



The Voice of Truth



November 18, 2012

"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 Gods' 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 Abra-

ham 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 Gods 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 mans' 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".

Continued on Page Two

In This Issue...

Pages 1 to 2 - "Law of Grace"

Page 3 - Keep the Feast

Pages 2 to 3 - Overlooking Prospective Converts

Page 4 - "WHICH CHURCH SHOULD I ATTEND?" | Can You Imagine?

Continued from Page Two, "Law of Grace"

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 privi-

lege 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. ♦

"Overlooking Prospective Converts"

By Jarrod Jacobs

A lament I hear from folks at times is the fact that "we" are "not converting more people." Some older acquaintances of mine sometimes reminisce about by-gone days when folks were converted to the Lord by the "dozens" in gospel meetings, and how this is not happening today. Usually in conversations like these, a statement will be made to the effect that "we" are only "converting our own".

Have you heard people speak like this? What do you think when you hear such things? I have thought much about these charges, and have come to the conclusion that such people: 1) Help no one in their comments. 2) Have overlooked a large group of prospective converts that need to be saved.

What large group of prospective converts are overlooked by our concerned friends? This large group is our CHILDREN and other FAMILY members!! I mean, do they not have souls? Do they not need to be saved from sin (**Rom. 3:23**)? Do they not have value or worth? Yet, when people disparage the fact that we are, "only converting our own", then what is that saying about these dear ones? Are their souls not of equal value to the "strangers" in the community?

Please understand, I am not writing this article to negate the good work done in foreign fields, or to somehow squelch our efforts to convert neighbors, friends, and strangers in town. Their souls have worth (**Matt. 16:26**). I am just begging that we be balanced and stop ignoring one group of precious souls in favor of others.

Please take a moment and consider the emphasis the Bible places upon teaching our own family members. Let us begin with Noah (**Gen. 6-8**). The Bible describes him as a "preacher of righteousness" (**II Pet. 2:5**). Evidently, in addition to building the ark, Noah was preaching righteousness to the people and warning them of the coming Flood. Yet, had Noah not convinced his wife and his children's families, concerning God's judgment and the coming Flood, he would have entered the Ark by himself (**Heb.**

11:6; I Pet. 3:20)! Was Noah a failure? Will we now disparage Noah because "all he could do" was "convert his own"? I know what God said about his work (**Ezek. 14:14-20**). What say you?

Let us read **John 1:40-42**. *"One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas' (which means Peter)." Because Andrew was concerned about "converting his own," we have the blessings of the confession Peter made (**Matt. 16:16**) the preaching of Peter (**Acts 2-11**), and the letters of Peter to Christians. Let us be thankful that Andrew showed such an interest in his brother. Had Andrew had the mentality of some, and looked disparagingly upon converting "his own", who knows when the apostle Peter might have been introduced to the Lord!*

Further, we remember that one of the qualifications of elders is to have "believing children" (**Titus 1:6**). It is necessary that a man who would be an elder be instrumental in instructing his children in the truth (**I Tim. 3:4-5**). At the same time, did we notice that nothing is said in this context about how many strangers or "outsiders" from the world he has won to Christ? Instead, the emphasis is placed upon the family life of this man who would be an elder/overseer over God's flock!

In addition to the above, consider such people as Eunice, Lois, Cornelius, Lydia, the Philippian Jailer, Aristobulus, Narcissus, Rufus, and Nereus. What do these people have in common? It is that each one of these people had family members who were brought to the Lord. (See: **Acts 16:1-5; II Tim. 1:5; Acts 10-11, 16:14-15, 25-34; Rom. 16:10, 11, 13, 15**) What if these people were not active in this work? What if they were more focused on the souls "out there" than they were the souls right in their own "back yard"? Are we guilty of overlooking prospective

Continued on Page Three

Continued from Page Two, "Overlooking Prospective Converts"

converts? Are we missing the forest for the trees?

Let me repeat that I am not disparaging man's efforts to reach "strangers" and folks in the world with the truth. By no means! We MUST do this (**Mk. 16:15; I Thess. 1:8; II Tim. 4:2-5**; etc.). Yet, let us also be balanced and remember our children and other members of our families have souls that need salvation also. Yes, even those "brought up in the church" will be lost if we are so focused on folks

"out there" that we never teach the ones "right here" and they are never obedient to the truth (**Mk. 16:16**)!

