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# THE WONDERS OF GOD'S GRACE

Part Two

*of Experiencing God's Grace*

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John Bunyan once said, *"The believer is now, by faith in the Lord Jesus, shrouded under so perfect and blessed a righteousness, that this thundering law of Mount Sinai cannot find the least fault or diminution [lessening, reduction] therein. This is called the righteousness of God without the law."*

Thanks be to God, through our wonderful Lord Jesus Christ, we have received such a righteousness (God's life-giving approval) with which the law of Moses cannot find even one hint of fault. Neither can it be undone by it in any way. There are no legitimate legal accusations that can be made before God against those who have received it (Ro. 8:31-34). Both David and Paul wrote about the blessedness of those to whose account God accredits no sin (Ro. 4:5-8). God instead accredits to them righteousness apart from the law. Since indeed we are no longer under the law's legal jurisdiction but under grace, God does not seek to find fault with us in order to charge us with guilt in accordance with the law. He now deals with us as His children, seeking to establish Christ-likeness within us. We are treated like disobedient children instead of being punished as lawbreakers if we sin.

In order to prevent the wrong notion that the grace of God is tolerant of sin, we must understand that although, as believer's in Christ, there is no longer any need for the (letter of the) law of Moses, the definition of what sin is has not changed. In fact, as previously *proven* in part one, the law was given because of sin, so that it would be defined. The written *moral* law of God remains the ultimate authority on what is sin and righteousness.

*Essentially, as long as our faith remains intact in Christ as our only source of righteousness, no (law) guilt can be charged to our account. We are instead chastened as sons.*

"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; (6) for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom

He receives... (9-10; paraphrased) that we may be partakers of His holiness and live” (Heb. 12:5-6, 9-10).

We are chastened as God’s sons and daughters, if our behavior falls short of the righteous or moral requirements of the law. The law no longer determines our fate, but God’s fathering heart does. As Holy Scripture reveals (Ga. 4:6), “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!””

Hear what Scripture says about those who are righteous according to faith:

“Who shall bring a charge against [accuse] God’s elect? It is God who justifies. (34) Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ” (Ro. 8:33-35)?

Paul’s conclusion is that nothing or no one can accuse us and, thereby, separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ro. 8:36-39). The accuser of the brethren no longer has a *legal* place before the throne of God because the blood of the Lamb has prevailed in our behalf. There is none left before God to (legally) accuse us or charge us with sin as lawbreakers. Neither can the law’s condemnation touch those who are safely hidden in Christ our righteousness. *Christ’s blood has prevailed in Heaven.* Our faith in Him is accredited to us as righteousness. In God’s estimation, this righteousness meets all of the requirements of the law.

*God’s redemptive blueprint is designed unto one end: that all praise would be to the glory of His grace as revealed in Christ Jesus* (Eph. 1:3-6).

Knowing that “sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace” (Ro. 6:14) should be a great source of hope, courage, and conviction to us. What could never be accomplished by the entirety of the Old Covenant has now been accomplished by Christ Jesus our Lord—the One who is full of grace and truth. How wonderful, excellent, magnificent, and all-sufficient is He. The more we sing the praises of His grace and truth, the more we experience freedom from sin, sickness, and demonic oppression, and the more we portray and radiate who He is.

Throughout the history of the Church, the need for repentance, holiness, righteousness, the fear of the Lord, and understanding the wages of sin have been preached from many pulpits, but how many have truly and accurately portrayed the grace of God that rescues us from experiencing the very things Scripture warns us against?

The Pentecostal/Charismatic Church in America has done well in preaching that faith without works is dead (Jas. 2), but we have failed to fully comprehend and preach that faith

does not begin with works. Because of this, teaching and preaching motivates people to first achieve or perform *for* instead of *receive from* God the necessary mercy and grace. Our “righteousness” has been subtly coerced by the accuser of the brethren to depend on our outward obedience instead of inward surrender to God. *Our obedience can only be a fruit of the righteousness that results from faith in Christ Jesus.* “For as by one man’s [Adam’s] disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s [Christ’s] obedience many will be made righteous” (Ro. 5:19). Faith begins as a posture or attitude of our heart toward God and His resurrected and glorified Son. It forms within the heart as the result of our agreeing with our need for His free gift of righteousness—the forgiveness and putting away of our sins. God’s unconditional love is first offered to us in that form. This unconditional love is received and never achieved, thus the reason it is defined as “unconditional.” Although it is love without *any* conditions, a person must believe and receive it to benefit from it. True faith first takes root and grows out of that love. This love first accredits righteousness to us after we have agreed with:

- 1) The law’s sentence of guilt and condemnation upon our lives, and
- 2) Our dire need for Christ’s sacrifice.

