us under condemnation, or under the judgment of God. It was given to show how helpless and hopeless we are, so that "all the world might be guilty before God."

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20). We will never be justified in His sight by keeping the law, because we can never keep it all. Neither can we boast in the areas we do keep. We can never take credit for what sanctification accomplishes in us. Because it is Him working in us, we can never boast or think of ourselves as great. Without Him, we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5). “Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 5: Salvation,” October 28, 2001, Sunday PM

Without Excuse

Before you were a Christian, you knew you were not right with God. This knowledge may not have been a dominant force in your life because you did everything you could to suppress it. Maybe you took drugs, found hobbies, or became consumed with your job or relationships. You ran from the inner voice that was continually calling you to reconciliation.

I believed in God a long time before I was saved, but I refused to subordinate my will. Like all unregenerate men, I was too caught up with self and didn't want God to cramp my style. I was miserable when *The Robe*, *The Ten Commandments*, or *The King of Kings* was televised at Easter. They were always intruding upon my life. I was doing really well until I was reminded that I was deprived and truly guilty before God.

Many of us sit here today and ask, “How can these people know there's a God, and not accept Him? How can they believe in God yet not respond?” Many of us didn't respond. Now that we have tasted and seen the goodness of the Lord, we see how stupid we really were.

People sense the presence of God and even believe in God, but so do

the devils. The Bible says the demons believe and tremble (Ja. 2:19). At times, we believed and trembled. In fact, the more frightened we were, the more bizarre our behavior became in trying to still that voice saying, “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Mt. 11:28).

The ministry of Jesus and what He accomplished on the cross are unto all. It’s continually being offered to everyone. The Word says that even the heavens declare the glory of God (Ps. 19:1). Even those who don’t hear the preaching of the gospel—whether it is the Aborigine or someone in the darkest jungle of the Amazon—will stand before God and be without excuse (Rom. 1:20). “*Without-the-Law Righteousness, Pt. 2,*” April 16, 1995, Sunday AM

The Law Reveals God as Just

The law not only reveals that we are guilty but that God is just. As God reveals Himself to us, we find that we are the guilty party, not God. Many people would say in their hearts, “If God were God, He should have acted this way. If God were God, He should never have allowed Lucifer to fall. If God were God, He should not have allowed Adam to sin. If God were God....” Whenever you make statements like that, you are setting yourself up as God. That attitude comes from the blindness of our minds and hearts through the fall of our father, Adam. “*Another Gospel, Pt.1,*” July 19, 2000, Wednesday PM

Some people judge God by saying, “It’s not right that God would ask us to keep commandments we are not capable of keeping. That doesn’t seem just to me.” They forget that God originally made man sinless and placed him in a perfect environment. But man willfully rebelled and became the enemy of God, deserving the wrath of God and eternal damnation. “*Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 5: Salvation,*” October 28, 2001, Sunday PM

The Law Points to Life

Paul said, “...*the law entered, that the offense might abound*” (Rom. 5:20). Once the offense is amplified, you sense internally that you have done wrong, and see the offense to God and man. Now that the offense has abounded, you clearly understand what you are responsible for and what the consequences of disobedience will be.

God made a temporary system of atonement so that judgment could pass over His people. They would take sacrifices to the priest and acknowledge the law as true and just. Those sacrifices symbolized the provision that came through Christ. The law demonstrated that there was One coming greater than Moses, whose life would transcend the laws of Sinai. Paul said that though the law brings the knowledge of sin (to the point of wondering if there is any hope for us), grace will much more abound. “*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom. 5:20-21). The law provided the understanding of the bondage we were in and, at the same time, revealed the grace of God. “*Law, Liberty, and Lasciviousness, Pt. 1,*” November 17, 1996, Sunday AM

“*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets*” (Rom. 3:21). The law and the prophets foretold of the coming Redeemer. See the grace of God in both the Passover and the Day of Atonement. In these events, the unmerited favor was bestowed not only upon a nation, but also upon each individual. These people had not merited any reward, but had lived in disobedience and rebellion, separated from God. The Day of Atonement was when the sins of the people were placed upon an innocent animal and sent away. This was grace. “*The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 2*” December 30, 1992, Wednesday PM

People today want to run *from* the law, but let us run *to* the law and see how great a salvation we have. Seeing how guilty we are strips away self-righteousness. We can then say, “In my flesh there is nothing good. I deserve a devil’s hell, yet what I have is a free gift from God.”

