

Speak Grace, Not Condemnation



David Eells



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Scriptures are taken from the *American Standard Version (ASV)* because of its faithfulness to the ancient manuscripts and Bible Numerics, a system designed by God for proving authenticity.

We have departed from the *ASV* only in the name Jehovah and Lord Jehovah which we replaced with Lord and Lord God, respectively. Neither represents the original YHWH but Lord is less confusing to many and we did not want this to distract from the teaching.

Numerics is a system designed into the Bible by God to prove authenticity. The Greeks and Hebrews used their letters for numbers. Therefore, the whole Bible is also written in numbers which show perfect patterns as long as the God-inspired original words are not departed from. It mathematically proves the original text and where it has been added to or taken away from. The Numeric English New Testament (NENT) is based on the numeric pattern and is quoted from when necessary.

We desire to make this book free on our part because Jesus said, “Freely you have received, freely give,” but the business of publishing does not lend itself to that. We can say that any profits made from this book will go toward promoting the message of the Kingdom of God and not to any personal, fleshly gain. Free copies of the book are made available through the generous donations of His faithful servants and can be requested at www.ubm1.org/free.

When we speak faith into people, they get grace: “for by grace have ye been saved through faith.” There is a place for condemnation but not in the life of one who truly wants to obey and be holy. These people need grace to do the works of God, but condemnation is contrary to faith and robs them of the very power of God they need. We feel Paul’s pain under the slavery of condemnation until he got the revelation of faith which is a free gift of God’s power to do His will.

(Rom.7:15) For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. (16) But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. (17) So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me ... (22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (23) but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. (24) Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? (25) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord ... (8:1) There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. We therefore dedicate this book to those who suffer as Paul did.

(Col.4:6) Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one.

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Books of the Bible - Abbreviation List

Old Testament

Gen.	Genesis
Exo.	Exodus
Lev.	Leviticus
Num.	Numbers
Deu.	Deuteronomy
Jos.	Joshua
Jdg.	Judges
Rth.	Ruth
1Sa.	1 Samuel
2Sa.	2 Samuel
1Ki.	1 Kings
2Ki.	2 Kings
1Ch.	1 Chronicles
2Ch.	2 Chronicles
Ezr.	Ezra
Neh.	Nehemiah
Est.	Esther
Job.	Job
Psa.	Psalms
Pro.	Proverbs
Ecc.	Ecclesiastes
Son.	The Song of Solomon
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Lam.	Lamentations
Eze.	Ezekiel
Dan.	Daniel
Hos.	Hosea
Joe.	Joel
Amo.	Amos
Oba.	Obadiah
Jon.	Jonah
Mic.	Micah
Nah.	Nahum
Hab.	Habakkuk

Zep.	Zephaniah
Hag.	Haggai
Zec.	Zechariah
Mal.	Malachi

New Testament

Mat.	Matthew
Mar.	Mark
Luk.	Luke
Joh.	John
Act.	Acts
Rom.	Romans
1Co.	1 Corinthians
2Co.	2 Corinthians
Gal.	Galatians
Eph.	Ephesians
Php.	Philippians
Col.	Colossians
1Th.	1 Thessalonians
2Th.	2 Thessalonians
1Ti.	1 Timothy
2Ti.	2 Timothy
Tit.	Titus
Phm.	Philemon
Heb.	Hebrews
Jas.	James
1Pe.	1 Peter
2Pe.	2 Peter
1Jn.	1 John
2Jn.	2 John
3Jn.	3 John
Jud.	Jude
Rev.	Revelation

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CHAPTER ONE

Letter to a Prodigal Son

My son,

*The Lord has chosen you as part of 3% of this world's population to be His own. I saw this in a vision I would like to tell you about. You are probably wondering, "How can this be, since I have been through hell?" Hell is the best place to learn that you really want to live in heaven. I've loved you since you were a baby and I've known the Lord has, too. Even your stubborn rebellion didn't change my mind or His. He has known you from before the foundation of the world. He has a special plan for your life that I would like to tell you about. You are probably asking, "Why would God love me since I have been so sinful?" Jesus said, **"A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred shillings, and the other fifty"** (Luk.7:41). **(42) When they had not [wherewith] to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most? (43) Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.** Jesus said that this answer is correct. Since you will be forgiven of much, you are now capable of loving Him the way He wants you to.*

*You might ask, "If He loves me, then why has He been so hard on me?" It is the devil who has been hard on you. He hates you and when he is through with you, then you are like him, destroyed. God said, **"Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves [as] servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey"***

(Rom.6:16)? *It's a simple matter to change Masters and Fathers. It happened to me when I was younger than you. Once, when you were younger, you asked God in a denominational church to save you. You think He ignored you or forgot about that, but He didn't. He was very glad and He took you very seriously, but He also knew you were stubborn. He knew you would have to know the consequences of serving the devil before you would fear Him as your Father and serve Him. You are almost there. When you get there, understand this about Him. He is seeking you and listening to you and, if you make one step toward Him, He will be very happy to make 10 toward you. You have His Word for that (Luke 15:20).*

(Luk.15:1) *Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him. (2) And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. (Jesus is now seeking you out where you are.)*

(3) And he spake unto them this parable, saying, (4) What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? (He goes after you to save you.) (5) And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. (He will be very happy to receive you.) (6) And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. (7) I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, [more] than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no

repentance. (Your heavenly Father and all of heaven will be happy at your turning to Him.)

(Luk.15:8) Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? (9) And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. (10) Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

(11) And he said, A certain man had two sons: (12) and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of [thy] substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. (13) And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. (What God gave you as a child you have now wasted.) (14) And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. (15) And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. (Now you are just feeding the flesh and the children of the god of this world, Satan.) (16) And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. (It's a hard road and you are near total death.) (17) But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! (You are starving for the

bread of His kingdom, the Word of God.) **(Luk.15:18) I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight:** (Just tell Him that you have sinned and you are sorry.) **(19) I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.** (Tell Him that you know you are not worthy of Him but you will serve Him with His help.) **(20) And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.** (You are far from Him but He sees you when you make a step toward Him and He will run to you in love.) **(21) And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son. (15:22) But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:** (He will meet your needs for righteousness and authority.) **(23) and bring the fatted calf, [and] kill it, and let us eat, and make merry:** (He will feed you with the best.) **(24) for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.** (He will give you His life.) **And they began to be merry.** (And He will be very happy; more so than over those who are serving Him now.) **(Luk.15:25) Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. (26) And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. (27) And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he**

hath received him safe and sound. (28) But he was angry, and would not go in: and his father came out, and entreated him. (29) But he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine; and [yet] thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: (30) but when this thy son came, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf. (31) And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. (32) But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive [again]; and [was] lost, and is found.

Please think about this, son.

*Love,
Dad*

CHAPTER TWO

Faith for Lost Loved Ones

Some parents feel very guilty that, although they did the best they could, their children seem to be going the wrong way. The following teaching is not against those who have faithfully served the Lord from their youth; rather, for those who feel that the Lord has passed them or their children by.

You need to walk by faith for them and not walk by sight. Believe in your prayers, wait for and expect miracles, but be patient. Know that God has a plan for them. Give some deep thought to this. It will free you from worry, strife and self-effort to bring about God's Will in them. They will have to be saved after tribulation and failure of their worldly expectations, probably as you were. Children raised knowing about the Lord are sometimes very self-righteous. They think they deserve what they have and don't understand grace. They will also have to see themselves as sinners, in order to be the dirt that the fruit can be borne out of. God only saves sinners. Haven't you been one? This is a necessary revelation in order to appreciate the great value of salvation and be saved by unmerited favor. I remember my oldest daughter, when she was three years old, going around our lost friends and relatives saying, "God don't like that." Of course, My wife and I told her that, but she quickly deflected the responsibility. We thought, "You little Pharisee."