By simply saying “yes, I truly believe” to Jesus’ sacrifice and resurrection, we will then receive what is needed.

Take care to incorporate these Bible-based truths into your way of thinking:

- God’s law has found everyone guilty and worthy of eternal punishment.
- God’s free gift of righteousness in Christ Jesus sets aside our guilt (redeems us). When guilt is set aside, so is the need for punishment.
- There is no need then for anyone to “work” in order to be righteous or good. We are righteous or good because of God’s grace. It is a gift from God by which we are relieved from the heavy burdens and demands of the law of Moses *or* any (ancestral, cultural, traditional, or religious) standard of living to which we would try to conform.
- Because God has accredited righteousness to our account, that righteousness is now also imparted into us as the life of Christ, of which we are partakers (2 Pt. 1:3-4). We have received the justification of (that results in and produces eternal) life within (Ro. 5:17-21 & 8:10). We have God’s life-giving approval because of our faith in our risen Lord. As long as we abide in, continuing to draw life from, Christ, we are considered righteous before God and worthy of eternal life.
- We are saved (delivered, healed, enlightened, preserved, and satisfied) by that life that flows within us. Our search for significance and overall well-being (Hebrew: *shalom*) has ended.

The life of Christ flowing within us is the key to our experiencing the fullness of all that God has for us in the New Covenant. This wonderful resurrection life in us is the surety behind our faith which is the substance or title deed of the victory that overcomes the world.

The more we look into this great wonder, the less appealing the (addictive) things of this world become. As the old song declares: “The things of earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.” Another song appropriately warms our hearts with: “It gets sweeter and sweeter as the days go by. Oh, what a love between my Lord and I. I keep falling in love with Him over and over, and over and over again.”

In chapter one of his second epistle, our beloved brother Peter shows us something of great importance—what God expects from us in order to “make our calling and election sure” (vs.1-10). He reinforces the exhortation with “he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins” (v.9).

Peter was saying that if we lack those things (lacking in the fruit that remains, Jn 15:16), we have lost sight of *the reality of the blessed state of those to whom God does not accredit any sin*. We have left our first love. BUT, we can get it back by:

*Rejoicing continually in Christ's finished work, simultaneously, expecting God to show us how that impacts every aspect of our lives. Our central focus must no longer be our short-comings (sin and failure). Abundant grace will then become our sufficiency in all things.*

### **The Cry of the Spirit**

The Spirit of God is crying out, summoning all, young and old, the wise and the fool, the well-educated and the less refined, the rich and the poor, and the strong and the feeble to the enormous bounty that has been secured for us at Christ's expense. My daughter, Grace, has an embroidered picture given to her when she was born. It appropriately displays an acrostic of her name: God's Riches At Christ's Expense. Grace is the one word chosen by God to properly define this bounty.

As we contemplate and began to understand these riches and the crucial but dreadful price Christ paid to secure all that the New Covenant offers, there stirs within our hearts the deepest passion, awe, and resoluteness to never betray such a wonder. The longer we gaze into this Divine display of love, the like of which has never before been revealed to mankind (1 Jn. 4:9-10), the more it consumes and transforms us. Additionally, the longer we gaze, the more closely we know and demonstrate that perfect will of God that is unchangingly constant in the Presence behind the (torn) veil (2 Cor. 3:18).

Our dear Lord Jesus told His disciples to pray to the Father: “Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” He told them to pray this way in anticipation of the ongoing impact on

them of His death, resurrection, and ascension. Jesus caught a glimpse into the fruit of the travail and labor of His soul from Gethsemane to His death on the cross and was satisfied (Is. 53:11). That satisfaction is now the world's salvation. Now, we can stand in the power of His resurrection life, to which every knee must bow, and declare, "Abba Father, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Heaven's will becomes earth's certainty as we draw near to that place where God's perfect and heavenly will is constant and never misunderstood, misrepresented, or doubted—*where Heaven's determination and confidence becomes ours*. We will then do the "greater works" Jesus spoke of in John 14 because of being *completely* convinced that Heaven's will can be done through us on earth. The more we experience Christ, who embodies the Godhead and in whom all fullness dwells, the more easily we will function like Him on earth. All of this has been made available to us through God's boundless grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is a most desirable hidden treasure—waiting to be found by us.