Listen to the psalmist’s cry: “*Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me*” (Ps. 51:11). When you sin, knowing that fellowship has been broken, do you cry with the same intensity as the psalmist, “*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me*” (Ps. 51:10)? If you are comfortable when you know you are not right with God, then you don’t understand true grace. “*Law, Liberty, and Lasciviousness, Pt. 1,*” November 17, 1996, Sunday AM

Without-the-Law Righteousness

When we see the vileness of man, we can appreciate our righteousness and the scripture that says, “*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*” (2 Cor. 5:21). The more we are forgiven, the more we love (Lk. 7:47). The more we are aware of this revelation, the deeper our love for the gift of God. None can be justified in His sight by the deeds of the law, but we are pronounced righteous, having been cleansed by the blood of Jesus. “*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.*” (Rom. 3:20-21). The Word says our cleansing will not be accomplished by us, but by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), the Son of God whom it pleased the Father to bruise (Is. 53:10). “*Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 5: Salvation,*” October 28, 2001, Sunday PM

We can have the righteousness of God without the law. Any other

righteousness is self-righteousness. Many of us fall into self-righteousness, thinking we have our acts together. We are in danger if we trust in our works and endeavors, and not solely in the blood of Jesus. Paul taught there is righteousness without the law, manifested by the law and the prophets. In other words, the law and the prophets spoke of the final provision, the gift of Jesus and the shedding of His blood. “*Without-the-Law Righteousness, Pt. 1,*” April 12, 1995, Wednesday PM

You can be right with God without the deeds of the law. He explains this by saying there is a righteousness “...*which is by faith of Jesus Christ...*” (Rom. 3:22). Trust what Jesus did on the cross as a consequence of His perfect, earthly life and His obedience to the heavenly Father. Believe and trust that this sacrifice was all that was necessary to appease God. This was a once-and-for-all, totally inclusive proclamation of man’s right standing with God through the work of Jesus Christ. When you receive this *without-the-law righteousness*, the law no longer has any demands upon you. “*Biblical Justification, Pt. 1,*” November 24, 1996, Sunday AM

We must answer the question in Romans 6 that the carnal mind asks: “If there is no need for us to keep the law to be righteous (because where sin abounds, grace does much more abound), then why don’t we freely sin so that God can be glorified in showing us more grace?” The apostle Paul said, “*God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*” (Rom. 6:2).

Too often we forget or minimize the price paid for us—the agony in Pilate’s judgment hall, the nails driven into His hands, His face beaten, His beard plucked out, and the spear thrust into His side. The worst torment of that day was found in these words: “*My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?*” (Mt. 27:46). He was forsaken so that

we could be reconciled. What great debtors we are. How can we then say, “Let’s sin, that grace might abound”? He did not suffer so we could freely sin. That attitude is void of the gratitude of one who has partaken of this free gift.

This *without-the-law righteousness* causes us to die to sin’s power and to be liberated into the spiritual life of Jesus Christ. We are crucified with Him, raised with Him, and identified with Him. In our co-crucifixion with Christ, we are seen as absolutely perfect as Jesus is. We are seen with a record of obedience—the same that Jesus had—and God puts that to our account. That is how God sees all those who have put their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. When that faith in Jesus is properly applied, it is as if we are as obedient to the law as Jesus was. During His earthly life, Jesus never broke any of the commandments of God. His obedience was imputed, or credited, to our account. When God looks on us, He sees us as having faithfully fulfilled the law.

Jesus’ righteousness was the righteousness of God rather than that of fulfilling the law. The law cannot make any man righteous, but is the schoolmaster to point the way back to God. The law is a mirror that makes man realize he is fallen, guilty, damned, and no longer in communion with God.

The law was fulfilled in Jesus’ perfect life. He practiced a higher law of innocence and obedience to God. God illuminates our hearts with the revelation of Christ’s work that was done for us, and there is now a new righteousness. “*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:22-23). “*Another Gospel, Pt.1,*” July 19, 2000, Wednesday PM

No War Between Law and Grace

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:17). There is no war between law and grace. Too many Christians think that we have to choose one or the other, but not so. Jesus said, “I did not come to destroy the law; I came and fulfilled the purpose of the law.” The law is not our enemy, as many Christians seem to think, nor is it our source of redemption. Even if we could keep the law to the letter, every jot and tittle, it could not bring redemption.

The law will do two things: illuminate your consciousness to see that you are a sinner, hopelessly lost, and then point you to Jesus Christ as God’s source of redemption. The Levitical law has no authority over us as the redeemed, but our lifestyles must still reflect the moral law of God. The Levitical ordinances were given to protect and preserve the people of God, by bringing purification and order (social and physical) to their lives. The moral law has been written upon our hearts, and we obey it as part of our character and nature as the redeemed. It is an internal force working through regeneration; therefore, the letter of the law and its physical mandates are not to govern our lives. We now work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). *“The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 1,” December 27, 1992, Sunday AM*

The Avenue to Christ

When Paul spoke of “the righteousness of God without the law,” he didn’t mean that we could be righteous while choosing to sin. God gives us a righteousness that is not based upon our performance or ability. The righteousness He gives is based upon His pursuit of us. Paul says, *“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of [not “in”] Jesus”* (3:22). This righteousness comes because of the faith,

obedience, and work of Jesus. It has nothing to do with our relationship to the law, but with Jesus' relationship with the Father. Jesus always did those things that pleased His Father. He didn't speak His own words but the words of His Father. Paul is saying that Jesus established a righteousness that did not exclude the law, because Jesus fulfilled the law.