Our heavenly Father has had many prodigal sons, just as Jesus' parable shows, but that doesn't make Him a bad Father (Luke 15:11-32). In this parable, the "good" son,

who never left, was self-righteous, judgmental and merciless. On the other hand, the younger son, who spent his inheritance on riotous living, realized his low estate. He came to his father very humbly, saying, **“Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son” (Luk.15:21)**. In other words, the once-rebellious son now understood mercy and grace and was a much better man for it. Prophetically, the firstborn son, who never left the Father, was the righteous among Israel, but they did not understand grace. The younger, second son of the Father, who fell away through the Dark Ages for 2000 years, is the Church who is returning in these days to understand the grace of God. Our Father said to these, **“Bring forth quickly the best robe (the “robe of righteousness” in Isaiah 61:10), and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand (a symbol of authority and of the Bride), and shoes (the walk of separation from the world) on his feet” (Luk.15:22)**. So the prodigal son will have more of everything than the first son.

Those who have been sinners know their need of God, but often those who are raised as God’s people do not. **(Mat.21:28) But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in the vineyard. (29) And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went. (30) And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I [go], sir: and went not. (31) Which of the two did the will of his father? They say, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom**

of God before you. (32) For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him.

Many times it is not the son who says he will go to work in the Father's vineyard who actually goes, but the son whose first inclination is to not go. Many "career" Christians are bored with the work of God and distracted by the world. The publicans and harlots are so appreciative of a place in the Kingdom that they throw their whole heart into it, willing to be servants rather than be served.

In the last days of the Gentiles it will be the same as it was in the last days of the Jews. There are many self-righteous "Christians" today who are not the creation that the Father desires. Those of you who have been raised in the Church should humble yourselves to the Word of God and not to religion, so that ***"no one take thy crown" (Rev.3:11). (Luk.18:9) And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought: (10) Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. (11) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. (12) I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. (13) But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner. (14) I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than***

the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Jesus told the Pharisees that He did not come to call the righteous but the sinners (Luke 5:32). ***(Rom.11:32) For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all. (8:20) For the creation was subjected to vanity (the fall and corruption), not of its own will, but by reason of him (God) who subjected it, in hope (Greek: “firm expectation”) (21) that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. (Gal.3:22) But the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. He chose us in Christ before Adam even fell. (Eph.1:4) Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love (meaning God knew we would need a savior before the world was made). From this you can see that the fall was in His plan. Children who are raised with Christ most often take Him for granted and do not really understand grace. God has a plan for them that may mean the temporary lifting of His grace that has been taken for granted.***

Peter was Jesus’ “little one” (Matthew 18) whom He raised to be a disciple. He was very self-confident, declaring to the Lord that he would never be offended and deny Him, but would go with Him to death (Matthew 26:33-35). God hates self-confidence but loves God-confidence. So how does God deal with this sin? ***(1Co.10:12) Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed***

lest he fall. Failure is the best treatment for self-confidence. (Luk.22:31) Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: (32) but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren. (33) And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death. (34) And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Jesus prophesied failure for this proud man. Notice that Jesus, Who had authority over Satan, did not forbid him from sifting Peter. Satan sifts to get what belongs to him and, in this case, it was Peter's pride, self-righteousness and self-confidence. What fell through the sieve was what God wanted, the humbled Peter. The sifted Peter, who had "turned again" or been converted, could now "establish the brethren." Before this failure, he would have been a good Pharisee.

(Luk.7:40) And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Teacher, say on. (41) A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred shillings, and the other fifty. (42) When they had not [wherewith] to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most? (43) Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. (44) And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her

tears, and wiped them with her hair. (45) Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. (46) My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. (47) Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, [the same] loveth little. Big sinners make bigger saints.

God wants people who are forgiven of their many sins and saved by grace so that they love and appreciate Him much. This is the creation that He wants, not Adam before the fall, but the creation that springs from the last Adam, Jesus Christ. Don't worry about your lost loved ones becoming sinners, just **"hold fast the confession of (your) hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised" (Heb.10:23)**. Gracefully sow seeds of truth as you can without frustrating them. They cannot be convinced without grace. Remember that God **"worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Eph.1:11)** and **"A man can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven" (Joh.3:27)**. Jesus said, **"No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him" (Joh.6:44)**. God will do it when the time is right and He'll use your faith. **(Heb.11:1) Now faith is assurance of [things] hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.** I think you can understand why sometimes God does not save people until they are a little older, after they have tried the world and found it wanting.

CHAPTER THREE

Weak to the Weak

Brethren, I was once questioned by a dear sister as to why I dealt so gently with a brother who was in an apostate “Christian” religion. My answer may help you on how to deal with someone who is caught up in a false doctrine, yet appears to desire truth. Anyone can judge, but love will build up and help the one who lacks.

Dear sister,

*I can assure you that few know as I do how evil that false religion is. I was a member of it until I was old enough to walk away. I assume my chat with [so-and-so] bothered you. Every time I talk with him, though, he learns more about the Scriptures and gets hungrier for the Word. If I would have spoken against his religion immediately, his defenses would have gone up and I would not be speaking to him at all. This is not God’s way of grace. We must be **“wise as serpents, and harmless as doves”** (Mat.10:16). Even a smoldering wick we should not put out (Isaiah 42:3; Matthew 12:20). Jesus confronted the self-righteous Pharisees directly without mercy, but He had mercy on the ignorant and erring who wanted truth. Jesus said to the Pharisees, **“If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth”** (Joh.9:41) and, **“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin”** (Joh.15:22). This man was born again, but he is an infant and knows so little. He needs milk (Hebrews 5:13). Soon I will be able to tell him clearly and he will be able to hear.*

Many people have made up their mind with comfortable ideas and don't change easily. If you tell them the big picture up front, they will close you out or leave you, or both. Jesus said, **"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now"** (Joh.16:12). **(Ecc.10:10) If the iron be blunt, and one do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.** A dull axe bounces out of hard wood, but if you sharpen it so that it enters by a very narrow front, the wood will receive it and then each successive blow can go deeper and deeper. **(Joh.16:11) If the serpent bite before it is charmed, then is there no advantage in the charmer.** The serpent, or flesh, bites when the charmer is not graceful. We have to enable people to overcome their own flesh so they can receive the bigger picture. We have to be **"wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (Mat.10:16).** Paul called it **as deceivers, and [yet] true"** (2Co.6:8) because we are calming and deceiving their old flesh so that we can gracefully get truth into their spirit.

We should follow God's advice for charming. **(1Co.9:19) For though I was free from all [men,] I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more. (20) And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; (21) to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. (22) To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things**

to all men, that I may by all means save some. (23) And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof. Self-righteousness demands that we be strong to those who are weak and impulsive, but this same Paul shaved his head, took a vow and circumcised Timothy in order to be acceptable to the Jews so he could share the Gospel with them. However, all of these were things he preached against to the knowledgeable. He would have been a lousy charmer any other way. (Jas.3:17) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. (18) And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.

I hope you will understand, or at least not judge me in this. I wish we would permit as much difference in doctrine in our assemblies as God commands in Romans, in order that the young may grow up and that we may learn the ways of peace. (Rom.14:1) But him that is weak in faith receive ye, [yet] not for decision of scruples. In other words, not to argue with them, but to teach them with grace. (Rom.14:2) One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs. (3) Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. (4) Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand. (5) One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day

[alike]. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. (6) He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. (7) For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. (8) For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. (9) For to this end Christ died and lived [again], that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. (10) But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God. (11) For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, And every tongue shall confess to God. (12) So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

(Rom.14:13) Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. (14) I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.* This makes room for the conscience and grace. (15) ***For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. (16) ***Let not then your good be evil spoken of: (17) for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace*****

and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom.14:18) For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. (19) So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. (20) Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. (21) It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor [to do anything] whereby thy brother stumbleth. (22) The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. (23) But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because [he eateth] not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. (15:1) Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (2) Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. (3) For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me.

The little brother or sister should be able to fellowship in peace with the elder brother or sister long enough to grow up in the knowledge of God. Many in these days, who consider themselves mature in doctrine, do not permit those weak in the faith into their fellowship. Give God time to reveal Himself to them. Take them under your wing and be patient with them. The self-righteous and proud do not permit differences of opinion. We need to remember that we did not get where we are, or learn what we learned, overnight. We are not talking about immorality or heresy here. That has to be dealt with as Paul taught. **(1Co.5:11)**

But as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat.