By drawing near to that Presence, we will be convinced of our dire need for it in our personal lives and as God's answer to the world's dilemma. Being filled with the Spirit, as we are commanded (Eph. 5:18), sums up and simplifies all that we need for this life. The most important conviction that must be nurtured by a Christian is their need for that Presence. That need for it must be foundational to all they do. Being filled (drunk) with wine is dissipation or wasteful, riotous, and uncontrolled living. To be filled with anything except the Holy Spirit is a needless waste of humanity. Those who continuously partake of the Heavenly wine of the Spirit will want nothing more. The very person of God himself defines the limitations of what can be accomplished through them—it's unimaginable.

In the Old Covenant, the high priest entered once a year into the earthly representation of the *Presence behind the (torn) veil*. Now we, as a royal priesthood, are commanded to draw near to the Heavenly original and abide there. "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, (20) by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, (21) and having a High Priest over the house of God, (22) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:19-22). To draw near to that Presence, we must:

- Have a full assurance of faith in the blood of Christ *alone*.
- Have a true (honest, sincere, genuine) heart. Our heart must not be given to denial of guilt or hypocrisy. The blood of Christ will remedy these tendencies if we will allow it.
- Understand that drawing near is done in our hearts as we soak in the reality of Christ's finished work. The soul (mind, will, emotions, desires, and personality) will then become anchored in the One who Heaven has supremely honored (Heb. 6:13-20). Only from this place of full assurance of faith can the terms and promises of the New Covenant be correctly represented and fulfilled.

- In this place of simplicity of devotion to Christ, we can be filled to overflowing with the wonder, grace, and truth of what we are experiencing. It becomes a river of living water that will turn the world upside-down (Jn. 7:37-38; the book of Acts).

All New Covenant ministry must correctly seek out and administer God's abundant grace—that will of God that is known as an immovable constant in Heaven and is passionately waiting to be released in the earth. Sadly, many of God's ministers in the Church are attempting to represent the things they know little about, resulting in misrepresentations of God's will. Traditions and teachings of men, not God's, have often become the standard.

The Old Covenant tabernacle consisted of three sections: the Outer Court, the Inner Court, and the Most Holy Place. If our perspective of the Most Holy Place is only limited to the two courts, we would not be fully qualified to represent that Presence behind the veil. I fear that most of the representations of God made to the people by the modern Church "priesthood" have been that of only "court" levels of understanding. (I make this observation based on the evidence of the fruit produced by the Church at large. Jesus said that you will know the true nature of people by their fruit—Mt. 7:16-20.) Too often God's will is *not* done on earth, in our individual lives, as it is in Heaven. Notice the phrase "as it is in Heaven." To what was Jesus referring? Did He really mean that it could be on earth as it is in Heaven? Or did He set an unrealistic standard that only a select few can achieve? Is God unpredictable in fulfilling His word to us? *While we may not comprehend all of the details of how God may work out His will, we can have the full assurance that He absolutely will.*

Our perspective of someone's house would remain quite limited if we chose not to take an inside tour of that house contrary to the request of the owner. It could be described to us but we would never be able to correctly represent it to others until experiencing it ourselves. The most qualified representatives would be those who live in the house.

In the outer and inner courts, there is God-given revelation and understanding available, yet such is limited to the items of protocol. These items were all given for the sole purpose of preparing the priests, making them *most* holy, to draw near to the Most Holy Place. How often do we place much emphasis on the means instead of the end in the Church? The outer and inner courts were the means to something greater and holier. God never intended us to camp there, creating man-made denominations, ideologies, and traditions that actually push us further from the end—the Presence behind the (torn) veil.

*When we attribute to the means the same importance as the end, the means always becomes a stumblingblock to reaching the end.*

In the Most Holy Place, God is all in all. There, everything bows the knee to grace and truth. *Sickness, disease, oppression, bondage, and all the ruin of sin's death march is overpowered*

*and nullified in the life of those who choose to be emboldened by the blood of Jesus and draw near.* In this resurrection life and power, we can and must remain, and from there minister to the Church and the world. Otherwise, we will disgrace that name by which we are called and cause people to think that Heaven's perfect will cannot be revealed and accomplished on earth. Instead of ministering the true anchor of hope, we will offer a religious and worldly false hope or hopelessness and console ourselves and others with "*accepting the things we cannot change*" although they are contrary to God's will. The only things we will have left to offer suffering humanity are just "forgiveness" and the dull clichés of human sympathy that have a form of godliness. This is where many man-made doctrines come from. They are designed to redirect people's faith and hope toward something else besides God's super-abundant grace. That grace is the sufficiency that God has supplied to us for all things. The good news is that it is never achieved but received by us. We become worthy of it, not by earning it, but by diligent and patient faith that knows and is fully assured by the fact it is continually available. Faith comes by hearing and embracing God's truth.

