

Head-Breaking Grace!

Part 3 – Slide & Scripture Notes

—portion by Cere Muscarella

How Far Does Grace Go?

“By the deeds of the law, no one will be justified in His sight...” R3.20 “Justified by His blood we are saved from wrath...” R5.9 “By grace we are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. E2.8,9 “Whosoever believes in Him will not be ashamed...” R10.11

How Far Does Grace Go?

Young guy comes to Jesus, loves the freedom, excitement, finds out what it means to follow Jesus, says, ‘no way’ and heads back to world... **What then?**

Gal, gets saved, finds Mr. Right who does her wrong, ten times before he leaves for another... she can't believe God did her this way... turns away... **What's her disposition?**

Guy gets saved, lives for the Lord, enters ministry, has an “opportunity,” goes nuts and ends up a sex maniac, druggie... **How can this be reconciled?**

Conclusion?

1. Never saved? Sovereign territory that God doesn't share well!

Who are you that *judges* another man's servant as worthless/"never"? **R14.4**

2. Lust of the eyes/flesh/pride of life; deceives/ isolates/snares/carries us away in sins? Dangerous/ fiery/painful to let sin reign.

“Let us all take heed how we build on our foundation in Christ. Build well, receive rewards. Build ill, suffer the loss of rewards *but he himself will be saved!* **1C315**

Grace... Charis: graciousness of manner and act, the favor and benefit and gift of God... Opened the way for us to be saved thru faith!

God's gift (His part was to provide a sacrifice for sin) of *salvation* is received by faith (our part is to believe)... not a salvation of works, because then men would boast of their own righteousness...

Completes our salvation/*justification!*

And it should be our love for Him that motivates our *sanctification!*

Works that show we are alive/connected to the Vine!

Think About It... What if scripture is all true?

What if everything that happened in the OT, to Israel, were examples for us upon whom the ends of the world are come...? **1C10.11** And what if Jesus first descended into the lower parts of the earth before He ascended? **E4.9** To preach to unto the spirits in prison **1P3.19** Opening the

graves at His resurrection **Mt 27.52,53** To lead “a great multitude out” **E4.8** (All the Pharaoh's, all the “termites,” all the antagonists...) **What would you think of God's grace then?**

—portion by **Sonny Bowman**

We're just not married anymore....

Imagine that I sit down to talk with Cere one day. Been having a lot of trouble with Judy.

I sometimes forget to take out the trash—she gives me a hard time.

She wanted me to mow yard for widow—but I had an online game planned already.

Later I go play golf, work on the car—anything to get away from her expectations and nagging. Then when I come home, I get the silent treatment.

We're just not married anymore—so I've signed up for a Christian singles matchmaking service to get a new marriage.

What do you think Cere would say—never mind, it may be best not to think too much about that.

First probably ask, Did you get a legal divorce? Then you're still married.

But I don't feel married and we don't act married!

You cannot get any more married, or any less married, than the moment you said “I do.” —unless you get a legal divorce. How either of you act or feel does not change the fact that you are married.

Two Aspects of Relationship

There are two aspects of the relationship: our legal position and our interactive experience.

Compare marriage (or family relationships). You may feel distant and be isolated because of hurtful actions and words. But you are still married. You are legally married, and your position is that of a married person—even if you don't look married or act married.

Even if you and your spouse are not on speaking terms. Your interactive experience of relationship has been damaged, but your legal position has not changed. You are missing out on the blessings and benefits of the relationship that rightfully belongs to you. And that interactive relationship with your spouse is the main purpose of marriage.

To fix problems in the interactive relationship, you need to change the way you think, ask forgiveness, AND change how you act. If you do, you will enjoy the experience of the relationship, but it doesn't make you any more married than before.

This is similar to our relationship with God. As Christians, we have a legal position as part of God's family. As a result, we are joint heirs with Jesus and heaven is our inheritance.

Galatians 4:4-7 — But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

This is true if we are good or bad people. Our entrance into God's family is not because we do the right things. It is because we put our faith in the work that Jesus did for us.

Galatians 3:26 — For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

At times, we choose to follow our own desires, rejecting God's will. It hurts the experiential part of our relationship with God. He may seem distant and mad. At those times, we need to repent, ask forgiveness, and once again follow His will for our lives. That restores the personal aspect of the relationship, opening again the benefits and blessings of truly knowing and loving the Creator who died for you.