Yours in Christ,

David

P.S. The brother spoken of above is now delivered and Spirit-filled. Glory to God!

CHAPTER FOUR

Accepting Those Whom God Accepts

You know, our hearts should really be burdened for those people around us who just can't seem to get ahold of any faith. They want to please God but they just really can't get ahold of any faith because they have spirits of rejection and anything in their heart is condemnation. The only thing that they get from other people is condemnation. They've never been accepted and so they don't feel the acceptance of God. These people need faith in their heart and the people around them need to put that faith in their heart, not correction. They don't need correction; they know what their problems are. I come from a background of nothing but continuous correction, so I know how it tends to make a person feel rejected and hopeless about the future because it takes away every bit of faith.

What we have to know and understand is that neither condemnation nor correction is the power of God unto salvation, but the Gospel ***“is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom.1:16)***, the good news. When we preach the good news that Jesus has set us free and delivered us to people who are coming from a background of rejection, that's the only thing they need. They don't need any other correction or condemnation; they need acceptance. Now I know there are people who are in outward moral disobedience and the Bible tells us to separate from them, but it doesn't tell you to reject them. For instance, it talks about the brother who won't work (2 Thessalonians 3:11) and it says to ***“withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tra-***

dition which they received of us” (2Th.3:6). (7) For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.... (14) ... Have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. (15) And [yet] count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. Think of all of these Christians who cannot get ahold of faith to get delivered and yet faith is all they need. Nobody has any need but faith. I like what televangelist Robert W. Schambach used to say: “You don’t have any problems; all you need is faith in God.” That’s so true! It has all been accomplished in Jesus and **“the works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb.4:3)**. The only thing that remains is for us to enter into those works through faith and enter into His rest through faith. So people need faith and God knows this.

I think one of the devil’s largest armies is an army of spirits of rejection because that’s one of the most common spirits there is around. And maybe I think that because of my coming from that background, but I see it a lot. It seems to be such an easy way for the devil to sidetrack people. I think that’s why God designed the New Covenant to be the covenant of grace, the covenant of **“no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom.8:1)**. I know that some versions read “to them that walk according to the spirit” but that is added; that wasn’t in the original since there is no numeric pattern in it. **(1) There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.** We have to learn to accept people with all their problems and all their imperfections the same way that God accepts us in grace. One of our biggest problems is we need to accept whom God accepts and when we don’t

do that, we are judging and having unforgiveness. People who have received rejection have only one need in their life – faith – but what they have instead is condemnation and you can't have both at the same time. You have to drop condemnation to pick up faith. You can put that faith in a person by pumping the Word of God into their heart and changing their direction from looking inward to looking outward, to looking upward. Because everyone with that problem is looking inward at what their failure has been and always will be, in their mind. All they can see is their failure and inability. But since it was God Who designed us and put “this treasure in earthen vessels,” He knows that we are unable and that's part of His plan. We need to be unable, otherwise it's not by grace, it's by works. Part of God's plan is that He put this great ***“treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves”*** (2Co.4:7).

We need to know that we can't do it. Those people who are under the Law, those people who are looking inward and seeing their failure, are thinking, “I just can't do it!” Well, that's great to know that you can't do it, but if you condemn yourself because you can't do it, then that proves that you're under the Law. When you're condemning self because you can't do it, you are proving that you have your eyes looking inward instead of upward. We have to get our eyes on the Lord. ***(Rom.8:31) What then shall we say to these things? If God [is] for us, who [is] against us? (32) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?*** There isn't anything God won't give us to supply our needs. If He would give us Jesus, the most precious, valuable and sacrificial gift that

He had to give, surely He wouldn't deny you anything else. Anything else would be insignificant; it would be like the ribbon on the box. If you're giving a great and precious gift to somebody, you're not going to begrudge the ribbon or anything else. God has given us and will give us anything but He does demand one thing: He demands faith. So instead of rejecting someone because we're looking at the problem or person, we have to learn to put faith into them. ***(Rom.1:16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation*** (Greek: *so-teria*) ***to everyone that believeth ...*** The Gospel is the "power of God." The Gospel is the good news and we need to put that good news in people. They need to hear, "Listen, Jesus set you free" (Romans 6:22). He has made us free from sin; it is already passed and done (Romans 6). I know this can be a hard thing for a person to believe after hearing so much criticism and rejection, even by church and "religious" people who don't know how to put grace into others.

All we need is grace, God's favor, and you can't get grace without faith, and you can't get faith if you have condemnation or rejection in your heart. ***(Rom.8:33) Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; (34) who is he that condemneth?*** Woe be unto the person who rejects the person whom God accepts! Judgment is upon those who reject people whom God accepts. God wants to put faith in people's hearts, but when we look at their problems, situations and failures, and then get them to look only at those things, rather than at the Savior and His salvation, we steal from them the faith that God wants them to have. And we are so prone to do that as religious people! Most people already know where they're going wrong; they just don't know how to get out of there

and go on. The only way for a Christian to get up and go on is to have faith; otherwise, you wouldn't need God because you could save yourself. But He will not permit you to get up and go away; it is going to be grace through faith or it's going to be nothing.

We have to learn how to get grace into people's hearts by speaking grace to them and pumping them full of faith. ***(Rom.8:33) Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; (34) who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*** That verse reminds me of where the angels were asking, "***Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?***" ***(Rev.5:2)*** Who has overcome to open up the seals? It asks, "Who?" And the answer is the Lamb has overcome to open up the seals (Revelation 5:5). They were weeping there because nobody had overcome to open up the seals of judgment and that's true. Nobody has overcome sin to the extent that they can judge without the anointing and wisdom of God. If we step out ahead of God and judge by our own sight and wisdom, we are doing something that only the Lamb has been given authority to do. He loosed the seals of judgment upon the earth; Jesus was the Lamb Who overcame. The Bible says to be ready "***to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full***" ***(2Co.10:6)***, but we are quick to correct. Our obedience may not be full, but we're quick to correct and point out, "Here is your problem," to people who just can't get up off the ground and cannot find faith. We even wonder why they can't find faith and yet we don't speak that faith into them. ***(Rom.8:35) Who shall***

separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And that's even with all of our failures and shortcomings. We're all coming from different backgrounds and we all have our own shortcomings and faults. It's very easy for us to see one another's shortcomings and to keep pointing them out, even though they've probably been pointed out to those people from birth (Luke 6:41-42). It's the good news that we need to be preaching more of: "Jesus has set you free." He bore the curse for us (Galatians 3:13) and set us free at Calvary from everything and we need to accept that.

Let me tell you about a guy I knew who had a problem with alcohol and was really condemning himself because he just didn't have the willpower to stay away from the stuff. I told him if it was up to willpower, there wouldn't be any salvation, especially for a Christian. If you could do it with willpower, you wouldn't need Jesus and you wouldn't be learning about grace. But he was one of those introverts who is always looking at himself, instead of looking at what Jesus has already done and instead of rejoicing in what Jesus has already done in salvation for him. There are a lot of

people like that. A lot of times, if you can't find faith, that's the reason. You are not looking in the right direction; your eye is not single (Matthew 6:22). You're either looking at yourself and your ability or you're looking at your inability. ***(Rom.3:28) We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.***

You know what that says to me? God justifies us and accepts us as righteous before we are perfect and it has to be before you are perfect. No matter how you see that, it has to be apart from the works of the Law. ***(Rom.4:1) What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh? (2) For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God.*** See, when you're condemning yourself, it's because you're expecting yourself to do better and that's not where success comes from. If you could, or if anybody could, by willpower do better, then they would be justified by their own works. They would be able to glory before the Lord and that's not possible.

