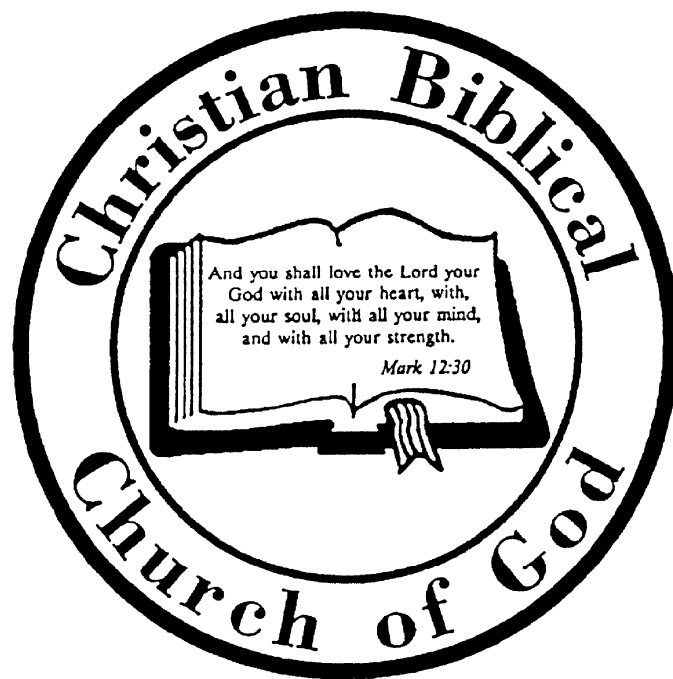


Grace of God



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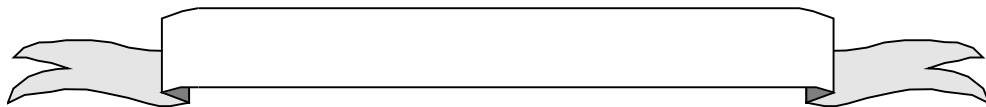
By Fred R. Coulter

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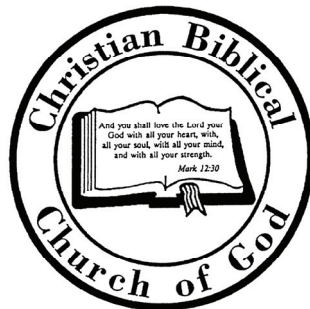
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Grace of God

Series of 8 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



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Grace of God

Foreword

After God had created the heavens and the earth, He “saw everything that He had made, and indeed, *it was EXCEEDINGLY GOOD*” (Gen. 1:31). The word good is translated from the Hebrew *tolby*, which means “beautiful, bountiful, cheerful, fine, good, GRACIOUS”; its secondary meaning is “joyful, loving, mercy, pleasant, pleasure, prosperity, wealth, well or well-favored” (*Gesenius’ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*). When God looked upon everything He had made, He saw that everything was very good. It was a BLESSING! As viewed through God’s eyes, His very Creation was a manifestation of HIS LOVE and HIS GRACE.

What is the Grace of God? Is it only the forgiveness of sin? Or, is the grace of God like most professing Christians believe, that it gives them freedom to determine which commandments of God they will or will not obey? They accept a grace that in reality is lawlessness, or license to sin. This transcript book reveals the grace of God in the Bible—Old Testament and New Testament. As we will learn, the grace of God does not do away with the laws and commandments of God, rather grace establishes law.

Indeed from the very beginning of creations, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and on into eternity in God’s gracious plan for mankind, Gods wonderful grace is evident. It is our hope that as you go through this series of that you will come to a better understand of this grace of God and develop a closer relationship with our Creator.

A special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Laila Patterson and Nancy Spaller for producing the transcripts.

Law and Grace

Fred R. Coulter

What does it mean to be *under the Law*? As we've discussed, under law means *subject to the penalty of the Law* if you break it.

Let's see that Jesus Christ was made subject to that *if* He would have broken the Law. That is one Scriptural meaning of *under the Law*. I recommend that you get the *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* [by George Ricker Berry], even if you know nothing about Greek. This will be helpful for you to read the English right under the Greek. You will see that the English translation is, in many key cases, much different than the *King James* and more accurate. There are some important things you can learn from it. [transcriber's note: *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter is now available].

We'll understand *under the law* and then we'll also understand what it means to be *under grace*. I think this is very, very important: that one of the things that is most critical and important to do when teaching is to teach so that those who are learning are also *thinking* with the teacher. That way then you can really gain and understand what's going on. This is what I try to do when I teach; to engage you so that you are *thinking* at the same time I am thinking. I think one of the biggest problems is that the Churches of God have not taught the people *how to think!* We need to *think* with the Scriptures in our mind!

Galatians 4:1: "Now then, I say, for as long a time as the heir is a child, he is no different from a servant, *although* he be lord of all; but he is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed beforehand by the father.... [so he would have the inheritance] ...In the same way, when we were children, we were held in bondage **under the elements of the world**" (vs 1-3)—controlled by the elemental demon spirits which rule the world.

Can you think of some Scriptures that tie in with that? I think you can see this in today's society much more clearly than at any other time that we have been in the Church of God, that it is wicked spirits who are ruling in high places. That's why you can moan and groan and have talk shows going day and night forever, and Rush Limbaugh can scream his lungs out; nothing is going to change, because he doesn't control it; you don't control it; people don't control it.

Ephesians 6:12: "Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high places....

[then we're told how we need to on guard against that]: ...Therefore, take up the whole armor of God..." (vs 12-13)—and so forth and so on.

Ephesians 2:2: "In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now **working within** the children of disobedience; among whom also **we all once had our conduct** in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the world*" (vs 2-3).

To be under the elements of the world, Galatians 4:3: "In the same way, when we were children... [before you were called into the Church] ...we were held in bondage under the elements of the world."

- What is the bondage besides Satan that holds us?
- What is the bondage that holds every human being?
- *Human nature!*
- What is another way to define this human nature that Paul defines?
- *Human nature!*

Human nature is from *within*—isn't it? Very important! Human nature is from *within!* Satan's spirit also stirs it up from *without*. Here's what Jesus said concerning human nature. Under Satan's guidance every society comes to this: Mark 7; also put in Rom. 1, showing how every society degenerates because it rejects God. It degenerates into homosexuality, lesbianism, evil and mayhem—precisely what we have today, because it's from *within*.

Mark 7:21: "For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth **from within**, and *these defile a man*" (vs 21-23). It's interesting that the Greek means *out from within proceeding out!*

This holds us in bondage! Paul defines this another very interesting way, which you heard me refer to time and again, Rom. 8. Every human being is born with this. After Adam and Eve sinned, etc., Paul said 'death passed to all men.' Are we subject to death? *We're all subject to death, yes indeed!* When are we subject to death? *When you die!* When can you die? *Anytime from conception!* Death is part

of our very genes. There's something else that's a very part of our genes called *the sin within us*. Paul said, 'When I want to do good I can't do good; the good I want to do I can't, and the evil that I don't want to do I hate.'

Romans 7:20: "But if I do what I do not desire to do, I am no longer working it out myself, but sin *that is* dwelling within me. Consequently, **I find this law in my members**, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man... [part of his very being] ...but I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the **law of sin** that is within my own members" (vs 20-23). Every one of us have the *law of death* and the *law of sin*.

Verse 24: "O *what a* wretched man I am! Who shall save me from the body of this death?... [very key, important thing] ...I thank God *for His salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ.... [He's going to deliver] ...Because of this, on the one hand, I myself serve the law of God with *my* mind; but on the other hand, with the flesh, *I serve the law of sin*" (vs 24-25)—because the *law of sin* is in you! That's why until the resurrection you will never, ever be perfect. Can't be! You cannot be perfect in the flesh!

Big mistake we made in WCG: Little children do not have human nature, they acquire it. Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! You put little children in a room alone and first thing you know you're going to have an argument—right? Next thing you know you're going to have a fight—right? Next thing you know, they're going to hit each other whether they've ever seen television or not, because they have sinful nature. It hasn't been *stirred up*, hasn't been fully developed, Satan hasn't gotten hold of them like we see with street gangs; their law of sin is stirred up within them, they are in bondage to Satan and the *law of sin and death*—therefore, we find premeditated, dedicated evil! Little children don't. They just have *human nature* and they don't know what they're doing, except they're fighting, but it's evident that they're born with it.

This is so important for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so important in our relationship with God; so important in relationship to our being *under the Law*. Paul says, Romans 8:1: "Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit." He says this after everything he says in Rom. 7, though he has a hard time overcoming and changing; though evil is always present with him.

So therefore, when we sin and we're not perfect, the first thing we do is condemn ourselves rather than repent. The next thing we try to do is

work it out ourselves so we can go to God when we don't feel so badly—right? Is this not true? I'm not talking about anything we haven't done. The truth is, *God knows!* If God knows every thought that we have and tries the heart and rein, does He not know when we sin? Does God know we're going to sin? *Yes, He does!* Should we go out and actively sin? *No, we should not!* Here's what the solution is: "...*there is* now no condemnation..." because you're *under grace* and not under law. *Under grace* means a whole lot more than just forgiveness of sin.

Verse 2: "Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death"—which held you in bondage; your bondage to sin and death was so much that you never knew what sin was. Not only did you did not know the law which defined it, you really couldn't concern good from evil.

Now that you have God's Spirit, why do you have war going on in your mind? When you have God's Spirit, you think: I shouldn't have this! What's happening? *God's Spirit is working with your mind to show you the gravity of sin!* That's what he's doing. Before you were ever converted it didn't make a bit of difference. Now you're converted and *it convicts you to lead you to repentance*. In this condition "...*there is* now no condemnation..." from God. Yes, you do have to go repent, but we've been made free from the *law of sin and death*.

Verse 3: "For what *was* impossible for the law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; in order that the **righteousness of the Law** might be fulfilled in us, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit" (vs 3-4).

- What is the greatest *righteousness of the Law*?
- Is it animal sacrifices? *No!*
- Is it tithing? *No!*
- Is it fasting? *No!*

Mark 12:30^[transcriber's correction]: "And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength..." That is the *full righteousness of the Law*. We do it because *we walk after the Spirit*.

We were held in this bondage, but because of the sacrifice of Christ—He took the penalty upon Himself by carrying within Himself the *law of sin and death*—His life and death *alone* can pay for sin. Nothing else can pay for sin! *Nothing else!* Really learn this: ***Nothing can substitute for the sacrifice of Christ!!!***

This will help us to understand law. Very important to understand law. If at 25-years-old you

finally came to the conclusion that the Sabbath needed to be kept and you started keeping the Sabbath very religiously—which is right, the Sabbath needs to be kept—can all your Sabbath-keeping from then on do away with all your Sabbath-breaking in the past? *No!* It's the same way if someone has killed someone. If they kill someone and never ever kill someone else, does that do away with killing that one person? *No, it does not!* We'll see how this works. I just want you to understand that ***nothing can substitute for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!***

We're held in bondage, we're released out of that bondage through Jesus Christ, Galatians 4:4: "But when the time for the fulfillment came... [at the appropriate time in God's plan] ...God sent forth His own Son, born of a woman, born **under law**... [subject to law, not *the law*, but ALL law—there is no definite article in the Greek and should not be there in the English translation] ...in order that He might redeem those who are under law, so that we might receive the *gift of sonship from God*. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father'" (vs 4-6).

1. That is one definition of *subject to law*. Subject to the *penalty of the law* if you transgress.
2. Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not rule over you because you are not **under law**, but **under grace**."

We always use to, in the past, insert there: *under the penalty of law*.

Therefore, if you put *not under penalty of law*, you must also put *under penalty of grace*. That's conflicting, because there's no such thing as a penalty of grace, because grace is the opposite of penalty. This brings us to a whole thing that I originally got in trouble with. I believed what I was told, that if you discover something then you should write it up and send it in. Well, I discovered that a certain leading apostle was teaching Church of God Seventh Day doctrine. This led to: What does it mean to be *under law*?

1. you are subject to the Law because you sin
 2. under the Old Covenant they were justified under law
- **Under law** they would sin, they would go and offer sacrifice according to law. They only had justification under law to the temple.
 - **Under grace** means that we are under grace for justification. That's what justifies us! God's grace, because there's no condemnation.

If we repent, if we yield to God, confess our sins—and the way you overcome sin is to love God in addition to the action of quitting to sin.

Romans 5:21: "So, that even as sin has reigned unto death, so also might the *grace of God* reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?" (vs 1-3). This is a very interesting thing, which is also pointed out in *The Christian Passover* book: ***When you are baptized, you are conjoined to the death of Jesus Christ***, because He died for you.

Baptism is the closest you can come to death, and yet still live. It also cleanses you, because of the water, *symbolically*. If we didn't lift you up out of the water, you sure enough would die. ***You are conjoined with Christ!*** That's how His death is imputed to you. That's why foot-washing and the renewing of it at Passover is so important.

Verse 4: "Therefore, we were buried with Him through **the baptism into the death**... [Christ's death; so the next time you think about how Christ was crucified, how He took all those stripes upon Himself, that's the death you were baptized into] ...so that, just as Christ was raised from *the dead* by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life." If God has done this great and marvelous thing, this is not just a religious bath; this is not just some sort of ritual cleansing. This is a fantastic, awesome thing that God had done! Therefore, we ***"...should walk in newness of life."*** How?

- Motivated by the Spirit of God!
- Led by the Spirit of God!
- Led by the Word of God!
- *Newness of life!*

Verse 5: "For if we have been **conjoined together** in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness of His resurrection*." How does He look? *Rev. 1—countenance as the sun; eyes as a flame of fire!* 1-John 3 says that we will see Him as He is. Who says that we're not going to be the sons of God? Who says that we're not going to be God as God is God? *That's coming right out of the Church of God today!* "...be *in the likeness of His resurrection*." It means the same thing—'homoiomate'—*the exact same substance, similitude and everything!*

Verse 6: "Knowing this, that our old man

was co-crucified with *Him*...” What did Jesus say when the crowds came after Him and He turned to them and He said: *Oh, you wonderful people, it's nice that you're all following Me; I'm so happy that you're following Me.* NO! He turned and said, ‘If anyone comes to Me and hates not—love less in comparison to God—...’ Matt. 10 says that anyone who *loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.* That’s where you get the hate and the love, that you love God more than ‘father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, lands and your own life also cannot be My disciple’—meaning: *You do not have any power to become My disciple unless you do that!*

Furthermore, He says, ‘anyone who does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple’—*does not have the power.* This is why the old man is crucified. One of the biggest things that needs to be taught to the brethren of God is that their commitment to God is the most important thing. *Never let your commitment to God be leveraged by another man! That's to God, and God alone!* That’s happened in too many churches. People have come in dedicated, wanting to serve God and the next thing you know the corporation has been put in place of God and you do this, that and the other thing; they’re taking your commitment—which should be to God alone—and they are adulterating it to use as leverage unto themselves. ***Don't ever let that happen!***

Verse 6: “Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin.” Paul says that we do sin, but *we are not subservient* to sin. In other words, you no longer serve sin as a slave serves his master. That’s what it means. You serve God!

Verse 7: “Because the one who has died... [How are you dead? *Through baptism, yes!*] ...***to sin has been justified from sin.***” How are you justified? By which law were you justified? *The King James* says ‘freed’; that is not correct. That’s where a lot of confusion comes in, because you do not have freedom of sin totally—do you? How could you be freed of sin if you still are struggling with sin? You are justified from your past sins, that’s what it’s talking about.

Then he goes on explaining how this justification comes about. Was this justification done by a law? You did not offer an animal sacrifice—did you? What law justified you? ***No law did! The grace of God did!*** What does justification mean?

- to be justified
- forgiven your past sins
- counted as just

- to be made right with God
- you are justified to God

When you sin you have a wage that you’re paid. ‘The wages of sin is death!’ That has to be justified or removed. How is that removed? *By Christ's death and you're conjoined to it!* No law—correct? The truth of the term *under law* means *you are not under law for justification.* That’s what it means in this case right here.

Verse 8: “Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, ***He died unto sin once for all...***” (vs 8-10). If the death of Christ is imputed to you, that is sufficient *once!* You don’t need to go offer any more animal sacrifices, but you do need to renew the covenant every year through the Passover.

“...but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord.... [that’s how we’re going to live] ...Therefore, ***do not let sin rule*** in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof” (vs 10-12). What are we to let rule in our lives? ***God!*** How does He rule in our lives? ***With His Holy Spirit through His grace!*** Very important; this is what Paul is getting to.

Verse 13: “Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead...” Have you ever had an experience where you’ve come close to death: through a wreck, health, sickness, whatever. A lot of people, even in the world, make amends when they literally are saved from death, or that they figured that they were dead.

“...and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God” (v 13). Whose righteousness? ***Christ's!*** See how he’s building up here?

Romans 5:17: “For if by the offense of the one man death reigned by the one, how much more shall those who receive the ***abundance of grace*** and the ***gift of righteousness*** reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ.” There is grace in the gift of righteousness. You haven’t heard very much about the gift of righteousness—have you? Have you ever had it explained to you what the gift of righteousness really is? ***Being able to become righteous through God's power in our lives!*** The gift of righteousness has to be given to you; it has to come from the Holy Spirit of God. What kind of righteousness? ***The righteousness of Christ!*** God gives to you. This is done

- to motivate us to love God
- to motivate us to overcome

God says, ‘You died, you’re buried, your sins are forgotten and here is a *gift* of My Spirit and righteousness, that when you come before My throne with Christ in you, that is the same as Christ Himself coming before Me.’ That’s pretty powerful stuff! Isn’t that something? Now you see the foolishness of ‘playing religion.’

Romans 6:13: “Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin... [Why? *Because you’ve been given the gift of righteousness!* Don’t go sin!] ...rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.”

Colossians 1:27: “...Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Isn’t that something? That’s why God doesn’t condemn us! Paul says, ‘What? Shall we sin that grace may abound?’ The furthest thing from our mind is wanting to sin. The furthest thing from our mind is to want to go out and live in sin again.

- we want to serve God
- we want to love God
- we want to do those things

“...those who are alive from *the* dead...”

Romans 6:14: “For sin shall not rule over you...” Sin isn’t going to because you have the Spirit of God, the gift of righteousness, the gift of justification being freely justified from your sins because you’re not under law. You can apply both meanings here:

- you are not under the penalty of the law; your sins have been forgiven
- you are not under law for justification, because no law can justify you—Christ has

—it means the latter more than anything else, “...because you are not under law, but under grace” (v 14)—you are under grace! What does *under grace* mean?

Verse 15: “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? MAY IT NEVER BE! Don’t you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (vs 15-16). Let’s see what the grace of God does.

Definition of grace: To understand the grace of God is to comprehend one of the most wonderful attributes of God.

We’re under grace. That, brethren, is what needs to be preached. We can say: not as the Protestants do.

They understand some of it, but they really don’t understand the magnificence of the grace of God.

The grace of God expresses the greatness of His love and the riches of His mercy. To live within and under the grace of God is to experience and appreciate the fantastic love of God and His merciful kindness. Grace is like a giant umbrella, which is the canopy of your relationship with God and you are standing in this grace, as Paul said, “...the grace wherein we stand” (Rom. 5). From God’s grace then comes

- His love
- His kindness
- His justification
- His mercy
- His comfort
- His Spirit

—which He gives us

This is why you go through and you read every one of the Epistles of Paul...

The reason I’m doing this series on *The Grace of God* is because in the church that I was affiliated with before, they didn’t preach it, they didn’t know it, they didn’t understand it—and still don’t to this day—and too many of the spin-off groups don’t understand it either. They don’t have a clue. Grace is more than the forgiveness of sin. ***It’s the whole status of your relationship with God!*** When Paul beseeched God three times to take the affliction from him, God’s answer was: ‘My grace is sufficient for you,’ because, Paul, it covers your whole life.

Ephesians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus: **Grace...** [very important; it’s not just ‘hello, how are you?'] (Notice where it’s coming from): ...**and peace** *be* to you ...” (vs 1-2). Remember, Jesus said, ‘My peace I give you; not as the world gives you. I give you My peace.’ He said that the Passover night.

Brethren, we have grace and we have peace “...**from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**” (v 2). That’s a profound verse! That’s why he starts out all of his epistles that way—the grace of God!

(go to the next track)

Contrary to religious speculations, God’s grace is not just a theological tenet or topic of argument drawing denominational battle lines. In fact, the grace of God means *life itself!* Without grace there would be

- no salvation
- no Christianity
- no eternal life

That's how profound grace is!

Indeed, grace is the foundation of true Christianity. The New Testament reveals that God the Father's grace is an all encompassing quality.

Let's see how encompassing it is. Let's continue on in the book of Ephesians, chapter one. That's why Paul starts out all of his epistles with grace—that's the most important thing.

Verse 3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ." I don't think we've really emphasized or understood what a blessing it is to have the Spirit of God. That is a heavenly thing. It's not an earthly thing. That is a heavenly thing *in Christ*. We will see that it's the earnest, the down payment.

Verse 4: "According as He has personally chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world... [that was His whole plan; He would choose those who would accept His calling] ...in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love." {parallel account in Col. 1}.

Think of it! He wants us to be without blame and Holy in Him *in love*! That's why Jesus said that 'if you love Me, keep My commandments.' He wants everything based on that love. But *in love*; that's where grace comes from.

Verse 5: "Having predestinated us for **sonship**..." *KJV*: 'adoption'—He's not adopting us; we are going to be the very sons and daughters of God. There's no adoption there. Adoption means you didn't beget. Adoption means you're taking someone else's child. This means *sonship* because we received the begetting of the Holy Spirit so that we can become His very children.

...**to Himself** through Jesus Christ..." To God the Father! Every time I go over this it just 'blows my mind' from the point of view that it's so great that it's just so inspiring that

- God the Father Himself has called us
- God the Father Himself has given us His Holy Spirit
- God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ Who was the Lord God of the Old Testament to become the sacrifice for us

So that He could take us *as His children to Himself*. That's what it says!

"...according to the good pleasure of **His**

own will" (v 5)—and desire. If I say this I know you'll understand it more: ***God the Father Himself***

- *desires* you
- has *called* you
- has *forgiven* your sins
- has *given you the gift* of righteousness
- has *put you in right standing* with Him

because He

- desires you
- loves you
- wants you

as His son!

Here's what His will is, v 6: "To *the* praise of *the* glory of **His grace**..." the most glorious, wonderful and fantastic thing that God is doing through grace:

- to call us
- to give us His Spirit
- to make us His sons

"...wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*" (v 6).

Accepted as Jesus Christ is accepted. What did Jesus say? *The Father loves Me and I love the Father! As the Father has loved Me, I have loved you!* So, 'as I have loved you, you love one another!' Has that been missing in the Church of God? *Yes!* Why? *Because the Church of God has placed people under law* by leveraging to themselves all control and commitment to God, instead of letting that person go to God. When you feel just overwhelmed with everything, you go to God and say:

- God, here I am
- God, I need Your love
- God, grant me Your Spirit
- God, help me to understand
- God, pour Your love out upon me

—and just drink in of the love of God! They might not be able to say too much after that. You might be on your knees crying, the tears running down, and God is granting to you a greater understanding of His love and the feeling of His love and understanding through His Spirit. *We've been accepted in the Beloved!*

Verse 7: "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Yes, forgiveness of sin is included in grace, but that is only *one part* of it.

Verse 8: "Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; **having made known to us** the mystery of His own will..." (vs 8-9). That is something! God has made this known about being the sons of God. That is so fantastic! People in the world don't have a clue

because God hasn't called them.

"...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself" (v 9). That's a lot of grace, to know God's very own plan. That's a tremendous amount of grace. "...He purposed it in Himself!" Does God have purpose? *Yes! He purposed!*

Verse 10: "That in *the divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance..." (vs 10-11). How? *By grace!* Can you imagine what it's going to be like to inherit part of the universe? Think of it! You talk about wealth! You talk about riches! You talk about a tremendous and fantastic thing!

The next time you have an opportunity to see the stars... I talked to a pilot who says when he's up there about 35,000 feet it looks like the stars are just right out there. You can fly along and if you're praying... He's said that he's prayed and tears just streaming down, 'Oh, God, You would grant us to share this with you.' That's something!

"...having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will; that we might be... [Think of this: This motley crew of us has been battered and bruised, knocked around, lowly of the earth, that we should be]: ...to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ" (vs 11-12). I read that and I'm amazed that the angels of God are going to praise God for *what He's doing in us*—"...to the praise of His glory..." That's something!

- That's why God wants each one of us.
- That's why we do the things we do.
- That's why God says to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Isn't it a pitiful little thing that He asks us to do—to put leaven out of our homes—compared to what God is going to do for us? Yet, people argue over should we or should we not eat it; should we or should we not put it out. I don't think we should do this.' *They don't understand the greatness of God's plan!* That's what we have to keep in mind, brethren.

When we are resurrected and changed... Try and think about this: What is it going to be like when you are resurrected and there's an angel carrying you up in the air. You're going to meet Christ in the air on the Sea of Glass in the clouds. You look around and you hear all these other saints being resurrected and they're going meet Christ on the Sea of Glass. Then all the saints together! We all see Christ! All the angels are there singing praises to God, to the praise of His glory that He did this! I tell you, that's

something! That's what the grace of God is all about!

Verse 13: "That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, in Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation... [that's what God is interested in; that's what He's doing] ...in Whom also, after believing, **you were sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise." That seal means that **you have the stamp of God in your mind, that you belong to Him!** Isn't that something! That's amazing! Brethren, may we never, *never*, **never** fall victim of ministers ruling us, but that *we follow Christ!*

"...sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (v 13). How sure is that promise? *God cannot lie! Character counts!* That's why God rules the universe, because He is righteous! There's a song that Steve Greene sings and I listen to it when I'm driving some of the long miles: *To God and God Alone*. He says: 'God and God alone is fit to sit on the universe's throne.' Why? *Because He is wholly righteous!*

If we have the promise from God and we have the Spirit of God and we know that we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, let God stir that Spirit up in us. Let Christ fill your heart and your mind and move you to understand the greatness of His calling. The ultimate of the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures when we will have no more sinful nature at all. That's something! This is why Paul did what he did.

Verse 15: "For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you, and the love toward all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (vs 15-16). Here's what he prayed, and, brethren, this is what we need to be busy doing; if there's any key that needs to be for any minister, this is what he needs to be doing:

- in helping
- in teaching
- in serving
- and helping the brethren to see this

Verse 17: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory..." Who's going to give it to you? *God the Father personally!* Listen, brethren, God the Father is involved in our lives directly!

- He Himself personally loves you!
- He Himself personally has called you!
- He Himself has justified you, make you right with Himself!
- He Himself has given you His Holy Spirit!
- He Himself has called you to sonship!

That He "...may give you *the spirit of wisdom* and

revelation in the knowledge of Him. *And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened...” (vs 17-18)

That’s why when you study God’s Word and you fill your mind with God’s Word, you’ll go along and all of a sudden it’s like a little light goes on—BING!—because with God’s Word and God’s Spirit is like a sphere. Within a sphere you can have an infinite number of lines intersecting it, and wherever one of those lines intersect that’s a connection and Truth of God’s Word. It will happen time and again.

I quoted there “...until we all come into the unity of the faith.” When the question was asked, ‘Why aren’t all the churches together?’ *We will be together when we come to the unity of the faith in Christ!* That’s why God is keeping us all separated and scattered, so that we are not going to lean on an organization; that we are not going to lean on men. We’re going to turn to God! Then when we have the *unity of the faith* with Christ—His faith *in* us—then maybe we can do some things together.

But now the whole Church is under God’s correction. That’s why it’s being scattered. Every minister is under God’s judgment. Every member is under God’s judgment to see whether they love Him, whether they will serve Him, or whether they are going to continue ‘playing’ church and only fool themselves and barely have the minimum acceptable to be saved. That’s what it’s all about. This needs to be our *modus operandi*.

That He “...may give you *the spirit of wisdom* and **revelation in the knowledge** of Him. *And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order **that you may comprehend**... [He doesn’t want us to be with any doubt; He wants us to no for sure, no doubt] ...what is the hope of His calling, and what *is* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (vs 17-18). The next time someone wins the mega lottery through Satan’s devices, just know that God has greater glory and greater riches that He’s going to give you. Don’t be envious one second!

Verse 19: “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from *the* dead, and set *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above every principality and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named...” (vs 19-21). That’s why Christ is the Head of the Church; that’s why no man is the head of the Church. Christ is because of what He did!

“...—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come; for He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all

things to the Church, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all” (vs 21-23).

Now, after all of this, Ephesians 2:1 “Now you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience” (vs 1-2). What a comparison from what we just read in Eph. 1. Look what God has called us out of! *Tremendous!*

Verse 3: “Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest *of the world*. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us” (vs 3-4). ‘God so loved the world that He ***gave*** His only begotten Son. Whosever believes *in* Him...’—meaning *into*. It is an outgoing belief going from you to Christ, God the Father and back to you—‘shall not perish but have everlasting life.’ He ***gave*** Him! When? *When we were sinners!*

- In His time!
- In His purpose!
- For His glory!
- For His plan!

Verse 5: “Even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For you have been saved* by grace.)” This is very important to understand. This does mean *have been saved*—past tense—from what? *Your sins and Satan!*

There is another place—which you can only see it in the Greek Interlinear—1-Corinthians 15. There are three phases of salvation:

1. *have been saved* (Eph. 2:5)
 2. *are being saved* (1-Cor. 15:2)
- an active, on going daily salvation

1-Corinthians 15:1: “Now I am declaring to you, brethren, the *same* Gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, *and* in which you are now standing; by which you ***are also being saved***... [present tense passive] ...if you are holding fast *the* words that I proclaimed to you; otherwise you have believed in vain.”

The reason you are being saved is because it’s a process. You are being created in Christ Jesus. So, the salvation is a continuous creation and a continuous salvation until you die and await the resurrection, or Christ returns and you are alive and are changed ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.’

3. *shall be saved* (Matt. 24:13^[transcriber's correction])—He who endures to the end shall be saved.

Romans 5:8: “But God commends **His own** love... [in the Greek it is emphatic] ...to us... [‘eis’—into us] ...because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we **shall be saved** from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (vs 8-10).

That’s why Paul said, ‘If Christ is dead you’re still in your sins.’ We’re going to be made alive, because Christ lives! So, the three things of salvation are:

- 1) *have been saved* now from Satan and our sins and the world
- 2) *are being saved* by walking in the Gospel and keeping the commandments and laws of God, and loving God
- 3) *shall be saved* at the resurrection because Christ lives

Most Churches of God ignore *have been saved* because they understand that you won’t be until the resurrection. And the Protestants don’t understand *are being saved* or *shall be saved*. You’ve got to have all three for the complete thing of salvation.

Ephesians 2:6: “And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” You’re certainly not sitting in heaven today, but you have been blessed with heavenly things by the Spirit of God, God’s grace, God’s peace and so forth.

Verse 7: “So that in **the ages that are coming...**” What is the next age to come in God’s plan? *When we’re resurrected!* What age is that going to usher in? *The Millennium; the Kingdom age!* That’s when we are going to sit with Christ, rule with Christ, become kings and priests with Christ.

“...He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (v 7). His grace is going to manifest to everyone who are physical human beings who enter into the Millennium—the Kingdom age—and who are born as human beings in the Kingdom age. We are going to be displayed as the “...exceeding riches of His grace...” Isn’t that something?

In other words, through us, God is going to extend grace throughout all humanity through the Millennium. Isn’t that something? Does that boggle your mind? We’re not going to be there just to *rule*

them with a ‘rod of iron.’ True, if they totally rebel. We’re there to teach them God’s love, teach them God’s grace, show them the whole plan of salvation.

Verse 8: “For by grace **you have been saved** through faith, and this *especially* is **not of your own selves**... [Very interesting! The Greek means *out from within your own being*. That salvation and that grace does not come out from within your own being; *it comes from God, because of God’s grace*; not of yourself.] ...*it* is the gift of God. Not of works... [not of yourself; it is a gift, you can’t buy it, you can’t work for it] ...so that no one may boast” (vs 8-9).

That is the summary of the whole book of Job. Can you imagine what Job would be saying if he entered into the Kingdom of God with the attitude that he had in the book of Job: ‘I made it, God! I made it! Look at me!’ *Not of works!* Remember: ***Nothing can substitute for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!*** There isn’t any work that is going to do that.

Verse 10: “For **we are His workmanship**... [Let God have the workmanship of His hands upon you through His Spirit] ...**created**... [salvation is creation; He’s creating Christ in you. Paul said, ‘My little children, I travail in pain again until Christ be formed in you; Christ in you, the hope of glory] ...in Christ Jesus unto *the good works*.... What are those good works?

- love
- joy
- peace
- longsuffering
- gentleness
- kindness
- goodness
- faith
- meekness
- temperance

Against such there is no law.

- Good works of living in God’s grace!
- Good works of being able to help others!
- Good works keeping the commandments of God, because you love God!

This is why the Sabbath is a total joy, because it’s from God and we love God, and we do it because we love God and it becomes a ‘good work.’

“...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (vs 10). To walk in that way of life. That’s why foot-washing for Passover^[transcriber's correction] is so important. Renew the covenant. God gives us a brand new start every year. As human beings we need it.

Let’s see if God can give us His Spirit to uplift us just a little bit more. When Paul wrote this

I've often wondered what he felt when he was writing this, because Eph. 3 is the most profound part of the entire Bible. If there's any favorite part of the Bible that I have, this is it. It is so profound!

Ephesians 3:11: "According to *His eternal purpose*... [There is an eternal purpose, a plan being worked out; and *by the grace of God we are a part of that purpose*. Think of that!] ...which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence **through His very own faith**.... [in us] ...So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are *working for your glory*" (vs 11-13).

Brethren, that's why we're going through the things we are as a Church and people. That's why in our private lives we have difficulties and trauma and trials. God gave His only begotten Son and look how He suffered; and He did it because He loved you. He did it for the joy that was set before Him. Since it's this time of year we focus in on the crucifixion of Christ and what He went through to forgive our sins, to grant salvation for us. What we need to do to overcome and put sin out of our lives. Let's see the whole comparison:

Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore, *since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight... [whatever it is you set it aside] ...and the sin that so easily entraps *us*; and let us run the race set before us... [these are the 'good works' we are to walk in]: with endurance, having *our minds* fixed on Jesus... [That's who we need to continually look to: Jesus Christ] ...the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith... [You're not going to finish it; I'm not going to finish it. *Christ is going to finish it*; He started it when God the Father called us.] ...Who for the joy... [through all the trials and difficulties] ...that lay ahead of Him endured *the* cross, *although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God. Now meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds" (vs 1-3)—and give up!

People do! And, brethren, I just tell you that there are people who are weary—faint of mind, faint of heart, faint of faith, faint of love—because they have been so emptied! Whatever we can do to fill them, to help them however we can, that's what we need to do. That's why I wrote the book: *Lord, What Should I Do?* You will notice that I didn't say come and 'join this church.' I said, '**You get right with God!**' Whether they ever fellowship with us or not is neither here nor there. It would be nice if they did, but if they don't and we've turned them back to God, have we not done our work? *Yes, we have!*

When you get to thinking it's rough,

remember this, v 4: "You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin." Neither have I. Some of us have a lot harder 'row to hoe.' Whatever trial and difficulty you have to go through—because you're going to have them—and your Christian life is never going to turn out like you thought it was when you started. Hasn't happened to anyone yet. The stakes are *eternal life!* It's not a 'religion'; this is eternal life in glory forever! I have yet learned to joy in tribulation. Sometimes I get close to it, but not yet, because it is grievous when you're going through it. But afterward then comes the 'peaceable fruits of righteousness.'

Ephesians 3:13: "So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are *working for* your glory. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (vs 13-15). Yes, God is family. He is part of a family; that's why He's called *the Father*. We are part of that family, yet unborn as spirit beings, but will be.

Verse 16: "That He may grant you, **according to the riches of His glory**... [think on that for a minute] ...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man." That you let Christ in you with the Spirit of God ***strengthen you***:

- with determination
- with love
- with grace
- with mercy
- with longsuffering

Brethren, I do not know what lies ahead. Martyrs are not going to be *weak* people. We've seen some people killed by the troops in the United States, assaulted with tanks. Mrs. Weaver was shot right through the head holding her own baby for the sake of a sixteenth of an inch of a gun on a shotgun!

I tell you one thing: We've heard the story that all these old weak Laodiceans are going to be martyred. NO! If it happens, we'd better be strengthened with might "...by His Spirit in the inner man that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and grounded in love... [There it is! That's the foundation! That's where your roots sink down into! Drink out of that reservoir of God's love.] ...you may be fully able to comprehend... [fully understand] ...with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height" (vs 16-18). The fullness of God's plan!

I tell you, if anything that has happened, brethren, we've been cheated by organizations. But that doesn't limit God. He's called us out of that, and here's what we're to know:

Verse 19: "And to know the love of Christ,

which surpasses *human* knowledge... [above and beyond all human knowledge] ...so **that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**" Isn't that going to be amazing! You're going to understand the grace of God when you look down and see a spirit body with glory. You look in whatever is called a spiritual mirror and see what God has created you to be as His son, with a spirit face that has radiance and glory. Isn't that something? *That's what God has called us to!*

That we might be filled with all the "...fullness of God. Now to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, to Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 19-21).

That's something, brethren! Whatever trial it is—and now we can say 'little trial'—let God help us with it; let God lead us and guide us! Yes, there are things we can do, and we need to be busy about doing that. But, this is what it means to be under grace, because you're justified with God, His grace is upon you with everything with salvation.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Galatians 4:1-3
- 2) Ephesians 6:12-13
- 3) Ephesians 2:2-3
- 4) Galatians 4:3
- 5) Mark 7:21-23
- 6) Romans 7:20-25
- 7) Romans 8:1-4
- 8) Mark 12:30
- 9) Galatians 4:4-6
- 10) Romans 6:14
- 11) Romans 5:21
- 12) Romans 6:1-13
- 13) Romans 5:17
- 14) Romans 6:13
- 15) Colossians 1:27
- 16) Ephesians 1:1-13, 15-23
- 17) Ephesians 2:1-5
- 18) 1 Corinthians 15:1-2
- 19) Romans 5:8-10
- 20) Ephesians 2:6-10
- 21) Ephesians 3:11-13
- 22) Hebrews 12:1-4
- 23) Ephesians 3:13-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 1
- Revelation 1
- 1 John 3

- Matthew 10; 24:13

Also referenced: Books:

- *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by George Ricker Berry
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Lord, What Should I Do?* by Fred R. Coulter

Grace of God I

Grace of God in the Old Testament

Fred R. Coulter

I'm going through the series in the book of John and we basically ended with the third chapter and we had the sermon about the love of God for the world, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and then how we need to 'walk in the light.' There's going to be in conjunction with it—although not directly in the series of John—the Grace of God in the Old Testament.

There are too many people who have the idea that God was only gracious in the New Testament; that God only gave His grace in the New Testament, and that His grace was not revealed at all until Jesus Christ. Well, that is not a wholly accurate statement, even though John said that 'the Law came through Moses and grace and Truth through Jesus Christ.' That is not saying that God was ungracious in the Old Testament. God *was* gracious in the Old Testament and in dealing with the people that He dealt with.