Christianity, similar to marriage, is all about the relationship. Jesus' main goal in dying for you was not to save you from hell. It was to bring you back into relationship with God. And that relationship begins the moment you are born again into His family. If all you want from Christianity is a "get out of hell free" card, then you have missed the whole point of Christianity. No wonder you feel miserable and unfulfilled!

Need to Ask Forgiveness Still

As in a marriage, we sometimes do things that hurt our interactive relationship. We may feel distant, but we are still married. At those times, we need to ask forgiveness and restore our relationship. In a similar manner, we still need to ask for forgiveness and turn from sin as a Christian to restore the interactive relationship part of our adoption.

So, last week when I said that asking forgiveness for sins could not make you right with God, I was talking about salvation—getting it or keeping it. But it is still important to ask God's forgiveness in our day to day walk as Christians. Not to get in the family, but to restore the interactive relationship.

Repentance

We are called to repent!

Acts 20:21 — testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not God's wrath that draws people to repentance. It is when we see His goodness in spite of our evil.

Romans 2:4 — Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

2 Corinthians 7:10 — For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

The primary Greek word translated as **repent** in the New Testament means: "1. to change one's mind, i.e., to repent. 2. To change one's mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins." (Strong's # 3340)

It means that what God calls evil, you really see as evil. (Del Tackett in The Truth Project)

When you truly see evil the way God sees it, it helps you turn away from evil and toward God.

We may be tempted by sin. But that's because we don't see it the way God sees it! I am not tempted to stick my finger in every pile of dog poop that I see just so I can get a taste of it. It is repulsive to me. Yet if I truly saw evil and sin the way God sees it, I would be no less repulsed by temptation to taste sin's delicacies.

Three things are needed in repentance.

- Change the way you think
- Turn away from sin – turning from
- Choose to follow Jesus – turning toward

These three things need to work together. That way they support and strengthen each other. For example, as you choose to follow Jesus more, it also helps change your thinking towards God's ways. Only do two out of three and you won't be successful.

True repentance results in a changed life.

There is a repentance that leads to salvation; but, we also need to repent as necessary when we get off track as Christians. That last repentance does not save us, but it does get us back in step with the Lord.

A New Goal in Life – Not Legalism

We must keep the image and example of Jesus before us at all times—because conformity to His ways is our call and our goal.

Luke 6:40 — A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

Colossians 3:1-3 — If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When we exhort you to follow the Lord, it is not to put you back under the Law. We are holding up Jesus' example so you can clearly see the end result of what you are working to become like. If you are a Christian, you are already right with God. But you probably have not reached the goal of loving others Like Jesus loves us. We are calling you to that higher law of love.

John 13:34 — A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Hebrews 3:13 — but exhort one another daily, while it is called "*Today*," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Legalism is when you say that someone has to keep certain rules to be acceptable or right with God. We are doing just the opposite! On the other hand, we are commanded to exhort one another to follow God's ways and avoid being enslaved by sin. So we always work to encourage you to follow the example that Jesus set before us.

Hebrews 12:1-2 — Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

You keep your mind on the goal when you run. (Paul is exhorting us in this passage!)

The Crucified Life – Following Jesus

We are called to take up our cross and follow Jesus.

Matthew 16:24 — Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

What does that mean to us? We can learn that by seeing what it meant to Jesus.

The cross led Jesus to choose the Father's will over His own.

Luke 22:42 — saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

The cross led Jesus to choose to love us enough to die for us.

Romans 5:6-8 — For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The cross led Jesus to lay down His life for us—even while we were His enemies.

John 10:15 — As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Romans 5:10 — For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Taking up our cross means we choose to follow God's ways rather than our own.

Ephesians 5:1 — Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.

Philippians 2:13 — for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

Taking up our cross means we choose to love others enough to lay down our own desires for their benefit.

1 John 3:16 — By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

1 Corinthians 10:24 — Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being*.

Taking up our cross means we choose to love and serve people, even when they are not nice.

Luke 6:27-32 — “But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. “But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

Summary

- Commit to maintain your interactive experience relationship with God.
- Repent and get back on track as necessary.
- Keep the goal in focus. Exhort others to do the same.
- Lay down your life to follow Jesus.