(Rom.4:3) For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. That's our job, to put that belief in people to believe God. Abraham believed God before he saw the answer and everybody has to believe God before they see the answer. We have to believe God for deliverance before we get delivered from our faults. That's the Gospel and that's what faith is; it's calling "***the things that are not, as though they were***" ***(Rom.4:17).*** ***(Rom.4:3) For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. (4) Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. (5) But to***

him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly (that's you and me), his faith is reckoned for righteousness. Now that's God's acceptance and we have to accept whom God accepts. If we don't accept them, then we're going to be speaking the wrong things to those people, we're going to be hurting them and we're going to be separating them from God. ***(Rom.8:1) There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. (Rom.4:5) But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. (6) Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, (7) [saying,] Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, And whose sins are covered. (8) Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin. (9) Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also?***

Stop and think about what circumcision is: it's a cutting away of the flesh. It's a symbol of our deliverance from the bondage of the flesh because it is a cutting away of the foreskin of the flesh. It symbolizes putting to death the flesh that you've been sowing. When you cut off the foreskin, it is a changing of the way you sow; you are not sowing the flesh anymore. The only way that we are going to reap the blessings of God is if we change the way we sow. Notice what Paul says: ***"Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness" (Rom.4:9). (10) How then was it reckoned? when he was in circumci-***

sion, or in uncircumcision? When did God call Abraham righteous? It was before Abraham received the sign of the Covenant, circumcision, which is a type of our deliverance from our old carnal nature.

You say, “Well, circumcision is baptism,” and that’s true. Paul said in Colossians that circumcision is a type of baptism. **(Col.2:11) In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; (12) having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.** Baptism is putting to death the old man and the resurrection of the new man. That’s what it’s all about – an act of faith whereby we are being united with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. And when we come up out of that water, we say, “I’m a new man. It is Christ Who lives; the old man died.” So we reckon it by faith, but the baptism has to be manifested in our life as we are continually dying and letting Christ come to life in us, day by day. Paul said, **“I die daily” (1Co.15:31)**. He brought to life his baptism daily; it was a manifestation that was coming to pass in his life. If baptism is not manifested in our life, then that act of faith has no works.

The washing of the water of the Word (Ephesians 5:26) is putting to death our old man and the new man is coming up continuously. But even before that manifestation, when does God count you righteous? You are reckoned righteous even before circumcision is manifested in your life; in other words, before you are sanctified and holy completely unto the Lord. **How then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in cir-**

circumcision, but in uncircumcision (Rom.4:10) before he had manifested this righteousness toward the Lord. God called him righteous for one reason – faith. And that’s the way we have to see those who are running after the Lord, even with all their failures. A person’s failures don’t make any difference. (Rom.4:11) And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them.

In Genesis 15, there are several signs of the Covenant that are manifested. For instance, there is the blood covenant that God made with Abraham. They were very familiar with the blood covenant in those days; I think in every nation they’ve been familiar with the blood covenant from way back. Another example is when God promised Abraham that his seed would be as the stars, a multitude (Genesis 15:5). So God made a covenant with Abraham. In fact, at this time he was called “Abram” and not “Abraham.” This covenant was before he had a name change.

What do you think a name change symbolizes? A name change symbolizes a change of nature, character and authority. The Hebrew word for “name” is *shem*, which means “nature, character and authority.” The same as the New Testament’s Greek word for “name,” which is *onoma*. This is a type for us because we’re getting a name change, too, aren’t we? Our nature, character and authority are being changed as we become sanctified through our walk of faith in Jesus Christ.

“Ah” in Hebrew means “the brother of.” When it was added to Abram’s name to make it “Abraham,” it changed

his name to mean “the father of a multitude” (Genesis 17:5). So before he could become “the father of a multitude,” or before he could become somebody who would sow the seed and bring forth a multitude, he had to have a name change. And that’s what we want to do. We want to sow a seed to bring people out of this world. We want to have spiritual children in this world. But before we can be the “father of a multitude,” we have to be the brother of the Lord; we have to come into unity with the Lord by taking His name. As a matter of fact, did you know that “ah” is also a part of the Lord’s name, “YHWH”? Translators added the “ah” to make “Jehovah.” A lot of Hebrew names have “ah” in them and originally that was the taking on of the Lord’s name.

At any rate, before Abraham’s name change, God said to him, ***“Take me a heifer three years old, and a she-goat three years old, and a ram three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon” (Gen.15:9). (10) And he took him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each half over against the other: but the birds divided he not.*** The animals were cut in half, which was the way they made the blood covenant. Then the two people making the covenant would walk in-between these halved animals. But God showed that Abraham would not fulfill his half of the covenant when he put Abraham to sleep. ***(Gen.15:12) And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him.*** I’ve thought about this as that’s your revelation of your sinful state when you come to know God; it’s “a horror of great darkness.” You get a revelation, “Hey, I’m undone!” And there’s not a thing you can do about it. ***(Gen.15:13) And he said unto Abram, Know of a***

surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. As a type, this was the Israelites when they were in bondage to the world, to Egypt. It was before they were baptized in the Red Sea and went to the Promised Land, so it was a type of them when they were lost and in degeneration. **(Gen.15:14) And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. (15) But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.** So God put Abraham to sleep and, as far as I can see, the only thing that passed between there was the smoking furnace and the flaming torch (Genesis 15:17). I think it means that Abraham could not fulfill his part of the covenant, that there were no works he could add to bring about the blood covenant. And here's another example, again from before Abraham was circumcised and from before he had his name changed: **(Gen.17:10) This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised. (11) And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant betwixt me and you.** And then He calls it **my covenant shall be in your flesh (13).** So before Abraham fulfilled righteousness in putting to death his flesh, in the cutting away of his flesh, God called him righteous.

You know, the Lord calls us righteous, not because of where we have attained to in the Lord, but because of election (Romans 9). Have you ever noticed that? It's just simply because God has chosen us; He sees the end before

the beginning (Isaiah 41:4) and He calls us righteous. And that's the way He wants us to look at other people. He wants us to say, "***He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ***" (Php.1:6). Just as Paul said, "***It is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you***" (7). In other words, "It is right for me to be thus minded on your behalf that He who started a good work in you will perfect it, will finish it." It's right for us to be minded that way toward the imperfections that we see in one another. It's to look past them and not to reject or criticize but to say, "God's going to finish the work." We just saw that before Abraham was circumcised God had accepted him. Here's another good example: ***(Rom.9:9) For this is a word of promise, According to this season will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. (10) And not only so; but Rebecca also having conceived by one, [even] by our father Isaac — (11) for [the children] being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, (12) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. (13) Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.*** So it was according to election that God accepted Jacob and rejected Esau.

When we see the calling of God in a person's life, aside from all their failures and foolishness, God has accepted them. We need to accept them, too, and not be so quick to try to do what is God's work to straighten them out. First of all, we accept them and then God's work through us is to pump faith into their lives because that's the good news of the cross of Christ. It's the good news that He bore their

sins on that cross and they need to realize that.

If I believe that God took away my sin, He's going to do it, not just cover the sin up. A lot of the churches are preaching that God just covers up the sin and not that He took away the sins of the world. Well, they had the covering for sin in the Old Testament, but they didn't have the taking away of the sin, of the sin nature. Those churches see sin as this offense that you've done toward God, rather than the nature in your heart that is against God. The sin that Jesus took away and nailed to the cross was the offense in your heart that's against God, the nature of sin in your life. Jesus took that away. I'm not supposed to keep looking at that; it's like looking at a sickness, rather than looking at the Healer. You don't keep looking at the sickness; you'll stay sick. Instead, you look at what Jesus did on the cross. "He took my sickness away. He bore my sickness." And it's exactly the same thing with sin: we don't keep looking at the sin. We keep looking at the Savior. "He bore my sin." Turn away from the sin and look at the Savior. The people who look at the sin are those same people who can't get up off the ground because there is nothing but condemnation and rejection in their heart. They feel that rejection from both people and God, but it's not there from God. It's people and the devil who put it there.