We now relate to the law through Jesus, and God applies the law *to us* through Jesus. The law is not excluded and has not been abolished as far as our responsibility to it. Not realizing this, others thought the law was the avenue to God rather than the avenue to Christ, who is the way to God. *"The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 3," January 3, 1993, Sunday AM*

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ" (Rom. 7:4). There is no merit for keeping ninety-nine percent of the law, so why knock ourselves out trying to keep it? Why deceive ourselves in thinking that the more law we keep, the more spiritual we are? We cannot judge our relationship by our external performance in keeping the law. Our relationship is based on our dependence upon Jesus, yet many of us have trouble believing that God will let us into heaven solely on the merit of Jesus' redemptive work. Our behavior, good works, sanctification, and holiness are consequences of redemption, not the basis for whether or not we're going to heaven. Only the blood of Jesus—His finished work in redemption's plan—will usher us into the presence of God. *"Fruit That Remains, Pt. 1," July 4, 1999, Sunday AM*

There is hopelessness without an understanding of the great mercy and grace of God. People are in churches today, hoping that if they pray, fast, and study more, God will accept them. Many have been taught that the more they study the Word, the more righteous they will be. These people are no different from the secular humanist who thinks he

has merit within himself and can achieve a relationship with God based upon his ability. This pride and self-righteousness is an abomination to God. If you think you can approach Him based on your performance, you don't know Him. *"The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 3," January 3, 1993, Sunday AM*

The moment we begin to relate to God based on our performance, thinking we have to win back His confidence or communion, we then attribute our performance as having the same worth as the blood of Jesus. Once we realize the value of the price He paid, we will never again try to equate our performance with His blood. *"Biblical Justification, Pt.2," November 24, 1996, Sunday PM*

God's Pursuit of Fleeing Man

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

God Pursues Man

The god of this world has blinded the eyes of natural man, lest he should believe the truth and love of the glorious gospel (2 Cor. 4:4). No amount of reasoning can bring illumination, because God cannot be rationalized. He is beyond man's ability to understand, and the scope of His majesty is beyond comprehension. His attributes cannot be comprehended, only believed and embraced.

"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11). Apart from God's illumination, man is unable to realize his spiritual condition. If he is gravitating toward God, it's because God is drawing him. Let me share something with you that will help in your evangelism. If someone is moving toward God, then bring him illumination, because it's not natural for man to pursue God. It is only natural for God to pursue man. He is using you to bring the Word of God, which brings illumination to this individual. Faith can then come into his spirit to illuminate, regenerate, redeem, and justify.

Since no man seeks God, those who have an appetite for Him have received the grace of God. The Holy Spirit imparts grace to draw them into His presence. The scripture says, *"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one"* (Rom. 3:12). *"Knowing Why and What I Believe, Pt. 1," October 21, 2001, Sunday AM*

God Hunted You Down

It is important for us to go back to this thought of God being the pursuer. God is the God of grace in both Old and New Testaments— nothing has changed. The Old Testament does not reveal God as harsh, judgmental, and showing only righteousness and justice, while God in the New Testament is a God of grace and philanthropy. He is the same God. He provided a great gift that allowed Him to be just as well as the Justifier. While remaining just, God justified and pronounced us righteous with His righteousness. He allowed us to be justified by dwelling among us through Jesus Christ’s incarnation. He transcended our nature and all of Satan’s power. As the first Adam sinned, the last Adam provided grace that abounds. Where sin abounded, grace super-abounded. God’s pursuit of us has always been by grace, not by our performance or works. God is working in us to will and to do His good pleasure. *“The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 2,” December 30, 1992, Wednesday PM*

We were sinners, alienated and separated from God (Col. 1:22), but He hunted us down. We can’t take any credit because we didn’t do anything. As enemies of God, we were serving ourselves and enjoying our flesh when God arrested us. We were enemies through wicked works, but now He has reconciled us.

The breach came through our dad, Adam, and man has been under the power of sin for generations. God reconciled us and gave us free access, so that now “whosoever will” (Rev. 22:17) may come. We do not come just to avoid hell. “Whosoever will” can be reconciled, can be clothed in the glory of God, can have fellowship with God, can live free from sin’s power, and can deal with the serpent in the Garden. Sin no longer has dominion over us, so we can go out boldly and can freely give what we have freely received. *“Cleansed To Serve, Pt. 4,” October 23, 2002, Wednesday PM*

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Mt. 16:17). We are blessed to have the knowledge of Jesus today. We didn’t choose Him; He chose us. We didn’t do anything to get where we are today; all that we possess is a gift. We cannot do anything in our own strength to finish this course, because it is by His grace, mercy, and faith working in us. Having that confidence, we understand that we are the elect of God, a holy people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, chosen and set forth as the church to bring forth praises to Him that called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light (1 Pe. 2:9). *“Keys Of The Kingdom, Pt. 5,” December 8, 1999, Wednesday PM*