Hebrews 13 gives us a very important Scripture that we need to really rely on and understand and realize in approaching this. We're going to see other aspects of the grace and mercy of God in the Old Testament, which also are precursors or forerunners of those in the New Testament. After all, let's not forget, all of those who prophesied also spoke of the grace that was coming. Those who wrote the words of God also were prophesying and writing down what Jesus Christ was going to do.

Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, and today, and forever." I would have to take it that this statement means:

- Jesus Christ *yesterday*—as the Lord God of the Old Testament
- Jesus Christ *today*—as He is the Mediator of the New Covenant
- Jesus Christ *forever*—on into eternity

There's one thing that we need to grow in and that is *grace and knowledge*. Let's see how we are to be growing in grace and knowledge. Here's a statement that is made, and as we get into this we will see how we are to grow in grace and knowledge.

2-Peter 3:18: "Rather, **be growing in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...**" As a result of studying through this again, this time I know that I understand it more, and I think we'll all understand our calling better.

How many of you have asked yourself: Why did God call me? Almost everyone does. That's one of the hardest to answer, but we'll answer that. I'll give you a partial answer right now: If we look at the things that we have done and what we are, then we have to ask: Why did God call me? That's an introspective way to look at it. The grace of God gives us the answers as to why God has called us. And we're going to see that it's not because of some great thing we have done, ***but it's the great thing that God has done!***

We're also going to see in the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, how God dealt with the ones He worked with directly was in a *very gracious way*—with the exception of when they sinned and God had to really lower the boom on them.

We also need to balance out the equation. If we sin in the New Testament, under the New Covenant, does not God lower the boom on us? What is the ultimate? What is the ultimate punishment of sin? *The Lake of Fire!* It sure is, and that is the opposite of God's grace. God's grace is all encompassing in God's goodness and the Lake of Fire is all encompassing and all consuming in doing away with people who do not follow God's way. We have these two very broad extremes.

Let's look at things from just a little bit different perspective than we have before. In Genesis 1:31 we find something of God's goodness or graciousness: "And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, ***it was exceedingly good...***"—'tov me od'—*beautiful or bountiful, cheerful, fine, glad, good* and also a word for *gracious*. So, even the creation of God was an *act of grace*. Why can we say the creation of God was an act of grace? *Because when you define the word 'grace' it means an act of God, unearned* on the part of the recipient—*unmerited in why the person is getting it*.

Grace actually means—in the Old Testament—*favor or kindness, gracious, pleasant, precious, well-favored, to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior in position or level, or, in this case, we are inferior to God even though we're made in His image*. So, God's stooping and bending to us is an act that He does—to be here, to find or show favor and to be or to give or grant graciousness, show mercy and have pity upon.

If God is gracious—which He is—then what He does reflects His grace or graciousness or goodness. We know that God is love, so then *grace is a quality* of that love. That love is shown in the things that God does. Go through the first chapter of Genesis and everything there is totally positive. God made the earth, all the animals and all the plants. He created human beings. He blessed all the animals and said to be ‘fruitful and multiply.’ He blessed Adam and Eve and said ‘to be fruitful and multiply.’ And when He finished everything He said, ‘Behold, it is very good.’

The next thing He did, Genesis 2, was a very gracious thing. A day—which we can now say is a *day of grace*, because it’s the day *God chose*. This gives us a little insight into Sabbath-keeping vs Sunday-keeping. If you do what God says by His dictate, by His command, then you’re acting in response to what God has done. So therefore, that is a gracious act from God to even give us these things. Creating the Sabbath, blessing it, sanctifying it, establishing it as a day of contact between His creation and Himself is, in fact, a very *gracious* thing.

Adam and Eve didn’t earn it. They were created, came to consciousness and God said, ‘I’m God, you’re Adam and you’re Eve—*Ish and Isha*. Here God gave the Sabbath as a very *gracious* thing to do. The Sabbath was given to man, Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath, and it’s given for our benefit. I tell you, we sure need it. Doing what I’m doing now, I know the value of the Sabbath much more than when I was just full-time in the ministry. There’s sort of a little trap in that—not to put it down or say that things are the way they are now or worse than they were then. There’s no judgment, it’s just that it’s a comparison of the difference in perspective.

When I would go around and visit all church people, I hardly had contact with anybody that we would say that were ‘in the world.’ Sabbath was a totally different thing from what it is now. People would come to Church and say, ‘I’m so glad it’s the Sabbath’ and I would say, ‘Yeah, I am, too’ from all these things I had to do; I had to go here and there. I enjoyed doing it, but now when the Sabbath comes and now when we get together with God’s people—because I’m not out there with God’s people day in and day out, I’m out there in the world with swearing, cursing, smoking, tobacco-chewing, foot-stomping *world*—it sure means a whole lot.

I can see that the giving of the Sabbath was a tremendous, *gracious act of God* so that we could have a day of contact with Him, a day of fellowship together with Him, a day that *He* has blessed! Have you ever noticed when you’re talking to someone

and you have a good conversation and at the end you say, ‘God bless you.’ You feel just real good when someone says ‘God bless you.’ You go away feeling real happy. Just think: God has blessed the Sabbath. That’s a fantastic thing! God has blessed this very day! That’s really a gracious act.

He didn’t bless the other days. He said, ‘Go work!’ This day He blessed. Then He showed them the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He gave them a warning, which was gracious. Isn’t that gracious to give a warning, that ‘in the day thereof you shall surely die.’ We look at it as a very negative thing and say, ‘Oh, terrible!’ But that was gracious. He warned them before He did it. How would it be if He said nothing to them and said, ‘Go ahead and eat of all the trees in the Garden.’ So, they go eat of all the trees of the Garden and then they eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and lo and behold, all these things come crashing in on them. What would be the first reaction? *God, why didn’t you tell us?* God didn’t do it that way! He told them first.

Then the creation of Eve for Adam was a very gracious act by God. Now then, we find that man—as they always do—turned the grace of God into something it shouldn’t be. Isn’t that right? Doesn’t that go right back to the book of Jude where it says that ‘they turned the grace of our God into licentiousness.’ That’s exactly what happened here in Gen. 3 if you look at it properly. Didn’t they take the graciousness of God and turn it into license to do what they want? *Sure! Yes!*

Let’s see that after man *fell*—which he did—Satan fell and man fell, both of them, *they fell from God’s grace!* So then there had to be the penalty of sin that came. God had to set in motion, which was already to go, all the laws controlling goodness, righteousness, sin and all of that sort of thing, to where there had to be a control on evil. There’s an automatic control on all evil whether people believe it or not.

Good example: Look at all of these so-called great rock stars. They run their lives in a very evil way. They take the drugs, they debilitate themselves; they bring others into the evil that they are doing—what happens? *They all die at a young age!* That’s almost like an automatic law that sets in. The more evil that you are the shorter you’re going to live. Whenever there is a sin, there’s always a consequence, because there’s an automatic law.

God set all of those things in motion, as well as we inherited the *law of sin and death* passed on to us by inheritance. How does God deal with us? We’re dealing with a situation whereby in certain things—in almost everything—*the law of sin and*

death keeps us from meeting the requirements of God's perfection, the only way God can deal with us in a gracious way, or through His grace.

The curse came on the world; we know the story of Cain and Abel. Gen. 5 gives the genealogy down to Noah. 'Noah' actually has the meaning of *God's favor*. Not grace, but *God's favor*, because God did something with the birth of Noah that perhaps maybe we've overlooked before and haven't quite understood in this light.

Genesis 5:28 "And Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years and begat a son. And he called his name Noah, saying, 'This one shall comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed.'" (vs 29-29). God lifted the curse at this time that was on the land because of the curse of Adam and Eve.

Verse 30: "And after he begat Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years. And he begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years. And he died. And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth" (vs 30-32). What happens here in God's intervention concerning the Flood.

Genesis 6:5: "And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was only evil continually*." That's a result of the *law of sin and death*.

Are there good acts and things people can do? *Sure there are!* But there are things that are good that are not motivated from goodness. They can be good on the surface. When you get right down to the final analysis when Jesus said, 'Don't call Me good, there is none good but God.' So, even though a person can do good things, do right things, do responsible things, that doesn't make them good as God is good. They are good by human standards.

Here God looks down on the earth and the thought of everyone was "...only evil continually. And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart. And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth... [In other words, let's just end all this nonsense!] ...both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them.' But Noah **found grace** in the eyes of the LORD" (vs 5-8). Why did Noah find grace? *Partly because of the things that he was doing*, but partly because of the *choosing of God!* That's how we find grace, **by God's choosing!** That's the whole point to remember concerning

God's grace.

We will see that this all the way through the Old Testament. It is by *God's choosing!* Case in point: Remember when Hezekiah was told to set his house in order, he was going to die. He wept and he cried and asked God to please remember 'the things that I have done.' Whatever his full repentance was, God chose to be gracious to him—didn't He? God sent Isaiah back and told Hezekiah, '15 more years.' That is an act of *pure grace!*

- Did Hezekiah deserve it? *No!*
- Did he earn it? *No!*
- Did he beg that his life be spared? *Yes!*
- Was he repentant? *Yes!*

But his begging and his repentance didn't earn it. God *chose* to do it! Just like what it's going to be at the Lake of Fire. There is going to be 'weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Weeping and gnashing of teeth **is not going to earn the grace of God**, because they've already *rejected* the graciousness that God was going to give them. **Grace is something that God gives to us!** Noah found grace, and you know the whole story of the Flood.

Now we're going to see something very interesting, quite a parallel here, Genesis 12:1: "And the LORD said to Abram, 'Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house into a land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing.... [This is a pure act of grace. That is why Abraham is called 'the father of the faithful.' God *chose* him—which is an *act of grace*—and God calling for us is an *act of grace*.] ...And I will bless those that bless you..." (vs 1-3).

Let's see the attitude they had at the Tower of Babel, Genesis 11:4: "And they said, 'Come, let us build us a city and a tower, *with* its top reaching into the heavens. And let us establish a name for ourselves..." They wanted to make a name *for themselves*, strictly out of

- *their own doings*
- *their works*
- *their own rebellion*
- *the things they were doing themselves*
- What happened? *They didn't make a name for themselves!*
- What did God do? *He chose Abraham!*

Abraham was probably a reject in his society. If you read *Josephus* you will find that he was a reject in his society because he wouldn't bow-down to idols! He was a reject, so God calls a *reject!* He says, 'All right, now that you're rejected, get up and

completely get out.'

I think there are some parallels for us. One of the reasons God called us: I don't think we were necessarily 'in like Flynn' in the world, I don't believe. I don't recall in my circumstances that I ever was. I wasn't a rebel, but surely anything but righteous. However, you want to measure by the world's standards, I think we can all say that about ourselves.

Here God says that He's going to make a name for Abraham. What is the thing that still motivates so many people in the world today? *To make a great name!* That's the whole thing behind the great sports things—isn't it? *It sure is! Make a name for themselves!* They love to be called 'bad'; same way with politicians.

Let's see what God told Abraham He would do, Genesis 12:3: "And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you.... [That's still true today! The world can't figure it out. All they do is curse and end up with drought and famine. Those who bless us and do go to us, they get blessings, too.] ...And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Part of our faith in God, part of our acceptance of God, is because we do have to accept God. He has to accept us, but we're accepted in Christ. We have to accept God; we have to answer the calling. God takes us as we are and forgives our sin, but there is sure one thing that is true: ***we are not going to change God!*** So, that means we have to accept Him for what He is and what He has done. We can't tell God, 'Oh yes, we love You, because You gave Your grace to us and You have called us, but then I don't like the way You're doing to the rest of the world. I don't like it that You blast the descendants of Abraham.' Well, would you want God to lie to Abraham? *Of course not!* There are some people who believe that way today. That's a very reason for a lot of the race problems in the world.

Genesis 18:1—here we will see God's grace involved in it. Here's where we find that Abraham found favor: "And the LORD appeared to him in the plains of Mamre, and he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground. And he said, 'My LORD, if now I have found favor in Your sight, do not pass away, I pray, from Your servant. Let a little water, I pray, be brought, and wash Your feet, and rest under the tree'" (vs 1-4).

Then he prepared this meal for the One Who was the Lord God of the Old Testament and, apparently, two angels with Him. Abraham did find *grace* in God's eyes—didn't He? Notice what

position this put him in, that all the way through this incident where God told Abraham what He was going to do to Sodom and Gomorrah, *Abraham reasoned with God!* Notice how he reasoned with God. If we are within God's grace and within God's mercy, and are in a repentant attitude—which we can see that Abraham was—then this puts us in a totally different relationship with God.

Isaiah 1:16: "'Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil... [There's something we can do, and that is to quit doing evil.] ...learn to do good... [we can do that] seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD...." (vs 16-18). Within this relationship with God there is repentance and the acceptance of God's grace, we can reason with God to a certain degree. Not to go against His will, not to change His plan, but we can ***reason on the basis of mercy.***

Just remember when James and John that came to Jesus—when then didn't receive Him in the village—and they said, 'Let's call fire down from heaven.' Jesus said, 'You don't know what manner of spirit you are in.' *You can always reason with God concerning mercy!* Therefore, you know one thing: if you have an enemy, don't go pray that God will destroy them, because God won't do that. You pray for that enemy, that God maybe could be merciful to him. Isn't that the hardest thing in the world to do? *That is the hardest thing in the world!* But if you found yourself in dire circumstances, wouldn't you want God to be merciful to you? Here's then how we can reason with God:

Verse 18: "'Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD. 'Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. **If you are willing and obedient,** you shall eat the good of the land... [what a tremendous and gracious thing that God does for us] ...But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured *with* the sword;' for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*" (vs 18-20).

Let's see how this actually was the way that Abraham reasoned and dealt with God, and God was gracious—wasn't He? He would be gracious to all the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah ***IF*** there were 50 righteous.

Genesis 18:23: "And Abraham drew near and said, 'Will You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?.... [he was reasoning with God face-to-face] ...Perhaps there are fifty righteous within the city.... [What is this also telling you about Abraham? *That Abraham was a merciful man!* He

was concerned with the shedding of innocent blood, as well as for Lot and his family! He knew that Lot was there.] ...Will You also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to act in this manner, to kill the righteous with the wicked.... [He's talking very bluntly directly to God!] ...And far be it from You, that the righteous should be as the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (vs 23-25).

If Abraham were speaking wrongly, God would have told him, 'You're out of order!' He just did to Sarah—didn't He? He said, 'Sarah, you're going to bear this time next year.' She laughed and snickered and said that she didn't laugh. God said, 'Yes, you did laugh.' If Abraham were wrong when he made the statement, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' God would have said, 'Abraham, what are you saying this for?'

Verse 26: "And the LORD said, 'If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.' And Abraham answered and said, 'Behold now, I have taken upon myself to speak to the LORD—I who am but dust and ashes.... [Notice his attitude; he realized he is just dust and ashes because in the snap of a finger that is exactly what he could become.] ...Perhaps there will be five lacking from the fifty righteous. Will You destroy all the city for lack of five?' And He said, 'If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it.' And he spoke to Him yet again, and said, 'Perhaps there shall be forty found there.' And He said, 'I will not do it for forty's sake.' And he said, 'Oh let not the LORD be angry....'" (vs 26-30). Notice the attitude that he had toward God. This is a perfect example of *reasoning* with God for mercy!

"...and I will speak. Perhaps there shall be thirty found there.' And He said, 'I will not do it if I find thirty there.' And he said, 'Lo now, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord. Perhaps there shall be twenty found there.' And He said, 'I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.' And he said, 'Oh do not let the LORD be angry, and I will speak **only once more**. Perhaps *only* ten shall be found there.' And He said, 'I will not destroy it for ten's sake.'" (vs 30-32). And, of course, you know they didn't find ten.

- What happened? *God saved Lot and his family!*
- What else happened? *Lot's wife did not believe the goodness and mercy of God and she looked back and turned to a pillar of salt!*

Notice that when they were leaving, Genesis 19:17: "And it came to pass, when they... [the two angels] ...brought him outside, *they* said, 'Escape

for your life! Do not look behind you, nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountain lest you be consumed.' And Lot said to them, 'Oh no, my LORD, behold now, your servant has **found grace** in your sight... [He knew that this was a gracious act of God. Did Lot do anything to earn it? *No!* He actually got out because of the pleading of Abraham.] ...and you have magnified your mercy, which you have shown to me in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil overtake me and I die'" (vs 17-19).

So, God allows even our own peculiar little difficulties and problems we have. Here Lot was right in the middle of being saved. He knew that he had found grace and he knew that he was getting out of it. He had the peculiarity that he was probably afraid of wild animals up in the mountains and said that he didn't want to go up there.

Verse 20: "'Behold now, this city *is* near to flee to, and it is a little one. Oh let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my soul shall live.' And *the angel* said to him, 'See, **I have accepted you concerning this thing also...**'" (vs 20-21). There's a little more reasoning and latitude with God, but what does it all depend upon? *It depends upon our acceptance of God's grace* and our recognition of our own human weaknesses and frailties!

That is why when come to the prayer in Luke 18—when the Pharisee came and said, 'God, I thank You that I'm not like other men.' See the difference in the attitude? And the sinner said, 'God, be mercy on me, a sinner.'

Genesis 32:5—here again we see the grace and favor of God. This has to do when Esau was coming back and he was going to meet Jacob and Jacob was coming with his two wives and two concubines and all of his sons, all of his sheep and all of his cattle. He thought Esau would take them. Jacob sent a present out to Esau and said:

Genesis 32:5 "And I *have* oxen and donkeys, flocks, and menservants, and maidservants. And I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in your sight." Jacob also knew the value of how he should treat his own brother. Remember, even though he did get the birthright the way he did from Esau, he still didn't despise his brother. He came and treated him very kindly. Jacob said, 'If I've found grace in your sight...' Esau at that time, was probably more powerful militarily and could really have done Jacob in. Jacob thought that if this guy still hates me for stealing the birthright, I'd better be very careful.

Genesis 33 goes through the whole episode of Jacob and Esau meeting, and I just want to cover,

Genesis 33:10: “And Jacob said, ‘No, please, if now I have found grace in your sight, then receive my present at my hand; for therefore have I seen your face, as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Please take my blessing that is brought to you because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.’ And he urged him, and he accepted” (vs 10-11).

Here’s another thing that’s very important and is also very true, and this ties in with the parable in the New Testament: *If you have received a gracious treatment and mercy*, how are we to treat others? *The same way!* Remember the parable of the lord whose servant demanded that he pay 10,000 talents. He said, ‘Lord, I don’t have it to pay’—when the lord commanded that he be sold and his family and everything. So, he forgave him. Then the one who was forgiven went out and choked his servant who owed him 100 pence. You know what happened when God found out about that.

Here’s a very good example in the Old Testament. As we go through we’re going to see a unity and a consistency in the whole Bible, rather just divided Old Testament and New Testament in the traditional way that it is normally done by most people. Yet, there is that division: the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. But the basic principle of grace is true in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Only the graciousness of God to us has the ramification of eternal life—which is absolutely fantastic! Here’s another kind of grace and favor that God can give, and it has to do in relationship with others. It also is a reward of God—not strictly speaking—it is an extension of His grace. I would hate to put in the form of a ‘reward,’ because *you cannot earn grace*. I would have to say that is semantically not correct, though apparently on the surface it is.

It is an extension of God’s grace because of your relationship with Him that He will extend His grace into the relationship that you have with others. Here’s a case of Joseph. He was brought into Egypt, sold, and especially after the way his brothers treated him, you talk about a family argument. I just imagine we would be shocked if we had the recording of all the arguments that the 12 brothers had between each other. And the arguments they had concerning Joseph: ‘This upstart with that coat and that smart aleck telling of the dream. We’ll fix his hide. We’ll take him out here and we’ll do him in.’ They were going to kill him. Then Ruben said to spare his life. ‘Okay, we’ll sell him to the Arabs.’

Then they went through the whole charade of killing a goat, putting the blood on it and taking the jacket back to Jacob saying, ‘Joseph is gone!’

They had to live with that lie for how long? Did Joseph *have cause* that he could be bitter? *Yes, sure he did!* He was brought into Egypt, sold, and:

Genesis 39:2: “And the LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the **LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hands**.... [The master could see that there was something special about Joseph. It was an extension of God’s grace.] ...And Joseph found grace in his sight... [tremendous favor, tremendous blessing] ...and he served him. And he made him overseer over his house, and he put him in charge of all he had” (vs 2-4). You know the rest of the story. It’s the one of the few cases that’s recorded in the Bible where a man turned down an illicit affair.

Nevertheless, then he went through all of the things of being in the dungeon. He found grace and favor in the eyes of Pharaoh, because Joseph told what Pharaoh’s dream was. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all Egypt. Joseph then returned that grace and favor when his brothers came down to Egypt to find grain because of the famine. He had a little trickery in it, too, but that made it kind of intriguing when you go through and read the whole story.

Can you imagine how they all felt when they were all together; when Jacob was there and Benjamin and all the sons were there in Egypt when everything was discovered of who they were and what was going on. Joseph said that it’s ‘by the hand of God that He sent me here.’ He didn’t even say, ‘Hey, brothers, I want you down here to apologize to me for what you did to me.’ Didn’t say that. Didn’t do it. Didn’t seek any vengeance. He said, ‘I’m here because of the hand of God. He’s blessed me, so let’s receive the blessings of God.’

Then we go through the rest of the story and come to the time when the children of Israel were the captives or slaves in Egypt. They suffered quite a few things, and, of course, we would have to say that the calling of the children of Israel out of Egypt was *a gracious act*. Remember, the whole beginning of the Passover, as it relates to Christ—and it’s through Christ that we have grace.

Exo. 32 is the sin where they made the golden calf. Exodus 33 is really a fantastic chapter when you realize it. Exodus 33:7: “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go! Get you down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*.’” After Moses stood between God and the people and said, ‘God, don’t kill them.’

Then God said, ‘I’ll take you to that land, only these are a stiff-necked people. Then we have

the occasion where Moses asked to see God in His glory, and God told him, ‘Yes, you can see My glory, but stand here at the rock and I will show you My back part,’ because no one can look on the face of God and live.’

Exo. 34—What it is that God delights in, and what God emphasizes more than anything else.

(go to the next track)

Exodus 34:5 “And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.” What are some of the names of the Lord? *Almighty! All powerful!* Is that what He emphasized? *No He didn’t!*

Verse 6: “And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, **merciful and gracious...** [He spared all the Israelites—didn’t He?] **...longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and Truth.**” Because God is love, this is what He delights in more than anything else.

This is why if a person approaches God from the opposite point of view—as we find in the parable of the three servants who were each given a pound (Matt. 25). One gained ten, one gained five and one hid it in the earth. Remember what he said when God came to account? *Here’s the pound You gave me, I wrapped it and hid it in the earth! I knew You were an austere man! I knew that You gathered where You didn’t sow! You harvested where You didn’t straw! Therefore, I was afraid and I hid it in the earth!* What was God’s response to him? *The same that he had to God!*

If our response, our attitude toward God, regardless of your circumstances is that **God is gracious and merciful and kind!** *If*, in our prayers and relationship with God you really feel down and out and sort of on the odd side of God—and I’m sure you’ve all felt on the odd side of God because of sin and some of the circumstances you’ve gone through—*remind Him of His goodness and His mercy.* Think of the attitude Abraham had; think of the attitude that Joseph had. Use those attitudes toward God coupled with repentance. Then you won’t be like the third servant who took the pound and hid it.

“...the LORD God, **merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,** keeping mercy to the thousandth generation... [He would have spared all those in Sodom and Gomorrah] **...forgiving** iniquity and transgression and sin...” (vs 6-7). That’s what God delights in; that’s why Christ came: to save the world, not condemn it. It’s own sins condemn it enough! That’s why the only sin that won’t be

forgiven is the *blaspheme* against the Holy Spirit, which comes from God the Father.

“...but Who will by no means clear *the guilty...* [God is not going to forgive unless there is repentance!] (If there isn’t repentance, then): ...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, to the third and to the fourth generation.” (v 7).

As it is in Exo. 20—for those who love Him and keep His commandments unto a thousand generations.’ A thousand generations is a long, long time. I can’t tell you exactly how long a generation is. I know that it came up one time where Jesus said that ‘this generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled’ (Matt. 24) We all try to figure out how long a generation is. I thought I’d be real clever and took the three sections of the 14 generations of Matt. 1—from Abraham to Moses—to whatever and took all of those and went through the genealogy tables and added up all the years of those that were listed and divided and got an average. I found out that there’s no way you can set a definite number of years on a generation, because one average was 32 years, one was 60 years, and one was 42 years. How long is a generation? *However God figures it!*

How long is a thousand generations? A thousand times 62 is almost the whole history of the earth. A thousand times 42 is almost all the time from Abraham down to our day—right? You want to take the narrowest amount—32 years—that’s 3200 years, goes back at least to David. That’s a long time! I just imagine that if we really knew, we are here as a result of God’s mercy, regardless of how we got here or our forefathers got here. We’re here because of God’s mercy. I know I would not want to live in Eskimo land. Nor would I want to be down in the jungles of the Amazon. When I see people in circumstances like that, I’ve had two responses:

1. Those dirty people deserve it—that’s *the wrong response!*
2. It’s God’s blessing that we’re here—and *may God be merciful to them!*

Maybe if God would call them, remember what God said of Israel in Jer. 2—‘If I would have gone to the heathen, they would have kept My laws and statutes to this day.’ We don’t need to get all uppity-uppity and brag about this, that or the other thing. We just need to be thankful for God’s mercy, that He has done it, that He has allowed it.

Let’s see some more of God’s graciousness and mercy and goodness. There are many places we can go in the Old Testament. Some I have covered in the past: sections in Deuteronomy where God said that ‘I love the fathers, therefore I have chosen you.

You're not the biggest, the greatest and the best, nevertheless, you're the least, smallest and so forth.

1-Samuel 1—let's see how God works through circumstances in people's lives. Samuel and his calling, and the whole situation concerning Samuel was because of mercy and grace. It was because of the attitude of Samuel's mother; strictly because of her attitude. Look at how all of Israel was blessed because of Samuel. Just to summarize:

They came year to year and Elkanah^[transcriber's correction] her husband said, 'Why are you weeping.' That's because she didn't have any children (1-Sam. 1:7-8).

1-Samuel 1:9: "And Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh and after they had drunk. And Eli the priest sat upon the seat by the side post of the temple of the LORD." We can also understand something here that's important: What happens when you come into contact with someone who is supposed to be God's representative, but is corrupt? Was Eli corrupt? *Yes, he was!* Were his sons corrupt? *Yes, they were!* God executed all three on the same day. **Hannah trusted in God**, not the man Eli the high priest.

Verse 10: "And she *was* in bitterness of soul, prayed to the LORD, and wept sorely." Not angry. Bitterness means *over much sorrow* in this particular case; much grief because of the trying circumstances of not having any children.

Verse 11: "And she vowed a vow... [this is reasoning with God in the realm of His grace] ...and said, 'O, LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look upon the affliction of Your handmaid and remember me, and not forget Your handmaid, but will give to Your handmaid a man-child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.'" You can imagine the older that Samuel got... It doesn't say *no scissors*, but no razor. It's not saying that his hair was always long. But he would not be shaved.

Verse 12: "And it came to pass as she continued praying before the LORD, Eli noticed her mouth.... [here's Eli, an evil man, still a priest] ...Now, Hannah spoke in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard...." (vs 12-13). You can imagine that she was there like you see at the Wailing Wall, the Jews rocking back and forth, you see their lips moving. She was crying and tears were streaming down and rocking back and forth.

Verse 14: "...And Eli thought she had become drunk And Eli said to her, 'How long will you be drunken? Put away your wine from you!' And Hannah answered, 'No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have neither drunk wine nor

strong drink, but have **poured out my soul before the LORD**.... [notice the whole attitude]Do not count your handmaid for a daughter of wickedness... [Eli's sons were called sons of Belial (1-Sam 2:12)] ...for out of the abundance of my anxiety and grief I have spoken until now.' And Eli answered and said, 'Go in peace...' (vs 14-17).

Did God honor Eli's command? *Yes, He did!* Not because Eli was good. Partly because she was pleading with God, but I imagine there were others who pleaded with God and wept and went through all these things and God never granted them children. But because God chose to do so and Eli affirmed it.

Verse 17: And Eli answered and said, 'Go in peace and the God of Israel grant *to you* your petition that you have asked of Him.' And she said, 'Let your handmaid find grace in your sight.' So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer *sad*" (vs 17-18).

She became pregnant. Her first child was Samuel and he became one who kept the Word of God going, and was a great prophet of God, and hence a tremendous amount of grace came to Israel because of that one thing. There's an excellent example of it.

Let's go to Psalm 78 and see how God deals with those who are sinners. How He dealt with Israel. I think this helps give us an insight into the tremendous wickedness of human beings. I think if we understand that and if we all understand that the wickedness in the human being differs not one wit from human being to human being, with the exception of those who are demon or Satan-possessed, that will obviously be multiplied in wickedness.

Here is the whole account of God calling Israel, how they went through the Sinai, how they sinned and their lust and everything just coming all the way through.

Psalm 78:32: "For all this they still sinned and did not believe in His wonderful works.... [They had the fire by night, the pillar by day; they had the manna, all the things that God had done: the killing of the wicked, the fighting of the enemy, etc. Therefore, He ended their days in vanity and their years in terror. When He slew them, then they sought Him; and they turned back and sought after God earnestly]" (vs 32-34). Isn't that true with all human beings. When the going gets rough there is not an atheist anywhere; not one.

You know how you know and atheist is really not an atheist? *By the very fact that he swears and takes God's name in vain!* If he didn't believe in

God why would he have to use curse words all the time? Because when you use curse words all the time you're trying to prove, trying to reinforce, that God doesn't exist. ***You're tempting and challenging God!*** So, if there were really an atheist, and one of these days I hope I meet an atheist, and if I hear him swear and curse I'm going to ask him this question: 'Why do you use God's name if you don't believe in Him? You believe in all the other words you speak—don't you? If you use His name you must believe in Him.' That will sort of twist them up in a knot. This is true. They've even portrayed this in movies, and it is true, when the going gets tough they cry out to God.

Verse 35: "And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the Most High God was their Redeemer. Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouths, and they lied to Him with their tongues, for their heart was not steadfast with Him; neither were they faithful in His covenant. But He, *being* full of compassion, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them..." (vs 35-38). That's going right back to the time that we just covered there in Exo. 32 & 33. That's quite a thing, that God is that merciful and gracious and here this is talking about just in the Old Testament—isn't it? We haven't come to the New Testament.

This will help you understand why God called Paul who was Saul, who was a destroyer of the Church. That's why Paul said that he was called to show a pattern. He considered himself to be *the* sinner. Every time I think of that I cannot help but think how relatives of the deceased—that Paul when he was Saul caused to be killed—felt when they were in the Church and then here comes Paul who was known; he's the one who persecuted the Church. You wouldn't feel like running up and putting your arms around him, hug him and say, 'Oh, Paul, I'm so glad to see you. By the way you killed my son.' *or* 'You killed my daughter.' It's an incongruity in human standards, but that shows you how fantastic the *grace of God* is.

Look at it here; it says they flattered Him with their tongues: "...and the Most High God was their Redeemer. Nevertheless, they flattered Him with their mouths, and they lied to Him with their tongues" (vs 35-36). They didn't mean it; they lied to Him: 'Oh, God, we will never do this again.' Their heart was not right with Him because they had their heart set on what they wanted to do.

Verse 37: "For their heart was not steadfast with Him; neither were they faithful in His covenant. But He, *being* full of compassion, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them..." (vs 37-38). Now you can see why it is so ludicrous for us to say

that as Americans we are great Americans, because of the great American spirit and the great American ingenuity. We're only here because of God's mercy to us, that's all! I mean, even as a nation and as a country we're here *by God's grace*.

"...yea, many times He turned His anger away and did not stir up all His wrath" (vs. 38). Sometimes I do this quite a bit in my own mind's eye. What would it be like just to be stationary and let the earth turn and what would happen every time I came to San Francisco? You can just feel the anger well up in you, you see all these fruitcakes going around up there and all the things taking place. How would you feel everyday? Well, God remembers that they're but flesh. He knows that their day of salvation is going to come. He's already set the laws in motion that will take care of their activities and so let it be, and be merciful to the rest.

Verse 39: "For He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes away and does not come again. How often did they provoke Him in the wilderness and grieve Him in the desert? And still again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel" (vs 39-41).

It goes through showing here that how God just keeps taking it and taking it and then it reaches a certain point. I don't know what God's level is of how He judges all these things and where it comes to. But I'm just thankful that He's merciful and we ought to look to His mercy and His graciousness and not look to His wrath and His power and His destructive ability, but look to God's creative ability and His goodness and that will help us in our relationship with Him.

Psalms 84:8: "O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed, for a day in Your courts is better than a thousand *elsewhere*.... [a thousand days in the court of the wicked] ...I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness" (vs 8-10).

I have seen this Scripture perverted, to use it as leverage in humility to force people into a fearful, humble stance to where then, 'he wasn't seeking in anything better than to just be a doorkeeper—so who are you?' *You know!* 'Oh that's right.' To use it as leverage in fear against people.

"...I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness, for the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory... [God is the One Who gives grace and glory] ...no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly"

(vs 10-11). That's something to keep in mind. That's why Paul rejoiced in his afflictions. That's why he rejoiced when God told him, 'My grace is sufficient for you.' Because He's withholding no good thing from us and He will give it to us, especially in due time at the resurrection.

"O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in You" (v 12). The next time you sin and you think: How can I go repent of this? *Especially if it's one of your lifelong problems!* There are certain things that God has allowed everyone to have as a lifelong problem. He did Paul—didn't He? He didn't heal him. Every one of us has some kind of lifelong problem or thing that is always a stumbling block for us, and every time we lose our temper, or whatever it is, we think: Oh, terrible! How can I repent again?

Remember this, this will help you: Psalm 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy." When you sin you sure are needy. Even when you don't sin you are needy. I mean, even when you're the very best you can be you're still needy. That is true!

Verse 2: "Preserve my soul, for I am Holy..."—we are! We're called the Holy people of God—aren't we? Aren't we sanctified with God's Truth? *That's true!*

Verse 3: "O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for You, LORD, are good and **ready** to forgive..." (vs 3-5). That's all part of God's grace! He is ready to forgive!

What if we thought we don't have to go back to 1-John 1 because we've been there several times where that He *will forgive* all of our sins, all of our unrighteousness? He *is faithful* to forgive them. Here it is He is also *ready* to forgive.

"...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You" (v 5). Don't hesitate to repent of any sins that you find yourself doing. I mean even if it's one of those things that dog you all your life, cause you do need it forgiven. ***He's ready to forgive for those who call upon Him!*** Sure enough if you don't call upon God He won't forgive them. If you think that it's too much that God can't forgive remember He's going to forgive the sins of the whole world. Are your sins greater than the sins of the whole world? *No!* That's all a part of God's graciousness.

Remember, it says that they 'limited the Holy One of Israel.' We limit God when we do not trust in His mercy. How is it that we don't trust in His mercy? ***When we do not acknowledge***

- His goodness
- His mercifulness
- His graciousness
- When we are *afraid* to go to God and tell Him that we really need Him

We really, *really* need Him! So, that's all a part of the *relationship of the graciousness of God*.

Verse 6: "Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications. **In the day of my trouble I will call upon You...** [Don't wait until the week after. You may not get out of your trouble.] ...for You will answer me. Among the gods there is none like You, O LORD; neither are there any works like Your works. All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O LORD, and shall glorify Your name, for You are great and do wonderful things; You alone are God. Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your Truth; unite my heart to fear Your name. I will praise You, O LORD my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forevermore, for great is Your mercy toward me; and You have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave" (vs. 6-13). Tremendous— isn't it? This is why we are to grow in *the grace* and in *the knowledge* of Jesus Christ.

- Why can't we have the joy of God's salvation?

Yes, we can have the joy of God's salvation when we understand about God's grace! Too many people who should have the joy of the Lord are in the misery of church, and that should not be.

- Why can't we feel good?

Not because we look upon ourselves as good and do as the world: psyche yourself up—self-hypnotize—how good you are, how wonderful you are, how much you can do. *No!*

- Why can't we feel good because we understand God's goodness?
- Why can't we feel happy because of what God has done for us?
- In spite of all of our circumstances?

Paul said in Rom. 8, it doesn't matter what comes against us: life or death, height, or anything. '**Nothing** can separate us from the love of God.' I really think we're really on the verge of beginning to understand that. Let's hope that going through this part of the *grace of God* we can understand more how we can have the joy of God and His salvation, and His goodness, and His mercy.

There is nothing wrong with that. Is it a sin for Christians to be happy because of God? *Of course not!* That's an incongruous question. Why should we as Christians have to go around and carry

God as a burden? That's a silly statement— isn't it? How many times did we make it so? Why did we make it so? *Because we didn't understand about God's graciousness and God's mercy!*

Here's another Psalm having to do with God's mercy, Psalm 103:8: "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, for as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him" (vs 8-11).

Verse 17: "But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting..."

Psalm 111:1: "Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart in the council of the upright and in the congregation. The works of the LORD are great, sought out by all those who have pleasure in them. His work is glory and majesty; and His righteousness endures forever. He has made a memorial for His wonderful works; **the LORD is gracious and full of compassion**" (vs 1-4).

I defy anyone to hold the doctrine that the God of the Old Testament was a God of wrath and a God of anger. God is a God of love, mercy and compassion for those who

- call upon Him
- seek Him
- repent
- draw close to God

God is a God of wrath, a God of anger and a God of power ***against sinners and the rebellious and the devil worshipers*** in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. There's no difference because God, as we saw in the beginning, is 'the same yesterday, today, and forever.'

Psalm 112:4: "To the upright there arises light in the darkness... [That ties right back in with our series in John—doesn't it?] ...he is gracious and full of compassion and righteousness." That's what God is! The book of John is that which exemplifies, is that which brings the understanding of God's grace and love like no other book. I think it is absolutely true that we cannot understand the Gospel of the New Testament, the Gospel of Christ unless we fully understand the book of John. That it's spiritually understood.

Psalm 116:1 gives the full situation here: "I love the LORD because He hears my voice and my prayers." Have you ever had a prayer answered that you just muttered kind of as a thought one time? Who knows how long before it was fulfilled. I've experienced that. I know that in the moment that I

understood that that prayer was answered there was a special thrill and exhilaration that even that little thought, *God heard.*

Verse 2: "Because He has bowed down His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live. The sorrows of death hemmed me in, and the pains of the grave took hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow" (vs 2-3). Lest any of us think that that is true, I know sometimes with the pains and difficulties of our own physical existence and the circumstances we are in, sometimes we feel that way.

Verse 4: "Then I called upon the name of the LORD: 'O LORD, I beseech You, deliver my soul.' Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you" (vs 4-7). I've often wondered what is going to be like at the resurrection when all these things really come together. Whatever that song of Moses is going to be when we're on the Sea of Glass, that is going to be absolutely stunning.

