



The Voice of Truth



October 4, 2009

"Law of Grace"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Paul said, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast"* (**Eph. 2:8-9**). Grace is usually defined as "unmerited favor." God didn't owe it to us. Out of love he extended grace. The grace of God is truly one of the main topics of the entire Bible. No one could say, "we could have just as easily have been saved without grace. We depend on God to save us. God did this through His grace.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly, in this present world" (**Tit. 2:11-12**). The relationship between law and grace is of the major theme of Paul's writings. *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (**Rom. 5:1**). *"But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one mans' offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ"* (**Rom. 5:15-17**). We should never be guilty of minimizing the importance of grace in our salvation. Without God's grace we could not be saved! His grace we are shown in the greatest gift: *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (**Jno. 3:16**).

As the song, "Amazing Grace," goes. God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (**Rom. 5:8**). Grace provided for our pardon while we were yet sinners. But our gift of pardon is conditional. How about when God offered Abraham land, but to receive it he was to leave his country. By faith Abraham obeyed. How do we receive God's amazing grace in the forgiveness of our sins? Jesus said that when men hear the gospel of God's grace, they must believe it and be baptized in order to be saved by God's Grace. (**Mk. 16:15-16**). Grace throws a rope to man drowning in sin. Man must believe and obey in order to be saved by grace. He does not deserve that grace and can never earn it.

The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (**Jno. 1:17**). God supplied man's greatest need when He sent His Son to die for man. Without this, we would be utterly hopeless. He could provide no means of forgiveness of sins. God's grace is seen in the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Grace comes to all.

The grace of God is what we all need, and can only be obtained through Christ, through faith in Him. Paul said, *"But by the grace of God I am what I am"* (**1 Cor. 15:10**). God's grace made Paul what he was. Grace is God's part in our salvation; Grace is that which God gives, and which man cannot do for himself. *"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you"* (**1 Pet. 5:10**). Faith is man's part in his salvation, and is something man can do for himself, and God does not force upon man. God's grace is from above, and descends from Him.

It is by the death, burial and resurrection that God reached down to man: this is Grace. Grace is shown most clearly by the Son of God. *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jno. 15:13).* *"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor" (Eph. 5:2).* We have done nothing to earn this. Salvation is the free gift of God; but it takes two, "Grace and Faith".

God wants all men to hear of His amazing grace. It is broad enough to take in everyone, if only men will receive it. *"The Lord is patient, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).* During the time of Gods patience, we have the wonderful privilege of telling men about His Grace. We must show people that they need God, this mercy, gift of love, the conditions for receiving it, the joy of sharing Gods grace. For God who is rich in mercy for His great love where with He loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together in Christ, by Grace we are saved.

"Lot Pitched His Tent Toward Sodom" By Jarrod Jacobs

Genesis 13 records the time when an uncle and nephew had to part ways. Abram and Lot had a large number of animals, and it became a hardship as Abram and Lot's herdsmen fought with one another (v. 1-7). Abram's solution was that they would part ways so as to ease the tension between the servants (v. 8-9). Lot agreed to this and then *"pitched his tent toward Sodom"* (v. 12). Tragically, this decision signaled the "beginning of the end" for Lot's family. While he traveled to the well watered plain of Jordan outside of Sodom wealthy and happy; in a few short years, he would flee from this area with only the clothes on his back, having lost his material goods in Sodom, his wife, and his children except the two girls who committed incest with him (**Gen. 19**)!

When we read about Lot in **Genesis 13**, he seemed to have everything, but then he

lost everything by **Genesis 19**! How could this happen? This happened because Lot *"pitched his tent toward Sodom."* An overview of Lot's life between **Genesis 13** and **19** shows us that while Lot first *"pitched his tent toward Sodom"* (**Gen. 13:12**), it wasn't too many years until he was dwelling *"in Sodom"* (**Gen. 14:12**). Finally, we read about him sitting *"in the gate of Sodom"* (**Gen. 19:1**)! In addition to this, Lot went from being merely a stranger in the plains to a man whose children married citizens of Sodom (**Gen. 19:14**).

Sadly, this is not the end of the story. Lot's wife was killed for her disobedience the day after fleeing from the cities God destroyed (**Gen. 19:17, 26**). This left Lot and his two girls as the only survivors. Yet, there were more problems he faced. You see, though his children were out of Sodom, Sodom was not out of the children! Therefore, his girls plotted and committed incest with Lot (**Gen. 19:31-36**). The result was that Lot, Abram's nephew and "brother" (**Gen. 13:18**), ended up having descendants who were perpetual enemies to Abram's descendants (**Gen. 19:37-38**)!

Just think, this all began because Lot's herdsmen and Abram's herdsmen could not get along, and so when given the choice, Lot looked toward the well-watered plain of Jordan for his sustenance (**Gen. 13:7, 9-10**).

What Does This Account Teach Us (Rom. 15:4)?

First, this account teaches us that outward appearances are deceiving. Just because something looks innocent does not make it so! Lot went to a well-watered plain (**Gen. 13:10**). This act in itself was not wrong or sinful. The grass and water did not bring temptations and sin. However, what was also on the plain would prove to be Lot's downfall! I wonder how many times in later years Lot wished he had never seen that plain, and had never left Abram?