Loved Unconditionally At Our Worst

God’s love never changes. God doesn’t have bad days or love you less than He loved you before the foundation of the world. Father doesn’t love you any less when you sin, but He may beat the tar out of you because He chastens those He loves. He will never forsake His pursuit of you. He commended His love toward you while you were a sinner. Jesus died for you, so you can rest and be free from the fear of judgment. You will not be cast out; God loves you. You can run away, but no man can pluck you from the Father’s hand. *“I AM, Pt. 8: The Love Of God,” July 24, 2002, Wednesday PM*

We hated Him, yet He loved us. We fled from Him, but He pursued us. In His love, He orchestrated our coming to difficult places where we were undone and bowed our knees. He allowed us, who were fleeing from His voice as Jonah did, to be caught in turmoil and brought to a place of compliance. Thank God for His unconditional love. *“Another Gospel, Pt.5,” July 30, 2000, Sunday PM*

God is drawing all men, but what causes us to accept His love? It is not because we are better or smarter than anyone else. The expressed will of God refutes the idea of election or arbitrary grace, for we know the Lord is “not willing that any should perish” (2 Pet. 3:9). So we have to assume that our willingness to hear and bow our knees must be the working of the Spirit. We were void of any innate worth, but chose to humble ourselves. Given a free will, we chose to love beyond ourselves.

“When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:6-8). Once we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, the scales fell off our eyes, and our hearts were illuminated. When we became aware of the fact that He sought us (we didn’t seek Him), we were humbled by God’s unconditional love. When we were at our worst, He extended the free gift of His righteousness so that we could be reconciled. We deserved a devil’s hell, yet were exalted to the throne of God. Nothing is more humbling, and, hopefully, nothing is more sobering. It makes us want to be about His business. We are debtors who have freely received, and we need to freely give. *“Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 2: Salvation,” October 21, 2001, Sunday PM*

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear” (1 Jn. 4:18). We are perfectly loved. If there is fear in our relationship with Father, we have not received this perfect love. Many of us have loved someone without our love being reciprocated, especially in relationships we formed while growing up. We were often deluded to think that if we could love enough, the person we loved would eventually return our love, once he understood how much we loved him. God loves us

despite our reciprocation. He doesn't need anyone to love Him back in order to continue expressing His love. Nor does God think that if He loves perfectly, everyone will love Him in return.

Once we understand and embrace God's love, all fear of judgment, rejection, and reprisal dissipates. Many of us have trouble accepting unconditional love because we know how unlovely we are. We cannot believe that anyone could love us if he or she knew who we really were. God knows you and loves you anyway! We embrace that love by faith because we cannot believe God loves us that way. Sin has deluded the unregenerate man to think that a holy God would not tolerate his behavior, so he must do something to appease Him. The appeasement, the propitiation, was in Jesus. "*Fruit That Remains, Pt.6,*" July 18, 1999, Sunday PM

Salvation is Wholly by God

Man does nothing to effect salvation, except to believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Even our belief was the consequence of His seeking us and imparting grace and faith. He made us aware of His mercy toward us. It is all of God. We didn't love Him until He first loved us. "*Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 4: Salvation,*" October 28, 2001, Sunday AM

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be

reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God (Jn. 3:17-21).

Condemnation comes from trusting in your own righteousness and works. When the message is presented in its simplistic truth, only an insane person would say no. The message is that you are a sinner—lost, damned, and going to a devil’s hell. You will be eternally tormented in a place where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. You will be left in outer darkness and unimaginable eternal damnation. However, you don’t have to do anything but believe that Jesus’ death was sufficient. Satan has blinded those who do not want to believe in Jesus. Do you see the power that humanity is under and the grace God gave to allow you to believe? Grace is a gift of God, and we should be so thankful for it. *“The Way, Pt. 1,” October 7, 2001, Sunday AM*

Out of our innermost being will flow rivers of living water from the indwelling Holy Spirit. The free gift of God’s Spirit abides in us because of the finished work of Jesus. The good news is that we were His enemies—we hated Him—and yet He relentlessly pursued us and gave us the grace to understand the magnitude of that love. He infused our hearts with faith to believe.