Psalm 145:1—here again you have to follow through the thought: "I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You; and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.... [we can sure say that about God's love] ...One generation shall praise Your works to another and shall declare Your mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious splendor of Your majesty and of Your wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Your awesome works; and I will declare Your greatness. They shall pour forth the memory of Your great goodness and shall sing of Your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (vs 1-8).

This could almost be the theme song of the second resurrection. You just think on it for a minute! Can you imagine what those people are going to think when they come to the conscious realization that they have been resurrected. When they come to the conscious realization that God is going to give them salvation. They're going to say that God is *gracious and full of compassion*. Slow to anger, and of great mercy.

Verse 9: "The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." That's a tremendous Psalm—isn't it?

Let's see a couple things concerning our part in using God's grace in relationship to God's laws. Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of the LORD *is* the

beginning of knowledge..." That's basically true. If it comes down to where you don't sin because of the fear of sin, that's better than not sinning. I've found that when you come to that point and you resist that temptation, what does God always do? *He always provides a way out! It's the beginning of knowledge!*

"...but fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of your father and forsake not the law of your mother, for they *shall be* an ornament of grace to your head... [In other words of grace and favor just in life and living like it was with Joseph.] ...And chains around your neck" (vs 7-9)—chains of decoration and beauty.

Proverbs 3:21: "My son, do not let them depart from your eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion, and they shall be life to your soul and grace to your neck" (vs 21-22). Apparently that had to do with some of the symbolism having to do with the priest ornamentation. I know across the forehead of the priest they had 'Holiness unto the Lord,' and then the two shoulder things. I forget right now exactly what they were.

Proverbs 4:9 talks about wisdom and what it will do: "She shall place upon your head a garland of grace; she shall bestow upon you a crown of glory." We can spiritualize this and project it into what it's going to be at the resurrection. That will be because of God's grace and then we will have a crown of glory, which won't fade away, etc.

Isaiah 30:18: "And therefore, will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you... [This is talking about how God is going to bring back all the Israelites; bring them out of captivity and restore them.] ...And therefore, He will be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you, for the LORD *is* a God of justice; blessed *are* all those who wait for Him."

Let me add to your reading list these things that you need to go back and read in the book of Deuteronomy: 4:6-8, 37; 6:16-18, 24-25; 7:6-9, 12-15; 10:12-22. Let's go to that one section and we'll pretty well end the grace of God in the Old Testament. This is showing our part.

Deuteronomy 10:12: "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command you today for your good? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *belong* to the LORD your God, the earth also, with all that is in it. Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, you above all people, as *it is* today" (vs 12-15).

Verse 19: "Therefore, love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." And it talks about fearing God, serving God.

Verse 21: "He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, Who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. Your fathers went down into Egypt with seventy persons. And now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of the heavens for multitude" (vs 21-22). Then you can add to that Deut. 11 about loving God and so forth.

Isaiah 53 is showing part of the grace of God. Remember, it says in Heb. 2:9 that by the grace of God 'Jesus tasted death for every man.' Well, here is a prophecy of it. This doesn't talk about the grace of God in Isa. 53, but it *shows* the grace of God. Isaiah 53:2 is a prophecy of Christ: "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; He has no form nor comeliness that we should look upon Him, nor beauty that we should desire Him. *He is* despised and rejected of men..." (vs 2-3). Imagine that He came to His own creation. He came to His own people.

Verse 3: "*He is* despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (vs 3-4). That's virtually what they said, 'If you be the Christ come down off the cross.' That's tantamount to saying 'You are there because you are not of God.' And if you're not of God 'You're there because God is striking you down.'

Verse 5: "But He *was* wounded for our transgressions; *He was* crushed for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace *was* upon Him; and with His stripes we ourselves are healed." We always used to say that's just *physical* healing. But I tell you, there's a whole lot more to *spiritual* healing than there is to physical healing. A whole lot more!

Verse 6: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned each one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; yet He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and with His generation who did consider that He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He *was* stricken?" (vs 6-8). It shows God's graciousness and mercy even in the death of Christ.

And we're going to see even more profoundly, as we get down to the Passover time, and I'm still brooding on this and thinking about the tremendous sacrifice of Christ and in particular in relationship to the fact of the power of Satan the devil's hand in His crucifixion. I hope we can get that in a real bright light this time, because it manifests ***the humility and the love and the mercy and the graciousness of God like nothing else ever does.***

- 1 John 1
- Romans 8
- Deuteronomy 4:6-8; 6:16-18, 24-25; 7:6-9, 12-15; 10:22; 11
- Hebrews 2:9

Also referenced:

- Sermon Series: *Gospel of John*
- Books: *Josephus*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural Referenced:

- 1) Hebrews 13:8
- 2) 2 Peter 3:18
- 3) Genesis 1:31
- 4) Genesis 5:28-32
- 5) Genesis 6:5-8
- 6) Genesis 12:1-3
- 7) Genesis 11:4
- 8) Genesis 12:3
- 9) Genesis 18:1-4
- 10) Isaiah 1:16-20
- 11) Genesis 18:23-32
- 12) Genesis 19:17-21
- 13) Genesis 32:5
- 14) Genesis 33:10-11
- 15) Genesis 39:2-4
- 16) Exodus 33:7
- 17) Exodus 34:5-7
- 18) 1 Samuel 1:9-18
- 19) Psalm 78:32-41
- 20) Psalm 84:8-12
- 21) Psalm 86:1-13
- 22) Psalm 103:8-11, 17
- 23) Psalm 111:1-4
- 24) Psalm 112:4
- 25) Psalm 116:1-7
- 26) Psalm 145:1-9
- 27) Proverbs 1:7-9
- 28) Proverbs 3:21-22
- 29) Proverbs 4:9
- 30) Isaiah 30:18
- 31) Deuteronomy 10:12-15, 19, 21-22
- 32) Isaiah 53:2-8

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 2; 3
- Luke 18
- Exodus 32
- Matthew 25
- Exodus 20
- Matthew 24; 1
- Jeremiah 2
- 1 Samuel 1:7-8; 2:12

Grace of God II

The Grace of God in the New Testament

Fred R. Coulter

How many have this booklet, *Grace of God of the Bible*? This is one that I wrote when we first began Biblical [Church of God]. I would have to say that at this point now we've grown a lot in understanding concerning grace, but I think you're going to be very surprised as why, when we were in Worldwide Church of God, we did not learn about the grace of God, and I think you're going to be absolutely floored!

Let's just review concerning *The Grace of God in the Old Testament* {#2 this series}. In studying through concerning the Grace of God in the Bible, it dawned on me that this is an example of kind of a personal experience in how you feel when you grow in knowledge. Remember, the Bible says that you learn 'here a little and there a little; precept upon precept, and here a little and there a little.'

This is exactly what it is, and if you want to know how much this part of the Bible has been used by me all you have to do is look at the pages and you can almost see by the color, and that's from the hand, just over the years, my dirty fingers have left these little marks and the little bit of sweat in the palm of my hands. I've got it marked. I probably have a half a dozen different pens and different times I've made major insertions in it.

How many times have I preached sermons on the Sabbath? How many times have we gone back and gone over the story of Adam and Eve? I know that the Worldwide Church of God there's only one version you ever hear and that's the only sermon you ever hear from one person, so you don't want to go back to Gen. 1, 2, and 3, but it dawned on me that in Gen. 2 when God made the Sabbath, let's see what He did to it.

Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by the *beginning* of the seventh day God finished His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day..." (vs 1-3).

Most people think it's a curse, but it's a blessing. He blessed the day. Why aren't people anxious to keep the day that God blessed? That's strange—isn't it? Sometimes things become so crystal clear that when you see it in its proper light it's just amazing—isn't it? You would think since people would want a blessing from God that they would want to keep the day He blessed. So, He blessed it.

Verse 3: "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."

When you go through and read the rest of the account, the Sabbath Day was given while Adam and Eve were in a state of grace, because they were given permission to eat of all of the trees of the garden *including the Tree of Life*. You cannot eat of the Tree of Life unless you have a state of grace.

The Sabbath was given not only as a law, as we find in Exo. 20 and Deut. 5, but it was given to mankind as an act of grace. {see booklet: *Which Day is the True Christian Sabbath?*} Sabbath-keeping: Is it salvation *by works*? or Is it an *act of grace*? I think that when people read that they're going to be absolutely surprised that keeping the Sabbath is an *act of grace*. We will see that God has given us good works that He ordained that we should walk in and the Sabbath is one of those *good works*. You can go back and go over the Scriptures where it says in Isa. 58, 'If you will turn your foot from the Sabbath and call it a delight,' etc, etc.

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto the good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them." Wasn't the Sabbath one of those things ordained that we should walk in? *Certainly!* Wherever you find Sabbath-breaking, just go back and re-read Ezek. 20. When they broke the Sabbath He said, 'How long refuse you to walk in My commandments?'

Go to Exo. 16:27-28^[transcriber's correction], where the fellow went out on the Sabbath to look for manna, and God said, 'How long refuse you to keep My commandments?' It's one of those good works, and it's a blessing. I can tell you that I know that from experience from the last three weeks sitting at home, that it is a blessing to keep the Sabbath and to assemble as God has said. There's just no two ways about it.

Let's see a reference to the Old Testament in 1-Peter 1; it's talking about the salvation and the grace that is given to us, and that even though the prophets of old were under the grace of God by their calling and their message, and their promise to be in the Kingdom of God, they didn't understand some of the things that we understand.

1-Peter 1:10: "Concerning which salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace *that would*

come to you... [toward you; they didn't understand it, but it was one of those things that God gave and they preached it] ...have diligently searched out and intently inquired, searching into what way and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ *which was* in them was indicating, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and these glories that would follow; to whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but to us they were ministering these things, which now have been announced to you by those who have preached the Gospel... [glad tidings, KJV] ...to you by *the Holy Spirit...*" (vs 10-12).

We are going to see why it is called *the glad tidings*. We are going to see why we have been missing the joy of God's salvation. *Partly because of our own sins, partly because of our own weakness and infirmity!* When you're in pain and misery you can't be jumping up and down for joy, that is true. I'm talking about the overall, why can't you feel good about being a Christian kind of thing? Why do you have to go around with a guilty conscience all the time? The Catholics are the ones who make you have a guilty conscience, because the Catholics have turned the grace of God into justification by Catholic works, and they turned it into lasciviousness.

Zechariah 3 talks about the time of the coming of Christ. This is one of the many parts. Isaiah is full of the prophecies of the grace of Christ, the crucifixion of Christ, and all the things having to do with what God was going to do with the grace of God that was to be given to us. Zechariah 3:8: "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your fellows who sit before you; for they *are* men wondered at, for behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch!" That's referring directly to Jesus Christ.

Zechariah 4:6: "Then he answered and spoke to me, saying, 'This *is* the Word of the LORD to Zerubbabel, saying, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD of hosts.'" How many times have we heard that preached, and yet, physical means were sought to bring about salvation. *No!* It's by God's Spirit.

Verse 7: "Who *are* you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you shall become* a plain; and he shall bring forth the Headstone [Christ] with shoutings, 'Grace! Grace unto it!'" This was a direct reference of the tremendous *act of Grace of God* in sending Jesus Christ.

Even though God is a God of grace in the Old Testament and New Testament, He reveals that grace to us as individuals in the New Testament in a very profound way. {read Isa. 55:6-7; 61:1-3 (quoted in Luke 4 where it says 'Come unto Me that are heavy laden and you can buy without money, and you can have bread without price'). Then Isa.

66:1-2.} Those are prophecies of the grace that God would give to individuals.

Now let's get into *The Grace of God in the New Testament*. Remember that I had this where I showed you the number of Scriptures that were included in the literature in the Worldwide Church of God, and how that on one page they had one column and two thirds of another column type written page. I've gone back and analyzed every one of those and in the entire literature of the Worldwide Church of God they only use ten Scriptures referring to the *grace of God*. *Ten!* Now, is it any wonder that people in the Worldwide Church of God do not understand the grace of God?

There's one thing that the grace of God does: ***it sets you free!*** Not free *to* sin, but it sets you free *from* sin, and it sets you free to where you have that direct contact with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Who is the only Mediator? *Jesus Christ!* It's sets you free from control and manipulation by men. So therefore, whichever church wants to control people cannot preach the true Grace of God. They cannot do it.

Let me count the Scriptures: 39 in the booklet that was supposed to teach about grace had to do with either commandment-keeping only, or the fear of going into the Lake of Fire. That is really something! And yet, the most important thing that we need to do, and, though I heard it preached from the pulpit from time to time, 2-Peter 3 was not in any of the literature. It's not here on the literature list. I was absolutely dumbfounded! I knew it was not too good, but I didn't realize how bad. I don't want anyone to take this as an attack on the Worldwide Church of God, but it shows an error in *their* teaching.

- Do we point out the errors of Protestants? *Sure we do!*
- Do we point out the errors of other doctrines? *Yes!*
- How do we point them out?
- Just by making fun of them? *No!*

We point them out by the Scriptures and whatever the Scriptures say that's what we go by. Not just one or two but we take the whole thing. We're going to go very thoroughly through the grace of God in the Bible.

2-Peter 3:17: "Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against *such practices*, lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, *and* you fall from your own steadfastness; rather, **be growing in the grace and the knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...." (vs 17-18)

In studying for this, there's part of it I'm going to have to omit concerning Jesus Christ until we get down toward the time of the Passover. We can answer the question for sure: Why are we to remember the death of Jesus Christ? Why is it that the Passover pictures His death and we are to, as it says in 1-Cor. 11, have a memorial of His death till He should come?

The Protestants would say, 'We celebrate His resurrection' with their so-called Easter. Why does God say we are to commemorate His death? We'll answer that before this Passover, and I think you're going to be absolutely amazed—I know I was in studying it—what God has done for us, and why we should remember His death even though we are saved by His life. We are to grow in the grace and the knowledge of God, and we should be doing that constantly. That's something we need to always continually look forward to.

I think as far as the group, *physically* we are perhaps one of the weakest groups you could ever find on the face of the earth. But *spiritually* let's hope that we can do as the Apostle Paul said, that God did many things with him as *a pattern for those who would believe afterwards*. We would have to say that with the sickness and the illness that the Apostle Paul had—I mean, there's just no two ways around it—God called him to preach the grace of God—didn't He? Yet, he himself was afflicted with at terrible eye disease, so bad that he even apologized that he may have appeared repulsive to the Galatians. Now, that's pretty bad!

Let me just give you an example. Have you ever seen someone who was disfigured so much you didn't want to, but the only thing you could do was stare at them? You felt real bad about staring at them, but it was so grotesque that was all you could do, just kind of out of shock and disbelief. Well, the Apostle Paul was much that way. What did they say to Jesus? *'If you be the Son of God get off this cross, then we'll believe you!'* I imagine there were a lot of people telling the Apostle Paul, 'When I see you healed then I will believe what you are saying.' Did God heal him? *No!* It's not based upon the physical condition alone. Here's one of the things that the Apostle Paul was an example for all of us in.

Let's get the full story flow, 2-Corinthians 12:1: "Indeed, it is not expedient for me to boast. But I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord." It seems to me that we heard people boast about how many of this and that that they have done and published and printed and preached to, and countries they went to, etc., etc. The Apostle Paul didn't. He did it out only out of foolishness.

Verse 2: "I know a man in Christ *who*, fourteen years ago, was caught up to *the* third

heaven. (Whether *this man was* in *the* body, I do not know; or out of the body, I do not know—God knows)." This is when he was being taught directly by Jesus Christ and he was in such a condition that he didn't know whether he was in the body, whether he was out of the body, or what.

Verse 3: "Now, I know such a man (whether *taken up* in *the* body, or out of the body, I do not know—**God knows**), *and* that he was caught up to Paradise, and heard unutterable sayings, which a man is not permitted to speak" (vs 3-4). I'm sure a lot of those things he didn't understand. What language do they use at the throne of God? If anyone wants to speak in tongues let them try that on for size. The Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. In other words the Holy Spirit translates it into whatever language God receives it in. Though God can understand all languages because God confounded the languages so He invented it.

Verse 5: "I will boast of such a one as this; but of myself I personally will not boast, except concerning my weaknesses. But even if I choose to boast, I shall not be a fool; for I will speak the Truth. However, I will forbear, lest anyone think of me above what he sees me *to be*, or what he hears from me. But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations, *there was* given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me, so that I might not be exalted" (vs 5-7).

There are certain things that God does just to humble him. The messenger of Satan, some people say, was a demon. I don't think that it was a demon, I think it was just an affliction that Satan was allowed to put upon him like Satan did upon Job. But just as Job was afflicted he was not Satan possessed, nor was he bothered with a demon. I would have to conclude it would be exactly the same.

"...to buffet me, so that I might not be exalted.... [God allowed him to have that, actually caused it] ...I besought the Lord three times for this, that it might depart from me; but He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you...' (vs 7-9). I think the longer we live the more we're going to see about the Grace of God, that that is the most sufficient thing we could have.

Why is that the most sufficient thing that we could have? *Because it doesn't matter what we are in the flesh! It doesn't matter who we are or what we are in the flesh if we have the grace of God!* Is there anything greater than the grace of God? Can there possible be anything greater? *No, there cannot be!*

That's why the Bible says when you compare physical things among physical things you're unwise, or compare yourself with others. You're unwise because you're not looking to the Spirit of God or the grace of God, which is all encompassing. That's what I can certainly say with us, the grace of God is going to have to be sufficient for us. God will take care of us physically in His own way and His own time as God sees that it's going to be. Sometimes God uses that as a tremendous example and witness to other people, because they will say, 'How can you believe in God when you suffer like that?' And you give the simple answer, *well, the grace of God is sufficient for me!*

We're all not going to live forever in the flesh, and yet somehow there's a strange quirk of human nature that we want to perpetuate the flesh forever and ever. It just doesn't work that way. It isn't going to.

Time marches on and we either weigh more or less, have more gray hair, or less hair. Our children get older. Like my wife was saying about Jonathan, in a year he is going to be going to Phoenix, and the chances of him coming home other than to visit after that is going to be very remote. He's a man. So is David; they are young men; they are not little babies any more. I mean, we can remember when they were born.

I remember when all of our children were born because I was there when they were born. I remember especially when David was born. Brought him out, put him on the table to clean him up, and there's Grandpa Henshaw and he said, 'Whoa! Look at that back! Look at that back!' David to this day has got a good strong back, and a good stand, and enjoys track and so forth. Now he's a man. He's going to be making his own way. He's going to be earning his own money. And at that point we can say, thank God. After all the cost and everything that goes into it. That's just part of life. We need to understand about the grace of God and let it be a sufficiency for us.

I have several definitions of grace and what it means and so forth. 'Charisma' means *the gift of God!*

- the *physical gifts* that God can give
- the *spiritual gifts* of God
 - ✓ chrisma
 - ✓ charismatos

Let's look at some Scriptures concerning that:

2-Corinthians 1:11: "While you also are laboring together for us by supplication *to God*, that the **gift** to us from many persons might be *the cause* of thanksgiving by many for us." The word *gift* you

can see is 'charisma'—this is just the *physical gift of goods*. It's just a blessing, a gift. Refers to the *spiritual gifts*...

1-Peter 4:10: "*Let each one, according as he has received a gift from God...*" There are gifts of the Holy Spirit. There's another Greek word for gifts: 'dorea'—*gift of God*. When it talks about the *spiritual gifts* in 1-Cor. 12 it is 'dorea.' Here we are talking about a gift in the way of 'charisma.'

"...*be using it to serve the others as good stewards of the Grace of God which manifests itself in various ways*" (v 10). We're going to see quite a few instances where we have the grace of God, which here is 'cheritos' and 'charisma'—both of those.

Verse 11: "If anyone speaks, *let it be* as the words of God; if anyone serves, *let it be* as from the strength which God supplies; so that in everything, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to Whom is the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. Amen."

Romans 1:11: "For I am longing to see you, so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift... [Here 'charisma' is referring to a *spiritual gift*. What is one of the most important spiritual gifts that can be imparted to someone? *The understanding of God's grace! The understanding of God's Word!*] ...in order that you may be established."

2-Timothy 1:6, where the Apostle Paul says: "For this reason, I admonish you to stir up **the gift** of God... ['tau charisma'] ...that is in you by the laying on of my hands.... [This obviously was with the ordination for the ministry. There are certain gifts that are imparted at that time.] ...For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness" (vs 6-7).

Romans 5:15: "But *should* not the free gift be even as the offense *was*?.... [The receiving of the gift of grace comes from the same word 'charisma.' We receive the Grace of God 'charis' *or* 'charite' *or* 'charitos'—either one, but we get the free gift.] ...For if by the transgression of the one man many died, how much more did the Grace of God, and the gift of grace... ['dorea'—the other word for gift.] ...which *is* by the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto many?"

Let's look at the word 'charis' *or* 'charitos'—which we have the English word *charity*. Here are the meanings of the definition of the word 'charis' *or* 'charitos':

1. graciousness, attractiveness, pleasantness
2. thanks *or* gratitude
3. favor, grace, gracious care, or help of goodwill

A broad definition means *the gracious intention of God*. What God is doing for us is really a fantastic thing.

4. on the part of God and Christ to us the possession of Divine grace as a source of blessings for the believer

We're going to go through this very thoroughly, and since so few people have really had the grace of God expounded, we're going to go through every Scripture. I know it's going to take a little while to do it. It may prolong the series in the book of John, but there are certain needs that we have and especially with the Passover coming up we are going to really be benefited when we understand this very thoroughly.

It really helps you in your relationship with God. I guarantee one thing, that if everyday you put your life under the grace of God and thank God for His goodness and His grace, you're going to have a much better day; you're not going to have to be overcoming and working on yourself. I've heard many ministers get up there and say, that you have to just beat the flesh and work on yourself—pray an hour and study an hour—in the most hateful way. So you do it.

At Ambassador College the students, when I was there, would be hours in the prayer booth. Every little thing was regimented because we were doing it rather than letting God do it for us. I mean we accomplished certain things. We did accomplish. You can do certain things that way. But you end up with a *salvation by works* because it's what *you* do rather than what Christ *in you* does. When you put yourself under the grace of God what Christ *in you* does then is accomplished without having to just beat the flesh. You try it. What's that old saying, 'Try it you'll like it.'

5. A store of grace that is dispensed

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE!...." (vs 1-2). That shows that you can draw on that store of grace when you sin. But you don't go out and sin so that more grace can come.

6. a state of grace *or* standing in God's grace
7. a deed of grace

For example: God the Father sending Jesus Christ with His death and resurrection and so forth.

8. a work of grace

We're going to see that there are works of grace. That's almost contradictory—isn't it? God's work *in us* is a work of grace—isn't it?

- if we're called by grace

- if we are saved by grace
- if we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus

then it is *God's work* in us which is a *work of grace*.

9. A work of grace that grows from more to more.

That's an interesting definition—isn't it? It grows from more to more. God is called *the God of all grace*. Let's talk a little bit about humility, because there's a false humility, too. I heard someone give a sermon recently on humility. Again, we must all make ourselves humble.

- What is the most humble act you can do?
- Is it that you make yourself humble and weak?
- Is it that you take a very contrite position?

I was watching this TV report on AIDS, there wasn't one man there that had a man's voice, even including the straight guys who were there just interviewing. And the society has been so feminized that a man can't speak as a man anymore, because everybody's offended. Should we all speak humbly and softly?

- Does that make us humble?
- What makes a person humble?
- What is the most humiliating act you can do?
- *Repentance and standing in God's grace!*

That is true humility; not something you put on; not something that you do or work up. I mean, a person can work up *superficial* humility out of vanity. I think maybe in the case of the poverty vow, that's a *superficial* case of humility out of vanity. 'Oh, we have given up everything.' But we lust after it all.

1-Peter 5:5: "In the same manner, *you* younger men... [That is not necessarily referring to younger elders *vs* elders; that means younger people in age.] ...be subject to *the* older men; and all *of you* be subject to one another, being clothed with humility... [How do you do that? How do you bind on, or put on humility?] ...because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble. Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God..." (vs 5-6).

You submit yourself completely to God. That is the most humbling thing you can do. That doesn't necessarily make you humble before people, because you are humble to God. Look at the example of Moses. He was called the meekest man on the face of the earth, but how did he treat those who rebelled against him? *He prayed to God and then he stood up and told them what they were: a pack of sinners.*

What did he do when he first saw all the Israelites sinning when he came down off the mount? *In anger he threw down the Ten Commandments that God wrote with His own hand!* Then he had the humility to ask God to spare them. He had the humility when God said, 'Hey, I'll fulfill My promise through you. You're of Abraham's seed, I'll destroy them and I'll fulfill it through them.' Moses said, 'No, God, please. If You're going to do that, blot my name out of the book of Life.' God said, 'Okay, I won't do that but I will do with whom I have to do with whom.' He spared them because Moses was humble. But he sure didn't appear humble before the people. They came up and said, 'Who are you to take all this to yourself?' So, *the most humbling thing you can do is submit yourself to God!*

Verse 6: "Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time; casting all your cares upon Him... [That's how you put yourself under the grace of God] ...because He cares for you. Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in the world. Now, may **the God of all grace...**" (vs 6-10). That's why we need to come to God.

I think we can safely say that the difference between a religion of men and the Truth of God is when the people are pointed to the Grace of God to trust in God and have that relationship with God vs trust in a man or trust in an organization, or trust in numbers or trust in past works or whatever.

"Now, may the God of all grace, Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after *you* have suffered a little while, Himself perfect you, establish, strengthen, *and* settle *you*. To Him *be* the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. Amen. By Silvanus, a faithful brother to you, as I reckon, I have written *to you* briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is *the* true Grace of God in which you stand" (vs 10-12).

(go to the next track)

I want to ask you: What is the Gospel? *Everyone would unanimously answer, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God*—correct? Well, we're going to see that there are two parts to that:

- 1) The Gospel of the Kingdom of God
- 2) The Gospel of the Grace of God and our Lord Jesus Christ

Which one is more important? *Since they're stated together they are **both** important!* You're going to be amazed; we're going to learn some new things.

Acts 20 is where Paul came to Miletus and he called for the elders at Ephesus and had them come down and Paul was preaching to them. After Paul got the elders of the Church of Ephesus down there:

Acts 20:18: "And when they had come to him, he said to them, 'You know how, from the first day I came to Asia, *and* all the time I was with you, I served the Lord with all humility and *with* many tears and temptations, which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; *and* how I did not keep back anything that was profitable, *but* preached to you, and taught you publicly and from house-to-house" (vs 18-20).

This is not going from house-to-house banging on the doors like the Jehovah Witnesses do. They always descend on our place on the Sabbath. There was a whole gang of about 20 out there on the street corner, and I think it was the last Sabbath I came up here. I drove out there and I said, 'Please don't go to this house over here.' Cause they come around and bang on the door every Sabbath. It doesn't mean that. He taught them publicly, he taught them in the Church, and in different houses, from house-to-house wherever the people were.

Verse 21: "Earnestly testifying, both to *the* Jews and *the* Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now behold, I am bound in the spirit, *and* am going to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall happen to me there; except that the Holy Spirit fully testifies in every city, saying that bonds and tribulations await me. But I myself do not take any *of these* things into account, nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify the Gospel [glad tidings] of the Grace of God" (vs 21-24). The glad tidings!

Why is it called the 'glad tidings' of the grace of God, or the Gospel of the Grace of God? *Because one of the most profound things that can happen to an individual in the grace of God is to not have sin imputed to him!* Even though 'the law of sin and death' is still in us, God does not look to that law of sin and death that causes us, when we sin, to serve the flesh. That's fantastic when we really understand that.

In other words, if we sin a sin that is a sin not unto death, as John said there in 1-John 5:16^[transcriber's correction], God is going to forgive that. A sin unto death is the *unpardonable sin*. We can have the confidence in coming to God and claiming that grace because ***we stand*** in that grace. That's why there needs to be the joy of the salvation of God, and the happiness and the faith in the assurance that that is so. If God, Who put 'the law of sin and death' in us,

condemns us because it is there, then we have no hope. Every time we do some little thing that we don't want to do, or maybe even some major thing that we don't really want to do or we're sorry we've done it, if God condemns us for that and beats us over the head all the time there's no hope for anybody. There is no hope of salvation for anyone. That's why we need the grace of God.

That's why he said, v 24: "...and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify **the Gospel of the Grace of God**.... [that's really tremendous] ...And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God, will see my face no more" (vs 24-25). There it is together.

He preached the Kingdom of God, but the Kingdom of God must preach the grace of God. How we missed that for years is amazing. I mean, we're going to see so many things that have been missed for so long it's going to be incredible. That's why there are so many misunderstandings that come along.

I will tell you another thing: *That's why people, when things don't go right, become so disillusioned*, because they blame themselves for everything that happens. When you blame yourself for something that happens and you don't think that God is going to help you out, and you carry that guilt around with you, it's a terrible burden to carry. There have been too many people put into that position. I have been there; you have been there; others are there. We need to understand about the grace of God and what He's doing more than anything else.

10. Jesus Christ is the only means by which the grace of God is mediated to men

Can you think of a Scripture that says that? *Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.'* He is the **only means**, and it's through His birth, death and resurrection. What God has done and still does for man in Jesus Christ His Son is God's outstanding act of grace.

This sermon is based upon John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life." And how that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; of course, that's in God's time.

11. God the Father is the source from which grace comes to man

What's a Scripture that verifies that? *'None can come to the Me. Christ said of Himself, except the Father draw him.'* That's the first act of grace. Do

you believe that God has called you? If you *believe* and *know* that God has called you then be confident and happy in that grace that God has given, that God the Father the Supreme Being of the whole universe reached down and called you. He didn't call you because you were righteous. He didn't call anybody because they were righteous, because the Bible says, ***'There is none righteous, there is none that does good, no not one.'*** God calls us because He calls us, and we virtually have no say-so about it.

Look at Paul. He was trooping off on the horses or donkeys, whatever they were on, going over to Damascus and he was trudging along and probably figuring what he was going to do to string up those Christians and BAM! he got knocked off the horse. Did Paul have anything to say about his calling? *Not a thing!* It doesn't happen that dramatically to everybody, believe me, but it happens to us nevertheless. That is tremendous! God is the Source from which grace comes to mankind.

12. Jesus Christ is the God ordained means by which the grace most effectively reaches man in his need

We are going to see that we have need. Grace is quite the reverse of a reward for good conduct. Bill Cosby did the Noah one. I forget the whole sequence, but I remember this where Bill Cosby says, 'I've been good! I've been good!' And that's the way most people view things. You do something 'good' and God is supposed to recognize the good that you do. Salvation by works is *doing good things to make God recognize what you've done* that is good. But that's impossible because in *the law of sin and death* you cannot truly, aside from God, do a Godly act.

We can do good things in the community. We can be upstanding in the community. That's in the community level. That's on an individual level. But as far as God is concerned it's the same difference as between not stealing to pick up the goods, and lusting.

There are a lot of people who have never stolen. But I'm sure would love to have had the opportunity, and to have gotten away with it, because it's there; the lust is there! *or* It could be of adultery, or it could be of other things.

13. Grace is quite the reverse of a reward for good conduct.

It is rather a means of rescuing man from his own deep failure. That's why we need the grace of God. We can be successful in the world—can't we? Even Jesus said a man can gain the whole world, but what is the profit if he loses his soul. We're talking about

spiritual failure that human beings cannot measure up to the righteousness of God on their own.

14. Rescuing him from his own deep failure and harm and helplessness to overcome it alone.

I tell you try to overcome something alone and by your own works, it is futile. How many have ever done that? I've heard it preached, too: 'You work on that sin and you overcome that sin.' That's the wrong advice. You go pray for God's grace and mercy and pray for God's gift with Christ in you that you can overcome. It's a totally different situation because you beat the flesh to overcome if you do it yourself, and you get absolutely frustrated.

A good example of that is you can do it to a certain extent but for example someone who's an absolute confirmed alcoholic cannot stop and cannot help themselves, and though they resolve—though they hate it, though they detest it—they are completely helpless. It's the same way spiritually. We cannot save ourselves. If we can save ourselves by our good works we wouldn't need Jesus Christ. That's why Gal. 3 says, 'If there were a law which would give life then truly salvation would come through a law.' But it has to come from God through His grace.

15. Obedience to the law to gain acceptance with God equals under law for justification.

One's acceptance with God is not something we can achieve by his own merits or works, but is chosen and called and made accepted, forgiven, blessed with the Holy Spirit of God, made heir of eternal life, made sons of God as a gracious undeserved gift from God the Father through Jesus Christ. That's what the grace of God has in the way of meaning.

Now I'm going to read to you the first part of the book, *The Grace of God In The New Testament* that I wrote about five years ago now.

To understand the *Grace of God* as revealed in the New Testament is to comprehend one of the most wonderful attributes of God; and is the *key* to a deep, personal relationship between God the Father and every Christian, through Jesus Christ.

The Grace of God expresses the *greatness of his love* and the *richness* of His mercy! To live within and under the Grace of God is to experience and appreciate the *fantastic* love of God and His merciful kindness.

Contrary to religious speculations, grace is not just a theological tenant or topic of

argument; drawing denominational battle lines; in fact, the Grace of God means *life itself!* Without grace there would be *no salvation, no Christianity! No eternal life!*

Indeed, *grace is the foundation of true Christianity.* The New Testament reveals that God the Father's *grace* is an *all encompassing* quality.

The Grace of God has tremendous meaning to those who really understand it. Through, Jesus Christ, God's gift of *grace* is granted so we may spiritually *grow up unto Him*, Jesus Christ—the Son of God—Who is the Head of God's Church, in all things.

The *Scriptural Truth* is that God the Father, through His GRACE and salvation, will share His eternal life, existence and glory with all human beings who *truly* love Him with *all* their hearts, and minds and beings.

The potential of our destiny to become the literal sons of God through the Grace of God is the *most incredible* and least understood Truths of the Bible. The Apostle John wrote, "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is" (1-John 3:1-2).

This is why Peter was inspired to admonish us to *grow in the grace* and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "Rather, be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory both now and into *the* day of eternity. Amen." (2-Peter 3:18). *Grace is based on love*

Love is the basis for the relationship and fellowship between God the Father, Jesus Christ and the person who has been called to salvation. *God is Love!* "The one who does not love does not know God because God is love. In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God; rather,

that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us.” (1-John 4:8-12).

Our relationship with God *must* be based on love! “And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This *is the* first commandment” (Mark 12:30). Love is the *foundation* of grace and *without* this foundation there is *nothing*!

As such then, *grace* is the primary quality or attribute; the first extension or expression of *God’s love*. Therefore, *grace* is the primary quality and function of the spiritual relationship and the fellowship between God the Father and the person He calls through Jesus Christ.

Now let’s see a couple examples of God’s grace in intervening in our lives. The salvation that was given needs to be stated this way:

- the first one to receive the grace of God in the events leading up to the birth of Jesus Christ was Zacharias and Elisabeth his wife, with the birth of John the Baptist.
- the very next one to receive direct grace and favor was Mary.

Luke 1:28: “And after coming to her, the angel said, ‘Hail, you who are highly favored!...’” If you look at that long Greek word ‘favored one’ you will see ‘charitee’. It is ‘kacharitee o mene’ is the way you pronounce that long word. Do you see ‘charitee’ right in there?

“...The Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women.’ But when she saw *him*, she was *greatly* perplexed at his message, and was considering what kind of salutation this might be. Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, because **you have found grace with God**... [It’s the exact same thing. Noah found *grace*. Exact same thing. Mary *found grace* with God.] ...and behold, you shall conceive in *your* womb and give birth to a son; and you shall call His name Jesus” (vs 28-31).

Direct message from God. Mary found grace. Why did she need to find grace? Contrary to the Catholic doctrine of the ‘immaculate conception,’ there had to be two immaculate conceptions for the Catholic doctrine.

- 1) for Mary, as the Catholics believe so she

would not receive the stain of Adams sin on her soul

- 2) the immaculate conception of Jesus Christ

Well, the fact is Jesus did have *the law of sin and death* in Him. He did receive that from His mother Mary, as part of His physical inheritance, otherwise He could not have died. And one other thing as to why the death of Jesus was so profound was because He didn’t have the law of sin and death in Him, just as a person, *He bore in His body our sins*! So, I’ve given you a couple things to think about to understand more about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Here is a tremendous verse that ought to just really bring you a lot of peace of mind and happiness and joy. That’s aside from the daily frustrations we have to go through in this life. Ephesians 1:5: “Having predestinated us for sonship... [‘huiiothesian’—which means *sonship*] ...to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will, to *the* praise of *the* glory of **His grace**... [‘cheritous’—God’s grace] ...wherein He made us objects [recipients] of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*” (vs 5-6). You think about that! We have been made the *objects* of God’s grace. Once we are called through God’s grace we are the *objects* of God’s grace.

We have a little thing in language called the object of the preposition—correct? That is the one that receives the action. We are receiving the action of God’s grace. We are the objects of that grace in Jesus Christ. That is mind-boggling when you really think of it and really put that together! We are recipients. We are made “...objects [recipients] of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*.”

Verse 7: “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” You just think upon that for a minute! How rich is God’s grace? Why did the Apostle Paul say, ‘What? Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid!’ God’s grace abounds more than we have ever comprehended or understood, and

- we *stand* in that grace
- we are *recipients* of that grace
- we are *objects* of that grace

That is a tremendous thing. You talk about mentally and spiritually helping you approach God, that should help an awful lot.

It will help us in our relationship with each other. It will help us overcome the greatest sins that Christians do unto another: Judging one another and judging one another’s hearts. That’s why Jesus said,

'Judge not lest you be judged' when you judge to condemnation. Isn't that what has happened to everyone of us? We've been judged to condemnation by others in the name of Christ when we ought to have it understood we are the recipients of the Grace of God, so therefore, who are we to judge the servant of God? If you are all under God's grace and His servants then to judge you to condemnation is to judge a servant of God. I'm not referring to just ministers. Do you serve God? *If you serve God you are a servant of God!* You may not be a minister but you are a servant of Him.

You see how that just clears the air? It just clears the air. Therefore, we don't have to snoop in people's lives. When you understand that, isn't it ridiculous how many grilling sessions that people had to go through, ministers coming over to their house and wanting to know what was going on? 'What were you doing? I heard this.' Then we'd get tongues plowing into everybody's lives. Can you see what happens when a whole church bases their doctrine of salvation on ten Scriptures, when there are literally 151 to tell us about the grace of God. That the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Gospel of Grace which Paul put ahead of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Let's keep all of these things in perspective.

Ephesians 2:4: "But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been **saved by grace**.)" (vs 4-5). This Greek word here is 'sodezo menoí'—which means *having been saved*. Right now we are in a state of *having been saved* from the 'prince of the power of the air,' and saved from the penalty of death from our sins. So, in that sense we *have been saved*, but we are in the *process of being saved*, if we stand in the grace, and we *shall be saved* at the resurrection. By grace you have been saved. (1-Cor. 15).

Verse 6: "And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages that *are* coming..." (vs 6-7). That's when we are going to sit down on those thrones: 'And I saw thrones and they that sat on them...' (Rev. 20:4). That's when we will be there in the heavenlies.