For those who lament the fact that "we" are "losing our young people", is it possible that we are losing them because we did not take the time to teach them concerning what is necessary to be "saved" while we could? Were we focused on them when we should have been? I hope so! Let us not be guilty of overlooking prospective converts.

Credit: *The Old Paths* - 9/23/12 ♦

Keep the Feast

By Jeff Belknap

The Bible is filled with types and antitypes: physical representations in the Old Testament, which lay the foundation for understanding the spiritual truths revealed in the New Testament. Although there are many other examples of these parallels, this article focuses on the feast of the unleavened bread, as it relates to the exercise of marking and avoiding.

The institution of the Passover, revealed in **Exodus 12**, was a seven-day feast in which the children of Israel were to eat "unleavened bread" after having "put away leaven" from their houses (**v. 15**). Moreover, **verse 19** says, *"Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel...."* During this feast, if the Israelites had tolerated any leaven whatsoever within their homes, they would have been severed from God and His people!

In the New Testament, not many years after the local church had been established at Corinth, the spiritual leaven of fornication entered in among them (**1 Cor. 5:1**). Paul's ensuing words of admonition were, *"...Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."* Then in **verse 11**, Paul specified some (though not all) leavening agents, including, *"if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no, not to eat."* After identifying various leavens, he concludes the list with the words "such an one." This would include other, similar leavening influences which were not expressly mentioned in the text (cf. **Mark 7:8, 13; Gal. 5:21**), but which are recognized as sin, or leaven, elsewhere in

the apostles' writings.

The antitype of unleavened bread for our spiritual "feast" today is "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Our acknowledgement of both of these elements is imperative if we are to please the Lord (**Matt. 4:4**)! If "sincerity" and "truth" are the "unleavened bread," then all ~~INSincerity~~and~~UN~~truth are leavening agents that we must "purge out." Case in point: false doctrine is also revealed in the gospel as leaven (cf. **Matt. 16:6-12** and **Mark 8:18**). Although heresy may be taught in all sincerity, it is still "untruth" and regarded as the leaven of "wickedness" [see *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, pg. 48, anomia (# 458)]. In **Romans 16:17**, the apostle Paul commanded all Christians to *"...mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."* No exceptions are revealed or implied (cf. **Titus 3:10**)!

There are many who advocate that **Romans 14** authorizes us to keep fellowship with those who teach and practice error on doctrinal matters of considerable importance, such as marriage, divorce and remarriage. Some have said that the reason they are not required to separate from "such" teachers is that they, themselves, truly believe the doctrine which they advocate. The end result is the same (**Matt. 15:13-14**), whether the instructor of erroneous doctrine is sincere or not: all doctrinal error (even a little, **1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9**) corrupts the souls of many (**1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Tim. 2:16-18**). *"The wages of sin is death"* (**Rom. 6:23**).

Will we tolerate and accept the fatal leaven of sin and error, or "keep the feast" with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth? *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦*

"WHICH CHURCH SHOULD I ATTEND?"

One Where His Name Is Glorified

Acts 4:12 - No other name whereby we might be saved.
Acts 11:26 - God gave the name Christian
1 Peter 4:16 - We can glorify God in this name.

One Where His Teachings On Salvation Are Followed

John 14:6 - Only He is the way to heaven.
Hebrews 5:9 - All must obey Him to be saved.
John 8:24 - He said we must believe on Him.
Luke 13:3 - He said we must repent.
Matthew 10:32-33 - He said we must confess Him.
Mark 16:16 - He said we must be baptized to be saved.

One Where His Will Is Followed In Worship

John 4:24 - Worship must be sincere and proper actions.
Acts 20:7 - Lord's Supper on the first day of the week.
Colossians 3:16 - Singing praises to God.
Acts 2:42 - Prayer and teaching.
1 Corinthians 16:1-2 - Giving of our means on the first day of the week.

YOU SHOULD ATTEND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST *"The churches of Christ salute you."* (Romans 16:16) ♦

Can You Imagine?

1. **Paul saying:** "You don't have to obey the gospel to be saved?" Read **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**.
2. **Paul saying:** "We are sprinkled with him in baptism?" Read **Romans 6:4**.
3. **Jude saying:** "I don't think it is right to argue the scriptures?" Read **Jude 3**. ♦

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

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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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