He drew us and infused light into our understanding by the Holy Spirit, so we could see the great and unspeakable gift of God. As that illumination came to us, God also placed the gift of faith within our hearts, enabling us to believe and receive that of which we were ignorant and that which we willfully chose to resist. We were incapable of believing. It is impossible for a man who has not received the grace of illumination to believe. The natural mind cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him (1 Cor. 2:14). *“Another Gospel, Pt.4,” July 30, 2000, Sunday AM*

Our salvation today is solely the work of the Lord. Tragically, many Christians think that they have made the effort to pursue and know God. No, He pursued and loved us; we didn't love Him. Many of us want to know Him in the power of His resurrection, but we think it will be accomplished by works. It will only be done through the simple realization that it can't be done in our own righteousness. We can do nothing, for it is a free gift. All that was required to appease God was found in the blood of Jesus (the propitiation, or the appeasement), and we are to have faith in His blood. We are total debtors to the grace and love of God. We are saved by grace: "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). We are made *just* before God—just as if we had never sinned, as pure and innocent as the first Adam prior to the fall. This was made possible only by the work and blood of Jesus Christ. "*The Law Of Liberty, Pt. 1,*" August 6, 2000, Sunday AM

Redeemed By Grace

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” (Romans 3:24)

“Eternal Redemption” for Us

Hebrews 9:12 says, *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”* There is no time in eternity. “Eternal redemption” means that redemption has always been. The plan for our salvation was finished in the heart and mind of God prior to our transgression. It has always been God’s intention to bring us home. There are those who defy God by saying, “Why would God even create man if He knew he would fall?” How dare we stand in defiance of God, judging His mercy, justice, and love, when He was willing to suffer and die to reconcile us before we were ever created! *“Another Gospel, Pt. 3,” July 26, 2000, Wednesday PM*

The Lamb Slain from the Foundation

Revelation 13:8 speaks of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation, slain in the heart and purpose of God before there even was an incarnation. This Lamb was the acceptable price in the determinate counsel of God. Not only was He the acceptable price, but His sacrifice was the effectual power to destroy sin’s dominance in man.

God has always desired to reconcile man. In 2 Corinthians 5:19, we see that *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”* The just and righteous

God loves you and has done everything in a legal manner to reconcile you to Himself. He remains just and the Justifier of those who come to Him through Christ.

Justice is a big issue in redemption. Those who are gambling on God being a big Santa Claus, who will let everyone in to heaven on the last day, do not know God. A sinful, unrighteous man cannot stand in the presence of a holy God. You can only be right in God's sight through what Jesus did. You are not right with God because you came to church today, prayed this morning, or will fast this afternoon. What makes you right with God is what Jesus did, not what you do. *"Biblical Justification, Pt. 2," November 24, 1996, Sunday PM*

The righteousness of God is "unto all" and is "upon all them that believe." God came, so that "whosoever" may come. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (Jn. 3:16). *"Another Gospel, Pt. 3," July 26, 2000, Wednesday PM*

A Provision for Reconciliation

Isaiah 53 says it all concerning our reconciliation and the love God has for us. It boggles our minds to think it would please Father to bruise Jesus on our behalf. We can't truly comprehend how it pleased the Lord to take the innocent Lamb, the righteous Son of God, and exchange Him for you and me.

Try to imagine giving your innocent child to take the just punishment of the worst person you could think of. You can't comprehend doing that, yet God did far more than that for us. That's the love Father has. You didn't deserve it. You are that worthless thief, that liar, that murderer, that adulterer you just imagined, yet God bankrupted heaven to

reconcile you to fellowship with Him. *“I Wound and I Heal, Pt. 5,” April 9, 2000, Sunday AM*

In the substitutionary work, not just anyone could lay down his life to be the sacrificial lamb for humanity. That would be noble, but he wouldn't be worthy unless he was guiltless, sinless, and spotless. No other person in the history of mankind but Jesus ever made the claim to be worthy to pay the price.

God became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14). In absolute innocence, He willfully subordinated Himself to death on the cross, being made sin with our sin. There was an actual, literal transference of sin to Jesus. The righteousness conferred upon us from Jesus is just as real as our sin, our bondage, and our sin nature that was transferred to Him. We appropriate this righteousness through the daily acknowledgement of our crucifixion with Christ. We willingly choose to humble ourselves to be placed on the cross by faith. Jesus died for us individually, not just for humanity in general. Redemption gets that personal. *“Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 2: Salvation,” October 21, 2001, Sunday PM*

Having done nothing of ourselves, redemption and forgiveness of sins were transferred to our account through the substitutionary work of Jesus. This makes Christianity different from all of the other religions.

People don't have trouble accepting Jesus' role as a great prophet or teacher. They have trouble with the substitutionary act—the fact that they can be forgiven because of what Jesus has accomplished. They still want their works to merit something. Because of pride, they don't want to be total debtors. They can't accept the fact that sin has been accounted to them because of their birth in Adam's lineage, and therefore will not receive the eternal life afforded them through the finished work

of Jesus. This is how sin holds men and women in bondage. Isaiah shows the substitutionary work of Jesus was not transferred to us based solely upon God's intent; a price had to be paid. The value of our lives is seen in the redemptive work of Jesus and the substitutionary work on the cross.