"...He might show the exceeding riches of His grace..." (v 7). That's a phrase I really want to understand. I can tell you this right now, I have a sense and a feeling for it but I don't fully comprehend the "...riches of His grace..."

- How rich is God?
- How great is His grace?

- How fantastic is His mercy?

We can only understand that as we grow in grace and knowledge. I think we understand it to a certain degree but that's what I want to work on and understand more.

"...in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God... [The saving the faith and the calling, every bit of it's from God.] ...not of works, so that no one may boast" (vs 7-9). If there were a law that we could keep perfectly, which would be the key that would compel God to give us His grace, just think of the boasting that there would be when a person finally did it. God doesn't want anyone boasting.

Verse 10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them."

This is such a fundamental thing that I think is going to help us all grow closer to God and each other and have more love for God and each other when we understand how God has treated us. He hasn't dealt with us after our sin. You know 'the wages of sin is death.' He hasn't dealt with us after our sins and we can be thankful for that.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 2:1-3
- 2) Ephesians 2:10
- 3) 1 Peter 1:10-12
- 4) Zechariah 3:8
- 5) Zechariah 4:6
- 6) 1 Peter 3:17-18
- 7) 2 Corinthians 12:1-9
- 8) 2 Corinthians 1:11
- 9) 1 Peter 4:10-11
- 10) Romans 1:11
- 11) 2 Timothy 1:6-7
- 12) Romans 5:15
- 13) Romans 6:1-2
- 14) 1 Peter 5:5-12
- 15) Acts 20:18-25
- 16) John 3:16
- 17) 1 John 3:1-2
- 18) 2 Peter 3:18
- 19) 1 John 4:8-12
- 20) Mark 12:30
- 21) Luke 1:28-31
- 22) Ephesians 1:5-7
- 23) Ephesians 2:4-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 1; 3
- Exodus 20
- Deuteronomy 5
- Ezekiel 20
- Exodus 16:27-28
- Isaiah 55:6-7; 61:1-3
- Luke 4
- Isaiah 66:1-2
- 1 Corinthians 11
- 1 John 5:16
- Galatians 3
- 1 Corinthians 15
- Revelation 20:4

Also referenced:

- Book: *Grace of God in the New Testament* by Fred R. Coulter
- Booklet: *Which Day is the True Christian Sabbath?* by Fred R. Coulter
- Sermon Series: *The Holy Sabbath*

Grace of God III What Does the Grace of God Do For Us?

Fred R. Coulter

I would like to review just a little bit and to go over the meanings of grace again. The Greek word for *grace* is 'charis,' 'charitos' or 'charite'—and it has the following meanings:

1. graciousness, attractiveness
2. thanks or gratitude
3. favor, grace, gracious care, or help or good will, the gracious intention of God
4. on the part of God the Father and Jesus Christ toward us or to us, the possession of Divine grace as a source of blessings for the believer
5. a store of grace that is to be dispensed, a state of grace, or that is standing in God's grace, a deed of grace worked by God in Christ. A work of grace that grows more to more.

In discussing this the last time, it was also brought up that *grace is the forgiveness of sin*. That is not quite a correct definition of grace. Your sins are forgiven *because of* God's grace. The *act of* forgiveness is the *result* of grace. Grace itself does not mean just the forgiveness of sin.

Otherwise, when you get to the openings of Paul where he said, 'Grace be to you,' is he saying 'Your sins be forgiven to you'? *or* Is he talking about something of a broader meaning and a broader sense? *We'll see that it's a broader meaning and broader sense!*

1-Peter 5:10 shows that God is the *God of all grace*. Then Jesus Christ is the only means by which the grace of God is mediated to men, through His birth, death, and resurrection and function as our High Priest in heaven. What God has done, and is still doing, for man in Jesus Christ His Son is God's outstanding *act of grace*.

This ties in with the Scripture in John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am **the** Way, and **the** Truth, and **the** Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.'" That narrows it down very, very specifically. Why is that so? The reason that is so, and the reason that God has it narrowed down into the being of Jesus Christ is *because no other being in all of the universe could qualify for that intermediary and for that sin sacrifice!* Only Jesus Christ! That's why it is not going to be through Mohammed or Buddha or Confucius. It's not going to be through any man or any movement. *It's going to be through Jesus Christ and no other way!* God is

determined that that is the only way that it's going to be.

6. God the Father is the source from which grace comes to man. Jesus Christ is the God ordained means by which the grace most effectively reaches man in his need.

We're talking about *grace before salvation*. Could God be merciful to someone who is not called for salvation? *Sure He could!* Could God answer prayers of people who prayed in sincerity to God? *Yes, He will!* Especially if they believe that there would be an answer.

What would be one of the most important things that a person could do in time of crisis if they have neglected God *or* they have not really firmly believed in God but they somehow find themselves in a terrible straight and trouble? What would be the most pleasing thing they could do? Would it not be to call out to God? *Sure it would!* Do we not know of many cases of people who've been in circumstances like that? They're not praying for salvation or eternal life. They were just trying to live a little longer. Maybe they're just trying to prevent some catastrophe from coming on them, and they pray to God in belief and ask God to help them in those circumstances.

God's graciousness and mercy is so great that even though He is not calling them for salvation He'll hear their prayer. When people get like that what is one of the first things they admit? *'Oh, I've been a miserable person!'* Is that not a type of repentance? *Sure it is!*

It is not a call to salvation necessarily, but that's why that God, being no respecter of persons, will help people like that. What they do from then on becomes another situation. Obviously, there comes a time that if, after God has helped them and rescued them and has done certain things for them, they turn their backs on God and just walk out and slam the door and do whatever they want, maybe the next time they get in those circumstances they're not going to get the help.

7. Grace is quite the reverse of a reward for good conduct.

This is why it talks about in Galatians, that until Christ came we were kept under law. The Law was a schoolmaster or tutor to lead us to Christ. It's the same thing with our children. They need the kind of

discipline that is by law. You do this and you'll get a reward. You do the other and you'll get a punishment. This brings them to a maturity of mind if it's consistent through their lifetime. When they get old enough they will be able to make the proper choices.

But without the rudimentary black and white righteousness and sin, good and evil to really formulate what they need, when they get older they will have no discernment between right and wrong if you don't. Little children cannot be treated as adults. You cannot sit down and reason with children as you do with adults. Their minds have not developed enough. We're beginning to see some of the results with our older children now. There are times when the best thing to say to children is *NO!* flat out, *Don't! Stop!* That is necessary. You wouldn't talk to an adult like that. You would say, 'Would you please...' Why? *Because they are old enough, they have comprehension enough!* The whole relationship is different.

So it is before God calls us—and in the process of calling us, too—that we get this concerning the Law and the commandments, and those are absolutely necessary, but the whole process is to put them in our mind and in our heart and our inward parts so that we, as led by the Holy Spirit, can live the right way of life. Exact same parallel with children.

The reason that we teach children that way when they are small, is so that when they grow up and they leave home they're going to have some kind of responsibility about themselves knowing what is right and what is wrong.

It's to lead us to Christ. That's why when we are led to Christ and we come under God's grace, *we do not have the liberty to go and live in sin.* Being under God's grace and blessing and mercy we have the liberty to have annulled 'the law of sin and death' within us in our standing before God. As long as we're in the flesh 'the law of sin and death' is going to be there. And the true day of redemption, if we understand it correctly, when you have repented and been baptized you *have been saved* from your past sins. While you're going God's way you *are being saved*. When Christ returns you *shall be saved* from flesh because you'll be changed to spirit.

The same way concerning the day of redemption. When you have repented and are baptized you have been redeemed—correct? While you are following Christ and walking in His way you are continually in a state of *being redeemed*. The New Testament refers to *the day of redemption*, which has to do with the resurrection. Redemption is not just a one-time act when you are baptized and repented of your sins. It is the same as salvation; it is

ongoing. Does not the sacrifice of Christ through the Grace of God have to redeem us or buy us back when we sin? *Yes!* So, it's an ongoing efficacious thing that God is doing.

8. One's acceptance with God is not something he can achieve by his own merit [by works], but is chosen, called, and made accepted, forgiven and blessed with the Holy Spirit of God, made an error of eternal life, made the son of God as a gracious undeserved gift from God the Father through Jesus Christ.

That really has a lot of meaning and I want to emphasize that again so that we can really bear down on that and it helps an awful lot.

I don't know how you have been since we have started through this series on *grace*, but I know that the more I study on it the more it helps me. It helps me an awful lot because then I look to God to give me the strength to overcome. I'm going to do the best I can, but I don't have to go around and just literally beat my head against a stonewall and to do it by *my* works.

It must be the working of Christ within me to overcome it. When we lay it at that doorstep, and when we bring it to Christ, and when we ask God's grace to be with us, to be upon us, it is something that happens in that state of grace that we are standing in, and it comes *to* us. That's why when we get into the blessings that are given, Paul opens the epistles and he said, 'Blessings from God the Father and grace and peace from our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.'

When you ask for a blessing do you not expect a blessing? *Sure you do!* When you ask for grace, should we not also expect grace? *Yes!* Should we not have that help, which is a gift, it's an undeserved thing? We can't find it within us. I think this has been the whole problem in overcoming. We've been looking to our resources within us for our own discipline that we work it up:

- we overcome a problem
- we go to God and say, 'God, I've overcome this problem'

—*it's the other way around!* We go to God and say, God:

- grant me Your grace
- grant me Your help
- grant me the strength
- lead me out of this overcoming

How do you overcome? *Overcoming is not a work that is human originated!* That's why in overcoming sin we can have God lift from us, and why should

we carry it around, we can have God lift from us that frustration and burden and vexation, which you've all experienced in trying to overcome something *by yourself*. There have been lust and temptations that you've had to fight, and you've fought them and you've gritted your teeth and you've asked God, 'Why does this continue?' *Very simple, you haven't put it under the grace of God and asked for God's grace through faith to lead you out of it.*

I hope that we understand that because I know for myself, I understand it more and I can be more relaxed, and I can be more relaxed around people. Why? *Because when you have God's grace and you know that God is going to do it then you don't have to be looking at other people with a view of judging them for something that they are doing—* which you may or may not like, or what you may or may not agree with, or what you may or may not think is sin. Just lifts that whole burden from you.

This is the atmosphere that has been lived under too long in the Churches of God, that you go into a congregation and once you come past the niceties and the introductions and the friendships and you start getting down into the human nature element of it, what do you find? *You find pickiness, the looking, the judging, the criticizing!* Why does that exist? *Because people are not pointed to the grace of God through faith and they too much want to overcome themselves without God!* When you strive to overcome so much on your own, what do you do? *You transfer that to other people in a sense that you're going to be critical of them for two reasons:*

- 1) because you're looking for faults
- 2) so you will feel better and can live with your own problem

Whereas, we need to just wipe the slate of all that and overcome with God's Spirit through grace.

1-John 5:1: "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ... [that's an ongoing sense] ...has been begotten from God... [or out from God the begettal has come] ...and everyone that loves Him [God the Father] Who begat also loves him who has been begotten by Him."

How do we then maintain the love? I think we've had some experience of that here. *We maintain the love for each other because we are not doing the things that I just mentioned that causes the problems!* We are not trying to live someone else's life. What we're trying to do is love God and live within His grace and love each other. That's the most encouraging thing that we can do. That's why in the time we've been here we haven't had any internal strife. We haven't had any of those

problems. If we continue in God's grace and in this kind of thing he's saying we won't have it. Not because we're better, but because Christ is greater than all.

Verse 2: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments.... [There is commandment-keeping right in it. Has to be!] ...For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. Now then, everyone who is begotten by God overcomes the world... [How do we overcome the world?] ...and this is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith" (vs 2-4).

How are we saved? *By grace have you been saved through faith!* That's how you overcome! That's why if you really go to God with this attitude—in sincerity, repentance, love and understanding—God is going to begin to let this grace come to you in a more abundant way and you are going to see a lot of the problems, mental things and temptations begin fall away. They won't be rooted in there like the core of a carbuncle. If you've ever seen a carbuncle and the core, it's about as long as my little finger and goes about that deep and it is so sore, and there's nothing you can do.

Same way with human nature. *Human nature cannot overcome human nature!* It has to be God's Spirit, and it has to be *by faith*. Why not just place it before God? Ask for His grace and mercy, and His Spirit to *lead you* in it. Be happy and thankful in the grace of God. I guarantee you that if you have faith and believe in God, then those things will begin to melt away.

Just like a carbuncle, if you lance it and you get out the core there's going to be a little scar there. The problem, temptation or thought pattern may come back from time-to-time—which then you can easily identify it and again go to God and ask for repentance and forgiveness—but it's not going to be that just hanging in there in every thought and every moment. It's going to be like taking that core of that carbuncle out. That's how you can overcome with faith. It makes the job a whole lot easier.

For example, if a person has a hard time with swearing and cursing. Or maybe they used to swear and curse a lot before they were converted, and you can't isolate yourself from the world. You cannot go in orbit. So, you go out and work and what happens? *You find yourself around people who swear and curse!* What's the next thing that happens? *Mentally you start doing the same thing—correct?* You don't want to but you do. If you set about to say, 'I'm not going to do that again,' and you force yourself to not do it, I guarantee you're going to continue doing it.

Why? *Because you haven't laid it before God to let Him do it for you!*

If you have not experienced that kind of overcoming *through God's grace* then 'try it, you'll like it.' God will like it. It makes life a whole lot easier and happy and contented because you can give all the credit to God. That's why it says, 'By grace are you saved through faith, not of works lest any man should boast.' That's how we are saved. So that's very important for us to understand.

Have you ever wondered what it means to be spiritually minded? *To be spiritually minded is to be life and peace, but to be carnally minded is death!* Can you see the difference in overcoming? ***A carnal mind cannot overcome a carnal mind!*** Therefore, any works that we do as a human being cannot be sufficient.

What is our spiritual battle? *We war not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and authorities and wicked spirits in high places!* That's where all the sin comes from. That's why when you're driving down the road and every thing's nice, BAM! you get an evil thought come through your head. Where do you think it comes from? *Prince of the power of the air!* You're not going to overcome that with just your own mental efforts; *you need the power of God.* It's a spiritual battle. So, if we put all these things in that perspective and realize that it is the spiritual power of God, why life is going to be a whole lot better. Not that we'll be richer. Not that we'll have better things physically and materially, because that's not what we need. We may want it, but that's not what we need. We need to overcome and be led by God's Spirit.

9. The Grace of God is like an all encompassing umbrella, which includes:

- faith
- salvation
- mercy
- redemption
- justification
- repentance
- love
- the laws
- the commandments of god
- forgiveness
- blessings

It's an all-encompassing thing. Let's keep that in mind.

What does the grace of God do for us? I'm going to list nine things that the Grace of God does for us in a fantastic way, and gives us privileges, and blessings. Privilege is something that is given; it is a

gift. You don't earn a privilege; you earn a wage. Privilege is something that is given, so it is a gift.

Hebrews 2—here is the *act of grace* by God. We know and realize that it was God Himself Who came as a human being for one specific purpose, and it reveals a little bit about the overall plan of God.

Hebrews 2:5: "For *it is not to the angels that He has placed in subjection the world that is to come...* [the Kingdom of God as it comes on the earth] ...of which we are speaking. But in a certain place one fully testified, saying, 'What is man, that You are mindful of him, or *the son of man*, that You visit him? You did make him a little lower than *the angels*; You did crown him with glory and honor..." (vs 5-7).

Is it not an honor and glory to be made in the image of God? *God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, male and female. Let Us make him after Our likeness.'* Then the whole thing of salvation is that we become like God, after the God kind. God gave us dominion over the earth; dominion over everything that is here. What one thing can we say that man has not been able to have dominion over, except his own sins? Mankind, sooner or later, because of being made in the similitude of God, given a creative mind, is able to do such fantastic things. We have been 'crowned with honor and glory.'

"...and You did set him over the works of Your hands; You did put all things in subjection under his feet." (vs 7-8). That is a prophetic as well as current statement. A lot of things that God says are current and prophetic. It is current because everything that is on the earth is under the hand of man, whether for good or whether for evil; whether we take care of ourselves, or whether we destroy the environment—it's under our hand. But also the word 'pantos' means *all things including the universe*. Man even in his fleshly form is on the brink of getting into the universe. If he were not limited by flesh, guess what would happen? *Yes, we would conquer other galaxies and go into the universe this very day.* It is prophetic in that that's what it will be.

"...For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing *that was* not subjected to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the angels*, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering **the death...**" (vs 8-9).

If you have your Greek Interlinear you can take a look at that statement and you will notice that *it is not just death*. It is ***the death***. When it talks about death in relationship to a Christian and a relationship to salvation it is talking about ***the death***.

What is the ultimate death? *The second death in the Lake of Fire!* And from that there is no resurrection.

Since Jesus Christ was God Who took on human form and He was the Son of God, and He's called in some places in the New Testament the Son of man and that actually refers back to Dan. 3 & 7, which is saying God Himself. We find in Titus 2 & 3 that Jesus Christ is called *the great God* and our Savior Jesus Christ. When He died that was *the death*. You can't have any greater death than the death of God. That's greater than just a human death because of the significance of Jesus Christ.

"...on account of suffering the death, in order that **by the grace** ['charitee'] **of God** ... [the *act of grace* in having Christ come and live, die and be resurrected] ...He Himself might **taste death for everyone**" (v 9). Notice that the definite article 'the' in the Greek is not there. You go back to the place that we just referred to before and it is called 'tou thanatoo'—which is *the death*. You come down here and it says, "...He Himself might taste death for everyone." So therefore, as it is applied to each of us it is applied to our own death. That is a fantastic thing.

Let's go through the book of Romans in a little more detail, and let's see the sequence of things as they come along. As I study—and I try and study New Testament Greek everyday—that's helping me be able to understand more and put it together. In Rom. 5 we see the whole sequence of events and how great that it is. When we come to take the Passover this year let's hope that we can have a greater insight into the death of Jesus Christ and what He has done.

Romans 5:1. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith **into this grace in which we stand...**" (vs 1-2). We're standing in this grace. It is a condition. It is the very basis of the relationship that we have with God. It is with grace.

It's very interesting that you get into some of these other Scriptures and when it says that we can come before the Father with boldness, that actually means that *we have access into the presence of God the Father*. And that can only be done through Christ and through grace because *no man* can come before God and live. But we have, *spiritually*, access to God the Father through this grace in which we are standing.

"...and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God.... [not what we can do; not in how great we are, but in the hope of the glory of God] ...And not only *this*, but we also boast in

tribulations..." (vs 2-3).

I've often wondered, and through the years I think I'm beginning to understand a little more now, how you can be happy in a trial. I have yet to meet someone who's in a terrible trial that is happy, saying, 'Great, I've got another trial. That's marvelous. Hooray! Thank you God.' *No!* We're to pray, 'Deliver us from temptation.' Why can we boast in trials or tribulations? *Because:*

1. God *will deliver* us from them!
2. He *will teach us* something with it of lasting, eternal, spiritual value!

That's why! That's why it says that 'we boast in tribulations.' I think Paul wrote this after he was an apostle for some 20 years so he didn't come by it right away. When he was struck down off the horse on his way to Damascus he wasn't very happy. He was not boasting in that trial.

"...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance..." (v 3). In other words, that trial coming through its full circuit is working out endurance. The *King James* says 'patience,' but it's *endurance*—patience and endurance are very synonymous.

"...and endurance *brings forth* character..." (v 4). God is testing us with these things. That's why we can boast in a trial. Many times people will think of a trial that will come, 'God, if you send this trial, I am ready.' That's boasting and God isn't going to send that trial; another one is going to come that you don't think of. The major trials that occur other than your knowledge of your own stupidity ahead of time, come as a total surprise. Isn't that true? *Yes!* But we can be thankful for it because God is testing us and proving us.

"...and character *brings forth* hope.... [Once we rely on God we can have more hope.] ...And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us. For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time **Christ died for the ungodly**" (vs 4-6). That's a tremendous thing to do, and I think that we're going to grasp a more full significance of this as we get down toward the Passover time.

Verse 7: "For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Christ also had to do that in faith. Did Christ have faith? *Yes, He had faith!* He had to die in faith knowing, as He told His apostles there on the Passover night, '*Blessed are those who believe on the things that you say about Me.*' And remember Jesus said, 'I pray for not

only these, but *those that shall believe* on Me through their word.' Christ had to die in faith knowing that His sacrifice would be in perpetuity for all time, for all ages of all mankind.

I don't know how many have been watching the series, *Shogun* on TV. If you've watched part of it, whatever, it's a pretty bloody movie showing Japan. They were lopping off heads, and stabbing, and committing suicide, and the only penalty for breaking a law was death or crucifixion. That is the letter of the law! I don't know if that's the impression you got from it, but boy I sure did. I thought I wouldn't want to live there. You talk about women's liberation, a woman in Japan was nothing; just worth no more than a piece of paper that a man could chattel her with. If he didn't like his wife he had the right to kill her. The sacrifice of Christ is going to have to apply to those lives, too. *Yes, it is! Christ died for the ungodly.* If we were without sin we would not need Christ. That's why it says:

1-John 1:8: "If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us." That's why we need a Savior. That's tremendous what He did.

Romans 2:9 "Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." How is that? *That is by grace!* He gets into all the rest of it. Rom. 6 & 7 he's talking about grace.

What Does the Grace of God Do For Us?

1. Christ died for all by the Grace of God

All—not just some, not just for the Jews, but *all*. There are some wretched societies that are going to need an awful lot of salvation. They need an awful lot of help.

I don't know if you read in the paper about the native society in New Caledonia? Sometimes it's good to get your paper and read sections E, F & G, just before you get to the classified ads. The *San Jose` Mercury* has 'E' section, and they give little reports and some of them are very revealing. They wouldn't dare put it on the front page.

How many saw the movie, *Sky Above and Mud Beneath*? They showed the natives in New Guinea. When I first saw that, it must have been about 1971, and I thought, 'Boy, this is kind of a bad movie, to show all these naked natives going around.' Then it told a little bit about the country they live in. They live in this jungle area. They don't have hardly any flat land. The mountains go straight up. It rains almost 300-inches a year. With that heat and that humidity I know why they go around naked. They couldn't possibly keep a stitch of clothing on

because it would just rot. All the do-gooder missionaries came storming down there, 'Let's dress these natives.' Next thing you know the clothes all mildewed right off their back; too much rain.

When I saw that I thought: Why did God put some people in an area like that? There's no clean food, there's no clean fish. If they go in the ocean there are these sea snakes that will bite you. Their greatest delight for a dinner is a nice fat, big grubby termite about the size of a thermos bottle, which they relish. They can't grow any food because there's no flat land. When I first saw that I thought: God is kind of unfair to these people. Look at us; we're sitting here; we have all of this and we don't have to worry about that. I just sort of lodged that in the back of my mind.

One other thing that they had. The only meat that they could have, they would shoot a monkey or a baboon; or eat a slug, a snail or a lizard. The only domestic animals they had were pigs. The women would suckle the pigs on their own breasts. That was a great possession. That's why they did it. What can you tame in the jungle? So, they tamed pigs, and I thought, how gross. It showed this right on the film. I thought: Sky above, mud beneath,' that is true. You have the 'sky above, it's raining, and all you have is mud underneath.

In this article I read about New Guinea and New Caledonia. Do you know what they do to the young boys? At seven years old they separate them from their mothers. They can no longer talk to a woman after that time and they put them through an enforced sodomy regime until 18-years-old! Of all the despicable, horrible things that you can do.

Therefore, I would have to conclude God is just in giving them that kind of environment and society to live in. Of course, they used to be cannibals and brain eaters, and warriors and fighters, and things like this; just horrible, wicked, despicable people. Those people are also going to be covered under the blood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ at the *second resurrection*, because God is not calling, nor can He, them today in that condition. They worship demons. They worship Satan.

(go to the next track)

Perhaps someone would die for a good person, but *Christ died for the ungodly!* That time of the second resurrection is going to be so absolutely fantastic. Can you imagine what a fantastic thing that it's going to be for people who've been in circumstances like that? To be reared in a society like those in New Guinea and New Caledonia? To be reared in a society as was shown on this thing *Shogun*? Can you imagine what it's going to be like? The last thing that you

remember before dying was a big sword coming down on the back of your neck. Satan is going to be removed, and I think God is gracious and generous in doing that for them. That is so fantastic it is just marvelous, and not only what God is going to do for us.

2. We are put into a special category with Jesus Christ—we are called *friends*

To be in a special category where you are called *the friend of Jesus Christ*. I'm sure that all of us have acquaintances. I'm sure that all of us have relatives. Are all your relatives your friends? *No!* They may be relatives, but they sure may not be friends. A friend is a special relationship that brings you in closeness. Christ, being *our friend*, then has a vested interest in seeing us into the Kingdom of God. That's why the whole psychology of 'beating' people into overcoming, and 'beating' them into the Kingdom of God defeats the whole purpose. *Christ is our friend!* How many times have we viewed Christ as almost our enemy? *That is not right!*

Here's what Jesus says in John 15:12: "This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you." That means that we have to give a whole lot more latitude and leeway then—doesn't it? It means that we have to understand and love each other even more because of what Christ has done for us and is doing for them.

You know why there is a lack of love when there should be love? It just occurred to me just now. *They don't understand that Christ is our friend* and it is put in such a way that 'I want to be in the Kingdom of God, but I don't know about you. And since I want to be there I'm going to make sure I get there, and I hope you get there.' It never comes across! It doesn't work!

Whereas, if we consider ourselves with this commandment to love each other as Christ loves us, v 13: "No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends." People may lay their lives down to be burned, 'For if we burn our bodies and don't have love it hasn't profited anything' (Rom. 13). They may do it for the publicity, they may do it for whatever, but they're not doing it for love. But, if you lay your life down for your friend:

- A friend is not going to cheat you—is he?
- A friend is not going to stab you in the back when you're not looking—is he?
- A friend is going to defend you—isn't that right?
- A friend is going to help you.

Jesus said, v 14: "**You are My friends**... [That's quite a statement—isn't it?] (But also notice that it's

conditional): ...if you do whatever I command you." Like anything else, a friendship has a close, intimate, understood set of rules. There are rules for conduct that are not close and intimate. One of them is that when you go to the airport you have to go through this machine to see if you have any metal. You must do it, that's it. What are the rules of friendship?

- trust
 - loyalty
 - love
 - protection
 - dedication
- all of those things!

- Does Christ love us? *Yes!*
- Does He protect us? *Yes!*
- Does He defend us? *Yes!*
- Does He watch out for us? *Yes!*

We don't want to lower the relationship with Jesus Christ to, on the human plane, become sloppy in the relationship by saying, 'Oh well, Jesus is my friend.' But we need to uphold it in honor and love and esteem. Jesus said, 'If you continue practicing what I command you...'—there are conditions. If you have a friend who deliberately lies to you, what happens? *He is no longer your friend!* If you've ever had that happen you drop that friend! Why? *Because he couldn't be trusted!* Christ won't lie to us, and we are under this grace of God. That's a tremendous thing for Christ to say that ***you are My friends!***

3. Not only are we friends, but we are also relatives—we are *brothers*!

That's bringing everything real close together. Hebrews 2:10: "Because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Jesus, although He was perfect, was *perfected*. Jesus was not offered as a sacrifice when He was twelve. But He was offered as a sacrifice after He finished His ministry and He was some 33-½-years-old. He was *perfected!* And I'm sure God's understanding was perfected in the human experience.

Verse 11: "For both He Who is sanctifying and those who are sanctified *are* all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." We are the brothers of Christ. 'Brethren' includes more than just the male gender. That means those who are of the Family of God.

Verse 12: "Saying, 'I will declare Your name to **My brethren**... [that is Jesus will declare the name of God the Father to *My brethren*, those that are in the Church] ...in the midst of the Church

I will sing praise to You.’.... [Then it goes one step further showing we are also the children]: And again, ‘I will be trusting in Him.’ And again, ‘Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me’” (vs 12-13).

4. Children of God

Romans 8:14: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God. Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, ‘Abba, Father’” (vs 14-15). That’s all a part of the Family of God, and we’re getting into the thing of the children of God/the sons of God—children of God. We’re right there with it. Sons of God/the children of God where we can call “Abba, Father.”

In the societies that we are talking about here, it is completely indiscrete to call someone not of your family by an endearing term like daddy or mommy, so forth. Even the German language to this day carries that through. When you meet someone on a formal basis, you do not use terms of endearment to them. It is very formal. It is very straightforward. Here, not only are we the friends of Jesus Christ, not only are we the brothers of Christ, we are also of the Family of God and we can call God our Father in an intimate way, Abba, which means Daddy. and that means that *the formal barriers have been broken down* for the Family of God. We still honor God, love God, respect God, but we can have that close intimate relationship with Him. That’s what the grace of God does for us.

I want you to notice the word for sons of God—‘huio’—which in the singular is ‘huios.’ That ‘ui’ is pronounced *we*. The ‘sons of God’ can refer—‘son’ can refer to the male gender distinctly. It can also refer to male and female.

There are two words for “*children*” but the main one I want to cover is called ‘tekna’—either gender, male or female—called the children of God.

1-John 3:1: Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the **children** [‘tekna’] of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the **children** of God...” (vs 1-2).

I don’t want to get into a lot of theological discussions and things like that. ***We are the children of God!*** When a mother is carrying a child it is called a child, yet, it is not yet born. Likewise, we are called the children of God because we have the begettal of God’s Holy Spirit, but we have not yet entered into the Kingdom of God because the

resurrection has not taken place. But God calls the things that are not as though they were (Rom. 4), because He told Abraham, ‘Your seed shall be as the stars.’ They weren’t yet, but He said they would be. God calls the things that are not as though they are. That’s why *we are the children of God*, but it will be a concrete fact at the resurrection in a spiritual sense.

Verse 2: “Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be... [The implication is *as the children of God to the fullest extent*.] ...but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is.” We are the children of God.

5. Sonship

We enter into this sonship. It is not an adoption in the sense of the way that people think of adoption. Adoption is taking someone that is not your offspring without your seed. However, until we receive the Spirit of God as the seed of God, we are not truly His children. Once we have received that then we are His children because we have the seed of God in us.

6. Daughters of God

2-Corinthians 6:16: “And what agreement is *there between* a temple of God and idols? For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be **My people**.’” It’s interesting, the way you pronounce that word for *people* is ‘laos.’ We have a word today of a nation that is called Laos. Be interesting to try and trace that derivation back.

Verse 17: “‘Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,’ says *the* Lord, ‘and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; and I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be **My sons and daughters**,’ says *the* Lord Almighty” (vs 17-18). Here the word ‘huio’—in this case plural it is ‘huios’—refers to the male gender exclusively. Then we have the *daughters*—‘thugaters.’ I think where we get the name Agatha, also from the Greek word ‘good.’ It’s not too good of a sounding name in English. You think of someone called Agatha, it’s not the best sounding name, but in the Greek it means *good*. ‘Horiaios’ means *beautiful*.

“‘...you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says *the* Lord Almighty” (v 18).

2-Corinthians 7:1: “Now then, beloved, since we have these promises, we should purge ourselves from every defilement of *the* flesh and *the* spirit, perfecting Holiness in *the* fear of God.” We went through how to do that. That is through the grace of God.

7. Joint heirs with Christ

Not only did Christ die for us, not only are we called

- the *friends* of Jesus Christ
- the *brothers* of Jesus Christ
- the *sons* of God
- the *children* of God
- the *daughters* of God

but we are also

- *joint heirs!*

When you get into heirs and inheritance it starts getting a little legal sounding—doesn't it? The Bible says there is *one* Lawgiver. Therefore, God is legal; because of law He's got to be legal. Don't think in terms of laws of the land or attorneys, or judges in that sense, because that will cloud your thinking in this particular case. Why don't you study this through because I don't believe that anyone outside of the first resurrection is a joint-heir.

Romans 8:16: "The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God.... [there it is, children—'teknon theos'] ...Now, if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs..." What is one of the main things that the whole prophecy of Israel hinges on? *Not only just on Christ*, that is one main promise or the promise of grace. *There is the promise of the birthright!* The birthright is by *inheritance*; it is a legal thing.

When someone dies they leave a will and they say, 'I give so and so such and such,' and so forth. Christ died and the *part of the will* was that we become heirs. If you're someone's offspring and they die, you are entitled to part of what they own legally. Because God has brought us into this relationship, God has entitled us, if we continue in the things that He has said, if we continue in the grace of God, we will be heirs.

Verse 17: "Now, if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him."

- What did Jesus Christ inherit? *He inherited the universe!*
- Who owns the universe? *God does!*

Didn't God say:

- The earth is Mine and the fullness thereof.
- All gold is Mine, and all silver is Mine.
- *Yes, He did!*

He let's us use it, but who owns it? *God does!*

If we are to inherit it, it's not just some will-of-the-wisp thing. *It is an inheritance!* We are going

to co-own with Christ everything that He owns. Just let that sink in for just a minute! Think on that!

Let's look at it another way: Why is it—and it's motivated out of greed in many cases—that a woman will want to marry a rich man, or a man will want to marry a rich woman? In the case of tremendous avarice and greed, there's even murder that has been known to take place to *do in* either the husband or the wife *to inherit what they have!*

We've almost gone full circle to the first place we began in Heb. 2 of God has put all things in subjection under Him, and it was Jesus. Hebrews 1:1 is the lead-in to it: "God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things..." (vs 1-2). If Christ is an heir of all things—it didn't say the heir of air. It's not just something out here in space that is nothing. It is the heir of *all things*.

It really shows the ridiculousness of being materialistic. It shows the ridiculousness of just striving after the fleshly things to have them for the sake of having them because Christians are going to have the best of everything through Christ, appointed heir of all things. That's everything that there is in the universe we will co-own.

But there are going to be rules for using it. The rules are that the Church is to be subject to Christ as the wife is to her husband. That's how we inherit it through then that marriage of the Church in Christ. We become joint-heirs. Let that sink in for a minute! How rich are you? Don't try and calculate it in dollars because I don't know what unit of value that God uses for what He's created. But it talks about, in Eph. 3, the riches of the grace and glory of God.

I'll tell you one thing. When we are clothed upon with our spiritual tabernacle, as it says there in 2-Cor. 5, it's not going to be an ill-fitted warehouse suit, I will guarantee that. When God says that we have the right, and it's going to be a property right in New Jerusalem and in the universe, we will own part of that. Not to use as any way we want—not to destroy, not to sin—but to use it for the glory of God and what God has planned. And I'll tell you this much, if God has planned what He has for human beings on the earth at this point, we're going to have to have a spiritual mind to comprehend what God's plan is going to be when we are the sons of God. Like Paul said, looking through the glass darkly we can get a glimpse of it, but when the fullness of that comes in that's going to be something.

I've often wondered what kind of vehicle God is going to say, 'This is yours,' and you just take off wherever you want to go. Won't have to be

stuck in some car behind the traffic. I got stuck last night in a traffic jam. I was all through at 5 o'clock, but I was in Redwood City, so I was on my way home and I got stuck in a traffic jam that began all the way from Mountain Home clear down south of San Jose. And it was just a creepy crawly all the way. You know, that's a good time to think what kind of a vehicle is God going to give us in the Kingdom of God. Angels will be our servants. That's going to be absolutely amazing! We're going to have to get use to it.

8. God is our Father

That's what the Grace of God does for us. God is our Father

9. Christ is going to marry the Church

I'll just summarize it with this verse, Ephesians 5:32: "This is a great mystery; but I am speaking in respect to Christ and the Church."

Verse 22: "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord; for the husband is *the* head of the wife, even as Christ *is the* Head of the Church; and He is *the* Savior of the body. For even as the Church is subject to Christ, in the same way also *let* wives be *subject* to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; so that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the* Word; that He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame" (vs 22-27). The only way that can be done is through the Grace of God.

Verse 28: "In the same way, husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself; for no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the Church. For **we are members of His body**—of His flesh and of His bones" (vs 28-30). That is, just like Eve was created out of one of the ribs of Adam, so the Church has been created out of the innermost being of Christ. That's what the analogy is then.

Verse 31: "For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh." It's going to be that we are joined in one Spirit with the Lord. It's going to be a spiritual and practical relationship for all eternity.

Let's talk about some of the things concerning the Grace of God and the riches of His grace, and the tremendous thing that God is doing. I'll just have to admit to you today that from Eph.

5:14-21 is my favorite the part in all of the Bible. I perhaps have given more sermons ending up here and coming to this than any other. And yet, through all the times that I have, I never cease to gain more from it, to have more feeling and more understanding of it every time I do.

Ephesians 3:14: "For this cause... [of God's plan] ...I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named... [the family of angels and the family of men on the earth who are going to be in the Family of God] ...that He may grant you, according to **the riches of His glory...**" (vs 14-16). That's quite a statement. How much can God give us? *He's already said we're going to inherit the universe with Christ!* That's not just some poetic statement. That means "...the riches of His glory..."

"...to be strengthened with power... ['*dunamis/dunamai*'] ...by His Spirit in the inner man..."(v 16)—or person. How can you best be strengthened with the Spirit of God internally? *You can by living in that state of grace*, because God is more willing *abundantly* to give us of His Spirit and to pour out His grace to us.

Verse 17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts in faith." In other words, that we come so close to God, and the Spirit of God that it's actually like Christ living *in* us, living in our heart. What does it say? *Out of the abundance the heart the mouth speaks!* If Christ is established in our heart and in our very being then it's not going to have to be that we live by the letter of the Law. We live by the grace of God. That's what he's talking about here.

Verse 17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ..." (vs 17-19). If we really come to that point through God's grace, to understand how much Christ *loved* us, *does love* us, and *is loving* us, that makes the whole relationship with God a much more tremendous thing. And God is more willing and able to give those things to us.

"...being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height..." (v 18). That's why it says there, and when I first read back in Heb. 6, 'Leaving aside the principles of Christ let's go on to perfection' I thought: What on earth is he talking about? I think I can understand a little more now. We're not putting Christ aside. We're going beyond baptism and

laying on of hands, and those rudimentary things that begins us walking on this path of grace so that we can come to this point to comprehend with all the saints what is *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the plan of God*. That's a four dimensional thing. That can only be with the Spirit of God. We can only comprehend it through His grace.

Verse 19: And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." That's quite a statement, to be filled with all the fullness of God. If you will look at the words, it is very redundant the way it is said there, but to "...be filled with all the fullness of God" has got to then refer to the resurrection when this will be accomplished.

Verse 20: "Now to Him Who is able... [Has the power. Christ and God the Father have the power.] ...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think..." That's really something—isn't it? All that we ask or think! The very greatest and magnanimous, wonderful, greatest thought we can possibly comprehend, God is able to do exceedingly above that.

This tells me that to enter into the Kingdom of God as a son of God, to be a Spirit being, is going to be so utterly fantastic that the human mind cannot comprehend it. I think it would be like taking a 100-watt bulb and screwing it into a socket, that when you threw the switch, would have 10-million volts of power. You threw the switch and it would go BLEWIE!—nothing left. I think that's a good comparison to what our minds are able to comprehend with what God would give us. But we're to grow in that.