(Rom.8:1) There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Truthfully, every one of us is coming from failure backgrounds, right? We've all failed and we've all come short of the glory of God. And that's why God designed grace. And that's why we need to cooperate with Him and help Him do His work, not fight against Him by bringing the condemnation. Yes, we're going to run into people who are willfully disobedient

and they are condemned. They are righteously condemned if they are sinning with the will, instead of just failing like many of us have done. Those people are not torn, like Paul was. **(Rom.7:19) For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise. (20) But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.** You see, God wasn't even attributing that sin to Paul because his desire was to not sin. Paul was separating himself and God was separating him from the sin that dwelled in him. "It's no more I who do it, but the sin which dwells in me." God was separating Paul from the wickedness of the sin that was in him. That's the way we need to see people. We have to separate people from the sin that is in them by helping them to get on God's side against the sin that's in their own heart. And the only way that you can do that is to pump up their faith.

A lot of people dwell on that you have to put the flesh to death, and that's true, but how do you put the flesh to death? Well, you can only do it by reckoning the flesh is dead. We were all baptized and we know that when we went down into the water, the flesh died, and when we came up, it is Jesus Who lives. That was our confession then and it has to be our confession now: "The flesh is dead." It's like after being healed of a sickness, even though you still see the symptoms, you have been healed. We can help one another by getting our eyes off of the symptoms and on the Savior. **(Gal.2:20) ... It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that [life] which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, [the faith] which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.** That's the thought we have to have in our consciousness.

Stop looking at self, either in ourselves or others. For those who have this problem, you have to direct their eyes off of themselves and on to Jesus because their only hope of salvation is faith. And again, they are accepted because of election, because God has chosen them and not because of where they are at the time. They are accepted because of that. Let's face it, we've all come from different degenerate backgrounds and we're all somewhere along in different stages in our walk. But if you haven't done everything perfectly and you're not doing everything perfectly now, you can't be accepted by the works of the Law. You still have to be accepted by grace. You know the old saying, "a sinner saved by grace." We don't want to stay as sinners saved by grace. We want to be saved by grace so that we're not sinners; we want to let Jesus take away our sin, right? That was His purpose. He came to destroy the works of the devil, to take away the sins of the world and yet we are not with Him in this process in agreement, unless we are accepting it before it's done. Unless we're accepting salvation and deliverance now for ourselves and for others, then we're not helping Him in the process; we're not doing the work of God.

So many people are out there preaching what they call the "Gospel" but it's not the Gospel. It's not the good news; it's the "bad news." It's the "Look at who you are, you rotten sinner," of the "condemnation gospel." Well, the good news is for those who are called of God. They're ready to hear it and they need to hear it. We are too quick to condemn. ***(Jas.2:8) Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well.*** "I want the grace, mercy and forgiveness of God. It's just that sometimes I don't think my

neighbor deserves it.” Well, whenever you’re judging, unforgiving critical of someone else, it’s because, “Hey, I want it but I don’t think they’re worthy of it,” right? **(Jas.2:9)** *But if ye have respect of persons,* (judging, unforgiveness or criticism is having respect of persons) **ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors.** **(Jas.2:10)** *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one [point,] he is become guilty of all.* In other words, if you are judging outside of the Holy Spirit that someone else is out-of-line from God, then it’s just you who is judging. The Holy Spirit can judge and He uses people to judge, but note, I’m talking about judging from our self. If we’re judging that someone is out-of-line for anything, then we can be judged for what we’re doing out-of-line. **(Jas.2:11)** *For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law. (12) So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty.* In other words, live the way you want to be treated. Judge others the way you want to be judged, “by a law of liberty.” **(Jas.2:13)** *For judgment [is] without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment. (Rom.2:1) Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things.* To say it another way, somewhere you are astray of the Law and you only have to be astray in one place to be judged by the Law as a sinner. If you break one law, you’re a law-breaker and that makes you unable to judge anyone else.

How could an elder ever throw somebody out of the church? Well, first of all, the elder should be an overcomer. He should be walking with the Lord and not walking in sin or else he is not an elder. And even then he's not perfect, so even then his judgment cannot be his own judgment but God's judgment. If he speaks, he better be speaking for God because if anybody speaks for himself or judges for himself, he is going to be judged. You know what the Scripture says: **(Mat.7:1) Judge not, that ye be not judged.** Forgive or you won't be forgiven. So, if anybody does speak a judgment, it better be spoken for God and not from self. **(Rom.14:4) Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand.** Evidently, this person wasn't standing, whoever he was, and Paul is telling you not to judge the guy because he wasn't standing. In the text it's talking about people who are weak, eat herbs and don't believe in eating meat (Romans 14:2) – people with all kinds of different legalistic doctrines. The Lord is saying that He is able to make him stand. But, yet, as far out as this guy was, Paul said not to judge him. “To his own lord he standeth or falleth,” so don't judge a servant of another.

(Rom.14:13) Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. Think about it. If you're getting a person's eyes off of Jesus and onto their own self, you're putting a stumbling block in their way, “an occasion of falling.” And people do that all the time, thinking they're doing it in the name of Jesus, when they correct “that poor fool” who is going this way or that. There is a way to help cor-

rect people without criticism and without judging. God can gracefully get things across to people without judging them and without criticizing them, and without getting them to condemn themselves. When you condemn yourself, it's because you must have thought you could have done better. You're not having faith in God to make you do better; instead, you're thinking you should have done better. It proves that you're under the Law because that's how the Law was: "Here is what I want you to do, now do it." Under the Law, the natural man took what God wanted him to do and did the best he could do to obey it, and he couldn't do it because it was impossible. That's the way the Law is. Grace is different: "I'm going to show you what I want you to do and I'm going to put it in your heart to do it." That's grace. "I'm going to work in you to will and to do" (Ephesians 1:11). See, the Law didn't do that. The Law said, "You better do it or else." And you can't put the "to do" in a person's heart without putting faith in them. ***(Rom.14:10) But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God. (19) So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify*** ("build-up") ***one another***. Paul is talking here about people who are still under the Law, mixing with people who are under grace. At the beginning of the chapter, one man has faith to eat all things and another man is weak in faith and eats only herbs. So Paul is talking about you mixing in with people who have contrary doctrines. ***(Rom.14:19) So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another***. If our attitude is not something that will build one

another up, if it's "let me straighten out your bewildered mind" or "let me help you do right." If that's continually the attitude we have toward people we see who are weak, we're probably going to fail in everything we try to do. It has to be edifying; it has to be building up.

I've run across so many people who have just given up on church but still have in their heart the desire to please God. They're crying down in their soul to please God but they don't know how to do it. They're still kicking themselves. They've been to churches that have kicked them and keep on kicking them. They haven't understood that that's not how grace comes. Grace comes by accepting something that you don't have before you get it. And that is what Jesus did. He gave us acceptance. We need to accept those whom God accepts; otherwise, we're going to bring ourselves under judgment, too. I've often thought, "Lord, how many times in the past have I brought myself under judgment and didn't even know it?" Sometimes people do bring themselves under judgment by judging other people and they don't even know it. I had a good example awhile back. I wasn't agreeing with a fellow who had a particular theology on the Trinity and he went out of here judging me because I wouldn't agree with him on his theology. Then the guy became sick and his paycheck was cut in half, and I know that happened because he was judging me. I've seen this happen quite a few times.

CHAPTER FIVE

Speaking Grace in Love and Faith

How many times has something happened to me or how many times have I become sick or come under some curse in my life because I judged somebody, instead of seeing them the way Jesus wanted me to see them? I can think of another example like the man in the previous chapter. In a church that I was in, there were two ladies who were running around gossiping. So I talked to them in front of another elder but they just jumped right on my case and rebuked me right back. I felt real calm and quiet in my soul, and the Lord spoke to me. He said, “They are going to get sick.” Well, I didn’t say a word back to them and the other elder was there. That night both of those ladies went to the hospital with unrelated illnesses; one of them had migraine headaches and the other one had a kidney infection. And they asked that other elder, “Why did this happen?” The guy had sense enough to say, “Because you rebuked an elder. You judged him and he was right.” We had to pray for both of them and the Lord restored them.