God accepts us in the midst of our sin when there is true repentance and godly sorrow. If you have to wait until you have done something to merit forgiveness before you will repent, it isn't repentance. It's feigned repentance; it is trusting in your works, and you are still dead in your sins. Understanding the magnitude of this substitutionary work creates a liberty in us. *"Knowing Why And What I Believe, Pt. 2: Salvation," October 21, 2001, Sunday PM*

God cast our sins from us as far as the east is from the west, into the sea of His forgetfulness, placing our sins behind His back. The handwriting of ordinances against us has been blotted out. There is no record of sin as we walk in the fullness of redemption and the grace of God. God not only forgives through justification and imputation; He forgets. We are not paroled convicts but guilty parties found innocent because of the work of Another who was proclaimed innocent. Our past sins have been remitted because of the mercy, forbearance, and longsuffering of God. *"Biblical Justification, Pt. 1," November 24, 1996, Sunday AM*

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Paul says that Christ, having the heart of God to bring about redemption, died while we were sinners. Redemption is a work that Jesus did to buy us back from the power of Satan and sin. Jesus purchased us by His victorious life, His sinlessness, and His death and resurrection. Redemption is the work God did on our behalf to acquire us back legally through what Scripture calls the "appeasement." Because God was appeased,

we can now be reconciled. Redemption is unto all, but only comes upon those who believe (Rom. 3:22). *“Another Gospel, Pt. 2,” July 23, 2000, Sunday PM*

Mind-Boggling Appeasement

We are justified freely by Jesus Christ *“whom God hath set forth”* (Rom. 3:25). God, the Judge, sent the agent necessary to bring about our reconciliation and justification in establishing our innocence and righteousness. God sent Him forth to be the propitiation, or in other words, the appeasement factor. God, being holy, righteous, and just, couldn’t just whitewash us or let us off. That wouldn’t be just or within His character. This not only has to be a legal act but a literal act. It is not a perceived righteousness; it is literal and effectual, reaching into the eternal realm where we were co-crucified with Jesus Christ. Its effect extends from the foundation of the world when the Lamb was slain. It is mind-boggling, but God is the author of it. Jesus was the agent sent forth by Father to be the appeasement. *“Another Gospel, Pt. 1,” July 16, 2000, Sunday PM*

Jesus obeyed perfectly, never breaking any of the commandments. He *“knew no sin,”* the scripture says, yet was made *“to be sin for us”* (2 Cor. 5:21). He was the perfect substitute. He not only lived a life of obedience, but willingly bore the justice and judgment of God through the crucifixion. Jesus’ death upon the cross went far beyond natural suffering and crucifixion. His death for humanity was not merely symbolic. When Jesus shed His blood in dying upon that cross, the justice of God was met. Jesus suffered the wrath of God for you: He partook of what you deserved, and God was satisfied. *“Another Gospel, Pt. 1,” July 16, 2000, Sunday PM*

It is by our faith in this blood that appeasement becomes a reality and

justification becomes effectual, working in our lives on a daily basis. His innocent shed blood was “*to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*” (Rom. 3:25-26). “*Another Gospel, Pt. 1,*” July 16, 2000, Sunday PM

When man sinned, the covenant was broken. God had been mocked, forsaken, betrayed, and robbed of His glory. He was also robbed of His treasure—man. God had been sinned against, and retribution—not just repentance—needed to be made to God. Someone had to pay to make this right. In order to remain just, God paid the debt Himself. God’s love for us is beyond our comprehension. Only the Holy Spirit can illuminate us to see the sweetness, grace, and loveliness of God, and then we can respond to Him. We no longer keep the laws through fear of judgment. We fulfill the laws by pursuing His loveliness, and we know Him better, realizing the finished work in us. He is the propitiation, or satisfaction. “*Biblical Justification, Pt. 1,*” November 24, 1996, Sunday AM

Jesus, Our New “Federal Head”

The righteousness of God in Jesus Christ is seen in His fulfillment of the law and in His innocent offering in representing humanity as its “federal head.” Earlier, we spoke of Adam being our federal head, in that sin was imputed to us through our birth into Adam’s family. Though in Adam all died, in Christ we have been justified (made right) and live in the appeasement of God through the blood. “*Another Gospel, Pt. 1,*” July 19, 2000, Wednesday PM

The gospel message is that when Jesus, our federal head (our representative), died, we died. He not only died *for* us; Scripture

says we died *with* Him. Even though our death with Him cannot be explained or comprehended, it can be apprehended by faith. The Bible makes it very clear that we were crucified with Him and raised with Him. What Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection was credited to our account. We can take no personal credit, but recognize the full work of the grace, faith, and righteousness accomplished by Jesus. This is one of the deepest subjects in all of the Scripture, and yet it becomes one of the simplest when we understand the federal headship of Jesus Christ. “Federal” means that He (one) represented us (many). *“Another Gospel, Pt. 2,” July 23, 2000, Sunday PM*

The Riches of His Grace

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;”

(Ephesians 1:6-7)

Freed Hostages

Three things are afforded us through the great work of redemption: we are free from Satan, free from sin, and free from the power of deception. Redemption brought us out of a hostage situation. Deception prevents the hostage from seeing his captor as an enemy, often times viewing him as a protector instead. That is what happens to man under Satan’s power, but when the blood of Jesus purchases us, we can see clearly. We see sin for what it is and Satan for who he is and how he has affected our lives.