"...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God, now to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, to Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 19-21).

I hope that we can really begin to grasp and comprehend and understand the grace of God to it's fullest extent. I think we can comprehend more fully what Paul said. ***'What? Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid!'***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 14:6
- 2) 1 John 5:1-4
- 3) Hebrews 2:5-9

- 4) Romans 5:1-7
- 5) 1 John 1:8
- 6) Romans 5:9
- 7) John 15:12-14
- 8) Hebrews 2:10-13
- 9) Romans 8:14-15
- 10) 1 John 3:1-2
- 11) 2 Corinthians 6:16-18
- 12) 2 Corinthians 7:1
- 13) Romans 8:16-17
- 14) Hebrews 1:1-2
- 15) Ephesians 5:32, 22-31
- 16) Ephesians 3:14-19, 18-20, 19-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Peter 5:10
- Daniel 3; 7
- Titus 2; 3
- Romans 6; 7; 13; 4
- 2 Corinthians 5
- Hebrews 6

Grace of God IV Grace is a Gift

Fred R. Coulter

Here's a little chart that I've put up on the board which will help us understand a little bit more about the New Testament and New Covenant, and the grace that we need. But first of all, let's go to Ephesians 2; this is a key section that will help us to understand about the relationship of ancient Israel to God. That is the key to understanding the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Here is a verse, once again, that you read along, you go over and you just pass right by it and it really tells us what we need to know, but we don't get out of it what we need to know because we're not thinking in the terms that we really ought to.

Right here let's begin in Ephesians 2:11—Paul gets done showing about grace (vs 4-10) and then he says: "Therefore, remember that you were once Gentiles [nations] in *the* flesh, who are called uncircumcision by those who are called circumcision in *the* flesh made by hands; and that you were **without**... [*separate from, apart from*] ...Christ at that time..." (vs 11-12).

It doesn't mean that Christ was not there. Christ was there, but they were not called to Christ. They were not brought to God. They were separate from God because God gave the Gentiles over to their own devices, over to their own gods and everything. Why? *Because God chose, of all the nations, only Israel!* God only worked through Israel directly. When they would go into captivity then God would work from time-to-time in a secondary manner with the other nations like Babylon and King Nebuchadnezzar; like when He brought the Assyrians to take away the northern 10 tribes, then He worked with them only as much as to fulfill His will, but He never went to another nation directly to deal with them as He did the Israelites.

Why would that be so? The reason it is so is because the Old Covenant was also a marriage covenant. And for God to go to another nation and deal with them as He did with Israel would be on God's part committing spiritual adultery. That is why He gave them a *bill of divorcement* and sent them away into captivity, but He did not marry another, or enter into a covenant relationship with any other nation. That's why it says concerning the marriage covenant, that Christ died, therefore releasing that Old Covenant so that the New Covenant could be established (Rom 7). The Gentiles were *apart* from Christ.

"...alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,

having no hope, and without God in the world..." (v 12). You're either with the true God or you are without the true God, one or the other. You can't really be half way in between. I mean there are many categories in the world that are somewhat half way in between but you can't be half way in between as far as God's relationship is concerned. Either you are or you aren't.

"...But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once **far off**... [That's a key thing that we want to cover. You might want to emphasize that.] ...are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition, having annulled... [broken down or torn down] ...in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in *the* decrees of *men*..." (vs 12-15). These were the 'religious' laws of the Jews on the one hand, and the 'religious' laws of the Gentiles on the other hand. They had 'religion.' They had what they thought was God. But they were alienated from the true God. They were without God in the world.

"...so that in Himself He might create both into one new man, making peace; and *that* He might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, having slain the enmity by it. Now when He came, He preached the Gospel—peace to you who *were* far off and to those who *were* near" (vs 15-17). Who were the ones who were near? *Israel is the one who was near!* They did not have a relationship with God that we can have under the New Covenant but they were closer to God. The Gentiles were far off; they were removed.

"...peace to you who *were* far off and to those who *were* near. For through Him we both have *direct* access by one Spirit to the Father.... [a complete different arrangement] ...So then, you are no longer aliens and foreigners; but *you are* fellow citizens with the saints, and *are* of the household of God" (vs. 17-19).

Let's see from the very words of God how He says that He would be near to them, that He would be their God. Deuteronomy 4:6. "And you shall keep and do *them*... [the commandments, statutes and judgments of God] ...for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations... [that's all the rest of the Gentiles, who were far removed from God] ...which shall hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.' For what nation is so great whose God *is* so near to them.... [The

closest one to fulfill that was the Queen of Sheba. She came and saw Solomon, and she said exactly those words.] ...as the LORD our God *is*, whenever we call upon Him?" (vs 6-7).

Tradition has it that she went back to her country and she supposedly built a temple much like the one that Solomon had built. She commanded her people to worship the true God, and I think we have some of the remnants today in the Ethiopians, who are supposed to be Christians and they claim that they are descendants of the Queen of Sheba, especially the house of the Emperor Haile Selassie. He called himself 'the lion of the tribe of Judah.'. Nevertheless, that's what their relationship was. They *were near* to God. We're going to see several things as to why grace is needed in relationship to this.

Verse 7: "For what nation is so great whose God *is* so near to them, as the LORD our God *is*, whenever we call upon Him? And what great nation has statutes and judgments that *are so* righteous as all this law which I set before you today?" (vs 7-8). There was a righteousness of the Law. Where the religionists became all out of place on this was when they created their own traditions and commandments, as the Pharisees did, which they rejected the commandments of God that they could keep their own traditions.

{referring to a chart} Under the Old Covenant in the middle on each side of the Old Covenant/New Covenant, put Abraham's Covenant. This is referred to in Rom. 4 and Gal. 3: that 'if you be Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.' And the Abrahamic Covenant was given when? *Before he was circumcised!* So, there were actually *two covenants* that were given with Abraham:

1. before his circumcision
2. at the time of his circumcision

—coming up and leading to the time then when Israel would be called as a nation out of Egypt.

Under the Old Covenant with Israel here are the order of events. You have

- God
- then angels would intercede for Israel with God
- you had the laws and commandments
- you had the temple, the high priest, the sacrifices (no promise of eternal life)

It was justification to the temple, the temple and nation to God. That's why they were *near* to God.

In the New Covenant, we have something better. We don't get near to God. That is why the

Old Covenant could not do what the New Covenant was supposed to do. The Old Covenant was not designed to bring eternal life. The Old Covenant was designed to bring them near to God. It says that 'the Law was to lead them to Christ' (Gal. 3). Why? *Because you could see with the Old Covenant that there were certain limitations that couldn't be overcome!* The main limitation was that it could not open the way to have direct connection with God. They were brought *near* to God, but in the New Covenant then, *we have direct connection* with God the Father.

How do we have that direct connection with God the Father in the New Covenant? *With His Holy Spirit!* They were near; the Gentiles were cut off. In other words, it was true, God just cut them off; that nothing to do with God. The more you study about some of these nations and things, the more you really understand that that was so. They had good and evil mixed in their society, and as Paul said the Gentiles that had not the Law when they do the things contained in the Law 'are a law unto themselves.' They did not have direct access to God.

Now we have direct access to God the Father through Jesus Christ, and He is our sacrifice and our High Priest. He is also the Mediator of the New Covenant. In the Old Covenant the angels were the mediators. God only put His presence in the temple and the Holy of Holies one day a year, on the Day of Atonement. Here we have the presence of God in us every day with His Holy Spirit, quite a different thing.

We have the promise of eternal life and that necessitates grace. The reason you need grace is because the things in the Old Covenant—though they were good, though they were Holy, though they were righteous—could not bring eternal life. It wasn't designed to bring eternal life, because even though they were *near* to God, and they had indirect access to God, *we have direct access* to God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It takes something more than was with the Old Covenant. That's why we need grace.

As Jesus said, 'Keep My commandments.' In the Old Covenant when they were justified to the temple, and the temple and the nation to God, in the New Covenant we're justified before God the Father in heaven, receive the Holy Spirit, and instead of a physical temple, we are the spiritual temple here on earth because we have God's Spirit in us.

The temple, as you will read under the Old Covenant, that He built the tabernacle so He could dwell among them (Exo. 25:8). They would have been a whole lot closer to God had they not sinned when He was giving the Ten Commandments. When

they sinned then God removed Himself yet one step further from them. That's why we have the high priest going in once a year.

Now it is completely different, as far as our relationship to God. In the Old Covenant, even though they could pray, at the time when they were praying—it's not saying that God would not hear their prayers, or answer their prayers—God was not directly involved in their life creating in them that which is going to be for eternal life. There is another flaw that we will see here in just a minute in the whole relationship of man with God and that's why we need the grace of God to compensate for that.

Let me use another analogy: If you have an imported Japanese or foreign car, it is not designed to do the work of a bulldozer. If you put a blade on the front of that little car to do the work of a bulldozer, what would happen? You'd soon smash it up. It would all wreck up. Nor is the bulldozer designed to go 60-mph or more, down the highway. What would happen to the highway and the bulldozer if someone got that up and going 60-mph down the road? It would just chew it all up. That, in a sense, is a good analogy that the Old Covenant was not designed to give life. If there were a law that could give life, justification would have been by a law. But there is the *grace of God* and the *forgiveness of sin*, which then makes it possible to have that relationship with God. It's not just near to God, it is that *God is in you*, and that's a whole totally different relationship.

Now let's see why we need grace in relationship to eternal life. I will just refer you to the series on the book of Romans. I'm not going to go through in quite as much detail this particular time. You would have to conclude that if you were an Israelite and you were near to God, you would be in a better relationship than the Gentiles who were cut off and far from God, but not according to the New Covenant because the New Covenant requires something else.

Romans 3:9: "What then? Are we [Jews] of ourselves better?... [than the Gentiles] ...Not at all! For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—ALL—with being under sin, exactly as it is written: 'For there is not a righteous one—not even one!'" (vs 9-10).

Under the Old Covenant, what did Paul say his relationship with God was? *Blameless!* He said that the righteousness, which is of the Law, is blameless (Philip. 3). What did it say of Zacharias and Elizabeth, the father and mother of John the Baptist? *They were blameless!* Why? *Because their attitude was right!* They were near to God. They were keeping the commandments that were there. As

far as the Old Covenant was concerned they were blameless, but were they without sin? *No! Could not be!* The Old Covenant was not designed to give the Holy Spirit to counterbalance the human nature and the 'law of sin and death.' They're all under sin!

Verse 10: "Exactly as it is written: 'For there is not a righteous one—not even one! There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God... [in the spiritual sense] ...They have all gone out of the way; together they have *all* become depraved. There is not *even* one who is practicing kindness.... [That is a derivative of grace—'charis tau teta.' It's kind of an awkward pronunciation.] ...No, there is not so much as one! Their throats *are* like an open grave..." (vs 10-13). This is exactly what happens.

I was talking with a man who was in charge of something called Help Yourself Real Estate. He just opened an office in Gilroy, and he was telling me that the realtors—once they come in contact with them—sell for a flat fee of \$2450, and they help you sell. In other words if you're going to sell your house they just give you the names and telephone number and you and the people work it out and they come and look at your home and then you pay them only \$2450. Well you know what this does to the realtors. That wipes them out because normally they're used to 6% or 3% and no less than 1-1/2% if they have a three way split. What happens? First of all, the realtors ignore them. Then they start bad-mouthing them, and then they start actively working against them.

Well, he just opened his office in Gilroy. He got new desks, new furniture, a new phone system, and all ready to go and he leased out an office that used to be a jewelry store. He thought everything was going to be fine and safe, but someone threw a Molotov cocktail through the window and burned out the inside of it and ruined all his new furniture, his phone system and everything, and he didn't take out any fire insurance so he is down the tube with it.

These are probably, whoever did it, 'good, upstanding' persons who probably belong to one of the civic clubs, who probably goes to church on Sunday. You can find out how quickly the bitterness and the stinging tongue will come when you bring up about the commandments of God and the Sabbath. Boy they can be so nice and then just turn an evil face to you right away. That's showing exactly how human nature is. That's just the way it is.

"...with their tongues they have used deceit; the venom of asps is under their lips" (v 13). I can prove that very quickly because if what in these recordings concerning homosexuality were

played on one of the stations up there in San Francisco, they would almost have a war going on right during the time the guy was speaking. You know they would. It just shows and reveals human nature. That's the way that human nature is.

Verse 14: "Whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; their feet *are* swift to shed blood; destruction and misery *are* in their ways... [I submit: look at Lebanon, Southeast Asia, Nicaragua, Chili, South Africa.] ...and *the* way of peace they have not known" (vs 14-17). They're always seeking peace—aren't they? They're always talking about peace—aren't they? They don't know the way.

Verse 18: "'There is no fear of God before their eyes.' Now then, we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those..." (vs. 18-19). That's virtually everyone because no one is exempt from the laws of God, although this is directly talking about those who are within the Old Covenant.

"...who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and **all the world** may become guilty before God.... [that's *all* the world, not just Israel] ...Therefore, by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him..." (vs 19-20)—in His presence. They can be justified to the temple, and because of the angels that were at the temple, the temple to God. But by works of law no flesh can be justified in the presence of God. Why? *Because they still have 'the law of sin and death' in them and it takes something more than what we can do!* It takes something only what God can do.

Here's what law does: "...for through *the* Law *is* the knowledge of sin" (v 20). That is the function of law. Is it still the function of law today to show what sin is? *Yes!* Then what does God determine that the penalty of the Law is? *The wages of sin is death!*

Verse 21: "But now, *the* righteousness of God *that is* separate from law..." In addition to the Law, is what he's talking about, because in order to receive eternal life you need the righteousness of God. That can only be *given* to you. That can only be *imputed* to you. That can only be given to you in the way of Christ and the grace of God. It can't come any other way. Why can't it come any other way? *Because God determined that's the only way it's going to come!* We have to have the righteousness of God in order to have eternal life.

"...*the* righteousness of God *that is* separate from law... [notice it is not *the* law. In the Greek there is no definite article; that's important] ...has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and

upon all those who believe; for there is no difference" (vs 21-22). God is not just working through the nation of Israel alone. This is what has angered the Jews so much.

I've been reading a book *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*. It is a pretty good book, and the premise of the whole thing is that, Matthew especially, perhaps Mark, maybe perhaps some of the things that Luke had, were originally written in Hebrew but translated to Greek, not Aramaic. The sacred-namers say that it's in Aramaic, but it's not Aramaic. It helps to understand a few difficult things in Matthew, and so forth, because it helps clarify it.

But he has missed the whole point. The people who are doing this is the center of the Foundation for Judeo Christian Studies. The reason he is missing a very important point is this: There are no extant text of the New Testament in Hebrew anywhere. I mean not even copies. Meaning, we have copies of Greek manuscripts, and in certain cases it's obvious that it was translated from the Hebrew because it's very similar to what the Septuagint was, which was translated from the Hebrew into Greek. But because of the hatred that the Jews had for the Gentiles—*hatred!*—therefore, when God began dealing with the Gentiles, what happened?

Remember when the Apostle Paul came back to Jerusalem and they found out he was there, they went to *kill* him. Then he was arrested. He said to the officer, 'Now, let me talk to the mob out here and see if I can calm them down a little bit.' So, he came out on the balcony and he started talking in Hebrew, and they were all quiet. Remember what happened when he mentioned the name Gentiles? This was before the destruction of Jerusalem. *They went into a wild frenzy!* They were ready to take Paul and dismember him. What happened? *The captain of the guard had to throw him in the clink that night, keep everybody away and then they snuck out at midnight taking Paul down to Caesarea.*

The authors of this book are Bivin and Blizzard. Blizzard is quite knowledgeable, but they missed the whole point of how much the Jews have hated Jesus Christ. They say we ought to go through all of the writings of the rabbis and that will help us understand the New Testament. I say, absolutely not! Maybe from a linguistic point of view it could.

But since the Jews hated Jesus so much, guess what they have in their Talmud, in their Mishnas? They have sayings very similar to what Jesus taught about being nice and being good, so you have the counterfeit over here. But God cut off and rejected and sent the Jews away because they did not receive Jesus Christ. Even in the New

Testament Church there was a problem between the Jews and the Gentiles, between circumcision and uncircumcision.

So, in going through the book I can see exactly what will happen to that foundation. The Jews are going to get in there and destroy the truth about Jesus Christ because that has been their goal for 1900 years, and until God calls them that is still going to be their goal, anyway they're going to do it. They can do it nicely today. I've heard Jews on talk shows say, 'Well, Jesus was a good man. Yes, we recognize that He was a prophet like other prophets.'

But that destroys the Divinity of Jesus Christ. And until God opens the minds of the Jews they are still going to be at loggerheads with this: *that God has made no difference between Jew and Gentile in relationship to coming before God in the New Covenant.* That's the whole basis of the problem, and it's 1900-years-old.

Paul said, v 22: "For there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...[all Jews, all Israelites, all Gentiles] ...*but* are being justified freely **by His grace** ['charite']... [It is God's grace and goodness, His love and forbearance that He forgives our sins, which makes us justified to God.] ...through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood..." (vs 22-25)—the blood of Jesus Christ.

Even though they had sacrifices under the Old Covenant, what does the book of Hebrews tell us? *The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin!*

- Who do you sin against? *You sin against God!*
- What takes away the sin before God? *The blood of Jesus Christ!*
- What took away the sin before the temple? *The blood of animals!*

That's why they were near to God. They could not be brought into the presence of God.

"...faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past" (v 25). As we know there is no such thing as future sin, although sin will occur in the future because it is not yet done.

Do you understand what I mean? It's like this ad for the Datsun or Nissan GX300. This policeman comes up and here's this thing parked on the road. He looks at, and here it is bright red. And they get the lights on it and he looks at it and they play this music, and he looks inside, and walks around it. He pulled up behind in his motorcycle.

Then it shows him standing there writing out a ticket. So, the owner comes out and says, 'What are you doing?' He tears the ticket out and gives it to him and says, 'This is for speeding.' It never went anyplace. What would happen when he'd go to court? That would not be a sin because he did not do it. But if he did speed and got caught, he did it. When he got caught it was in the *past tense*.

All sin is in the *past tense*, because it is an action and a thought that you do now. Who knows what we'll think tomorrow, for good or for bad. I have yard work to do tomorrow; lots of yard work to do. By 2 o'clock in the afternoon when it's hot, I don't really know what my future attitude is going to be. We have more trouble with rotten hoses. You know, you haven't used them all summer. You go out there and hook them up to run water and the end falls off because you buy this \$3.98 hose, 50 feet.

I went out this morning just to turn it on, just to let the water run. You aren't breaking the Sabbath if you water your lawn. I went out there and the hose fell apart on me. I had one of these handy-dandy little quick-fix-its, so I put it on and I didn't realize it but I made both ends the same. Instead of one being one way and one being the other way. So, I thought, Oh no! Boy, that'll teach me to do that on the Sabbath. I didn't know I was going to do that. I did not know that I was going to get up this morning and run out there and say, 'God, I'm out and I'm going to fix this hose, and we are going to water the lawn.' No, I just said, hey, well it's a little dry, and since Jonathan has to stay home and watch the dog today, I'll let him move the hose around. I went out and turned it on and we ended up with this total disaster over just a dinky rotten hose.

My wife is laughing because she saw it. You know, go out there and screw it in and you're looking, one piece is in one hand, the other piece is in the other hand. She told me to be careful. I didn't know how careful.

It's the same way with our relationship with God. That's why we're told in the prayer that we are to ask for forgiveness of our sins every day because every day there are sins that we will do. Either sins of mental temptation, of or sins of omission, or commission and God is not giving us a blanket thing for the entire future.

It is "...of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; yes, to publicly declare His righteousness in the present time, that He might be just, and the one Who justifies the one who *is* of the faith of Jesus" (vs 25-26).

When we come down to the Passover time, then I'm going to give a sermon showing why the

sacrifice of Christ is what we remember and why that is so very important. But if we have the faith that Christ is the only One, where it said, 'I am the Way, I am the Truth, and I am the Life...' Then *if we believe* that then God gives us His grace, and He gives us that *gift of grace* which is His righteousness. If God is going to give us eternal life, that is the only righteousness that will qualify for it—isn't that correct?

Verse 27: "Therefore, where *is* boasting?...." The Jews can't say, because they've had a religion now for over 3500 years; 'we're near to God.' The Gentile can say, 'So be it, but I have God's Spirit to have direct access to God. And that's because of God's calling, not because I'm great or because I'm better than you, but because of what God has done.'

"...It is excluded. Through what law? *The law* of works? By no means! Rather, *it is* through a law of faith" (v 27). Every time I read that it really is kind of mind-boggling because if faith is opposite of law, how can you have a law of faith? Well, the *law of faith* means that there is a certain set way that God has ordained that faith is going to work. It's based on belief and the attitude. It's based upon what God has done. Remember, Jesus said that if any come some other way, 'they are a thief and robber.' So, it is a *law of faith*!

Verse 28: "Consequently, we reckon... [calculate through this] ...that a man is justified by faith..." Faith in what?

- Faith in Jesus Christ!
- Faith in God the Father!
- Faith in His sacrifice!
- Faith in what He has done!

"...separate... [and apart] ...from works of law. *Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also *the God of the Gentiles*? *Yes! He is* also God of *the Gentiles*, since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith" (vs. 28-30). That's just a play on words. Either *by* faith or *through* faith, it means exactly the same thing. That's why he used two different words.

Verse 31: "Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE!...." The Greek here is 'me,' those are the first two letters. Then 'genoito' comes from the word concerning begotten, and this is the same word that is used for created.

John 1:3: It says, "All things **came into being** [*egeneto*'] through Him..."—that is the past tense of *coming into being*. When you come back here to 'me genoito,' it is the same word and it really means *don't ever let that thought come into your*

mind or *don't ever let that come into existence*—that kind of thinking; it's the same root word.

Don't let it ever come into existence. It says, Romans 3:31: "...MAY IT NEVER BE!.... [the *King James* says, 'God forbid,' but that's a complete mistranslation] ...Rather, we are establishing law."

Why do we establish law? *Through the process of repentance, the receiving of God's Holy Spirit, coupled with the grace of God and the keeping of the commandments of God, we want to keep the commandments of God!* We establish it because it becomes a part of us! When it becomes a part of us, that's the best way to establish law. Just like with our children. When it becomes a part of them that they automatically do the things that we've been trying to teach them all their lives, boy that's fine. We don't have to go around and say do this, do that, do the other thing; don't do this, don't do that, don't do the other thing. It establishes it, and that's what we're trying to do in teaching—isn't it? We're trying to establish it in them so they will do it.

Likewise with God! That's why He says that this is 'the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah after those days. I will put My laws **into** their minds, and My commandments **into** their hearts.' As we will see a little later in the Greek, it means *to write them in the tablets of their heart*. The Old Covenant was that He wrote them on tablets of stone. They were always to have the Ten Commandments written and placed at the doorpost when they would come in, so they could see it when they come in and when they go out. The orthodox Jews still do it today.

When I was pastoring down in Torrance and Santa Monica area reached up into the Hollywood area. When I would go visit in the Jewish areas I could tell who was a Jew and who was a Catholic. Catholics make sure you know they're Catholic. They put a little cross right up to the left side of their door. The Jews put a little thing with the Ten Commandments written on it and it's supposed to be the two plates. Even the Jews to this day do that. They put this little thing that it is the Torah, and they have the Ten Commandments written on them.

Now we have it where we establish law because it is in our hearts and our minds, and our inward parts. In other words, we're not seeking an opportunity to sin, hoping we won't get caught. That is a work of law. We are seeking an opportunity not to sin. So, if a temptation comes along, rather than saying, 'Oh well, no one's around, I'll do it.' We avoid it completely. We get away from it completely. Totally different approach: one is carnal; one is spiritual.

Romans 4:15: “For the Law works out wrath...” Why does the Law—because it’s Holy, spiritual, just and good (Rom, 7)—work out wrath? *Because every time you break the Law there is a penalty required!* What is the penalty? *The wages of sin is death!*

Verse 15: “For the law works out wrath; because where no law is, *there is* no transgression.” Why? *Because we saw the Law gives us the knowledge of sin!*

- by the Law is the knowledge of sin
- *the wages of sin is death*
- the law works out wrath
- *the wages of sin is death*
- where there is no law there is no transgression

This is where you come into a catch-22. The law tells us what sin is, and we are to *repent* of our sins. If we are to repent of our sins and accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we are brought into the relationship of grace with God and we *establish law*.

The Protestants say, ‘We do away with law altogether.’ Then what do you have? If you do away with law altogether—which is ridiculous—it’s like walking in and saying, ‘I cancel the law of gravity.’ But everybody’s still sitting in their chair, they’re not up floating around. You can’t cancel the law of gravity. You can’t cancel the laws of God. What happens when a person makes a proclamation that you have no laws? *Then you have no definition of sin!* Then what happens? *They go back and they establish their own righteousness!* ‘Yeah, murder is sin and we do need to honor mother and father.’

(go to the next track)

At 100-years-old it would be impossible for Abraham, of his own to engender children, let alone the difficulty or the deadness of the womb of Sarah. So he had to say, ‘Yes, Lord, Your Word is true. I believe what you say.’ When God says He forgives your sins, then we believe what He says. He says, ‘I am going to give you eternal life, if you believe in Jesus Christ.’ Jesus said, ‘Keep My commandments.’ *and* ‘This is a gift that I give to you. ***It is a free gift based upon belief!***

- You don’t have to climb Mt. Everest.
- You don’t have to do so many ‘hail Marys’ and ‘our fathers.’
- You don’t have to build buildings. You don’t have to make statues or idols.
- ***You believe what I said!***

You’re not any more capable of giving yourself eternal life than Abraham was in

engendering Isaac. So then, in the same way, if we believe God in what He says, He will fulfill what He says. That’s why grace is so fantastic, because the only way this can come is through grace.

Verse 20: “And he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God; for he was fully persuaded that what He has promised, He is also **able** to do” (vs 20-21). The word *able* is ‘*dunatos*’—which is derived from the word ‘*dunamis*’—which means He has the *power* to do it. God has the power to perform what He has promised.

Verse 22: “As a result, it was also imputed to him for righteousness.” When you believe God, He then imparts to you His righteousness to overcome and compensate for our own sins and weaknesses. We cannot be spiritually righteous before God on our own.

Verse 23: “But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; rather, *it was* also *written* for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed... [we’re going to see the depth of why He was delivered for our offences] ...to those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from *the* dead” (vs. 23-24). In other words, He had to be raised to go before God the Father, and to have that sacrifice accepted before there was justification.

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand... [we’re getting into that direct access to God the Father] ...and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God” (vs 1-2). Rather than how good we are and what righteousness we can do, we boast in God and what He can do.

Verse 3: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, and endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us. For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time Christ died for *the* ungodly. For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man...” (vs 3-7). Even in the flesh you can talk about ‘good’ people as people view people. A good person in the world is still a sinner before God.

“...although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood,

we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.... [we shall be saved by Him from wrath] ...And not only *this*, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation [atonement (*KJV*)]” (vs 7-11).

Verse 12 shows us why then we need the grace of God, and why only God can give it to us. As we have our little diagram that I drew before, here is God, and here is Israel—and they were close to God. They didn’t have direct access to God. On a personal basis, even though they were near to God, they were still cut off from God, spiritually, because they sinned. Here are the Gentiles over here, and these are the two, which are going to be made one in Christ. This is why God has to call us. What cuts us off from God? *Sin does!* But what causes us to sin? *That’s the law of sin and death!* So therefore, God is the One Who has to make the initiating action to us:

1. God *calls us*

That’s why it says ‘No one can come to Me except the Father draw him. (John 6). God has to call us, it can’t be done any other way.

2. God has to *grant repentance*

3. God has to *forgive sin*

4. God has to *give His Holy Spirit*

Everything is what God has to do—Isn’t it? That’s why it’s the grace of God.

5. God has to *give us His righteousness*

We can’t get that kind of righteousness ourself.

6. God has to *give the justification*

What do we have to do? *We have to believe and also keep the commandments!* Notice all that God has to do. That’s why it says in Galatians that if there were a law given that could give life, verily there it would be given through a law. But it’s through the grace of God.

Now we have direct access to God the Father. That’s why Christ came to reveal Him. We’ll see the thing that has cut us off from God and why we need the grace of God. That’s very, very important. Therefore we’re not going to take the grace of God lightly! We are not going to even let that thought come into existence that we void the Law of God.

Verse 12: “Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by means of sin *came* death; and in this way, death passed into all mankind...” That’s where ‘the law of sin and death’ entered. It’s something we all inherit.

When babies are born you see these cute little sweet things. They’re nice and cuddly and warm until all the natural bodily processes begin and then those other things need to be taken care of. Same way with our little puppy; it’s nice and cuddly and cute and everything like that, but it doesn’t know what it should do, and where it should do it, and it’s already done it where it shouldn’t do it and it’s already gotten someone in trouble, and WEEE! the smell is unbelievable, and we just got it yesterday afternoon.

So, it’s exactly the same way. These cute little babies, though God calls them innocent, do have in them the ‘law of sin and death’ from birth. That is what cuts all human beings off from God. God brought the Israelites close to Him, but He kept all the Gentiles cut off until the time of the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Then God opened it up for all, making no difference.

“...death passed into all mankind; *and it is* for this reason that **all have sinned**” (v 12)—they still sin! Like the young man. He came to Christ and asked, ‘What good thing should I do to inherit eternal life?’ Christ said, ‘Keep the commandments.’ *I have!* ‘Then go sell all that you have and become perfect; *become perfectly mature spiritually.*’ The young man couldn’t understand it. Well that was one that Jesus didn’t call. He couldn’t understand it. Didn’t want to give it up. But if a person were able to be perfect in the flesh—it’s an impossibility but we’ll say ok; the only one to do it was Christ—but if a person were able, what about his children? *They inherit the law of sin and death*, and what happens? *They sin!* ALL have sinned!

“...and it is for this reason that all have sinned.... [that’s what it’s talking about] ...(For before *the Law*... [until the Old Covenant commonly called *The Law* was given] ...sin was in *the world*. However, sin is not imputed when law does not exist” (vs 12-13). Didn’t He say all have sinned? Jews and Gentiles? That shows God’s laws are active and working all the time, otherwise God could not hold them accountable. He says those who know better and sin will be beaten with many stripes. Those who sin and don’t know any better will be beaten with few stripes. But they’ll still be beaten. That was the parable.

Verse 14: “Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even upon those who had not sinned in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the *One Who was to come*.... [Adam was the figure of the Christ] ...But *should* not the **free gift** be even as the offense was?” (vs 14-15)—‘charisma’—which is *gift of grace*, the *free gift*, freely given. God doesn’t charge us for it; in

some organizations you'd think God does. God does not charge for it. He gives it to us free.

"...For if by the transgression of the one man many died... [because death was passed to many because of that sin] ...how much more did the grace of God, and the gift of grace..." (v 15). That gift in grace is the righteousness of God imputed to us. That is a gift. God says, 'Here is the gift of righteousness before Me. You are as Jesus Christ.' God has done that to inspire us to want to do better, but don't get all self-righteous about it because it's through Christ. He's given it to us to inspire us to keep the commandments of God and not get all entangled in our own traditions and things which are against the laws of God. It is the free gift.

"...which *is* by the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto many? And *should* not the free gift *be* like that which came by *the* one who had sinned?..." (vs 15-16). In other words, shall it not be as it came upon all men to sin, because of the sin of Adam, shall it not be that the grace of God will be given to all of those that God calls? *Yes!*

"...For on the one hand, judgment *was* by one unto condemnation; but on the other hand, the free gift *is by one to the* justification of many offenses. For if by the offense of the one man death reigned by the one..." (vs 16-17). In other words, that's something to think about. Because Adam and Eve sinned death was passed on to all human beings. From them death comes to all human beings, and it is inevitable.

We just heard yesterday that the fellow who discovered the process. He didn't invent it, he just discovered some of the laws of health that God had, Pritikin was his name. It was that if you exercise, if you cut way down on the fats—I think he's gone to the extreme to have no fats, I think the body needs a certain amount, but not animal fats—then the body can recuperate and the heart will recuperate and you can live longer, but he, unfortunately, got leukemia and he committed suicide day before yesterday. Death comes to all men.

How many here have read Adele Davis' health books. She's got a lot of stuff there, and boy I imagine in her lifetime she was popping pills by the carload everyday. I mean, hands full of pills. But she died of cancer of the bone marrow. It's given once for all to die. Death was because of the sin of Adam and Eve, so it passed to all. The death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection: how much more is that going to do for those who believe in Christ? They'll be given eternal life. That's what it says toward all men of the *justification of our offences*.

Verse 17: "For if by the offense of the one

man death reigned by the one, how much more shall those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ.... [Where it's talking about life, it means eternal life. Shall reign in eternal life.] ...So then, even as by the one transgression condemnation *came* unto **all** men... [all condemned to death because of sin] ...in the same way also, by the one act of righteousness *shall* justification of life *come* unto **all** men" (vs 17-18). That could read in the Greek: *into the justification for eternal life*.

Verse 19: "For even as by the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, in the same way also, by the obedience of the one *Man* shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, so that transgression might abound..." (vs 19-20). In other words, in order to clearly define that sin is sin God gave His laws to Israel to make it very apparent.

"...but where sin abounded, the grace *of God* did super-abound... [that is able to cover sin, forgive sin] ...so that even as sin has reigned unto death, so also might the grace *of God* reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vs 20-21). That's why we need the grace of God.

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say?..." Many people have said this, that the more you sin the more grace you need, therefore, the more grace that comes the more it glorifies God because God is glorified in giving grace. I've almost heard people say it just that way.

"...Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? **MAY IT NEVER BE!...**" (vs 1-2). Here it is again: 'me-genoito'—which is *may this thought never come into existence*. That's why they said, 'God forbid' in the *King James*. It means more than just 'God forbid.'

"...We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?" (v 2). We can't live in sin. Sooner or later, if you have the Spirit of God and you have not done despite to the Spirit of grace, you can no longer live in sin. Though you may, through weakness of flesh, be tempted to living in sin, sooner or later you can't live in that. Why? *Because the Spirit of God is going to prick your conscience so much that you are going to come out of it!* You can't live in it.

Verse 3: "Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death... [also *death* can refer to the second death] ...so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the

Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be **enslaved** to sin” (vs 3-6)—‘douleuein’—which comes from the word ‘doulos’—which means *slave, slave of sin*.

Verse 7: “Because the one who has died to sin has been justified from sin.... [if you’re baptized you’ve been justified from sin] ...Now if we died together with Christ... [through baptism] ...we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him” (vs 7-9)

That’s the thing we need to realize. We have, through Christ, been made free from the ‘law of sin and death.’ We are going to die because we all die in Adam. But we have been made free from the ‘law of sin and death,’ which is in our members—though we still have to fight it because God has not removed it—rather He has given His Holy Spirit.

If we could look at it this way: In order to make two wires from 110 into 220, you have to have a third wire bringing the third lead in. When you do that something changes. You don’t remove the wire, but you add another one. So it is with receiving the Holy Spirit of God. He does not take out of us the ‘law of sin and death.’ But He puts into us His Holy Spirit, which is like that third wire to give us the power and strength to overcome through Christ. That’s why we have the enigma in Rom. 7 about doing the things he didn’t want to do while he still loved God and loved the Law of God.

“...death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin... [We don’t have to obey the sin. We don’t have to obey the temptation. We don’t have to obey the lust that is there.] (We are): ...dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body...” (vs 9-12).

The sin is still going to be there because of the law of sin and death,’ but don’t let it rule in your body. Don’t let it just completely consume you. When you hear these tapes on what the homosexuals do you’re going to see how sin rules in their lives; absolutely consuming, ruling their lives. We’re not to let sin rule in our lives.

“...by obeying it in the lusts thereof. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments

of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves...” (vs 12-13). The choice is still there. There’s still that question of doubt what we’re going to do. But as long as we remain within the grace of God we will receive eternal life.

“...rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. **For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace**” (vs 13-14). This has been one of the most misunderstood verses that has ever been; a source of controversy. What happens when they were under law? *They were near to God but they didn’t have direct access*—isn’t that correct? They could have their sins forgiven at the temple but it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to blot out sins before God in heaven spiritually. That’s why Christ died.

If you are under law, even under the Old Covenant there are still the motions of sin and death. **But we are under grace!** What does that grace do? That grace puts us in contact with God, gives us His Holy Spirit and all the things I said that God does for us, and brings us into the very presence of God the Father through Christ Jesus. That’s why we are under grace. No way whatsoever is he talking about to keep the laws of God, or the commandments of God the way that God would want us to—because we are under grace—he’s not talking about that at all. We are not under the Old Covenant. We are not under the sacrificial system. We are under the New Covenant—the covenant of grace—which brings us into that direct contact with God the Father.

Verse 14: “For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? **MAY IT NEVER BE!**” (vs 14-15)—‘me genoito’—*may this never even come into your mind or thought*.

Isn’t that the way that the carnal mind works? *Yes! That’s the way that the carnal mind works!* It’s just the same way with parents. For example: if the kids are going to go someplace, ‘Please let us know where you’re going and how long you’re going to be gone, and when you’re going to come back and be here exactly at such and such a time.’ If you don’t tell them that, they’ll say, ‘Well, guess what? They didn’t tell me to tell, so I’m not telling.’ That’s a carnal mind working.

That’s what he’s talking about here. Don’t be carnally minded in it and think because God wants to forgive our sins, is willing to forgive our sins, is desirous of forgiving our sins, that we say, ‘Well now, God wants to forgive our sins. I’ll sin and then, hey, God has to forgive our sins.’ He said, ‘Don’t let

that even come into your thought.'

"...MAY IT NEVER BE! Don't you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as servants* to obey... ['doulos'—plural for 'douloi'—which is *slave*] ...you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (vs 15-16). That obedience involves *belief, acceptance* and *faith* in Christ Jesus and, of course, keeping the commandments of God.

Verse 17: "But thanks *be* to God, that you were *the* servants of sin, but you have obeyed from *the* heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you; and having been delivered from sin, you became *the* servants of righteousness. I speak from a human point of view because of the weakness of your flesh. I speak from a human point of view because of the weakness of your flesh; for just as you *once* yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness, and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto **sanctification**" (vs 17-18)—another word for Holiness.

Verse 19: "For when you were *the* servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. Therefore, what fruit did you have then in the *things* of which you are now ashamed? For the end result of those things *is* death. But now *that* you have been delivered from sin and have become servants of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end ['telos'] result *is* eternal life" (vs 19-22).

'Telos' means *the pinnacle of*. It can mean *the end*, but it also means *the pinnacle*. Where it says Christ is *the end of the Law*, it doesn't mean He did away with it, it means that Christ is *the pinnacle of the Law*. The whole purpose or projection to the Law so that you become *the servants* or *the slaves* to God and you have your fruit unto sanctification and the pinnacle or the end of this is eternal life.