People can be this way, too. The woman in **Proverbs 7** was a "flattering" woman, she

treated the young man in a kind way and enticed him with her *“fair speech”* (v. 5, 21). It seemed “innocent” at the time. Yet, *“she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death”* (v. 26-27). Satan is this way, too. He can transform himself *“into an angel of light”* (II Cor. 11:14). This is obviously a transformation that is only “skin deep” (to borrow a phrase). He seems innocent. His lures and enticements seem harmless. Yet, when we give in to temptation and sin, then *“sin when it is full-grown brings forth death”* (Jas. 1:15)! Certain games and entertainment can be this way. Movies, television shows, and the like can “advertise” themselves as innocent forms of entertainment only to overwhelm us with sinful ideas and acts played out before us to entice us to want to take part. Is there any wonder David said, *“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes”*? (Ps. 101:3) It is time we applied that verse to ourselves! Can good, wholesome works be found in television and movies? Yes, but we have to look hard to find them, and cannot always trust the first thing we see! Similarly, in the last decade, the internet has invaded our homes and offices. There are good things to be found on the internet. Yet, there is much evil there as well! It appears innocent. Sometimes, the names of certain websites appear innocent, but a visit there will bombard us with sinful pictures and temptations. Beware! It is more pervasive than we like to admit!

Second, the account of Lot and his tragedy teaches us that sin and evildoing does not stay static. In other words, it grows over time. Though we may be as Lot and not engage in it ourselves, if we are not on our guard, sin can overwhelm us before we know what has happened. No doubt this is what happened to Lot. The unlawful deeds in Sodom *“vexed his righteous soul from day to day”* (II Pet. 2:8). Yet, he was so involved with Sodom since he had moved into town and his children married into this culture, that he could not tear himself away when the time came to flee. The Bible says the angels had to take him and his family by the hand

and drag them out of town before it was destroyed (Gen. 19:15-16). We see without question that sin does not stay static.

We observe this same truth in our lives, don't we? For example, we understand that the person who has lost all his money and has destroyed his family through drinking alcohol or drugs did not start out planning to do that! He started with one drink, with one “hit” off a joint, etc., just to get along, or to have fun, or to “relieve stress.” He did not begin with the purpose of going to work drunk or stoned. She did not start out with the intention of stealing prescription drugs to satisfy her “high”, but then getting caught and going to prison. Yet, this was the result because sin does not stay static!

Too, we know of some who have been unfaithful to their mates. It didn't begin this way, did it? It may have started with a chance meeting on the street, or with an innocent e-mail, but it grew into something more! No doubt many have cried, “I never meant for it to go this far!” Lot could have said the same thing, couldn't he? He did not go to the plains in Jordan with the intention of living in Sodom! Let us remember the words of Scripture: *“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”* (I Cor. 5:6)! Sin does not stay static.

Third, a point that can be overlooked if we are not careful is the impact our choices have upon our children. At times, we hear folks making excuses that what they do with their lives is “their own business”. Some try to say what they do has no impact on anyone else. Yet, if they have children at home, the choices they make have a great impact upon their children's souls. Let us never forget this. We parents have a greater influence on our children than perhaps we would like to admit at times. God says, *“And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”* (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21).

Let us also bear in mind that a child's spiritual downfall can come at times, not from the influence from without (as in the

case with Lot in Sodom), but from the influence within if we as parents are not conscious of how we are treating our children; and what we are teaching them on a daily basis! Parents, what are we teaching our children through our works and our deeds? (**Matt. 5:16; Titus 1:16**)

Lot made a choice that resulted in his daughters marrying men of Sodom. When he tried to warn them and spare them from harm, “*he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law*” (**Gen. 19:14**). The sons-in-law, and his daughters ignored him and died in fire and brimstone! Perhaps when at home, those girls would have listened to their father, but now it was too late (for them and him)! In addition to this, the two unmarried daughters, after having survived the destruction of the cities, conspired together to commit incest because they thought there was no one who would marry them (**Gen. 19:31-32**). In this case we see that though Lot’s daughters got out of Sodom, Sodom did not get out of Lot’s daughters!

Could it be that perhaps the sins ob-

served by Lot that “*vexed his righteous soul from day to day*” (**II Pet. 2:8**), had an increased burden to him because his children were going down a path that he did not teach them at home? This account in **Genesis 13-19** ought to be an object lesson to those of us who are parents and grandparents (**Rom. 15:4**).

Conclusion

Yes, Lot “*pitched his tent toward Sodom*” and ended up losing his goods, several members of his family, impregnating his own daughters while in a drunken stupor, and giving rise to two nations of people who were perpetual enemies to Israel. Can there be any clearer warning to us today of what sin can do in just one generation? Let us hear and fear and let us make sure we are following what the Lord says (**Col. 3:17; Rev. 22:14**). Righteous living, godly decisions, and standing as Joshua (**24:15**) will result in a blessed life and a blessed family who will continue to do what is right for generations to come. *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com*

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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