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18). His precious shed blood appeased God and legally allowed us to be set free from Satan’s dominion. Our view has now become larger than it was when we were captives—held in a room, blindfolded, tortured, beaten, and brainwashed. Our world has now become one of reality rather than one that is satanically controlled. We begin to see as we are seen and to know as we are known. That’s the benefit of redemption transferred to us. *“Another Gospel, Pt. 4,” July 30, 2000, Sunday AM*

Freedom to Choose

“For ye are bought [redeemed] with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20). You belong either to Satan or to God. The phrase used in Romans is, “to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey” (Rom. 6:16). If you allow yourself to be ransomed by God, you become His possession. When, in His mercy, God opens your eyes to see your need of salvation, He sets you free to make a choice. At that moment—and only at that moment—you are free to choose. You can go back under Satan’s lordship or you can follow Him. “Without-the-Law Righteousness, Pt. 1,” April 12, 1995, Wednesday PM

Some think we have been redeemed unto our own will and self-dependence, but we have not. We have come from Satan’s domain to God’s domain, and are now love-slaves. We choose to be here and are free to leave. We are free at any moment to go back to the kingdom of darkness and exercise our will. If we want to live in God’s kingdom, we will not be our own. *“Another Gospel, Pt. 3,” July 26, 2000, Wednesday PM*

In presenting Christ to the lost, we can make the mistake of causing others to think there is no cost. Although the cost has nothing to do with our redemption or salvation, there is a cost for choosing to follow Jesus: death to self. It is the taking up of one’s cross daily. We acknowledge that we have been bought with a price—we are not our own—and will be placed in the kingdom as it pleases Him, to serve for His glory. He doesn’t treat us as servants but as sons. *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21). “Without-the-Law Righteousness, Pt. 1,” April 12, 1995, Wednesday PM*

Our Worth Seen in the Price Paid

Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God said, “For my sake I have redeemed thee.” God has an investment in man, for His love is in us. Man was just a hunk of clay until God breathed the breath of life into him. God invested Himself in Jesus Christ to redeem us back. “*The Fall of Man,*” *Basic Bible Doctrines 1504*

Redemption means that God paid the ransom for us. Satan didn’t set the price; God set the price by His own justice and holiness. A perfect sacrifice had to be offered, the genius of God’s plan of incarnation.

We can understand our eternal worth by the ransom paid. The value of the redeemed object is seen in its price. Our worth is seen in the price that Jesus paid. Hebrews 9:12-14 says, “*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*”

The gift of grace opens our eyes to believe. We were purchased with the precious blood of Jesus. When we understand how precious His blood is, we are able to understand how precious we are to God. We have trouble equating our value with the blood of Jesus, the spotless Son of God. In the natural, we recoil at that thought. We believe there is no possible way we can equate our worthless lives with the blood of the Son of God. Yet God was pleased to bruise Him for us (Is. 53:10). “*Another Gospel, Pt. 4,*” July 30, 2000, *Sunday AM*

Until we understand our value to Father, we will not be able to move in the liberty redemption has afforded us. We will continue to think of ourselves as orphans, and fail to realize that we've been adopted into the household of the King and that we sit boldly at His table. Just like Mephibosheth, we, in all our brokenness and unworthiness, have been granted to sit at the King's table (2 Sam. 9:13). Beloved, this is what redemption is all about. We need to understand the value of the exchange.

Ephesians 1:7 says, *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."* We have no innate or intrinsic value; our value is due to the grace, the unmerited favor, of God. We didn't deserve that price tag, but it was conferred upon us. We all know what we are really worth, but God perceives our worth according to the value He has placed upon us through His grace.

We're worth what God perceives us to be worth, because He saw us before the foundation of the world. He sees us in eternity. He doesn't look at us in our broken, depraved condition. He sees us as pure creatures into whom He breathed life—created in His image and as His representatives on this earth. We are those for whom He came and with whom He had fellowship, those whom He sees complete in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. He sees us from eternity, not in time and space. This is why we are valuable to Him today. This is how we must see ourselves, rather than through our momentary performance. Our relationship with God should be based on the worth He has placed upon us, and we receive by faith the work finished in Jesus through this great redemption.

Grace Provides What You Need

In one of the parables, the lord of the vineyard found some men whom he promised to pay a denarius for their work. (Mt. 20:1-2). A denarius was a day's wage—that which was necessary to meet the daily needs of the average family. Realizing their need to work for that day's food, they were happy for the opportunity to work in the field. In the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour, and even until the eleventh hour, the owner continued to hire more workers and agreed to pay whatever was right.