So I’ve thought, “How many times have I done that? How many times has that judgment fallen upon me because I moved people’s eyes off of faith and onto themselves? And because of my condemning them and because of my judging them? How many times have I brought myself under the curse because I didn’t do the work of the Lord?” I did a religious work, alright. I did a religious work but not the work of the Lord. How many times have I done exactly what those two ladies did? They judged me when I was doing the work of the Lord and I knew I was doing the work of

the Lord. But then the Lord judged them for what they did to me, for rebuking an elder. They were judging me and the Lord judged them. They didn't know that they were going to be judged; they didn't know that they were doing wrong. That guy whom I was talking about from the previous chapter never did believe that he was even being judged for what he did. He told another brother he didn't believe that was the reason he became sick and his paycheck was cut in half. You know, it's always a dangerous thing to take it upon yourself to judge anybody whom the Lord has put in authority. Hey, we can be living under a curse right now because of the way we're treating other people, because of the way we're misusing and abusing the Word of God in doing a so-called "work of the Lord." But we're not doing the work of the Lord if we're not putting faith in people's hearts.

Now there is a place for condemnation and I don't want to leave that out. When there is willful disobedience, the blood of Jesus doesn't cover it, the Bible says. ***(Heb.10:26) For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins.*** That is true. But even then, it says, ***ye who are spiritual, restore such a one (Gal.6:1).*** There is no way to restore anybody except they move past a place of condemnation and come into faith because that's the only way to get grace. Without grace, you don't overcome and without faith, you don't get grace. Our prayer should be, "Lord, just give us Your grace to be graceful and preach the good news and bring these poor people out from under the condemnation and judgment of the devil."

You know, I think sometimes we misjudge love. Sometimes we don't necessarily feel what we have called "love,"

that emotional feeling about people. “Love” in the Scriptures, *agape* love, is always tied to obedience. We’re never even asked to *phileo* God; we’re asked to *agape* God. And Jesus said, **“If ye love (agape) me, ye will keep my commandments” (Joh.14:15)**. A proof of Scriptural love is obedience, not the mushy feeling that we get from emotions. The proof that you love God is, “Do you obey Him?” And that’s what we need to pray for, too. We need to ask to be able to love God because if we have that, we’ll obey Him. If we love Him, then we will obey Him. Again, that’s not an emotional love. God doesn’t trust emotions and He doesn’t want us to trust them, either. They’re untrustworthy, they’re physical and of the flesh. They can be used by God and they can be a great blessing, but they can just as easily be used by the devil. And that’s what is so untrustworthy about emotions: they’re schizophrenic. They’re following the Spirit one minute and following the flesh the next. You probably know people who do this with the Lord; it’s because they follow emotions and they’re not stable in the Word. We need to be based on the Word.

Some people claim *phileo* love is a human love but that’s not true. I’ve found places in the Scripture where God *phileo*-loved Jesus and where God *agape*-loved Jesus. So, *phileo* is not just a human love; however, we’re not asked to *phileo* God. We’re asked to *agape* God. That’s the obedience. You can’t make yourself feel mushy and emotional in your heart toward God but you can do that love of obedience, which is what God asks. And just because you don’t feel something, it doesn’t mean it’s not there. That’s why we’re not supposed to be based on feeling, but we’re supposed to be based on the Word. And the more you grow with God, the more He’s going to wean you away from your

feelings and put you on the Rock. The Rock is the Word and emotions have to be the water swirling around the Rock because, I'll tell you, there is nothing stable about them. But God wants to wean us and the more we grow with God, the more we'll be weaned away from feelings and emotions. Some people think that if they don't feel something, they didn't get healed, or if they don't feel something, God didn't hear them. You know, we're not asked to believe any such thing. We're asked to believe, "**All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye received**" (**Mar.11:24**). There is not necessarily any kind of feeling that goes along with that. And, as a matter of fact, the more you grow with God, probably the less you will get feelings because God wants to wean you away from them so that you don't trust in them, so that you don't consider that things are "yea" or "nay" because of your feelings. Did you know God wants us to believe in the Word and trust in the Word? You don't have to feel anything.

You know, there are people who say that you have to have a *rhema* word, you have to have God speak a special word out of the Word to you before you can stand upon it. That's just hogwash! You don't have to do a thing but believe what this Bible says and stand on it. Yes, God can give you a *rhema*, but I tell you, every word in here is a *rhema*, if you are humble to it. That's the whole point: Are you humble to what the Bible says? Does God have to talk to you when He has already talked to you through His Word? Of course, He can do it, but He doesn't have to. He can speak one of these words to you and He can confirm it with a dream or a vision, or He can speak to your heart, but He doesn't have to. Everything in the Bible is *rhema*, if you're humble to it, if you just believe the Word and you stand on the Word, every

word, everything with no feelings, no feelings one way or the other. People who think that they have to have feelings are just wrong. I've proven in my own life that I don't have to feel a thing. I can pray and feel nothing. And even though I just pray and don't feel a thing sometimes, the Word is still true. And if you're dogmatically determined to say that, "Hey, the Word is true and everything else is a lie," just like the Bible says, "**let God be found true, but every man a liar**" (Rom.3:4), then what you've prayed for is going to happen. It'll work; that's all you need. Outside of emotions and feelings, the Word is all you need; stand on the Word. Accept only Scriptural thoughts in your mind; reject everything else that exalts itself against the true knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:5). And resist every temptation to "avenge disobedience" (2 Corinthians 10:6) or to correct people, without the anointing of the Lord.

Now I want to point out something else here, too. The Lord will not ever use you to correct somebody, if you have the same problem that they do. He will not use you. He'll use a person who has overcome in that area to correct that person. But if you have that problem, don't ever think the Lord's going to use you to correct somebody else with it. He's just not going to do it. Be ready "**to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full**" (2Co.10:6). So I'll say it again: If you correct people without the anointing of the Lord, that's judging and being unforgiving, and only God can do that. But God can do it through people and He does do it through people, after He anoints them. In fact, Scripture says it so clearly. (1Co.6:5) ... **What, cannot there be [found] among you one wise man who shall be able to decide between his brethren. (2:15) But he that is spiritual**

judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man. In other words, God can use your spiritual man to speak judgments and He can even use you to unforgive as a ministry for God. Jesus told His disciples that, for the Kingdom of God, **“whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever [sins] ye retain, they are retained” (Joh.20:23)**. Paul didn’t forgive the man who had his father’s wife (1 Corinthians 5:6); Paul threw him out because **“a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1Co.5:6)**. He didn’t forgive him for the Church and the Kingdom’s sake, so we see there is judgment. There has to be judgment. But we have to be careful, though. **(Rom.2:1) Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things. (14:4) Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand.** We have to be careful that we don’t judge unless we are in the Spirit.

(1Ti.5:1) Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father; the younger men as brethren. You know, I don’t think a lot of times people realize that Paul is talking to Timothy there and Timothy was an apostle. A lot of people don’t realize that. Timothy was an apostle, not a pastor. **(1Ti.5:19) Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at [the mouth of] two or three witnesses. (20) Them that sin reprove** (“rebuke” in the *KJV*) **in the sight of all** (again, he was talking to Timothy), **that the rest also may be in fear.** I know that the *King James* says “rebuke not,” and then it turns around

and says “rebuke.” The word for “rebuke” in the Greek is *epiplesso*. *Epi* means “upon” or “at,” and *plesso* means “to strike” or “to smite”; hence, “to rebuke verbally.” That’s the word for “rebuke” in 1 Timothy 5:1. The other one in 5:20 is not “rebuke” at all. In verse 20, it’s the Greek word *elegcho* and it means “to convict, confute, refute.” In other words, it basically means “to exhort” and that’s really what our ministry is. It’s to help people believe what Scripture says. There are a lot of Christians who don’t believe the Gospel because they have no hope and don’t see a way out of their sin. But if you believe the Gospel, there is power there to come out from under sin. So we help people believe the Gospel, the good news that, “Hey! You don’t have to dig your way out or by your own willpower. Come out of there because Jesus already did it!” There is no way to make a person believe but you can speak faith to their heart. I know how I’ve treated myself when I’ve had a problem with unbelief. Instead of studying faith, I’ve repented of my unbelief because it’s a sin. It’s a sin that Jesus took away and I treat it like a sin that Jesus took away. People who can’t get ahold of faith need to be exhorted because a lot of rebuke will just harden their hearts. You can study faith until you are blue in the face, but if you still have the sin of unbelief, you won’t believe it.