Verse 23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the **gift**... [*free gift* or ['charisma'—free gift of grace] ...of God *is* eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

I'll just review Rom. 7 because I want you to go through and read it, especially beginning with Romans 7:7: "What then shall we say? *Is* the law sin?... [There we have that statement again]: ...MAY IT NEVER BE!..." Don't ever let that thought come into your mind, would be a modern vernacular way of translating that.

Paul went on to say, Rom. 7 paraphrased: We know sin by the Law, but the Law is spiritual, Holy, just and good. But I as a human being have sin in my flesh, which is called the 'law of sin and

death.' Therefore, because of that 'law of sin and death' it causes me to practice the things that I hate, that I don't want to do. But through the grace and the goodness of God, because I am serving the Law of God and serving Christ through grace with my mind, it is only the 'law of sin and death' in my members that is making me sin and not my pre-determinate will.

Because of this conflict going on, v 21: "Consequently, I find this law *in my members*, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me." That's a conflict that goes on. You still have the 'law of sin and death' that has been cancelled out spiritually before God because He presents you as Christ, that you are righteous to Him. You have that connection with God, which is like that third wire. You have the Holy Spirit of God, you're under the grace of God, but here is this struggle. God intended that that struggle be there so that we would understand how serious sin is!

Verse 22: "For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man." That is true. Whenever you read about the laws of God, how good they are, the Word of God, that's fantastic! You delight in it! You say, 'Wonderful! Marvelous!'

Verse 23: "But I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members. O *what a* wretched man I am!..." (vs 23-24). The whole lesson God wants us to learn in it, as we are yearning for eternal life, is how wretched human life is separate and cutoff from God! It is wretched!

That's why Paul said, 'If Christ is not raised, we're still in our sins!' and 'If only we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most miserable!' Why? *Because of this battle that goes on!*

"...Who shall save me from the body of this death? I thank God *for His salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, on the one hand, I myself serve the law of God with *my* mind; but on the other hand, with the flesh, *I serve* the law of sin" (vs 24-25). Because sin is in our members!

The first time I read that, that was so confusing to me. I could not understand that! I think I understand it a little more. I'm sure there's more understanding that we need to get out of it. The more I go over this, the more I understand it. That's why it's important that we go over it in detail.

The most important thing for us to get out of this; we have this fight going on; we're warring against the 'law of sin and death'—right? We don't want to sin—correct? But we do sin! Here's this catch-22 just ongoing like this all the time.

Romans 8:1: “Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit.” Though that ‘law of sin and death’ is in us, God does not condemn us for it. Why? *Because we can’t help the fact that it is there!* We can’t get rid of it. Only God can give us His Holy Spirit to compensate for it. Because it still is active in our lives, God does not condemn us for it. But that doesn’t mean that since God doesn’t condemn us for it that we run out and sin!

Verse 2: “Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death.” Let’s add one qualifying statement: But for God the Father, it has not been removed from you entirely. But as we grow in grace, we are to be circumcised with the circumcision of Christ—isn’t that correct? Circumcision only removes a part of—like circumcision of the flesh, it only removes part of the skin.

That circumcision in Christ brings the Holy Spirit to us, it does not take away the ‘law of sin and death’ entirely, but before God the Father we are free from the ‘law of sin and death’ through grace, because we are *walking after God’s way in God’s Spirit!*

As long as we are under the grace of God He is not going to condemn us because we have the ‘law of sin and death’ in us. Rather, He has compensated for it with God’s Holy Spirit. Before God the Father we have been made free from the ‘law of sin and death.’ It’s still there to plague us in the flesh but we are not to yield ourselves to it. We are not to let it rule in our lives. Rather we are to let the Holy Spirit rule in us.

Verse 3: “For what *was* impossible for the law to do...” Why was the law powerless! The law was powerless to compensate for the law of sin and death. The law was powerless to give eternal life because the law stated what brought death. Therefore, what brings death cannot bring life. So, the law was powerless.

Verse 3: “...in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**; in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit: For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who walk according to *the* Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.... [with God] ...because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*.

But **those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God**” (vs 3-8).

That’s quite a statement. You need to think on that. Cannot please God. Someone without the Spirit of God cannot please God; it is impossible. They can be as good as they want to. That’s the whole story of Job: cannot please God. Only thing that can please God is where His Spirit is.

Verse 9: “However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now, if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you. So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the* flesh; because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God” (vs 9-14).

I hope that we can all understand more about the grace of God and why we need the grace of God. I wanted to go through this in detail because next week then I’m going to go through a majority of the places where the grace of God is used in the New Testament and we are going to see that when Paul starts out his letters and says, ‘Grace be to you...’ he is saying that there is something coming from God to you. That’s a tremendous thing!

We read over that, ‘Paul, an apostle to God, grace and peace be to you from our Lord Jesus Christ...’ Now we’re ready to get into it. *No!* We missed all that that was right there at the front.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 2:11-19
- 2) Deuteronomy 4:6
- 3) Romans 3:9-31
- 4) John 1:3
- 5) Romans 3:31
- 6) Romans 4:15-16, 20-24
- 7) Romans 5:1-21
- 8) Romans 6:1-23
- 9) Romans 7:7, 21-25
- 10) Romans 8:1-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Ephesians 2:4-10
- Romans 4

- Galatians 3
- Exodus 25:8
- Philippians 3
- John 6
- Job

Also referenced:

- Book: *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* by David Bivin and Roy Blizzard Jr.
- Sermon Series: *Romans*

Grace of God V Grace Upon Grace

Fred R. Coulter

I just want to mention that sometimes in reading in the English out of the Interlinear—because I’ve studied the Greek and prepared for the sermon—I will just go right through something so fast that you will miss the point. Or, knowing the meaning of the Greek word, I will insert the meaning of the Greek word rather than going through and stopping and saying what the Greek word means. Sometimes I will pronounce the Greek word, which is ‘Greek’ to everybody; it is Greek to me because it’s Greek, but it may be just a little too fast in some cases, and I may do a little creative thinking from the point of view of leaping ahead without filling in the background as I’m going along. So, if that occurs, or if I do that please let me know; I want you to understand.

It is not my intent to do anything other than have you understand and have you learn and to grow in grace and knowledge and closer to God. That’s certainly the most important thing that needs to be. That will help you to help me. What I’m really asking is that if I do that I want you to help me, and you can just raise your hand and say, ‘Hey, I don’t understand, and that’s *Greek* to me’ That would help out an awful lot, and you don’t have to feel that if you ask a question like that, that I am thinking that you don’t know, you don’t understand,’ because that is not the point. That would not be even a thought in my mind. What I’m trying to do is have it so you can understand it.

Part of the difficulties that come in, is that it was written in Greek. Some of that Greek has been translated out of the Hebrew into Greek—certain portions of Matthew, Mark, and possibly Luke, so you’re twice removed from what was originally said. Then you come into English and it’s translated into the *King James*, and the *King James* is almost 400 years removed from what we’re using today.

So, when you attempt to get back to what was really said, you can get closer to it when you get to the Greek. You can get the next step closer when you read through the Greek Interlinear. You can come closer if you know how to use concordances and things like this, and try and put it all together.

This is where I’ve been coming from in it, so it’s not my intent at all to go so fast. But in just listening to myself on the tapes I can see where I was going so fast on some of these things, and I assumed that you understood this, that and the other thing, and maybe it really wasn’t as clear as it ought to be.

I know that in dealing with people who know more than one language, if you know two languages then you’re in a situation where that you have greater knowledge than other people, however if it gets in a situation where the Greek is really ‘Greek’ and confusing, then help me by raising your hand and we’ll back up and we will go over it so you understand it, because I think this is really very important that we understand it. I hope that will encourage you to help me in the situation.

Don’t by any means, ever have it in your mind that if you ask a question I will look down on you for asking the question, because that’s not the point. I would be derelict if I did not answer the question so you would understand. We’re trying to grow in grace and knowledge, and we’re trying to come to a point of understanding God’s Word that will be very helpful to us.

I’ve caught it on the tape when I was listening to the sermon, that I will mention things and I will mention a Scripture and I’ll give you one clue. Unless you see me turning the page to go to that Scripture, don’t go to it, because I will mention a Scripture and start talking about it and you’re busy turning trying to find it and I’m only using it as a reference. ‘Over here it says that, and over there it says, this, and over here it says this.’ I could just picture someone trying to keep up with it. I didn’t intend for you to turn to all of those Scriptures. I hope that I can try and get this in the proper perspective.

1-Corinthians 12:1: “Now brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant concerning the spiritual *gifts*. You know that you were Gentiles, *and* were carried away with dumb idols, as you yourselves were led away again and again” (vs 1-2).

To some people that would be a very insulting statement. I suppose if I ever had the opportunity to walk into Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, I ever had an opportunity to stand up in the pulpit and say, ‘You Catholics are led away by these dumb idols,’ I don’t think I’d last too long. They would take that as a very insulting statement. Lots of things that God has inspired to be said when people like that take it in a sense where they might consider it insulting. It really is not meant to be insulting. He’s saying it just as it is.

Verse 3: “Therefore, I am letting you know that no one speaking by *the* Spirit of God calls Jesus

accursed...” That was a particular problem at that time. One of the things they had to do before they could speak in the synagogue was they had where the one would read the Scripture, then you could have others who had the authority to read Scriptures. They wore a little badge on their phylactery, and the one who was the leader of the synagogue could invite them to come and read some Scriptures. Then you had the ones who could get up and they could talk.

When Jesus became such a central figure in Judea and the heavy Jewish populations, what they did to insure the purity of the synagogue was for those Jews to show that they did not believe in Jesus, they had to stand in the synagogue and curse Christ. By cursing Christ they claimed that they had the Holy Spirit of God because Christ was not of God. This is not quite the same problem that we have today. That was the particular unusual problem at that point.

There also may be some pagans who believed in their own saviors, who would call Christ accursed from their religion and claim they have the Spirit of God. You know, things in the world, there’s a multitude of everything. It’s a Babylon of confusion and everybody thinks they have this or that or the other thing. That’s why we have to go by the Word of God.

“...and no one can say *that Jesus is Lord*, except by *the Holy Spirit*” (v 3). That is not just a statement like a Catholic would say ‘I believe that Jesus is Lord.’ What Paul is saying here in believing Jesus is Lord is that the Lord has complete absolute control over your life. That’s what that means. Whereas, like with the Catholics, as we read here with the pope, be faithful to the teachings of the church, and the pope is lord over you.

Verse 4: “Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are differences of operations, but it is the same God Who is working all things in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for *the benefit of all*. For to one, a word of wisdom is given by the Spirit; and to another, a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; and to a different one, faith by the same Spirit; and to another, gifts of healing by the same Spirit; and to another, *the working of miracles*; and to another, prophecy; and to another, discerning of spirits; and to a different one, various languages; and to another, *the interpretation of languages*. But the one and the same Spirit is operating in all these things, dividing separately to each one as *God Himself desires*” (vs 4-11).

I just might mention that in some of the things that I’m trying to do, I know that I’m not a worker of miracles. I know that I am not one that goes around laying hands on people and they become healed every time I lay hands on them. God does intervene, and He’s healed people that I’ve anointed, that is true. There are some that I have anointed who have not been healed in the sense that they have physically recovered.

I don’t think that I am one who is lacking in faith, but I am not the kind like Stephen who is filled with faith. I am not a person who has a direct revelation of prophecy. I understand certain prophecies. I think some of the prophecies can be understood more clearly than others. I am not necessarily one that can discern spirits. Walk in a room and say oh, here’s this spirit or that spirit or the other spirit. I’m obviously not one who speaks in tongues, although I can read Greek. I can pronounce the Greek and some German, and that’s about it. And you haven’t heard me speak in any so-called ‘heavenly tongue’; obviously, I don’t do that. And you haven’t heard me stand up and interpret for anybody, so obviously, God has not given me that gift.

The only gift that I can see that God has given me in the way of a ministry—I hope that will be helpful—is to another the *word of knowledge*—the knowledge of God’s Word. This is what I’m trying to impart to you. So, if I go beyond where you are in your knowledge of God’s Word so you don’t understand it, I’m not serving and fulfilling a purpose for you.

I hope that by the Spirit I’m getting the word of wisdom. I think some of my experiences indicate I’m not filled with wisdom. I’m not lacking in some sense. But if I were filled with wisdom no one could do things to me. I would have it all figured out before they had it done, and such is not the case. I think it’s good, once in a while, and we’ll see as the Apostle Paul did as far as grace and ministry, there is a lot more to the ministry in relationship to grace than maybe we’ve given understanding about. But we’re not to credit ourselves with any great thing. *We’re to give glory to God in everything we do!* About the only thing I feel that God has given me, has been the word of knowledge concerning God’s Word to be able to just put it together. I’ll let it just stand at that.

I find that with my study, I have to go beyond the English *King James Version* of the Bible to study and to grow in grace and knowledge. Does that mean that a person cannot have the understanding of God’s Word if all they have is the *King James Bible*? *No, it does not mean that,*

because God made sure that in every translation of the Bible there is enough of the knowledge of salvation.

I want us to get deeply into the Word of God as we can to understand God's Word as much as we can but I don't want to do it with a penalty to any of you of not being able to understand and follow along. For example, when I would say in the sermon here concerning grace, that not one *work of law* will bring you salvation, don't think as though I'm saying in any sense of the word that we are not to keep the commandments of God. We are to keep the commandments of God, absolutely, yes we are. But that is not going to give you eternal life. Jesus Christ alone, as a gift, will give you eternal life.

When I say you cannot earn salvation, that doesn't mean that you don't have your works. For example, if someone told you that you would inherit, if you did certain things, a fantastic tract of land. What could you do to earn it?

- A) you can't buy it
- B) there is no hourly wage, or there is no set thing to earn it, but it will be given to you provided that you follow all of the conditions of the will

So, it's the same way with eternal life. God will give us eternal life provided we follow all the conditions of the will—the New Testament—showing the will of God, which means *keeping His commandments*. That's part of it, but what can we do to *earn* the universe? I mean it's all we can do to struggle from month-to-month to earn enough to pay the people we owe. What could we do to inherit eternal life? How much could we give? **Nothing!** We could give everything and still not have it.

Look at Howard Hughes. I hate to use an example because I don't want anything like that to happen to me. So, I say it very cautiously. In the world we see so many examples of rich people such as Howard Hughes, who have billions! They can buy this, they can buy that, they do the other thing. They can snap their fingers and Presidents squirm. But look at the miserable life that Howard Hughes led, and became an absolute recluse. Yet, he had control over Presidents of the United States, but look at his life. That's just an example of living.

That's why Solomon said, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!' When I say that there is nothing that you can do to earn salvation, does not in any way diminish from keeping the commandments of God. That's a requirement to receive the gift of eternal life. Too many people look to commandment-keeping as the means to eternal life, the tool for eternal life, when the means is through

Christ, and the tool is the Holy Spirit. The condition in which we stand before God is grace. To stay in God's good favor and grace we need to keep His commandments.

As far as what I'm trying to do here, please help me. When I ask: Do you understand? I look around I think, 'Ok, you've got it.' Fine, I'll go to the next one, when maybe you don't have it. You can help me to help you if you just raise your hand and we'll get everything all clarified that way and that will help our. Once you learn and you go forward the way God wants you and God's knowledge, it becomes very exciting. It becomes very uplifting. It becomes very positive because you have an extra tool of the knowledge of salvation through which the Holy Spirit can work, the Holy Spirit can lead you and help you. And that's really what the whole goal is.

Let's review just a little bit what we've covered. It's very interesting, especially getting through the situation with the series in the Gospel of John, that John does not spend much time on the *grace of God*. But he prefaces his whole Gospel here:

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), **full of grace and Truth.**" So, he's prefacing everything that he is saying here in the rest of the Gospel of John based upon:

- a) that Christ was the God of the Old Testament and He was God
- b) that He's the light of all men
- c) that He was full of grace and Truth

Why did Christ have to be full of grace and Truth? *Because He was the very Son of God!* He was God on earth. He was bringing the Gospel of Grace.

One of the things that the Apostle Paul said concerning grace, 'This is the true grace of God.' I think that if we take those statements for what they are and think about them, if he says this is the true grace of God, then that means that there was a false grace called the grace of God, which was not the grace of God because it was not the true grace of God. We live in a confusing world. Who is the author of confusion? *Satan is!* He loves to counterfeit everything that God does. He comes along with a grace, which allows you to do anything you want to do, and that's called the grace of God, but that is not the true grace of God.

I don't know how many of you saw the news last night, but I saw on the news that they ran a test of U.S. currency in Florida. What they did, they just went around asking, 'Do you have a \$10 bill?' *Yes!*

‘Would you exchange it for this brand new ten?’ *Certainly!* They did this to a lot of people. They took the money and they analyzed it and every bit of that money had traces of cocaine on it; just the money that’s in circulation in the general population, which tells you that the drug trading down there is so massive, it is so commonplace that you can go at random and you can pick up currency from anybody and it’s tainted with cocaine. That’s really something—isn’t it?

It is just like what Satan does. He will take the Word of God—part of it—and he will use it to his own advantage although it’s tainted. Just like that currency is tainted with cocaine, the doctrines of Satan are tainted with his way and it is not the true grace of God.

We have the example of Matthew 4 and Luke 4, where Satan does use Scripture to his own advantage. When John writes and says that the Word became flesh and He was *full of grace and Truth*, he’s prefacing everything that he says about Christ all through the rest of the Gospel of John based upon that grace and Truth.

Verse 15: “John [the Baptist] testified concerning Him and proclaimed, saying, ‘This was He of Whom I said, “He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was [existed] before me.”’ And of His fullness we have all received... [What is the fullness of Christ that we receive?] ...**grace upon grace**” (vs 15-16).

What does the term *grace upon grace* mean? Remember, I had the one definition there for the definition of grace, that is *grace that increases to more and more*. It was very awkwardly phrased and it kind of left you dangling. Well this is what it means:

- by grace we are *saved*
- by grace we are *called*
- by grace we *stand before God*
- by grace we *overcome*

It is **grace upon grace**, and all of these things are a *gift*. All of these things are given to us so that we don’t boast in what we can do, but we boast in the glory of God.

When we come before God, we don’t do as the Pharisee is saying, ‘God, I thank you I am not as other men, or as this publican down here. I fast twice in the week. I tithe of all that I possess. I’m not an extortioner. I’m not unjust. I’m not an adulterer.’ But he missed the whole point. He missed the whole thing of the grace of God. He was trying to receive salvation by works. ‘God, I do all of this, I must be in good standing with you because I do this.’ No, it is *grace upon grace*. That’s why the publican down

here, and he beat on his chest and said, ‘God, be merciful to me, *a sinner!* I’m a dirty wretch.’ God gave grace to him. He said, ‘I tell you, that man went to his house justified rather than the other.’ So, this is what it means, *grace upon grace*.

Verse 17: “For the Law was given through Moses...”—which is true. The Law is important. The Apostle Paul likens the Law in Gal. 3 to a tutor while we were children before we became adults. Is it important that you had a childhood, whether for good or whether for bad? *Sure it is*, because you couldn’t be an adult unless you had a childhood—correct? Do you cast away your childhood? *No!* Did you learn from your childhood? *Yes!* So, it’s the same way.

The Law was given *to lead us to Christ*. Christ did not do away with the law. He specifically said so. But He came to bring something greater than the Law. Something greater than the Law gives, because the Law could not give eternal life. The Law cannot give grace. That’s why when a person is hauled before a judge on account of breaking a law, the judge must make a determination. In some cases he is bound by the law because the law doesn’t speak. And he can do nothing.

There is a recent case of that. I forget exactly what it was right now, but I think it had to do with a murder, and since it was not specified in the law about a certain thing the judge could not allow a certain thing to come into evidence, and therefore the man was released. The Law is very specific, whereas grace is broad and general. Grace is a whole area and arena of living with God, which is greater than just living with the Law.

Verse 17: “For the Law was given through Moses, **but the grace and the Truth** came through Jesus Christ.” The word *came* is the same Greek word that means *came into being*. The same word used over in v 3, that all things came into being through Him.

So, **the** grace and **the** Truth came into being so it would be manifest to men and for God to man through Jesus Christ. Not that God didn’t have it. Not that God was not gracious. That’s not the point. But it did not come into being for mankind until Christ came.

For example: you can take many different chemical things, and until you have the right mix of it and come up with the right formula, you have not brought something into being; the same way with Jesus Christ. Eternal salvation was not open to all men until Christ came bringing *the* Grace and *the* Truth. It came into being through Jesus Christ and in His very person.

Verse 18: “No one has seen God at any time...” This tells us the whole basis of what God is doing. God is interested in grace, not sacrifice. That sacrifice means animal sacrifice, or the sacrifice of human endeavor or deprivation so that you can prove to God how good you are.

When *Shogun* came on we recorded it this last time. There’s one part in there that really shows the attitude of works. This is where the Jesuit priest, ‘father’ Albeto, and the Japanese Jesuit candidates were together and there was another Catholic priest. Before they would let them continue in their Jesuit training, each of these Japanese candidates would have to confess their sins. This one Japanese fellow confessed his sins and asked forgiveness and then came the word. Yes, you are going to go without food and you’ll have only rice and water for 30 days, and do this, and furthermore you are going to be scourged.

And the fellow said, ‘I’m Samurai and I cannot be scourged,’ and just would not relent. The priest would not relent. He was ready to come over and kill him rather than let the guy get off from being scourged. But if a person has repented and asked forgiveness and they really believe it was to God, what on earth good would a scourging do? *That is salvation by works!* The works of so many of this, and so much of that, that’s salvation by works. That’s forgiveness by works. Whereas, when it is by grace, it is God’s free gift.

Here is the whole basis of the Apostle Paul’s ministry. Acts 20:24. “But I myself do not take any of these things into account... [none of the warnings that he would be in trouble if he went into Jerusalem] ...nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.”

That’s the whole basis of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is about the grace of God. I don’t want anyone to take me to task because I may say that it has been emphasized in the past concerning the Kingdom of God, which is true. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God must be preached in all the world as a witness, that is true. The Kingdom of God is coming on the earth, that is true. Jesus Christ is the King, that is true. But no one is going to get into the Kingdom of God without grace. That’s why there is the Gospel of Grace.

“...so that I might finish my course...that I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify the Gospel of the Grace of God” (v 24). That is fantastic good news—isn’t it? And gospel means *good news*, or as you will read the English in your Interlinear, it says *glad tidings*. The proverb says that good news

from a far country is like a well of spring water, which rejoices the person.

If someone comes up to your door and knocks on your door and they say ‘Your car has been burned down in the driveway.’ What happens? *Your heart sinks* and you look out there. Sure enough here is the cinderling hulk of your car; it is gone. Some people just recently in San Jose smelled a little smoke and they had to get out their apartment; it burned everything they had. Some of these people were just new immigrants to the U.S. They lost everything! That’s bad news!

It’s the same way when we find out about how sinful we are as human beings. That’s bad news. That’s terrible bad news. What is the good news? *If we repent to God and accept the sacrifice of Christ and the grace of God*, that is the *good news* and that is the *glad tidings* that we are accepted of God.

I suppose that if we received a telegram, which said, ‘This telegram is from Heaven saying that you are in good standing with God,’ we would hold on to that and say that is great, but it doesn’t come that way; it comes by faith and belief. The grace of God is the good news that God isn’t going to hold your sins over you if you repent. That is fantastic good news. And then the Gospel of Grace also has to do with receiving eternal life. That’s great good news! That’s the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Verse 25: “And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God... [he relates the Gospel of the Grace of God and the Kingdom of God together] ... will see my face no more.”

This is one of the very key things concerning the grace of God that we have to keep in mind. This is why regardless of whatever happens, don’t get discouraged. Or, if you do get discouraged, don’t let things weigh in on you so much that it overwhelms you because God is the God of grace. Remember how we read that we receive of Christ *grace upon grace*. That refers to the grace that we stand in. That refers to the grace that we continually receive of God, continually coming.

1-Peter 5:10: “Now, may **the God of all grace**... [That’s a very interesting statement—isn’t it?] ...Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after *you* have suffered a little while, Himself **perfect you, establish, strengthen, and settle you**.” That’s what that means, to *establish you in His grace*. That’s quite a very inspiring Scripture. This is the one I turn to when things get tough. I always turn to that. That one always encourages me;

holds out some hope. Even if things are tough, God is there. Even when things look kind of bad, God is there and He will help in every circumstance.

Rather than go through every single Scripture, I will go through the main Scriptures. However, I will mention concerning the grace of God that all of the Scriptures from Rom. 3:24 clear through Rom. 8:4

- *explains the entire operation* of the grace of God.
- explains the entire need of the grace of God
- explains why God has to give His grace
- explains why salvation by works cannot bring you eternal life

Now let's go back and see some of the other Scriptures, which will be a progression through the New Testament. I think we need to also refresh our memories that the New Testament Church was not without its problems. It had its problems. Obviously, those problems were created because of the Jew/Gentile conflict. We don't have exactly the same problem we have today as they had back then.

Let me just mention that the Jews were saying that a man had to be circumcised in the flesh in order to be saved. When they said it was necessary that means that it was *obligatory*, that there was no eternal salvation without circumcision. That's what was being preached, and that's what the problem was.

Acts 15:6: "Then the apostles and the elders gathered together to see about this matter. And after much discussion had taken place, Peter stood up and said to them, 'Men, brethren, you know that from *the* early days, God made *the* choice among us *that* by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the Word of the Gospel, and believe'" (vs 6-7).

That is true! Peter was the first one to speak to a Gentile about the salvation of God and in the person of Cornelius and his household and God had to send him there by dream and vision and revelation. Otherwise, he wouldn't have gone there because the Jews couldn't even be in the same room with a Gentile. That was a Jewish law, *not* a Law of God.

Verse 8: "And God, Who **knows the heart**... [That's the key important thing concerning grace. *God knows the heart*] ...bore witness to them *by* giving them the Holy Spirit, even as *He did* to us." Very important point here: When they said it was obligatory to be circumcised to receive salvation they were saying in effect it was obligatory to be circumcised before you can receive the Holy Spirit,

because if you don't receive the Holy Spirit there is no salvation. That is self-evident.

So he gave them "...the Holy Spirit, even as *He did* to us, and made no difference between us and them, *and* has purified their hearts through the faith" (vs 8-9). And that purification of the heart by faith is an act of grace. That's part of *grace upon grace*.

Verse 10: "Now therefore, why do you tempt God by putting a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Let me be sure and just interject here what he was talking about was not just circumcision alone but all of the traditions and rituals of Judaism, which they could not bear. Even Jesus corrected the Pharisees and Sadducees for that. What it was, it was that there was a certain sect of the Pharisees (v 5).

So you had the problem of the Pharisees coming in there and saying they have to do this, and after they're circumcised they have to do that, they have to do this, and they have to do the other thing. *No!* That puts a yoke of bondage of salvation by works. That's why God dramatically gave the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and his household before they were baptized because God was teaching them that the Holy Spirit is going to come with repentance.

Verse 11: "But by the grace of *the* Lord Jesus Christ we believe we shall be saved in the same manner as they also." You are saved through grace. That agrees with what we already covered in Eph. 2:4-10. By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. "...we believe we shall be saved..." through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's a *future* salvation. That's not just being saved from our sins and from Satan the devil and the present time. That is, shall be saved in the future, even as they. So then, they went on and talked about the agreement that they would have there.

Verse 21 talks about that Moses was read in the synagogue every Sabbath Day. We are not talking about *non*-Sabbath-keepers; we are talking about Sabbath-keepers.

(go to the next track)

Acts 18:27 is talking about the preaching of the Lord and so forth: "And when he [Apollos] was determined to travel to Achaia, the brethren wrote to the disciples, exhorting *them* to welcome him; *and* after arriving, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace."

What we're going to see is that the grace of God is the main vehicle that God uses in everything relating to us. We believe through grace. We are granted repentance (Rom. 2:4) through the grace of

God. We then stand in grace and this brings us in contact with God all the time. So we see *this grace upon grace* as we're continuing.

I just wanted to mention in this one Scripture out of Romans in particular, Romans 4:16: "For this reason *it is* of faith, in order that *it might be* by grace, to the end that the promise might be certain to all the seed—not to the one who is of the law only, but also to the one who is of *the* faith of Abraham, who is *the* father of us all." ***It is by faith! It is by grace through faith!*** Those go hand-in-hand. It's very much like, if I could use the analogy that I have before, water. You have to have hydrogen and oxygen to make water. You need them both. You need to have faith so that you can have grace. You need grace so that you can increase in faith. You have to have both.

What I'm covering now is the grace of God having to do

- with faith
- with belief
- with salvation
- with redemption
- with hope

That's quite a bit!

2-Corinthians 2:14: "But **thanks be to God**, Who always leads us triumphant in Christ, and manifests the fragrance of His knowledge through us in every place." Remember, one of the definitions of grace is *thanks*. This is grace be to God for all that He has done, is the summation of it, so that we can be in God's sight pure.

Verse 15: "For we are Christ's sweet perfume to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to those *who are perishing*, we are a stench of death unto death; but to those *who are being saved*, we are a fragrance of life unto life...." (vs 15-16).

What he's saying to the world is that if you really believe in Christ it's like *death unto death*, but before God it's like *life unto life*. We are a sweet savor to God because of God's calling. We may appear to be a foul stench to the world because they don't understand us or Christ. And I think that would be self evident, especially in a public setting if you really had to say what needed to be said. You would become an absolute foul stench in their nose.

"...And who *is* qualified for such things? For we are not like the many, who for *their own* profit are corrupting the Word of God... [Were there a lot of people corrupting the Word of God? *There were a lot of people!*] ...but we speak with sincerity, as from God, *and* before God, *and* in Christ" (vs 16-

17).

Example: In some of the dealings that I'm having now, I'm in contact with a man who is a minister of a church in San Francisco. He's a black man and he has his own church. We were discussing several things concerning some project he is working on, and I said, 'Well, maybe I can come up and have a conference with you. But I'll make you a deal...'—because he knows I'm a minister, too—'maybe I could come up on your Bible study night and I would cover the topic *what you will look like in the resurrection*.' He said, 'Oh boy, that sounds good. Yeah, I'd like to know what we'll look like in the resurrection. You've got yourself a deal.'

And I thought to myself, if I had to stand up there and really lay everything open the way it is in the Word of God I would be just like *a savor of death unto death and might not escape with my life*. I think the best way to do is do like the Apostle Paul when he was in Athens. He wanted to tell them something about God that they didn't know anything about. So, I think that's the best approach if I have that opportunity. But notice what he said. He said, 'Boy that is interesting. I would like to know that.' Here he's the pastor of the church and has regular Bible studies and so forth.

2-Corinthians 6:1 has to do with the day of salvation: "We then, working together *with Him*, are also exhorting you not to receive the grace of God in vain." Why would he say that, that you would not receive the grace of God in vain? *Because it could be misused!* I think that if you read all of 1st and 2nd Corinthians you will see that obviously they were misusing the grace of God.

If 1st and 2nd Corinthians were not there you would not realize what could happen in a Church of God. It becomes very mind-boggling; it really does. It becomes very, very hurtful the things that go on. Let's hope that we can learn the lessons from that. So let's not receive the grace of God in vain. Let's receive it in profitability and in Truth.

2-Corinthians 8:5: "And not *only* as we had hoped, but they gave themselves first to the Lord, and to us by *the* will of God.... [This is about helping and serving and relieving the brethren who were in deep poverty, and so forth.] ...So then, we exhorted Titus that as he had begun *this service*, so he might also with you **make this gift complete**" (vs 5-6).

This is the gift of helping someone in distress. This is part of your belief in helping people who are brethren in the Church—brethren indeed—not brethren in wolves clothing who come along just to take. But those who have need, that when you help them this is an act of grace on your part as

motivated by God's Holy Spirit. So this is part of our salvation in helping each other.

It blends into the spiritual salvation rather than just the physical salvation of food to eat while you are hungry, or food to eat because there's a famine.

Verse 7: "Now even as you are abounding in every way—in faith, and word, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in the love *that* you have for us—so you should also abound in this gift [grace]." In other words, let all of the physical things that you do show the grace that God has given to you. Not that you use it as a gauge or a measuring stick, but as the Scripture says when you do your alms don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. In other words just do it abundantly from the heart as you are led from God's Holy Spirit. That's what it's mainly speaking of here.

Verse 8: "I am not saying *this* as a command, but *I am exhorting you* through the diligence of others...[that is who have already given for this relief going to the brethren in Judea] ...in order to prove the genuineness of your love. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: that although He was rich, He became poor for your sakes, so that by His poverty you might become rich" (vs 8-9).

What he's saying here is that you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then with the background, with that thought, what he's really saying is, Who was God before He became Christ in the flesh, Who came to this earth, Who offered Himself in sacrifice, and that is the grace. He became poor. He gave up everything so that we could become rich, that is that we could receive eternal life.

Galatians 1:3^[corrected]—here's where the Apostle Paul was also having trouble and he makes this statement: "Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ." That is interesting. We'll talk just a little bit about the openings because I'm only going to cover a few of those. You will notice in almost every one of the Epistles of Paul in either vs 1-4, and in one occasion it was in v 5, he says, "Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ."

That's really a very comforting statement when you read it and understand it. If you take away the grace from our Lord Jesus Christ and from God the Father then you have friction; you have hostility. Isn't it much better to be in harmony and be in the grace of God? *Yes!* When he's saying grace and peace, now that's the peace that comes from God, because before we are called, we were what? What does it say in the New Testament? *We were enemies*

of God by wicked works in our minds! Which means that if you were an enemy you were *at war!* *You were at war with God through your sins!* Here is peace from God. You are no longer an enemy. There is peace. That's what reconciliation means. You are reconciled. You have peace. That's quite a thing!

He says you have *peace* from God the Father and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ, v 4: "Who gave Himself for our sins, in order that He might deliver us from the present evil world... [and that is through grace, by grace have you been saved] ...according to the will of our God and Father; to Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen. I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel" (vs 4-6).

We're going to see a little later, he talks about the true grace of God. So here's the warning, that if you get into another gospel you are falling or removed from the grace of God. That is very profound when we think about it. We have all experienced the process that happens when you are being removed from the grace of God by a change in the Gospel that rejects Christ. You can see what happens, "...to a different gospel." I think I've heard another gospel preached.

Verse 7: "Which *in reality* is not another *gospel*..." [There is not another gospel. There's only one Gospel.] ...but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ." How does one pervert the Gospel of Christ? We'll just make a little summary.

1. You leave off the name of Christ. You cannot preach the Gospel of Christ without the name of Christ.
2. You cannot preach the coming Kingdom of God as an unseen hand from nowhere coming to save everything everywhere. That is perverting the Gospel of Christ.
3. You cannot say that it is in the person of one being, human being—like the pope or some other person who claims something—because that is perverting the Gospel of Christ.

The Gospel of Christ and the grace of God, as it says here, v 3. "Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ." The Gospel of Grace is that you have access to God the Father and Jesus Christ *directly*; anything else is a perversion of that.

Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For *the life* that I am now living in *the* flesh, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of

God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God..." (vs 20-21).

How could you frustrate the grace of God? *To make or to render not as effective, the grace of God in your life!* How can you make the grace of God not as effective in your life, but by relying on the dos and don'ts, rather than relying on Christ. Where he said when they withdrew themselves, when Peter came down. They separated themselves, all the Jews. Did that make them better before God? *No!* Did that frustrate the grace of God? *Yes!* It gave two stages of salvation.

1. Gentiles over here
2. Jews over here

That Jewish attitude is still a problem in the world today. Not concerning salvation, but just that attitude in general. He doesn't blunt the grace of God.

"...for if righteousness *is* through *works* of law, then Christ died in vain" (v 21). His whole act of the death and resurrection and His act of grace is a thing in vain. This refers back to what he was talking about perverting the Gospel of Christ.

Galatians 1:8: "But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!" There's the penalty for changing the Gospel of God. I think we've seen in the lives of people we know what happens when they change the Gospel of God. Have they not been under a curse because they've done it? *Yes, sure!*

What he's saying very strongly here, even if we—any of the other ministers under the Apostle Paul, and even the Apostle Paul himself—came preaching any other gospel than that which was given to him by Jesus Christ, you're cut off from God. Even if it be an angel from heaven or a purported angel from heaven it isn't true, because God's way and God's grace and God's salvation is absolutely set through Jesus Christ and through the grace of God. Can't come any other way. That's what it's saying there.

Verse 9: "As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (vs 9-10). That has to do with the grace of God.

We just read in Acts 15^[transcriber's correction] where God put no difference between Jews and Gentiles, and then how dare Peter come down there, and some of the other Jews, and then separate

themselves and say, 'We're not going to sit down with these other Gentiles and fellowship with them. We're going to go into another room here because we are better than they are. Therefore, because we are better than they then we stand before God better than the Gentiles, so we are justified by separating ourselves.' That's the whole rational in what they were doing. That is not the case and that's why he was so hard on Peter.

I just want to touch on salvation and redemption, Ephesians 1:6: "To *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*." That is very profound verse that we have been accepted of God *in* Jesus Christ, and we could also say *as* Jesus Christ. That's why the Grace of God is so fantastic.

Verse 7: "Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence" (vs 7-8). That's what it is, *grace upon grace*. What we're doing today is going through and seeing all the aspects of *grace upon grace* that is given to us.

As we're going through Col. 6 I will maybe give you an example of how you can do a word study in the Bible or a concordance study, because this is literally what we are doing. We are going through every place that has the word grace in reference to the grace of God.

Colossians 1:6: "Which has come to you... [that is the Word of the Truth of the Gospel] ...even as *it* also *has* in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, just as *it is* among you, from the day that you heard **and knew the grace of God in Truth**." There we have the grace of God in Truth.

Jude 3-4 shows the grace of God *not* in Truth, v 3: "Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints.... [here again is this attack upon the Truth of God] ...For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness..." (vs 3-4).

I wanted to tie that in directly with Col. 1:6, because this shows that the grace of God in Truth is going to be the message that Christ brought, whereas there may be a counterfeit which turns the grace of God into lasciviousness or license to sin, which goes against what the Apostle Paul taught when he said,

‘What? Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid! Don’t let this thought even come into your mind. Don’t even let it come into existence.’

Verse 4: “For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2-Thess. 2:13-17 is a real key section because this, in addition with Rom. 3:24 thru Rom. 8:4 shows the process of salvation. 2-Thessalonians 2:13: “Now we are duty-bound to give thanks to God always concerning you, brethren, who are beloved by *the* Lord, because God from *the* beginning has called you unto salvation...” That is a gift—isn’t it? *That is grace!* The very calling of God is grace. He chose us to salvation, and salvation is grace.

“...through sanctification of *the* Spirit... [We receive the Spirit by faith through grace—don’t we?] ...and belief of *the* Truth... [we believe the Truth of God] ...unto which He called you by our Gospel... [which is the Gospel of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God] ...to *the* obtaining of *the* glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 13-14). Now that’s quite a statement—isn’t it?

How do you obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ? *There are two ways you obtain it;* remember just before He was crucified He said, ‘Now am I glorified. Now is the Father glorified.’

1. You receive the glory of Christ by accepting His sacrifice for you, which was an act of grace that God brought to the world.

That is called a glorious thing, and that is why we observe the Passover so you receive the glory of God that way.

2. the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ at the resurrection, referring to what we will be when we are resurrected.