When it was time to pay the workers, the men that worked an hour received the same pay as the men that labored the whole day. The men that labored the whole day called a union meeting, saying, “This isn't right!”

But the master said, “Wait a minute. I thought you agreed to work for this amount.”

“Well, yes we did, but....”

What good would it have been if the lord, the goodman who hired each of them, paid the last man one twelfth of what he needed for that day? Would his needs have been met? No, his family would have gone hungry. That was grace: it is not what you deserve or what you worked for, but what you need. *“The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 2,” December 30, 1992, Wednesday PM*

Grace for Eternity

Regeneration, or the new birth, does not make you saved. The new birth is what illuminates your spirit to see the magnitude of salvation.

Regeneration and justification (being pronounced righteous) lead us into salvation, which is progressive through sanctification. Scripture says we are justified by faith and are saved by hope, the hope of our salvation. Salvation is not complete until glorification manifests. When He comes, we will be like Him and will see Him as He is (1 Jn. 3:2). *“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ...and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”* (Eph. 2:5-7). “In the ages to come”—even after your glorification—everything revealed will be by grace. *“Without-the-Law Righteousness, Pt. 3,” April 23, 1995, Sun AM*

Grace goes on for eternity. Even after the work of regeneration, in which corruption has taken on incorruption and mortality has taken on immortality, grace does not cease. Even after you get to heaven, you’ll live by the grace of God. For eternity He will show you things that will absolutely blow your mind. By His extension of grace, you will continue to grow in the knowledge of His vast greatness. It will be inexhaustible! You will never cease to be awed by your God. What a great gift! *“The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 1,” December 27, 1992, Sunday AM*

Paid in Full

You would be elated if someone stamped “PAID IN FULL” on your mortgage. You would be delighted if your credit card or car were paid off. But even greater than this, the handwriting of ordinances that condemned us before God has been blotted out. Our sins will not be held against us or even remembered because of God’s free gift in Jesus Christ. We can’t understand such a salvation; we surely don’t deserve it, but we receive with thanksgiving. We are eternally in debt to Him, having been purchased with the blood of Jesus, and are no longer our

own. As His possession, we are glad to be slaves in His house. When we have that kind of heart attitude, He will say, “I don’t catch you in the snare of My love to hold you in bondage, but I liberate you to sonship. When you understand that you’re a slave, I’ll adopt you as a son.” *“Biblical Regeneration, Pt. 2,” December 1, 1996, Sunday PM*

God gives you the grace to believe that Jesus’ blood is sufficient. You are no longer alienated from God. He loves you and sees you as His son, righteous and sinless because of the blood of Jesus. If you believe that, your faith is counted for righteousness. His blood made it a fact, and your belief in it appropriates your liberty. The breaking of sin’s power has liberated man. The blood of Jesus is sufficient to redeem man from satanic power, and is available to all. Therefore, you can say, “I’m the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ.” Even though there are areas still out of order in your life, your salvation is *“not of works, lest any man should boast.”* You are free today because of the blood of Jesus. *“Without-the-Law Righteousness, Pt. 1,” April 12, 1995, Wednesday PM*

Maybe you have been under bondage, but now you realize the freedom, love, and acceptance in the beloved. Understand the effectiveness and worth of the blood of Jesus. You thought you had to add something to it, but you now understand the blood was sufficient to eradicate sin’s power. It blotted out the handwriting of ordinances against you. You were a slave to Satan and to sin, but now a new Master has bought you, and His blood paid the price. You have been brought into fellowship with God the Father. He bought you, and you are now His slave. You purpose to be His servant for the rest of your life. You don’t need any more freedom than what you already have. You are free from Satan and from sin. You delight in being a slave to righteousness! You don’t want to be free; you want to be God’s possession. You were under the bondage of self-righteousness, works, the letter of the law, and condemnation, but the Spirit now speaks to

your heart. Knowing you are free, walk in this liberty with an understanding of what grace is. “*The Goodness of Grace, Pt. 3,*” January 3, 1993, *Sunday AM*

As these principles of God’s grace become real in your life, you will rejoice as bondages you have battled for years fall at your feet. What you did through bondage, in trying to appease God, you will now do freely because of your love for Him. You will have a liberty to do them rather than an obligation. “*Without-the-Law Righteousness, Pt. 3,*” April 23, 1995, *Sunday AM*

Father, we stand in awe of Your mercy and Your love. No words can express our gratitude for the righteousness of the sinless Lamb. In Your innocence, You were made sin with our sin, that we might be made righteous with Your righteousness. Again we acknowledge the finished work, and will not cheapen Your blood by trying to add our own works, but simply say, “It is finished.” We are the children of God, sons and heirs with You. In remembrance and celebration of the finished work, we can only say, “Thank You.” “*Divine Guidance, Pt. 3,*” June 2, 2002, *Sunday PM*

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