The Lord spoke to me one time when I was in a situation where I was preaching faith to a group of people who weren’t catching on to it. The Lord said to me, “You are trying to give them resurrection life before death. What they have to do is repent of unbelief before they can accept faith.” Repentance is death; it’s a dying to self. If you don’t repent, you can’t take hold of resurrection life. Resurrection life is faith. You can preach faith, faith, faith and if it doesn’t go

in, it's probably because of the sin of unbelief. That person has to repent first. That's what we have to do. You know, we have to see that as sin in our life. We have to confess that as a sin, rebuke it from our life as a sin and accept ourselves as delivered because that is what Jesus did. He delivered us.

Another point is that people who have a fear of rejection in their heart rarely confess their sin. They usually try to hide their sins. And again, you can't get power from God that way, so in either case, you have to preach faith and not rejection.

CHAPTER SIX

Grace: the Unconditional, Unmerited Favor

(Luk.9:57) And as they went on the way, a certain man said unto him, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (58) And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven [have] nests (Greek: “lodging places”); but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. (59) And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (60) But he said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God. (61) And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. (62) But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. It’s pretty obvious at a glance that the text is about following the Lord, which is really what the word “disciple” means; it means “follower.” The first man said, “I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,” but then the other two men, instead of following, made the suggestion, “Lord, let me first go do this or that.” I think that’s one of our biggest problems – we have too many distractions. First we want to do this and that, then we will make the Lord, Lord, and then we will listen and humble ourselves. The complaint Jesus had was that “the foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” We are supposed to be the “lodging place”

of the Lord and we are supposed to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2) by taking the head, or lordship, of the Lord.

In our Christian walk, we're learning to come into the place of making Jesus Lord. A lot of people say that they made Jesus Lord at such and such a time, but you know, that's not true. We are making Him Lord as we humble ourselves to Him day-by-day and become disciples or followers. When you make the decision to become a Christian, He is not the Lord or head. The Scripture says, "***the head of every man is Christ*** (meaning He is the ruler or head); ***and the head of the woman is the man***" (1Co.11:3), but obviously we are somewhere in between being the lord ourselves and the Lord being Lord. So Jesus' complaint was that He didn't have a lodging place to lay His head; in other words, to be the Lord of a body of people. But we are growing into that headship. (Eph.4:13) ***Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (14) that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error*** (being led about by different doctrines, instead of being led by the Lord as our head); (Eph.4:15) ***but speaking truth*** (Greek: "being true" ***in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, [even] Christ***. We are growing up in the headship of Christ. In so many ways, we're limited by our understanding and can only follow Him to the extent we have been enlightened. The more we learn to walk by faith, the less we need to be enlightened to fol-

low by faith. You can follow the Lord and not understand the Lord, but some people won't do that. They want to understand before they obey. We're learning to walk by faith after the Lord, even when we don't understand faith and how it works. Faith is blind because you just stand on God's Word without having any natural proof and then you see the natural proof. That's how the walk with the Lord is as we're learning to make Him head and growing up in all things into Him, Who is the head. To the extent that we walk according to our fleshly mind and not after the mind of Christ, we are not holding on to the head.

(Col.2:18) Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, (19) and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God.

The main point here is that if you're puffed up and walking after your fleshly mind, then you're not holding fast the head because the head is the mind of Christ. He is our ruler, our Lord; we are His followers. In a way, we all have to lose our mind. The Bible says, ***“be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom.12:2)***. We have to lose our mind in order to live like Jesus wants us to live or to be a testimony for Him. And if you look at this next verse in a spiritual way, there's a lot of meat and depth there: ***(Rev.20:4) And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God....*** John was imprisoned on the Island of Patmos for the tes-

timony of Jesus and for the Word of God (Revelation 1:9). The Scripture says here that those who rule with Christ on these thrones “are the souls of them that have been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and the word of God.” The Greek word for “testimony” or “witness” is *marturia* in one place and in another it’s *martus*, from which we get the word “martyr.” It just means “an evidence given, a witness or record.” Jesus said, **“but ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses” (Act.1:8)**. That’s not necessarily talking about witnessing out of your mouth, but it is talking about being a witness, or evidence, of Jesus Christ. Remember how the people knew the disciples, even though they were ignorant fishermen? **(Act.4:13) Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.** The disciples were an evidence, a witness and a testimony of Jesus. Here in Revelation, those people who judge on those thrones were “beheaded for the testimony of Jesus.” I think we all have to be beheaded for the witness and testimony of Jesus. There’s a deep parable and revelation here, more than just the physical. We have to be “beheaded for the testimony of Jesus” in order for us to manifest that testimony to this world. We have to “lose” our minds and we have to renew our minds, to **“be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom.12:2)**. So how do we bring that to pass, not only in ourselves, but in the people around us? What can we do to cause one another to make Jesus Lord, make Him our head, and to learn to follow Him withersoever He goest? Jesus didn’t think that was such

an easy thing to do, but we can make it easier for one another and ourselves. Remember, we're talking about Jesus having a place to lay His head and if we aren't disciples, we haven't given Jesus a "lodging place" to lay His head. If we aren't disciples, we aren't going to follow Him whithersoever He goest and we're going to be saying, "First, Lord, let me do this." We'll be putting everything else ahead of the Lord and not letting the Lord be the Lord.

(1Pe.2:2) As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation; (3) if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: (4) unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious. So the Lord Jesus is a living stone. He has been rejected of men but with God is elect and precious. Pay attention to the word "precious" in this chapter.

(1Pe.2:5) Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. As a priest, your spiritual sacrifice is your body because you are making it obey the Lord, not the old man.

(1Pe.2:6) Because it is contained in scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone (Jesus), elect, precious: And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame. (7) For you therefore that believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve, The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner. First of all,

it is the chief cornerstone which is more important than any other cornerstone and is the head of the corner. There is only one kind of building that fits that description and that's a pyramid. The Great Pyramid of Giza, which Jose-

phus said was built by the sons of Enoch, for some reason has the chief cornerstone missing and nobody has ever figured out if it had been put there or not.

The Great Pyramid is a great revelation from God of measurements for the future of mankind. In fact, the word “pyramid” is the Chaldean word *urimidan*, which means “revelation measurements.” Archeologists have actually gone back and looked at the standard measurements given in the walls of the Great Pyramid and predicted history. This was a tremendous revelation given by God to Enoch’s sons about the future. The Great Pyramid went through the flood and didn’t settle 1/100th of an inch. It originally was covered with 144,000 polished white marble stones on the outside, which is a number in the Scriptures. It has a missing chief cornerstone that the builders rejected, which is a type of Jesus. It’s just fantastic what God did there as a witness to mankind. The Bible makes several references to the Great Pyramid, but the main thing I want you to see is that for those who believe, the “preciousness,” “the stone which the builders rejected” is for them. In other words, they have been given the lordship, the headship, the chief cornerstone. For those who disbelieve, He is “the stone which the builders rejected” and they have no head over them. This is talking about Jesus when He was rejected by the builders or leaders of Judaism, the scribes and Pharisees, who rejected His lordship and headship because of their unbelief. They rejected Him because they preached the Law and Jesus preached grace, so Jesus seemed to be against the Law to them. The scribes and Pharisees preached the Law, but Jesus preached grace and those who did believe believed because they received the grace. How can you believe, except if you believe that God has given you grace or favor?

If you think that God is judging you according to the Law, your faith will never get up off the ground. As long as you think that you're not perfect and haven't pleased God, you can't believe God for anything. You can't really make Jesus Lord, as He wants to be, unless you receive grace through faith. If you're condemned because of people preaching the Law, if you're condemned because of receiving a legalistic preaching or message, then you can't have faith, grace or the chief cornerstone. He can't be Lord in your life, if you are going to be led by the Law.