So, these statements—though you read through and they sound very beautiful and flow right along—are jam packed with meaning—aren’t they?

Verse 15: “So then, brethren, stand firm, and hold fast the ordinances that you were taught...” These were obviously then the things that they were to carry on traditionally based upon God’s Word, not some new tradition that they could invent.

“...whether by word... [as they were taught] ...or by our epistle. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ

Himself, and God—even our Father, Who loved us and gave *us* eternal encouragement and good hope through grace—” (vs 15-16).

If you follow all the way through everything the Apostle Paul is talking about in v 13

- about your calling
- about your salvation
- about the sanctification
- about your belief in Truth
- the calling to the Gospel
- the obtaining of glory
- the standing fast in what were taught
- that God has directly dealt with us
 - ✓ has loved us
 - ✓ given us an everlasting consolation
 - ✓ and good hope

All of that is through grace. That’s why this is a very key section in understanding the operation of grace. All of that is through grace! Then he says v 17: “Encourage your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”

Titus 2:11 also talks about grace and salvation: “For the grace of God, which brings salvation for all men, has appeared.” The grace of God that brings salvation. That is the whole operation of salvation. You are saved through grace. There again, and again, and again.

Titus 3:3 shows another part of the operation of grace. When I have said that you cannot overcome on your own, but the grace of God in you with God’s Spirit will do the overcoming if you are led of the Spirit of God. I do not mean in any sense that we are not to do anything. We are to do all we can.

Titus 3:3: “For we also were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving all kinds of lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful *and* hating one another.” That sounds like some churches I know.

Verse 4: “But when the **graciousness** ... [the grace of God] ...and the **love of God** our Savior toward man appeared... [the grace of God] ...not by works of righteousness which we practiced...” (vs 4-5). In other words if you got every good person together everywhere and had them all doing good, would that constrain God to appear to you? *No!* Christ appeared because it was the time that God had determined, not because anyone was doing good. That’s what he’s talking about.

“...but according to His mercy He saved us, through *the* washing of regeneration and *the* renewing of *the* Holy Spirit, which He richly poured

out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior; so that, having been justified by His grace..." (vs 5-7).

I went through several Scriptures before we came down to this of *justified by grace*, showing again the whole operation of grace depends upon the love of God, the kindness of God, and that's how we are justified by grace.

Hebrews 12:28: "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, through which we may serve God in a pleasing *manner* with reverence and awe... [We have something here very interesting. That we still serve God with reverence and Godly fear though we are of the Family of God, though we are the friends of Christ, etc.] ...For our God *is* indeed a consuming fire" (vs 28-29).

Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." What we're talking about, the grace of God as received by God the Father through Jesus Christ is *the same* yesterday, today, and forever.

Verse 9: "Do not be carried about by all kinds of strange doctrines. For *it is good for* the heart to be confirmed by grace... [we are established in the salvation of God and our hearts are established with grace, with God's goodness and kindness and mercy.] ... *and not by foods*, which have brought no *spiritual* benefit to those who have been preoccupied *with them*"

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
- 2) John 1:14-18
- 3) Acts 20:24-25
- 4) 1 Peter 5:10
- 5) Acts 15:6-11
- 6) Acts 19:8-27
- 7) Romans 4:16
- 8) 2 Corinthians 2:14-17
- 9) 2 Corinthians 6:1
- 10) 2 Corinthians 8:5-9
- 11) Galatians 1:3-7, 3
- 12) Galatians 2:20-21
- 13) Galatians 1:8-9
- 14) Ephesians 1:6-8
- 15) Colossians 1:6
- 16) Jude 3-4
- 17) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17
- 18) Titus 2:11
- 19) Titus 3:3-7
- 20) Hebrews 12:28-29
- 21) Hebrews 13:8-9

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Galatians 3
- Romans 3:24-8:4
- Acts 15:5
- Ephesians 2:4-10
- Acts 15:21
- Romans 2:4

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *Gospel of John*

Grace of God VI The Works of Grace

Fred R. Coulter

I want to review just a little bit to mention that the grace of God needs to be the whole umbrella under which everything that God does fits—*everything!* It emanates from the love of God and how God deals with us. I think that too many times people get all involved in things relating to law more than it is to grace. What the Bible has is the grace of God and everything is under that. Then you'll have many limiting factors so that you don't go out on a limb and turn the grace of God into licentiousness.

Let's just review a couple of things. Ephesians 2 is really the heart and core of the central theme of being saved by grace. Let's understand something that we need to look to in relationship to the grace of God, the salvation of God, and so forth, and that is the meaning of grace is *God's goodness and kindness, God's gracious gift!* Whatever we have from God is a gift. Stop and think about everything that we have that we receive from God, it is all *a gift*. We don't earn a thing.

- we didn't earn to be born
- we didn't earn to be called
- we didn't earn anything as far as salvation is concerned
- we didn't earn to be born here vs being born in Africa
- we didn't earn to be either a man or a woman

All of that came without any of our say so or input.

When God calls us it is with God's grace. He chooses us. That's why there are a lot of people running around seeing if they can find God, and seeing if they can choose God. But unless God calls them then there is no choosing of God. When God calls us it isn't by our own works, though God requires works that we are to do, and certainly we need to have them. Once you understand the Grace of God and understand why God has done the things that He has, and the way He has, then who would want to go out and sin and break the laws of God? It becomes a whole internal motivating moving way of living.

Ephesians 2:1: "Now you were dead in trespasses and sins..." When you are in a state of sin you are as good as dead. That means everyone walking around is living in a state of sin, they are as good as dead, because unless God calls them—which God is merciful to call us; 'the wages of sin is death'—that is what is going to happen.

Verse 2: "In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience" That's interesting! Who's one of the famous singers now? *Prince!* He's the most pornographic wretched person around as far as music goes. Anyone that listens to that they need to have their head examined.

"...the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the* world. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us..." (vs 2-4). The operation of love transmits down to us in the form of grace.

Verse 5: "even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ..." In other words, the minute that Jesus' sacrifice was accepted by God the Father *it was accepted*, as far as God is concerned, *for the sins of the whole world*. But they can't be forgiven to each individual unless three things happen:

- God forgives them
- God calls them
- they repent of their sins

All of those have to take place.

"...(For you have been saved by grace)" (v 5). A person, in the way that the Baptists would take it, say 'once saved always saved.' That is only true if you remain in grace, because we will see a little later you can fall from grace through sin. Salvation is a three-fold thing:

1. you ***have been saved*** from your past sins

That's what it's talking about here. When you've repented and been baptized you ***have been saved*** from your past sins

As long as you are walking in the Gospel of God:

2. you ***are being saved*** from your sins
3. And salvation ultimately ***will be*** at the resurrection.

It's interesting that salvation, redemption and deliverance all are part of an operation of God, and describe the same thing of salvation.

Verse 6: “And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus” (vs. 6). That’s not something that takes place now. We are not in the heavenlies right now in the sense that we are with God. However, we have the Spirit of God, which comes from God. Where is God? God is in heaven—isn’t He? He sends His Spirit. That means that when we have the Spirit of God, God looks upon us as if we are there already though we are not, because the operation of God is that He calls things that aren’t as though they were.’

Verse 7, shows us when: “So that in the ages that *are* coming... [when Christ returns] ...He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.... [the Anointed Savior] ...For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves...” (vs 7-8).

That is one lesson that we are all going to learn. Though we can have desire, though we want to do the things that God wants, it is still not of ourselves. We can’t walk up to God and say, ‘God, I’ve never done this, or I’ve never done that, and I’ve never done the other thing, so therefore, You need to give me salvation.’ No, there is not one thing that we can do to earn it, because eternal life and salvation comes from God. However, we are to have good works. We’ll see what they are here in just a minute.

“...*it* is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship...” (vs 8-10). We’re the workmanship of God. I think that that would help us all understand each other a whole lot better if we would realize that ***we are all the workmanship of God!***

“...created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v 10). Living under the Grace of God includes keeping the commandments because Jesus said, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ It includes the good works, which God said that we should do, which come under the umbrella commandment of ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’

The good work of loving God, the good work of helping and serving each other, those are all the things that God wants. But the best work that can be worked in us is the inner working of God’s Holy Spirit. That’s the best good work that can be done and we are to walk in them. Our way of living is a walk of life, and is typified by the Days of Unleavened Bread that we walk out of sin, we walk out of Egypt, we walk out of the things of this world and *walk toward God and walk toward the Light.*

God Gives Grace:

There’s something that’s very interesting that God does. The principle is: *he who has shall receive*. Remember the one who went out and worked with the talents, developed them and doubled them? One got five with the five, and the other one got two with the two, and the other one with one got nothing. To whom did God give the one? *He gave it to the one that had developed the five!* In one parable it’s five and in another parable it’s ten. So likewise, once we receive of the grace of God we are to receive more of God’s grace on a continual basis. As I’ve mentioned, it is a supply of grace that God gives to us.

James 4:6: “But He gives greater grace.... [That is to overcome the things of the world, the sins that are listed up here above.] ...This is the reason it says, ‘God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble’” In other words, God’s gracious gift of love and mercy and forgiveness. Most of the time when you ask people, what is the grace of God? They will say, ‘The forgiveness of sin.’ That’s part of it. It is also the blessings of God. It is everything that God does for us. He’s willing to give us more grace if we come to God in the right way.

Verse 7: “Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” How then are we going to be able to resist the devil and temptations? *By drawing close to God, receiving more of His grace!* That grace in the faith will then cause the devil to leave us. I know, just by experience, and I can say it is true—I hope that you find it so—the more that you draw close to God in this attitude the less you are going to find yourself sinning and repeating the same sins, the sins of the mind and all that. Things will fall into place much better because God is giving you more of His grace so you won’t end up doing that.

We’re going to see here about grace and salvation, where they come together. You can’t have salvation without grace, and you can’t have grace without salvation.

1-Peter 1:6: “In this you yourselves greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials; in order that the proving of your faith, which is much more precious than gold that perishes...” (vs 6-7). I think we can all live those things in our lives—can’t we? And we can all look back and see how those things work out that way.

“...though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ; Whom, not having seen,

you love; in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, *and* rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory; *and are* receiving the end of your faith—*even the* salvation of *your* souls... [your whole life, your whole being] ...concerning which salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you have diligently searched out and intently inquired” (vs 6-10).

The grace of God and the way that God deals with us is absolutely fantastic. I think if we understood it more we would treat each other a whole lot better, I'm sure of that.

Verse 11: “Searching into what *way* and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ *which was* in them was indicating, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and these glories that would follow; to whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but to us they were ministering these things, which now have been announced to you by those who have preached the Gospel to you by *the* Holy Spirit, sent from heaven—into which things the angels desire to look” (vs 11-12).

At the resurrection if we see some of the angels we can ask them ‘what was it that you were desiring to look into?’ When we’re resurrected and meet Christ and all the saints we’re going to have a lot of questions that we’re going to ask them. ‘What was it like at this point? What happened there?’ It will be very interesting. We will see some of the angels and we’ll ask them what it was they were desiring to look into.

Verse 13: “For this reason, be prepared in your minds, be self-controlled, *and* be fully hoping in the grace that will be brought to you at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ.” We can see with this that the grace of God has a broad application. The grace of God to be given to us, and it brings

- hope
- salvation
- Truth

1-Peter 5:5 is the parallel account that we have in James 4:6-7 that we just covered. It says that we are to yield ourselves to God. ***He gives grace to the humble***, and how we are to resist the devil in that particular way. There are some other categories, I realize this is kind of a potpourri if you haven't followed through all of the other series on it this will not be exactly the easiest thing to follow.

For the Work of the Ministry:

There is another aspect of the grace of God, which is very important for us to realize, and that is

the grace of God as it refers to a ministry or work that a minister is doing. It is by the grace of God that we are able to preach the grace of God. I've seen this as a minister, I have seen that when I really prepare and do the things I need to, that God gives an extra amount of His Spirit to do the things that are necessary as far as preaching. That is part of God's grace.

Acts 14:25: “And when they had spoken the Word in Perga, they came down to Attalia; and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been **committed to** the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled” (vs 25-26). There it shows very importantly and gives a greater degree of understanding of serving and teaching and ministering and things like this. It is of the grace of God for the work that they were to fulfill.

Verse 27: “They arrived, they gathered the Church together and declared all that God had done with them, and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there with the disciples *for a long time.*” (vs 27-28).

Here again we find concerning the grace of God and the ministry in preaching and teaching and things like this. Romans 1:3: “Concerning His Son; Who came from *the* seed of David according to *the* flesh, Who was declared *the* Son of God with power, according to *the* Spirit of Holiness, by *the* resurrection from *the* dead—Jesus Christ our Lord” (vs 3-4).

That's the key thing. Remember in the Feast of Unleavened Bread it is not just the Passover but it is the *whole* feast. It starts with the Passover and then you have the whole feast, and remember that the resurrection of Jesus Christ occurred during that time. It says that if Christ is not raised then ‘you are dead in your sins’ (1-Cor. 15).

He declared then to be the Son of God with power “...according to the Spirit of Holiness, by according to *the* Spirit of Holiness, by *the* resurrection from *the* dead.... [If you carry the authority and the weight of what he just said.] ...Through Whom we have received grace and apostleship...” (vs 4-5). Grace and apostleship in teaching and preaching are tied right together. We're going to see one place where Paul says, ‘You were saved by my grace.’ Does that mean that Paul gave grace? *No! That means by his ministry!* By the grace of his ministry, which is part of the grace of God.

Verse 5: “Through Whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all the nations, in behalf of His name.”

1-Corinthians 15:10. “But by *the* grace of God I am what I am...”

Let’s go back and see that he is talking about the apostles, v 7: “Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage. For I am the least of the apostles, *and* am not fit *even* to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by *the* grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain...” (vs 7-10).

He’s talking about *his work* of the ministry. Of course, there has to be a tremendous amount of grace—doesn’t it? He understood what he was doing after he did it, that he was persecuting the Church of God and causing people to be killed. He thought for sure he was doing what was right. He was getting letters from the high priest. You can’t have any greater authority than letters from the high priest.

Let’s liken it to owning property. If you have title to property you go take it and possess it and own it and no one can deny you. Well here, he had the authority of the high priest. Didn’t the high priest know what he was doing? *No!* But he thought he did. Weren’t they trying put out *the way* of the Christian life? *Yes!* He caused people to be killed. Now, Paul didn’t do that after he was converted. But he said, ‘By the grace of God...’

- How much will God’s grace cover? It will cover an awful lot.
- How bad can a person be before conversion? *I don’t know; that is God’s judgment!*

We’ll look and see what part of the unpardonable sin is. People can get to the point that they think they have done it, and they may have not committed the unpardonable sin, they may be knowingly living in sin and really not wanting to, but really not wanting to change—that is not he unpardonable sin. You really haven’t rejected God, but nevertheless, tremendous thing! I don’t know of anyone who has killed people in the Church of God that God has subsequently called, except Paul.

Verse 10: “But by *the* grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain; rather, I have labored more abundantly than all of them; however, *it was* not I, but the grace of God with me.” Then he goes on explaining about the resurrection.

We’ll see that the Apostle Paul had an awful lot to say concerning the grace of God and his preaching, and the grace in his apostleship.

Romans 15:15: “So then, I have more boldly written to you, brethren, in part *as a way of* reminding you, because of the grace that was given to me by God.” He says it a little more directly here to whom he is writing. What is he writing? *He’s telling them what they should be doing!* It’s interesting that in the book of Romans there is more discussion concerning the grace of God than any other book, and showing

- why we need the grace of God
- why human nature is the way it is
- why we need that forgiveness

He says that he is writing this to them because of the grace of God that was given to him.

Verse 16. “In order that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles...” That’s why a ministry cannot be, just because people appoint them or people elect them, or because a friend of so and so, or because there may necessarily be whatever other circumstances, but it is definitely a calling by the grace of God. He said clearly here:

“...that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles, to perform the Holy service of teaching the Gospel of God; so that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by *the* Holy Spirit” (v 16).

As you know the whole purpose of going through this in-depth is so that we can cover all the aspects of grace and to cover as many Scriptures as possible. I’m not going to cover every one. I won’t have time to do that.

Referring to the ministry that he had and the work that he was doing, 2-Corinthians 1:12: “For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in *the* simplicity and sincerity of God (not in carnal wisdom, but in *the* grace of God)... [Paul looked at everything that he did, which is true, in his life as being part of the grace of God. His ministry, his life, what he was doing, and everything.] ...we had our conduct in the world, but more abundantly toward you.”

This study is a little bit different than just going through in a sermon type thing, but it is to go through and look at all of the Scriptures covering a certain aspect of it. So here we are looking at the aspect of grace in relationship to the ministry of the Apostle Paul, and as it refers to a ministry then to all of the other ministers of God who are truly ministers indeed.

Ephesians 3:2: “If indeed you have heard of the ministry of the grace of God that was given to me for you.” That grace of God came from God to Paul, and then to the people. Not that Paul was

dispensing God's grace and everything had to go through Paul in order for them to get to God. *No*, that is not true. But the ministry that he had in teaching and preaching to them *was* the dispensation of the grace of God, which was given to him.

Verse 3. "How He made known to me by revelation **the mystery...**" That could well be translated *secret, the secret of God!* It is kept secret from the world. It's not a mystery in the sense that the Catholics think of a mystery or the mystery of whatever they're supposed to be doing. It is the secret of God not revealed to the world.

"...(even as I wrote briefly before, so that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of Christ), which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His Holy apostles and prophets by *the Spirit*; that the Gentiles might be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel" (vs 3-7). That's an interesting statement, the gift of grace.

The Righteousness of Christ:

What is the gift of grace? *The gift that God gives to each one of us, which is the righteousness of Christ!* In order to qualify for eternal life it can't be on our righteousness. Even though we are keeping the commandments of God from an internal point of view, because we have the 'law of sin and death,' we cannot be truly righteous.

For example: if you had a gold coin, and if you're doing like a lot of them are now, so if you buy any gold coins be careful. Buy one of these things to test it, because in Syria and Saudi Arabia they are making South African krugerrands—just a little bit bigger than the regular South African krugerrands—but they are made with an overlay of gold and inside is lead. We can liken that counterfeit to human nature. It may look good on the outside but it's got lead on the inside. There is no way that that can ever, ever, qualify to be 100% pure gold, it is an impossibility!

So, with human beings. We have the 'law of sin and death' in us so it is impossible for us to ever, ever, be wholly righteous on our own, cannot be done. The *gift of grace* is the giving to us by imputing to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. When God views us He views us as He views Jesus Christ. We didn't earn it, any more than you can change that counterfeit coin, that the inside is lead, into 100% gold. Nor did we earn anything that God gave to us. He gave it to us; it is His gift—the *gift of grace*.

He's also referring to the gift of grace referring to his ability in preaching, and in writing, where he was writing to them by the grace of God. It is the gift of grace of God, which is

"...*which was* given to me through the inner working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, was this grace given, that I might preach the Gospel among the Gentiles—even the unsearchable riches of Christ" (vs. 7-8). And there again he makes it very clear concerning his ministry based on grace.

Philippians 1—here's the Scripture that I mentioned concerning Paul's grace. I know the first time I read that I thought: I wonder if that's a mistranslation. Once you have any understanding of God's grace you know it has to come from God—must come from God—otherwise it's not God's grace. So, when I read this, I kind of did a double take. You know, you're eyes kind of cross and you think about it, and you go on. You can know this for sure: ***there is nothing in the Bible that is wrong***, so therefore, there is a proper explanation of it.

Philippians 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you... [Who's doing the works in us? *God is through the Holy Spirit!* The inner workings of God's Spirit; the good work in us.] will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ." Have no doubt, God is not going to give up on you. He'll keep performing it until the day of Jesus Christ if we be willing.

Verse 7: "It is indeed right for me to think this of you all because you have me in *your* hearts, both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, **and you are all fellow partakers of my grace.**" That means they were partakers of *his ministry!* They didn't partake of grace because God gave it to Paul, and then Paul gave it to them. No! Paul came preaching the Gospel of the Grace of God. Through grace Paul was given the ministry. Through the grace that God gave them, coupled with the ministry of the Apostle Paul, then they had their standing in salvation through the Gospel.

Calling of God—Election of Grace:

God is the One Who does the *selecting*. That's why you see all these great revival campaigns on television, and they all come screaming down and they all give their heart to the Lord. They're all emotionally stirred up, and I'm sure a lot of them are really wanting to do what is right. I'm sure that many of them are totally sincere in what they're doing, but why is it that it never follows in a lasting way? *Well, because God didn't do the calling*, the

preacher did. He said, 'You all come.' You have to answer the call of God, not the call of the preacher.

Romans 11:5: "Now then, in the same way, at the present time also there is a remnant according to *the* election of grace." Strange as it may seem, you go back and you analyze all through the Bible, it's been hard for people to understand it. Let's just stop here and we'll take a little diversion.

Everything that God has done in the calling of people and working of people is an *election of grace*. Every bit of it! You go back to Abraham.

- ✓ When God called Abraham, it was God's choice to call him. It is by grace.

It doesn't say it exactly that way, but that's what it is because ***everything God does is by His grace***, even the getting rid of the wicked from the point of view that it spares the righteous. Here's how God called him.

Genesis 12:1: "And the LORD said to Abram, 'Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house into a land that I will show you.'" He had to get up and just leave everything. God didn't call Nimrod. Nimrod wanted to go *his way* and become the great lord. These people over here in Gen. 11 said, 'We're going to build a tower and make us a name.' God didn't have any part of that. He destroyed the tower of Babel, and He calls Abraham.

Verse 2: "And I will make *of* you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great.... [it's not what men will, but what God does] ...And you shall be a blessing.... [by grace God says]: ...And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you...." (vs 2-3). That's exactly the way it is.

- ✓ by grace Isaac was born
At the time God chose! That was by grace.
- ✓ Isaac, when he had his two sons Jacob and Esau.
- ✓ by grace God chose Jacob rather than Esau
- ✓ by grace God chose Joseph
- ✓ by grace God chose Ephraim and Manasseh.

That means every blessing that flows from there, it's by God's grace by promise, which He cannot break, so therefore, people are receiving the things by grace undeservedly.

- Do we live in this land because of the grace of God then? *Yes!*
- Did we earn it? *No!*
- Did we deserve it? *No!*

We don't deserve anymore than the Aborigine living down in whatever place, wherever in the world, plague infested, either the jungle or the desert, it doesn't make one bit of difference. God did not choose them. Because God chooses us does that mean we are better than the other person? *No!* It is *God's choosing*, so it is all in God's plan. Then you just go right on down.

- ✓ the Exodus was an act of grace
- ✓ the giving of the Ten Commandments was an act of grace

All the way through those things are of the grace of God. You can study all of the Bible with that in mind, that ***everything that has been done is by the grace of God!***

We have an example here in Romans 11:4; remember when Elijah, and Elijah said, 'Oh, God I'm all alone and there is none.' God said *no!* "...I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed a knee to Baal.'.... [God has a lot more going than we think.] ...Now then, in the same way, at the present time also there is a remnant **according to the election of grace**. But if *the election is by grace, it is no longer by works...*" (vs 4-6).

This is a famous Scripture that all Protestants like to use to show you don't need to do anything because if it is by grace then it can't be by works. That's not what it's saying. It's talking about the election of grace is not a result of your work. Do you understand that? In other words, because God calls you does not mean that He does it because you have done something to deserve it. That's *God's election of grace*. It's not of a work that you do. So therefore, salvation is by the grace of God, but that does not mean that you do not have works to do.

These works that it's talking about here has nothing to do with the good works reference earlier in Eph. 2. This is the merit badge work. Like my son David going through school, if he passes the grade he earns the promotion to the next grade. They cannot deny him that. His works earn him that promotion, it will be the 11th grade next year. But because you were good growing up, because you are able to do all of these things and you knew about God's work, therefore then

- God has to
- God is impelled to
- God must give to you

a calling because of that. ***NO!*** God is not impelled by any of our works. Maybe God will have mercy and understanding, and God will hopefully call, and I hope God does call all my family, but it has to be that *God does the calling*. It is not by works.

Verse 6: “But if *the election is* by grace, it is no longer by works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace....” The grace of God for calling is no more grace. But you can line up and if you qualify, just like welfare, if you qualify. If by the lack of work and if by the lack of income you qualify, you earn welfare. People work for welfare by not working. That’s sort of turning it around a little bit, but I’m sure you can see the example very clearly.

“...otherwise grace would no longer be grace....” (v 6). Now let’s look at it the other way:

- *if* when we are called by the grace of God
- if we receive the Holy Spirit by the grace of God
- *if* we repent by the grace of God
- *if* we are walking in the works that God has given us to do—the right works that are included under this umbrella of grace

What if we start relying on the works rather than the grace? *We turn it in reverse, and that’s the whole problem of the book of Galatians!* They received the Holy Spirit *by grace!*

Then they ended up saying, ‘Well now we have this, so let’s go do whatever we want to.’ Then they fall from grace and depend on their works. Sunday-keepers have salvation by works; their works of Sunday-keeping. We are to keep the Sabbath because God says so, but that’s what God requires; that is a requirement. We can’t go to God and say, ‘God, I’m so much better than everybody else because I’ve kept the Sabbath all my life.’ The high priest could say that. He was born into the family of Aaron. He was due by birth, the high priest at a certain age. Not now, not under grace. I hope you see the difference there.

Verse 6: “But if *the election is* by grace, it is no longer by works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? What Israel was seeking *through works*, this it did not obtain. But the election obtained *it through grace*, and the rest were hardened...” (vs 6-7). Well, I won’t get into a full dissertation on that. The grace of God by election is *a calling*.

If we have it by our works, what we do then, we go along and we do something and say, ‘God, I did this. Put your approval on this.’ Well, maybe God didn’t want it in the first place. God’s approval is not going to be on it. I can go back and see there are a lot of things that I used to do. I’d go along and I’d do and have to look back and say, ‘God, yes, this

is good, oh approve this, by the way I prayed in your name.’ No! It doesn’t work that way.

2-Thessalonians 1:11: “For which cause also we are praying continually for you, that our God **may count you worthy of your calling...**” I want to emphasize *calling*, and that Greek word is ‘election’ or ‘selection.’ It is not election as we think of as voting but it is God’s choice, His election, which is *selection*.

“...worthy of *your* calling, and may fulfill *in you* all the good pleasure of *His* goodness, and *the* work of faith with power; so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and of *the* Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 11-12). There’s the operation of grace through God’s calling and through God’s bringing us to that.

Galatians 1:16 where Paul talks about his calling, even his birth, yes, everything he did as part of the grace of God (Gal. 1:16).

(go to the next track)

A Way of Life Serving Jesus Christ:

Acts 13—here it is even just a little more than the grace of God as a message, but also the grace of God as a way of life; the grace of God as serving our Lord Jesus Christ. I’ll just summarize. He came into the synagogue and then he was teaching about Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead.

Acts 13:38, Paul says: “Therefore, be it known to you, men *and* brethren, that through this man *the* remission of sins is preached to you. And in Him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses” (vs 38-39). Then you know what happens. The Jews kicked him out, the Gentiles came and said, ‘Come and preach to us the next Sabbath.’

Verse 43: “Now, after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes who worshiped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.” That has to do with ***the message of God, the way of living!*** It is the grace of God. You can see how all encompassing the grace of God really is.

Acts 14:2—here again Paul went into the synagogue, “But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. For this reason, they stayed a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord...” (vs 2-3). It doesn’t say how long they were there, but I’m sure that they were there several months.

“...Who bore witness to the **message of His grace**... [What is one of the names of Jesus Christ? *The Word!* Through Whom do we have grace? *Through Jesus Christ!* We can expand this even more. It has more meaning than just the word or a preaching or a message, but it has to do with *everything concerning Christ.*] ...granting that signs and wonders be done through their hands” (v 3).

2-Timothy 1:8. “Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but jointly suffer with *me for the sake of the Gospel*, according to *the power of God, Who has saved us and called us*... [there it is, all with the grace of God] ...**with a Holy calling—not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace**...” (vs 8-9). God’s purpose and grace is

- the calling
- the saving
- everything to do with God interacting in our life

—according to God’s purpose and grace.

Verse 10: “But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who has annulled death... [That is tremendous! People really understood that.] ...and has brought to light *eternal* life and incorruptibility through the Gospel unto which I was ordained a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of *the Gentiles*” (vs 10-11). All of this then is by the grace of God.

Jesus as He was growing up:

How was Jesus able to do the things that He did? *By the grace of God!* That’s how He was able to do it. Mary was selected to bare Jesus by the grace of God. The angel came and said, ‘Hail, Mary, you are well favored’—you have received grace from God. There can be no more graciousness given to a person than that. That’s quite a mighty thing to be chosen to bare the very Son of God.

Luke 2:40: “And the little child grew and became strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom; and **the grace of God was upon Him**.” Jesus’ whole life, everything that Jesus stood for was the epitome of grace. He needed the grace of God and it was upon Him.

After the incident there at the temple, and they found Him and brought Him back home and so forth, v 51: “Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He was subject to them. But His mother kept all these things in her heart.”

I just wonder what Mary thought at the resurrection. And remember when they were all gathered in that room where 120 of them were? I

wonder what was in her mind, what was in her heart, because all these things were going on. Several places Luke said, ‘she kept it in her heart.’ In other words she remembered it.

Verse 52: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature [age], **and in favor**...”—in grace. *He grew in grace!* Not that He was ever lacking in grace. Just like God is always perfect, but God is also growing in knowledge, Jesus was perfect from the time that He was conceived. But at His conception He was not a perfect 20-year-old.

This is why He grew in “...wisdom and stature and in favor [grace] with God and men” (v 52). Shows us quite a bit about the life of Christ as He was growing.

The end of Jesus’ life:

Let’s go to Hebrews 2 and let’s look at the end of His life, because that was also by the grace of God. Let’s understand one of the verses that we covered in 1-John 1 where it says that Jesus was **full of grace and Truth**, which means then that **everything that Jesus did was directed by the grace of God**. Everything, from the time that He decided to become a human being, and that is by God’s Own choosing, God’s *election*.

Everything that we see, God has reached down and He is the One Who has done it. Lots of times we like to think God does something because we’ve done something, and it’s the other way around. We do something because God has done something. So therefore, we don’t need to get all uppity-uppity about what we do or do not do because God is the One Who does it. James said don’t say that we will do this or we will do the other thing tomorrow. You say, ‘if God will.’ Why? *Because if it isn’t with the grace of God you may not do it!*

Hebrews 2:8 talks about Jesus: “‘You did put all things in subjection under his feet.’.... [that is, mankind in general] ...For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing *that was* not subjected to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the* angels, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering the death, in order that **by the grace of God**...” (vs 8-9). That’s a tremendous thing: “...by the grace of God...” How much does God want us to receive eternal life? *So much so that He sent His Son so that our sins could be forgiven!*

“...by the grace of God He Himself might taste death for everyone” (v 9). That’s a tremendous gracious act that God would give His Son. That’s why it says there in John 3:16 that God ‘gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him

shall not perish but have everlasting life.' It's by the grace of God.

Verse 10: "Because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

Do you remember how I mentioned that the reason that Jesus sits at the right hand of God is because the right hand is symbolic of salvation and Jesus is our Savior? Add that together with what we read here:

Hebrews 4:14: "Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses..." (vs 14-15). In other words He can. He feels it. He understands them. He knows them. Yes, He has lived them.

"...but *one Who* was tempted in all things according to *the likeness of our own temptations*; yet *He* was without sin. Therefore, we should come with boldness..." (vs 15-16). That doesn't mean come barging up like a charging pit bull or elephant. It means that you come confidently, courageously, knowing that you can trust in Christ.

Verse 16: "Therefore, we should come with boldness **to the throne of grace**... [Christ is there. That grace is to be given. We are to live in that grace, and walk in that grace.] ...so that we may receive mercy and **find grace to help**... [grace is given to help; that means then we get an extra supply of grace] ...**in time of need**."

That doesn't mean just run to God whenever things get so bad you're ready to squeal 'uncle,' because there is not a time that we don't need the grace of God. Can you think of a time that you don't need the grace of God? I can't think of one time when we don't need the grace of God. I mean, we need the grace of God in everything we do. So we need to come to God in that time of need, and of course that is everyday.

The Grace of God and Power:

I've heard many ministers talk about, and I've heard people ask: Why aren't there miracles? If we could only do better things there would be miracles. If you only had faith there would be more miracles, because Jesus said if you have 'faith as a grain of mustard seed you can say to this mountain, *be removed*, and it will go into the sea.'

So therefore, we all run around and condemn ourselves because God is not doing the things

because we're not doing them. Is that true? *No!* That's not true, because when God *gives grace for power*, God is the One Who decides to give it. If we go to God and by our works we earn it then it's not grace. You don't earn a miracle. Ministers can't earn the privilege of God using them for miracles.

I've known ministers that have fasted, I've known ministers that have prayed. I've even heard them bragging, 'Oh, I'm fasting and praying so we can have more miracles,' and let everyone know. Well, God could care less. God will do it when it's *His* time, and He will do it in *His* way.

Let's see exactly what was happening here. This is after they were released from prison. They were all praying together. Acts 4:29: "And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings, and grant that Your servants may speak Your Word with all boldness... [and that's what we need to have, that kind of boldness and confidence] ...by reaching out Your hand to heal..." (vs 29-30). They're asking God to stretch forth *His* hand. Not asking God that they could have good works so that God would have to work miracles through them.

No, they asked God that "...by reaching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your Holy Son, Jesus.' And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with *the* Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness" God decided that He was going [to give that power, and that He was going to give that grace] ...And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." (vs 30-32).

This is not communism, or that we all run off someplace and sell everything and give it all to the preacher and he puts in the bank and you all go live out here and when the communal fails then he's got the money in the bank and you have nothing. *No!* They were there together because this is an extension of the time from Pentecost and they all stayed together through that time after Pentecost. Rather than going home they stayed in Jerusalem. That's why they had all things in common. It would be like if we all had to stay here for a while, well then we would have to share and give and things like that. That's what it's talking about.

Great Grace:

Verse 33: "And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and **great grace** was upon them all." God gives more grace; it's called *great*. In this sense it's

not great in what we think of as a great person, but great in the sense of the amount of grace that God gave, or the quantity that God gave.

Grace—Favor or Gift or Acceptable:

Let's see one of these instances. I'll just refer you to the notes on grace so you can look them up if you desire to look up those different areas where the word grace from the Greek 'charis' is used in a different translatable way.

Luke 6:32: "But if you love *only* those who love you, what **praise [grace]** is it to you?" The Greek there is 'charis'—which means *what grace have you*. In other words, if you only do the things of loving those that love you, there is no grace from God. That's what it's talking about. What grace have you? Obviously you have thanks. The people that you love thank you, and you thank them. But it is, "...what **praise [grace]** is it to you?" What grace have you from God? *Because you love those that love you!*

"...For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good *only* to those who are doing good to you, what praise is it to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to *those* from whom you hope to receive, what praise is it to you?" (32-34). What grace have you? That's why another instance, the gift that was sent by the Greeks down to Jerusalem, the gift of grain and dates, and things when there was the famine down in Jerusalem, it was called *a gift*. It was also called *grace*. It could refer just to the physical giving. If you just give to them what grace have you?

"...For even sinners lend to sinners, that they may receive as much again.... [in many cases because of interest, a whole lot more] ...But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great..." (vs 34-35) God will count it the way He will through His grace, not through your way of doing things.

How many times has some political mucky-muck been on some board of whatever. It think a lot of them are on United Way, and they are the big this and the big that, and they are giving their time and donating. Then you find out later they're nothing but crooks under the skin anyway, so you see that's why God has it so that we don't plan it. 'I will join the United Way and I will donate my time and services and I will be noted in the community and then I will run for mayor and I will be elected.' That falls into the category of doing things that you hope a return for.

Verse 35: "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your

reward shall be great, and you shall be *the* children of the Highest; for He is good to the unthankful and *the* wicked." If He weren't there wouldn't be anyone left alive.

Grace and Gifts:

God gives certain gifts and of course that all ties in with 1-Cor. 12 about the gifts and so forth. This is a word that means *freely given*. Even our understanding of God's Word, even our understanding of the things that we have of God.

1-Corinthians 2:12: "Now, we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is of God, so that we might know the things **graciously given** to us by God." *No charge!* That's why it says that *you can't buy your way into the Kingdom of God*. Simon Magus tried to buy the Holy Spirit. It is freely given unto us.

Romans 12 talks about the grace of God that is given to us in reference to the gifts differing one from another. We'll see how this ties right together. Paul is speaking here of the grace that was given to him.

Romans 12:3: "For I say through the grace that was given to me, to everyone who is among you..." [This is part of God's giving of grace to the apostle Paul for the effect of preaching. He is speaking to every one that is among you.] ...not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think with sound-mindedness, as God has divided to each one a measure of faith. For even as we have many members in one body, but all members do not have the same function; likewise, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another. But each one has different gifts **according to the grace that is given to us...**" (vs 3-6). The giving of this gift, whatever it is. Some people have one gift one way, some have a gift another way. That is all from the grace of God. *It is given to us!*

"...—whether prophecy... [speaking or preaching] ... *let us prophesy* according to the measure of faith; or service, *let us tend* to service; or the one who is teaching, *let him tend* to teaching" (vs 6-7). And he goes right on showing that all of these things then are exercised through the gift of a grace of God.

1-Peter 4:10: "Let each one, according as he has received **a gift from God...** ['cheritos'—*the gift*] ...*be using* it to serve the others as good stewards of *the* grace of God..." The giving that God gives to us, the calling that God gives. All of it has to do with the grace of God.

There's one other section that is important that we need to understand that has to do with the grace of God and each of us individually. This kind of flows into one of the other sections that I have. There is a whole section that I'm not going to cover except just a few Scriptures, which has to do with the opening and closing of each of the epistles, having to refer to the grace of God.

Grace and Peace:

1-Corinthians 1:3: "**Grace and peace be to you...**" That's very important. When we understand the grace of God we have more peace. I think that we have really begun to understand that and learn that and we are going to preserve that peace by the grace of God.

Verse 3: "**Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.** I thank my God always concerning you, **for the grace of God that has been given to you in Christ Jesus** (vs 3-4). You think of it in a personal way. Christ is the One Who has given it to you. That shows how active God that is involved in our lives.

Talking about with our speech, Colossians 4:5: "Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside *the Church*, redeeming the time. *Let your speech be always with grace...* [in other words in a good and positive and kind way] ...seasoned with salt, that you may know how to answer each one" (vs 5-6). It just becomes part of our way of life, the way we walk, the way we talk, and everything then reflecting the grace of God.

Affliction and Suffering:

Sometimes you will see someone who is afflicted with something and God does not intervene to do anything for them. God does not heal them, though they pray, though they've been anointed or whatever. God has another purpose in mind for them. We have one such a lady—Esther Greisinger—who is much that way. She has done more to help people in her state of weakness than she could have done any other way because of the grace of God that is given to her for that very purpose.