Outer and inner court thinking normally sees God's perfect will as a "veiled" mystery and attributes adverse events in a person's life to the mysterious will of God. God's will is not a mystery to those who draw near to Him. Listen to what our beloved brother Paul stated: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. (10) But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:9-10). We have a choice as God's people. The decision is ours:

- We can remain outside the veil (God's holy presence) and attempt to figure out and represent what we have not experienced and, in our false humility, quote verse 9, or...
- We can embrace verse 10, draw near, and experience what no eye has seen and no ear has heard.

We must beware not to buy into a religious false humility that would cheat us out of New Covenant blessing. Now, let us draw near.

Let us put away the biased conclusions made about God based on our limited experience with Him. *Our lack of experience behind the (torn) Veil always becomes evident in our teachings, life, works, and ministry.*

How often have I seen New Covenant truth compromised, customized, and made more acceptable because it seemed that "God did not answer our prayers." If it had to do with praying for someone's physical healing, we must first understand that the person was already healed close to two thousand years ago. The blood of Christ that was taken into the Most Holy Place in Heaven testifies to this. To say God did not heal them is a

misrepresentation at least (unless, of course, the person was judged by the Lord; 1 Cor. 11:29-31). If someone died and went to hell that did not profess faith in Christ, would we say “God didn’t save them?” No, *they* did not meet the conditions.

God is unfalteringly true to His word. Jesus never turned anyone away for forgiveness, healing, or deliverance during His earthly ministry. They all come in the same package. He had a one hundred percent success rate, whereas, the modern Church obviously has not. Let God be revealed as true and everyone else a liar. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). He never told people that God *may* decide not to save, heal, or deliver *some* of them. What results would He have gotten if He had done so? However, there were some He could not help because of their unbelief and hardness of heart (Mt. 13:58; Lk. 5:29-32; Jn. 5:39-40).

*It was hard for many Jews to comprehend that God would freely hand out such blessings through Christ while on earth without first requiring conformity to the law of Moses. This is mostly because of what was commanded in Deuteronomy 28, which says, if you keep the law you are blessed, if not, then you are cursed. The grace of God in Christ Jesus offended their pride and self-righteousness—their self-made image based on their interpretation and appropriation of the law.*

Today, by God’s design, **according to our faith** (and what we believe to be true), so will it be done to us.

If our beliefs concerning healing and such are based on our success rate, then we are falling short of that Presence behind the veil. We must repent, throwing off our limited and biased thinking, and draw near to receive the abundant grace.

If you desire to reign in life through Christ, over all things that fall short of Heaven’s will, then you must draw near. No one can do it for you. But, others who already have, though they may be few, can show you the way.

- Draw near by the blood of the Lamb. Allow His blood to remove all consciousness of sin and failure in your life and this includes all forms of insecurity and inferiority. Your right standing with God can *never* be based on your obedience to God but solely and continually on one man’s obedience, Christ Jesus. His life-giving approval (justification) is the source for producing fruit (good works) in our lives. Let it flow by boasting and reveling in Christ alone.
- Enter “His gates” with thanksgiving in your hearts and enter “His courts” with praise (Ps. 100:4). Why? Because Jesus’ finished work on the cross is enough. It is all that is needed for you to draw near. These sacrifices are to be offered continually (Heb. 13:15).



- The more you gaze upon Him who is full of grace and truth, the more you become like Him. The more you focus on your frail and sinful humanity and your attempts to “repent” and be a “good” Christian, the worse off you become.
- Repentance, holiness, and obedience should never be placed on the same level as or above Christ in our lives. They will then become the end and not the fruit.

The more we behold the wonders of God’s grace the more we will realize that:

“Sin [and all of its fruit] shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace” (Ro. 6:14)...and

“For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who *receive* abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Ro. 5:17). All that we need to reign in life, as Christ did, is to “receive” the gift of righteousness and an abundance of grace. *These are NEVER achieved but received.* Jesus, as our Great High Priest, is touched by the feelings of our infirmities, but is only moved by those who:

“Come boldly [motivated by faith in Christ’s blood and the resulting righteousness accredited to our account] to the throne of grace, that we may *obtain mercy and find grace* to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

The benefits and blessings of the New Covenant are not available just for the “super” Christian. *Did Jesus do all those works while on earth for law-keepers or law-breakers?* Now let’s go on to part three (added November of 2013), *The Benefits and Snares of the Grace Movements.*



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