Paul is talking about his affliction that he had. When he had the vision and he didn't know if he was in the body or out of the body he says, 2-Corinthians 12:5: "I will boast of such a one as this; but of myself I personally will not boast, except concerning my weaknesses. But even if I choose to boast, I shall not be a fool; for I will speak the Truth. However, I will forbear, lest anyone think of me above what he sees me *to be*, or what he hears from me. But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations, *there* was given to me

a thorn in the flesh..." (vs 5-7).

We know that he had this terrible eye condition. Terrible eye condition, where in Galatians it said that they didn't even want to look upon him. When he wrote the book of Galatians it was with such large letters so that they could read it. It says, "...a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me..." (v 7).

That doesn't mean that it was a demon because obviously Paul was not bothered with demons. A messenger comes from the word 'angelos'—which is also translated *angel*. This has to do with a messenger or probably was a messenger from Satan...BAM!...just like it was with Job, the disease was upon him. But that doesn't mean that it was there on him, or that he was demon possessed, or that he was demon bothered.

In other words God allowed that messenger to afflict him with this affliction, and then obviously left him. Just like during the affliction of Job, was Satan there with him all the time? *No, only to afflict him!* When the affliction was gone it was Job and his three friends and then God up there listening to what's going on. Satan was not there. There are some people who thought that this means that Paul had a demon with him all the time, just to kind of correct him. *No!* He had an affliction that was a messenger from Satan.

Once he received it then it was to buffet him, "...so that I might not be exalted. I besought the Lord three times for this, that it... [what ever the illness was] ...might depart from me; but He said to me, '**My grace is sufficient for you...** [God's grace is sufficient] **...for My power is made perfect in weakness.**' Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (vs 7-10). Understanding fully the grace of God he understood what it meant to be afflicted.

There are several Scriptures that we want to cover in the opening and closing of some of the epistles. It's interesting that if you go through and study it, Paul and Peter talk more about the grace of God than any of the others. It is very important for us to understand that when they wrote their epistles, and when they wrote these letters and they said 'the grace of God be with you. grace and peace, and love and mercy of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,' there is an actual blessing that comes with that. It's a very important thing that they put in there.

Here the Apostle Peter says, 1-Peter 1:2: "*Who have been chosen according to the*

predetermined knowledge of God *the* Father, by sanctification through *the* Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of *the* blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you.”

That is quite an introduction and lots of times we go studying along and boy we want to get to the important things so we cut out the first verses and we cut out the last verses and we don't realize how important that is for us. Go through and you study those and you read those and they are important to us.

It does it twice here in Romans 16:20: “But the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.** Amen.” Amen means *so be it*. So, if he says the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen, it means that he wants the grace of God with you.

Verse 24: “**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with all of you. Amen.**” That's one of his more powerful endings.

2-Corinthians 13:11. “In conclusion, brethren, rejoice! Be perfected; be encouraged; be of the same mind; be at peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with a Holy kiss. All the saints send salutations to you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit... [that is the fellowship, the inner fellowshiping of the Holy Spirit with you] ...*be* with you all. Amen” (vs 11-12). That's almost one of the best endings that you could have, right there.

Galatians 6:18: “Brethren, ***may* the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit**.... [in the spirit of your mind] ...Amen.” That's a significant verse—isn't it?

Ephesians 6:23: “Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith from God *the* Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. **Grace *be* with all those whose love**... [grace and love go together] ...*for* our Lord Jesus Christ is uncorrupted. Amen” (vs 23-24).

It might be very inspiring for you to read through the first three or four verses, and the last three or four verses of every one of the Epistles of Paul and I think you will see how much the grace of God is involved actively, just like it said, ‘and the grace of God be with your spirit.’

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 2:1-10

- 2) James 4:6-7
- 3) 1 Peter 1:6-13
- 4) Acts 14:25-28
- 5) Romans 1:3-5
- 6) 1 Corinthians 15:10, 7-10
- 7) Romans 15:15-16
- 8) 2 Corinthians 1:12
- 9) Ephesians 3:2-8
- 10) Philippians 1:7
- 11) Romans 11:5
- 12) Genesis 12:1-3
- 13) Romans 11:4-7
- 14) 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12
- 15) Acts 13:38-39, 43
- 16) Acts 14:2-3
- 17) 2 Timothy 1:10-11
- 18) Luke 2:40, 51-52
- 19) Hebrews 2:8-10
- 20) Hebrews 4:14-16
- 21) Acts 4:29-33
- 22) Luke 6:32-35
- 23) 1 Corinthians 2:12
- 24) Romans 12:3-7
- 25) 1 Peter 4:10
- 26) 1 Corinthians 1:3-4
- 27) Colossians 4:5-6
- 28) 2 Corinthians 12:5-10
- 29) 1 Peter 1:2
- 30) Romans 16:20, 24
- 31) 2 Corinthians 13:11-12
- 32) Galatians 6:18
- 33) Ephesians 6:23-24

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Peter 5:5
- Genesis 11
- Galatians 1:16
- John 3:16
- 1 Corinthians 12

God's Greatest Gift of Grace

Fred R. Coulter

Let's begin by going to Romans 4 and let's understand some very important and profound things. What God has done is really an absolutely tremendous thing that He has done for His people. Romans 4:16: "For this reason *it is* of faith..." Our standing with God is *through faith*. It has to be the very faith of Jesus Christ.

- the same faith that Jesus had in committing Himself to God the Father, to go through the whole ordeal of the crucifixion
- the same faith that Christ exercised to heal the sick and raise the dead
- the same faith that is a gift of the Holy Spirit that God gives to us.

We are to live our lives by the very faith of Jesus Christ. That's what Paul said in Gal. 2.

"...in order that *it might be* by grace... [It's God's grace: *His favor, His gift, what He does unilaterally* to everyone He calls.] ...to the end that the promise might be certain to all the seed—... [If you are Christ's, and Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.] ...not to the one who is of the law only, but also to the one who is of *the* faith of Abraham, who is *the* father of us all, (exactly as it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations.').... [At the resurrection, isn't he going to be surprised!] ...before God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they are" (vs 16-17).

Whenever you get discouraged, remember this: Don't look at the circumstances where you are today. In faith, ask God to help you have the understanding that He is going to change those circumstances in the future and count everything that you go through—if you love God—that it's going to work out for good, *everything*; even though you're going through trouble right now, if you need to be; it's going to work out for good!

Verse 18: "And who against hope believed in hope... [Sometimes you get so desperate, so down and so low the only thing you can do is hope in *hope*; the only thing you can do is say, 'God, You promised!' Because you can't see your way out of it, and you can't see your way beyond it, so you have to commit it into God's hands.] ...in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, 'So shall your seed be.'"

He had to have a lot of faith, because at 99-years-old it's rather difficult, to say the least. But nevertheless, God did!

Verse 19: "And he, not being weak in the faith, considered not his own body, already having

become dead, being about one hundred years old, nor *did he consider* the deadness of Sarah's womb." That's why He did it this way, because God intended to show the world through Abraham—that through God's grace and God's faith—He is even able to do the impossible! If He chose someone young and strong and virile and beautiful, had a beautiful wife, all this sort of thing, hey, where's the miracle? *There isn't any!*

Verse 20: "And he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God." If you have a time when you are not believing as you ought to, give glory to God and ask Him to work it out. That's how you're strengthened in faith; you give glory to God!

Verse 21: "For he was fully persuaded that what He has promised, He is also able to do." Understand this, this is true: Every word that's in the Bible is a covenant and promise from God! When you claim those promises, ask God to bless you with His promises. He will do so, but also He will do it in His own time and in His own way so that it will have the greatest effect. God will do it.

Verse 22: "As a result, it was also imputed to him for **righteousness**." That's part of the gift that God gives you. This doesn't mean that this is a substitute for commandment-keeping. This righteousness is right standing with God, or you could phrase it another way, because the word is almost equivalent: "As a result it was also imputed to him for **justification**." In other words, he was justified before God *because he believed* and God imputed that to him. That's why you cannot appropriate Christ. That's the reverse.

If, like the Protestants say, 'appropriate Christ,' you're taking God to you. Who's calling whom? *You're calling God!* Well, then, where's God's calling? If you call God, Who is God? You or God? They've got it all backwards. ***God is the One Who imputes! God is the One Who gives!***

Verse 23: "But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; rather, *it was* also *written* for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed—to those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from *the* dead... [that's believing in the Father Who raised Jesus from the dead] ...Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for **our** justification" (vs 23-25). There's the key! He had to be raised to appear before the Father, *for our justification*, that is to be in right standing with God the Father in heaven above.

That's the whole key! That's the whole reason why God has called us! Remember that!

Never, *ever*, **ever** get discouraged any longer than it takes you to get on your knees and pray to God! You might be clear down in the depths; you might be walking through the shadow of your own 'valley of death.' We all have to face that, every one of us! But nevertheless, you will be delivered. God promises so! He develops it from here. Once you have been put in right standing with God, have been justified by the sacrifice of Christ and His blood and righteousness imputed to you as a gift of God:

Romans 5:1: "Therefore, **having been justified by faith, we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace **in which we stand...**" (vs 1-2). Living in grace is like living under the umbrella of God's love, from which comes grace, blessing, peace, faith, hope and all the fruits of the Holy Spirit. You stand under that, and these come from God to you through Christ.

"...and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God.... [No us, not our physical things, not our goods, but]: ...in *the* hope of the glory of God" (v 2). When you're at your lowest, think about when we are old and weak and ready to die—I don't know how many of us are going to reach that stage before Christ returns or not; but when you reach that stage—or are getting close to that stage—you know in your own heart how corruptible the flesh is; how weak the flesh is.

Don't get discouraged, because God is looking beyond. He's called you in *the hope of the resurrection*—correct? The hope of the resurrection is that you will have a new body, a new mind, and you will be a new being! If this old 'corpus nephesh' deteriorates, you do the best you can to keep in the best shape you can as long as you can, but one day it's going to go sayonara. God intended it. It says, 'Blessed is the death of a saint in the eyes of God.' Why? *Because all those who die in faith have made it!* Is that not God's purpose and goal? *Yes, it is!* God refers to this death as *sleep*.

Verse 3: "And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations... [that takes a good deal of getting use to; Paul went through many] ...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance." What did Jesus say in Matt. 24? *The one who endures to the end, the same shall be saved!* You have to have endurance. How many people have not had endurance? It's more than just patience. It could be translated *patience* or *endurance*, but endurance is the more profound translation.

Verse 4: "And endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us" (vs 4-5).

That's the operation of how God's grace comes to us. Notice that as a gift of God it comes with:

- hope
- faith
- trials
- endurance
- character
- the love of God

This is why Christ came to reveal the Father.

Let's see that it was Jesus' job to reveal the Father. The reason that He wanted to reveal the Father was because *God the Father is actively involved in our lives*, as well as Jesus Christ. You're going to see that the revelation of the Father proceeds through the Gospel of John and then much of it is later picked up by the Apostle Paul and carried forward even more. I was just overwhelmed when I went through and did the study, and I found out it was 117 times in the Gospel of John and ten times in the Epistle of First John that it mentions the Father. Then compared to the other Gospels, it was really very overwhelming.

John 12:35: "Then Jesus said to them, 'Yet a little while the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, so that *the* darkness will not overtake you....'" This can happen in many different ways. We can say today that there's still peace in the land. While you can still study, while you still can pray, while you still have freedom be zealous for God and make the best that you can of it. The day is going to come when the 'darkness' is going to come and overtake the whole world.

This is what happens to those who do not do that, if they stand in one place or go backward, they are receding from the light. Right at first they don't understand that they are leaving the light. Just like if you got in front of a car with the headlights on, and you started walking toward the headlights, you could still see the light. Then you didn't quite make it all the way to the car because you turned around and you started going the other way. The lights were still shining—weren't they? It's kind of self-deceptive because you think you're in the light, but your back is to the light. You start walking away and just like it is when it's dark, right at first if there's a little light you can see really good—right? But sooner or later you get far enough away and it's all darkness again. That's why He said, 'While you have the light, walk in the light.'

"...For the one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going'" (v 35). If you know some who have left the light to go back to darkness, *ask them*:

- Where are you going?
- What are you doing?

- What are you learning?
- Where is God?

I think you will find that they don't know!

Verse 36: “While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become *the* children of light.’ Jesus spoke these things and *then* departed from them *and* was *in* hiding. Although He had done so many miracles in their presence, they did not believe in Him” (vs 36-37). Isn't that amazing? Isn't that just like the children of Israel coming out of Egypt after seeing all the signs and wonders and miracles? By the time they got out there and their feet were sore and their mouths were dry the heat was hot, and they said, ‘What did you bring us out here for? Who can give us food? Who can give us water?’

Verse 38: “So that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled who said, ‘Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of *the* Lord been revealed?’ For this *very* reason they could not believe because again Isaiah said, ‘He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so that they would not see with *their* eyes and understand with *their* hearts, and be converted, and I would heal them’” (vs 38-40). Many people read that and think:

- Why would God want to do that?
- Doesn't He was as many saved as He can get saved?
- Isn't that what the Protestants say?
- ‘*Ya'all come give your heart to the Lord, come down to the altar here tonight, because it may be too late if you don't do it and you go home. You may not get home.*'

Here he says that He blinds their eyes and hardens their hearts so they can't see, understand and be converted, and He won't heal them spiritually. What kind of savior is that? *God's plan is greater!* You have to come to the Last Great Day to find out why. The long and short of it is that He has yet to have mercy on them.

Who comes to God? *The one that God the Father draws*—right? He's got to have some to be first—doesn't He? He's got to have the first resurrection in order to do the rest of His plan—does He not? Think of it this way: Those He has called, you're part of that plan! You're part of the solution! You're part of what God is working out! That's something!

Verse 42: “But even so, many among the rulers believed in Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God” (vs 42-43).

- You always got your politicians in there—don't you?
- You always have your people-pleasers in there—don't you?
- You always have those who put people before God!

They would rather go fellowship where it's nicey-nice and learn nothing about God, because the people are their God. That's called a ‘social religion.’ But the truth is, unless you have a right relationship with God—during the Sabbath and during your life before you go to Sabbath services—then you deserve the social fellowship, because that's your god! Sooner or later it's going to come to an end.

Joe Jr. [Tkach of Worldwide Church of God] just gave the edict: Sunday or else! All their socializing didn't do them any good—did it? Did it preserve the Sabbath? *No!* Were they weakened in faith because they didn't stand firm? *Yes!* Do they have enough strength to stand now? *We'll see!* Just like Job said, ‘What I have greatly feared has come upon me.’ Now the hour of decision is at hand! Do you love God? *or* Do you love men? There have always been those; that's what Jesus said here. Then Jesus made it clear, and this is the whole key point. This is what keyed this with me in reading Karlstadt—this verse right here:

Verse 44: “Then Jesus called out and said, **‘The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me.’**” Christ opens the way to the Father! Opening the way to the Father, through Christ, is the *greatest grace* that God can give. We'll explain this as we go along. I want you to go back and think of how many times you have heard it said, ‘Pray three times a day, and you have to pray by the clock’? The truth is, if it isn't from the heart, I don't care if you're surrounded in a clock shop. If it isn't from the heart, then what are you doing? What is it? That's why it has to be to God the Father. That's why He's given you this greatest grace. It's to all those He has called.

I tell you what, if this doesn't excite you and open your mind and your understanding, I don't know what will. We need to grasp that if you believe not on Jesus only, **“...The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me.”** *Not just in Christ!* Now you're going to begin to see that the Protestants are also halfway-beeners. They haven't come to the Father, and the Father hasn't brought them.

Verse 45: “And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me.... [What does the Father look like? *Just like Jesus!*] ...I have come *as* a light into the world so that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. But if anyone hears My

words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world" (vs 45-47). All of this shows our choices involved in it. That's why the Word of God is so important. It's not the one who is preaching that's important. It's what God is inspiring to be taught that is important. It's not how the speaker speaks that's important. It's does he speak the words of God—that's important!

Verse 48: "The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him; the word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day.... [Here's why: How was Jesus taught? *Of God the Father!*] ...For I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father, Who sent Me, gave Me commandment Himself... [God Himself personally gave it to Christ] ...what I should say and what I should speak" (vs 48-49). Now we're getting into understanding the Father even more—right? Have you noticed this?

- What is one of the first things that apostatizing Christians start to do?
- What is one of the first things they drop off? *Foot-washing!*
- What's next? *Unleavened bread!*
- What's next? *Holy Days!*
- What's next? *Sabbath-keeping!*

A 'little leaven leavens the whole lump!' The way the Greek is here makes it far more imperative upon us with foot-washing:

Romans 13:13: "You call Me the Teacher and the Lord, and you speak rightly, because I am. Therefore, if I, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, **you also are duty-bound** to wash one another's feet" (vs 13-14). That's much stronger and that's what the Greek means, instead of 'you ought' (KJV) to wash one another's feet. In English today the word 'ought' does not have the binding quality of 'duty-bound.' Today the word 'ought' is almost optional. 'You ought to be here at 8 o'clock.' That doesn't sound mandatory that I absolutely need to be. That's why 'duty-bound' is much better.

Verse 15: "For I have given you an example, *to show* that you also should do exactly as I have done to you. Truly, truly I tell you, **a servant is not greater than his lord, nor a messenger greater than he who sent him....** [Always true—isn't it? *Yes, indeed!*] ...If you know these things, **blessed are you if you do them.**" (vs 15-17).

How many blessings do people deprive themselves of when they stop foot-washing? When they stop keeping the Passover? *Satan's going to be there and make them feel good, then they justify what they're doing in their own mind—right?*

- when they give up unleavened bread

- when they give up on the Holy Days
- when they give up on the Sabbath
- when they don't believe in tithing and offering
- when they don't believe that they ought to live by every Word of God

So, they cut themselves off from all these blessings!

John 14—we'll spend a little time here, because this is a key, pivotal chapter. Again, He's revealing the Father all the way through. Notice that this was done on the Passover night—correct? What is the key to knowing and understanding the Father? What is the key to receiving this grace? *The Passover!* I mention about the *simplicity in Christ*—correct? It's simple! **"...blessed are you if you do them."** It's that simple!

John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were otherwise, I would have told you. I am going to **prepare a place** for you" (vs 1-2). What is Jesus preparing for me? *A place in New Jerusalem!* I wonder what that's going to be like? He's also preparing you for eternal life and to share in His glory!

The reason why God's greatest grace is to reveal the Father to you and you have a relationship between you and the Father through Christ is because that's a foretaste of when you are going to live with God forever and see Him face-to-face. God has called us to a fantastic calling. This is big time stuff, brethren! That's why the world hates us, because the puny substitute that they have is just worthless compared to what God has for us.

Now then, He gives a guarantee, v 3: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again..." Is Christ coming again? *Absolutely!* When is He going to come? *Right on time!* God the Father's time and *no man's* time! You will understand. It's going to shake the heavens; it's going to shake the earth; it's going to shake the sea and everything. There is going to be ***no doubt!*** It isn't going to be the secret little something to askance you up and take you out of the Tribulation. It's going to come as a BLAST from heaven! God has called us to the greatest calling—you talk about *big league!* What God has called us to puts into total insignificance anything else.

"...and receive you to Myself; so that where I am, you may be also. And where I am going you know, and the way you know" (vs 3-4). They didn't quite understand that. Especially Thomas, he had a hard time understanding that it was really Christ Who showed up. Remember what he said? *If I see His hands and His side, then I'll believe!* When

Christ appeared eight days later, He said, 'Thomas, come here.'

Verse 5: "Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going; how then can we know the way?'.... [Again, He made it simple. You have to do it.] ...Jesus said to him, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me'" (vs 5-6). There we see the joint calling of God the Father drawing, but you have to come through Christ.

Notice that it is not *a* way. It is not *a* truth. It is not *a* life. *It is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and it is exclusive!* It is either God's way or no way! It's not going to be 'half my way, Lord, and half Your way; let's share this.' Are you God? *Of course not!*

Verse 7: "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. But from this time forward, you know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and that will be sufficient for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long a time, and you have not known Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; why then do you say, "Show us the Father"?' (vs 7-9). Christ is the One Who opens the way and opens the door.

Verse 10: "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak from My own self; but the Father Himself, Who dwells in Me, does the works." Same way with us: with God's Spirit, whatever we do, it is God the Father and Jesus Christ *in us*.

I tell you what, when you really grasp this and you really understand this, this is going to help you overcome sin more than anything else, because you're going to have that direct relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ

- Who takes away sin
- Who gives you grace
- Who forgives your sins
- Who puts you in right standing with Him

What can be against that? *Nothing!* Isn't that greater than listing out your sins and say, 'I've got to work on them'? What you need is a conversion—a change of mind, a change of heart—and that will solve the sin problem—won't it? Not entirely, because we still have the 'law of sin and death' in us. But it will give us the hope, the spirit, the life, the zeal and the desire. That's what belief and hope is all about.

Verse 11: "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe Me because of the works themselves. Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the

works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father" (vs 11-12). All you have to do is read what the apostles did. They did great works! They did greater works!

Verse 13: "And whatever you shall ask in My name... [With this kind of attitude and spirit you're not going to ask out of lust or covetousness; greed or envy. You're going to ask out of sincere desire.] (v 14): ...If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*." If you 'love Me keep the commandments—namely Mine.'

Verse 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word... [Paul says to 'imitate God.' Be imitators of God! That's a pretty high standard—isn't it? *Yes, indeed!*] ...and My Father will love him, and **We** will come to him and make Our abode with him" *You become a temple of the Holy Spirit!* The Holy Spirit has two parts:

1. the begetting of the Father and direct access to Him
2. the mind of Christ

That's why it's called *the Spirit of the Father* where we call 'Abba, Father'; and it's called *the Spirit of Christ*. 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' It's combined! Both are doing the work.

Verse 24: "The one who does not love Me does not keep My words..." Nothing clearer than that—right? 'What do you think about the Sabbath?' *I don't think we need to keep it!* 'You don't love God.' *Yes, I do, I go to church on Sunday!* Do you see how incongruous that is? It doesn't work! If you love God you'll do everything that He says—right? *Yes!* Just like praying for your enemies.

"...and the Word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me" (v 24). People with their opinions and think that they have a right to choose—which they do. But they don't realize what they're doing when they reject God—do they? They think that they're rejecting a church, or think that they're rejecting a preacher. They don't understand that *they're rejecting the Sovereign of the universe God the Father!* That's big time stuff—isn't it? *Yes, indeed!* Then He talks about sending the Holy Spirit.

(go to the next track)

Verse 30: "I will not speak with you much longer because the ruler of this world is coming; but he does not have a single thing in Me. Yet, *he comes* so that the world may know that I love the Father, and that I do exactly as the Father has commanded Me. Arise, let us go out" (vs 30-31).

How many times did Jesus say that? If Jesus did everything the Father showed Him to do,

commanded Him to do, and everything as the Father wanted Him to do, then what right do people have to try and tell God what to do? That's part of the simplicity in Christ. You have to ask simple, stupid questions. The answer becomes very obvious.

John 15:1: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the **husbandman**." That's an interesting word: husbandman/farmer, etc. Farmer really wouldn't fit here. Husbandman is the best, because it means *someone who is married to the land* and takes care of the land and the crop like a husband does a wife. That's much more fitting. It shows tender, loving care—doesn't it? *Yes!*

Verse 2: "He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit... [There's going to be some branch plucking going on here quickly—right?] ...but He cleanses each one that bears fruit..." That's the whole purpose of trials; that's the whole purpose of difficulties. When William Tyndale said, 'If everything went smooth and nothing went wrong, then our faith would be vain, indeed! If God bids you to go over the sea, He will send a tempest to test you whether you believe Him or no.' It's easy to say that you believe in God and trust God, if you're driving a Rolls Royce and sitting on a bank account that has millions and millions and say, 'I love God.' If you end up like Job and you lose your Rolls Royce and everything, then it's another thing. Do you still love God?

So, every trial you have count it as a blessing, "...in order that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you.... [that's part of the right standing with God] ...Dwell in Me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you *bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me. I am the vine, *and* you *are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing" (vs 2-5). That is nothing unto eternal life. Absolutely, that's what that means.

When you get down to it, people really can't do anything without God anyway: Who created them, gave them abilities, created their hands and feet and whatever they can do with their mind. It all has to come from God anyway—right? In fact, you can do nothing at all unless it comes from God.

Verse 6: "If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned.... [There will be a Lake of Fire and they will be burned, just like Jesus said.] ...**If** you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you..." (vs 6-7). That says a lot—doesn't it? You have to have the words of Christ *dwelling in* you. You have to come from the point of beginning with the Word of God when

God calls you:

- to begin to understand it
- to begin to put it together
- live by it
- use it more
- understand it more

Then it has to come to the point that it is *dwelling in you*. In other words, with the Spirit of God and the Word of God that's what motivates you to do what you do. That's the whole process of conversion. That's what it's all about. The ultimate of that is to have the mind of Christ.

Philippians. 2:5: "**Let** this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." That's something you have to *let* by desire and by wanting, by study, by practice, by living. That's God's Word *dwelling in you*.

Here's the reason, John 15:7: "...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you." Stop and think; go back and think many years back. Have not all your prayers been answered that were prayers in truth and sincerity and love? Not in selfishness and greed. Haven't all of those been answered? *Yes, they have been answered!* Were they answered in the way that you may have expected? *Many of them, no!* Many of them in an entirely different way, but a better way: *God's way!* So that you can have

- conviction
- faith
- hope
- love

All of this comes from God. That's why this is so important here. That's why in the Passover preparation that John 14-17 *are a love letter from God to you*. This is part of the New Covenant. These are the words of the New Covenant.

Once we get rid of our complacency and strip away the blindness that we have, and really begin to drink in of God's Word, WOW! look what's there! Yes, it's there!

Verse 8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love... [tie that in with John 14:15] ...just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love. (vs 8-10). {see sermon series on *Love*, specifically #1: *When All Else Fails, Remember: God Loves You*.}

- when the Church fails
- when the minister fails
- when your friends fail

- when your relatives fail
- when everything else fails
- you're at the bottom of the bucket in failure
- depressed out of your gourd

—remember: **God loves you!**

Verse 11: “These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you” (vs 11-12). That’s the challenge for the Church today. We’ve been all so driven against each other—beaten up with fear, rules, hierarchy and all this sort of thing—that you walk into the assembly of the brethren and you don’t know who your friend is or who your enemy is; you don’t know whether you can talk to someone or whether they’re a spy or reporter for the hierarchy. You walk into a group that’s supposed to be loving each other and it’s like Corinth. Here’s this little group over here in tongues, here’s a little group over here in Psalms, here’s Peter’s group, Paul’s group, Christ’s group, Apollo’s group, and they’re all kind of looking at each other in a suspicious way. Am I describing something that you’ve experienced? *Yes!* Is this what God wants?

Put it all aside! Love each other because Christ loves you. Don’t judge each other by appearances, because you’re always going to be disappointed. Are you not when you look in the mirror? *Of course!* Love can’t thrive in those carnal things! But with God’s Spirit we can grow in love and we can grow in grace. When you understand the greatest grace of all then you’ll understand that.

Then He talks more about the Father all the way through John 15. Go back and read the rest of it and you’ll see there’s even more there. We can’t cover everything all at one time. Here’s what I want you to understand, and this will help unblock many obstacles to faith.

- this will open the door of faith
- this will open the door of love
- this will open the door of belief
- this will help you have a greater relationship with God

—because this is the beginning of the greatest grace that God can give you, and that is a personal relationship with God the Father—through Jesus Christ that the Father Himself has initiated and wants to maintain with you. That’s what’s important.

John 16:26: “In that day... [after the resurrection and He ascended to the Father] ...**you shall ask in My name; and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you.**” So much for the saints interceding—right? Catholic doctrine: pray to the virgin Mary and she will intercede for you. He is

our Propitiation, our Advocate, *we have direct communication.* That’s the greatest grace! **We have direct, instant communication with God the Father in heaven above, the Sovereign of the entire universe!** That’s why we’ve been called. That’s the whole sum of it, and God wants this relationship to grow!

Verse 27: “For **the Father Himself loves you...**” You may want to think about that, pray about that. You may want to take some time and repent about all your accusations against God because He didn’t do what you wanted. Remember that He loves you, and that everything you have gone through is for a purpose and design that you can grow in that love. Now you can put aside all of those barriers and all of those things that have held you back in your carnality and fear and lay it on Christ and know that the Father loves you and you pray to the Father.

Jesus said how to pray when the disciples said, ‘Teach us to pray’? **Our Father! Direct access to God the Father.** That is *the greatest gift of grace!* God gives that to us! Verse 27: “For **the Father Himself loves you,** because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.”

After Jesus showed Himself to Mary Magdalene early on the first day of the week—the Wave Sheaf Offering Day—just before He ascended to the Father, He told Mary Magdalene, John 20:17: Jesus said to her, ‘Do not touch Me, because I have not yet ascended to My Father.... [I want you to think about the rest of this verse.] ...But **go to My brethren** and tell them that I am ascending to My Father and **your** Father, and **My** God and **your** God.’”

The reason that God has called us exclusively from the world is because this relationship and gift of grace is so great that it can only be shared with those whom God calls, and those who respond to God. He’s not going to waste this in vain on just anybody.

What did Jesus say in His last prayer? *Abba, Father, if this cup can pass from Me!* We are given the same blessing of calling God the Father ‘Abba’—right? How close is that relationship? *As close as it can be!* There’s nothing in the way of that. That’s why Paul said that ‘if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise. There is neither male nor female, Scythian or Barbarian, Jew or Gentile. God has cut all of that away so that you have direct access to Him. Not as a high priest.

Remember where we start out on the Day of Atonement. The high priest, *once* a year goes in for *one* ceremony, goes into the Holy of Holies. But

now *you* and *I*—all of those who have the Spirit of God—***can go into the Holy Holies any time, any day or night, right before the throne of God Himself!*** Now do you understand why Paul said the ‘former were the weak and impotent elements of the world’? *Yes!*

Let’s look at some other things here that are important and tie this in with John 6:44. Here again the proper translation of the middle voice verb brings out a profound meaning in the Greek.

Ephesians 1:2: “Grace and peace *be* to you from God ***our*** Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ” (vs 2-3). If you have direct access to God the Father in heaven above, is that not a spiritual blessing? Is that not a heavenly thing? If you have the Spirit of God, is that not a heavenly gift? *Yes, it is!*

Verse 4: “According as **He has personally chosen us...**” That’s the middle voice verb, which means that the action that comes from God shows His personal involvement toward you. God is the One Who is going to benefit, as well as you. Don’t you benefit in that because you have God’s love and He has personally called you? *Yes!* Does God benefit in it? *Yes, because He increasing His Family*—correct? He didn’t leave it to an angel. He didn’t leave it to someone else.

“...**He has personally chosen us for Himself...** [that’s what it means in the Greek] ...before *the* foundation of *the* world... [God had His plan before the foundation of the world, and He calls us and plugs us into His plan, so to speak.] ...in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love” (v 4). That’s another gift of grace— isn’t it? *The imputed righteousness of Christ!* With a repentant heart, loving God, believing God, having His Word written in your heart and mind and all of this together ***makes you Holy and blameless before God!***

Isn’t that astounding! That’s why the emphasis needs to be on repentance and on a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, rather than focusing on sin to overcome. If you have that relationship, you will overcome sin—right? *Yes!* Everyone knows his or her own sins—right? The preacher can’t get rid of them by standing up and condemning you and beating you over the head with fear, because of sin. Rather, he needs to teach you to look to God the Father and Jesus Christ and have this relationship, and let Christ take care of it, and let God the Father inspire it to be removed from you, because:

- you love God

- He loves you
- He personally called you
- He drew you

This is amazing stuff, brethren! This is something!

Colossians 1:10: “That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God... [lifelong project] ...being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified...” (vs 10-12).

How many times have you heard in a sermon: ‘You’ve got to do this to be qualified for the Kingdom of God’? *Yes, there are certain things we need to do, that’s true,* but Who qualifies us? *God does!* The Father has made us qualified, because He loves us.

“...for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light; Who has **personally rescued us from the power of darkness...** [That says a lot— doesn’t it? There are going to many verses like this that brings out in greater detail, with far more meaning, what the Scriptures really say.] ...and has transferred *us* unto the Kingdom of the Son of His love” (vs 12-13).

Hebrews 6:14—talking about the covenant that God gave to Abraham: “...‘Surely in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you.’”

Verse 17: “In this way God, desiring more abundantly to show the heirs of the promise the unchangeable nature of His own purpose, confirmed *it* by an oath; so that by two immutable things...” (vs 17-18).

Let’s understand something, this is really important to grasp: When God says something, is it true? *Of course!* Will it happen? *Yes, indeed!* When *He swears by Himself* He has made that promise absolutely guaranteed, immutable, unchangeable and it will happen! That’s how we need to approach God, with that assurance. That’s why you never again have to have a prayer where you get down on your knees and you pray to God, and when you get up you say, ‘Well, I wonder if He heard me?’ You just killed your prayer—didn’t you? *Yes!*

“...two immutable things, in which *it was impossible for* God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope *that has been set before us*; which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and steadfast, and which enters into the *sanctuary* within the veil... [The door to God the Father has been opened, and ***that is the greatest gift of grace!***]

...where Jesus has entered for us *as* a forerunner, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec" (vs 18-20).

Remember when Stephen was being stoned and he looked up into the heaven, and he said, 'I see God with the Son of man standing at His right hand!' That's exactly what takes place when you pray.

- Christ is there to *intercede*
- Christ is there to *advocate*
- Father is there to *hear*

You pray to the Father, because the Father Himself loves you! That ought to give us great hope, great confidence and great understanding. Let's carry this a little bit further. That's why it's important to understand the covenant that we are in. God has promised by *two immutable things* that it's impossible for God to lie.

- that's why we are to *believe* God
- that's why we are to *love* God
- that's why we are to *serve* God

Hebrews 10:16: "'This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,' says *the* Lord: 'I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds.'" That's what God is doing, the process of conversion. He will give you

- His love
- His hope
- His joy
- His faith
- His self-control

All of these things come in time.

Verse 17: "'And their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again.' Now, where remission of these *is*, *it is* no longer *necessary to offer* sacrifices for sin. Therefore, brethren, having confidence to enter into the *true* Holiest by the blood of Jesus" (vs 17-19).

You are to use that *greatest gift of grace* to pray directly to God the Father every single day and every minute or time that you need to. You don't have worry about seeing some 'important' person. You have the Sovereign Ruler of the universe you can go to any minute of any day; you have direct access. What a blessing! What tremendous thing! Absolutely marvelous!

That's why Paul says, v 20: "By **a new and living way**, which He consecrated for us through the veil (that is, His flesh)."

Let's see where John spoke of this; that it was going to happen. This is what he's talking about. As John reveals the Father, and as we are

given some of these other details by Paul, etc., it's really tremendous, brethren. It really is! That's why it's so important that on the Sabbath Day that we understand this: We keep the Sabbath to fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. That's the true fellowship. When you love each other, then when you shake hands, Christ in that person is shaking hands with you. When you hug each other, Christ is hugging you. Christ is in you, hugging the other person—is that not true? *Yes, it is!*

That's what God wants. He doesn't want some superficial, artificial—Hooray! Hooray!—kind of stuff. He wants it from the heart. He wants it because of love and conviction. ***The door is always open!***

John 10:1: "Truly, truly I say to you, the one who does not enter the sheepfold through the door, but climbs up some other way, that one is a thief and a robber." If you try and change the Gospel, you're a thief and a robber, and you're not going to get to God the Father except through Christ. Isn't that right? Isn't that what He said? *Yes! He is the Way, the Truth and the Life!* There's only ONE door!

Verse 2: "But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he brings the sheep out, he goes before them... [He's not requiring anything of you that He's not already done.] ...and the sheep follow him because they know his voice" (vs 2-4).

That's why it's so important that for whomever is doing the teaching to teach the Word of God. Wasn't that what Paul charged Timothy to do? He said, 'I charge you before the Lord Jesus Christ Who shall judge the living and the dead. Preach the Word!' Don't give us psychology. Don't give us good ideas. Preach the Word: spiritually feed, nourish, up-build.

Anyone who teaches is going to have a greater judgment if he doesn't do that. That's the first judgment upon him—is it not? What are you doing standing in a pulpit—or sitting in a pulpit—pretending to be a minister of Jesus Christ and you 'lead My sheep astray'? Whomever you may be! Whomever the dumb sheep are that follow, ***you deserve what you get!*** If you don't listen to the voice of Christ, and you listen to a hireling, you're dead meat!

The truth is, those who are really converted, v 5: "'But they will never follow a stranger... [They will get out of there—right? Why have people left? *To get away!*] ...for they will flee from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they did not

understand what He was saying to them. Therefore, Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep" (vs 5-7). Only way to God the Father is through Christ! That is the Door! And the door to the Holy of Holies, He's opened up, He's walked through, He is there and it is open for those who love God and have His Spirit and look to the Father. The Father has *personally called* them and *personally loves* them. You won't trade that for anything—will you? *No, not at all!*

Verse 8: "All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers... [All other religions. You can just label them right down the line.] ...but the sheep did not hear them." Rather, the sheep were slaughtered and killed by them.

Verse 9: "I am the door. If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture." You will never hunger, you will never thirst—right? Isn't that what Jesus promised? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 10: "The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life, and may have *it* more abundantly." That doesn't necessarily mean in this life. He promises 'sufficiency in all things' in this life—right? *Yes!* But we have life more abundantly in this life with the Spirit of God and the relationship with God—don't we? *Yes, we do!* Not in things! Not in physical possessions! But in relationship with God, with the priceless Holy Spirit of God.

Verse 11: "I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. But the one who is a hireling, and who is not *the* shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep, and flees. And the wolf seizes the sheep and scatters them. Now the hireling flees because he is a hireling and has no concern for the sheep" (vs 11-13). He's only worried about his own skin—right? *Yes!* He's only interested in the money. 'Well, why did you stay?' *I've got a family and children to support!* There's your answer: a hireling! He has no concern for the sheep.

Verse 14: I am the good Shepherd, and I know those who *are* Mine, and am known of those who *are* Mine. Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep" (vs 14-15)." That is a blessing that God has given us, that we can have this relationship.

1-John 1:1: "That which was from *the* beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of life; (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life,

which was with the Father, and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us... [Here's the key, this is the *greatest gift of grace*]: ...**for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ.**

That is the greatest gift of God! The greatest gift that God can give you!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural Referenced:

- 1) Romans 4:16-25
- 2) Romans 5:1-5
- 3) John 12:35-40, 42-49
- 4) John 13:13-17
- 5) John 14:1-14, 23-24, 30-31
- 6) John 15:1-7
- 7) Philippians 2:5
- 8) John 15:7-12
- 9) John 16:26-27
- 10) John 20:17
- 11) Ephesians 1:2-4
- 12) Colossians 1:10-13
- 13) Hebrews 6:14, 17-20
- 14) Hebrews 10:16-20
- 15) John 10:1-15
- 16) 1 John 1:1-3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Galatians 2
- Matthew 24
- John 14-17
- John 6:44

Also referenced: Sermon Series:

Love Series (specifically #1: *When All Else Fails, Remember: God Loves You*)

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