In fact, the Bible tells us that if you seek to be justified by the Law, you are severed, or cut off, from Christ and grace. ***(Gal.5:4) Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace.*** If we're going to bring people around us under the headship of Jesus Christ, we have to preach grace so that they believe. If we believe God is on our side, we can go confidently before the Throne of God and that's what grace is all about – unmerited favor. If His favor is poured out toward you, you can believe that God will want to do something for you, including anything in the Gospel. The problem is that so many times we are thwarted from making Jesus Lord in a certain area in our life because we're feeling condemned due to our failures. But, if we can receive grace through faith, then Jesus can do through us what God did through Him. Many times we think that God couldn't use us the way He used Jesus, but how else can you have a testimony of Jesus? Jesus said, ***“as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Joh.20:21)***. He didn't make any particulars about who could lay hands on the sick or cast out devils; He just said “believe.” He isn't playing favorites and surely He has a certain job for each of us, but

the things that Jesus did, God wants to flow through us to the people around us. The people around us can't receive it, nor can they have faith to cause the miracle to happen, unless we speak that grace into their heart. We're talking about the fact that you don't see any problem in people around you that wouldn't be solved if Jesus would be Lord of their life.

We see people around us who are just bogged-down in difficulties and sins, and if Jesus would be made Lord in that circumstance, they wouldn't have any problems. Yet, what we're seeing here is that Jesus can't be made Lord, except one way, which is by grace through faith. In Zechariah 4, there's another parable that very closely identifies with the parable in 1 Peter 2 about God building this building out of stones and we who are making Jesus Lord are the "stones." We're not talking about those people who won't make Him Lord or are not disciples or followers of Jesus. Those people are led by the Law. There are people who say that Jesus is their Savior but they just go and do their own thing, like in Luke 9. They think that there are things that are more important than making Jesus Lord, so He is not head in their lives. But we are learning to come into His headship. ***(Zec.4:1) And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. (2) And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have seen, and, behold, a candlestick all of gold, with its bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps thereon*** (sounds very similar to the seven lamps that stood for the seven churches, just like these lamps); ***there are seven pipes to each of the lamps, which are upon the top thereof*** (one bowl that feeds these seven lamps); ***(Zec.4:3) and***

two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. Olive oil, of course, is what the lamps commonly burned and the two olive trees signifies what is feeding the Church. ***(Zec.4:4) And I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? (5) Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. (6) Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel ...*** Zerubbabel (meaning “those who were born of Babylon”) and Joshua (meaning “the Lord is salvation”) ended up being the two olive trees. Those two, who were high priests and rulers of the people of God when they were building the city, were being likened by God to the two olive trees that fed the people with the oil. ***(Zec.4:6) Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*** The power of the Law was might, but the power of grace is God’s Spirit because we freely admit that we are not able to fulfill this Covenant without the Spirit moving through us. The power of the Law wasn’t that way and, of course, they failed. This revelation is about grace because it’s “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” ***(Zec.4:7) Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel [thou shalt become] a plain*** (talking about the Kingdom of God; all throughout the Scriptures mountains symbolize kingdoms); ***and he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it.*** Zerubbabel, those who were born from Babylon,

is going to “bring forth the top stone” by shouting to this mountain, shouting and speaking grace, which is going to “bring forth the top stone.” Individually and corporately, it is going to be speaking grace that is going to bring forth the top stone, the head, the chief cornerstone, Jesus. This stone is only going to be brought forth by those who come out of Babylon and speak grace to it. Individually and corporately, if we want to make Jesus Lord in somebody else’s life, we have to put faith in the people around us, not condemnation.

If you have faith in God, Jesus is Lord in your life. The builders’ problem was condemnation. They didn’t understand Jesus’ grace; it was offensive to them and so they rejected the stone. Well, the only way we’re going to bring forth faith in other people is if we give grace to them and the only way we’re going to bring forth grace in people is to give them faith. It’s like a never-ending cycle. James 3:6 talks about how the tongue can set on fire the cycle of life. We have to be able to change other people’s cycles from grace to faith, and faith to grace, instead of curse to curse. We’re still talking about changing our head because we don’t want to be our head anymore; Christ is our head. And we don’t want people around us to walk after the mind of the flesh, but to walk after the mind of the Spirit. The only way we’re going to be able to do this is by getting people to stop looking at themselves and their failures and start looking at the promise. The promise builds them up, causing them to grow and change their life cycle. ***(Eph.4:20) But ye did not so learn Christ; (21) if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: (22) that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth***

corrupt after the lusts of deceit; (Eph.4:23) and that ye be renewed (“changed”) ***in the spirit of your mind,*** (24) ***and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.*** (25) ***Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another*** (we are a corporate building). (26) ***Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*** (27) ***neither give place to the devil.*** (28) ***Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.*** (29) ***Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying*** (“building up”) ***as the need may be*** (“as the need may be” is not in the original, which says, “of the need” because every occasion has a need), ***that it may give grace to them that hear.*** We can give grace to people who hear us and that grace will empower and build them up in whatever their need is. But corrupt speech will cause them to lose their faith in God and cast them down by overcorrecting them.

One time someone had a dream about me where I was screaming at my son, Justin, correcting him, and the Lord allowed me to realize that Justin was very sensitive to correction. I never screamed at Justin that way, but sometimes the Lord will give you a dream and overemphasize an area because that is the way He sees it. Sin to us is one thing, but God sees it as exceedingly sinful if He looks at it as He portrays it. Of course, we are forgiven in Christ and our sins are overlooked in Christ. Well, one day not long after that dream, Justin had pulled up with one foot, trying

to find neutral on his bike, and had the other foot on the ground. But he didn't think to grab the front brake, so he was slowly sliding down the hill while the traffic was coming and I hollered at him to grab his brake. I wasn't mad at him. I was more concerned about him sliding out into the traffic but it really hurt his feelings. Justin's eyes got all watery and I could see his sensitivity to correction. A lot of us have a sensitivity to correction but the longer we grow with the Lord, the more we are able to overcome that. The Lord was showing me in that dream to be careful in correction so I didn't overcorrect and so the problem didn't get worse. You can cause many people to get worse by giving a simple correction because sometimes the Lord shows us things about people but He doesn't necessarily mean for us to correct them or show them what is wrong. I always pray about that because the Lord gives me dreams about people and I ask the Lord if I'm supposed to let the people know about it, or just pray for them. And the Lord is faithful in letting me know what to do.

A lot of people can't receive correction gracefully. There's a way to do it and the Scripture teaches us how to do it, but we have to be careful. Anything that comes out of our mouth that is not building up the need and doesn't give grace to those who hear, is corrupt speech. **(Eph.4:30) And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.** Corrupt speech grieves the Holy Spirit. Corrupt speech is when we don't preach the grace of Jesus Christ but preach the Law instead; it's when we legalistically cast down people and their faith and give them hopelessness. **(Eph.4:31) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all**

malice. What causes us to correct people so much? One reason for us to speak corrupt speech is because we have the wrong emotion in our heart; we have bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, railing, malice or anything like that. That's when we're quick to correct people and direct their eyes onto themselves, rather than the Lord. **(Eph.4:32) *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving*** (In the Greek, this word is *charizomai*, which means "giving grace or favor.") ***each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.*** In other words, you have to be able to forgive before you can correctly deal with somebody around you. That way you can build them up, not to cast them down, and give grace to them so that they can grow. You have to put away "all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing" in order to speak grace and build up the need in that person.

I'm speaking out of experience here. I know this because the family I was raised in continually corrected me until I lost all self-confidence. It was by the grace of God that He brought me out of that, but knowing where I came from, I can see what it does to other people. I know that if you continually look at your problems, lack and failures, you cannot believe that God is having grace toward you and so you can't go boldly before the throne of God to receive the grace that you need. The reason why God told us to go boldly before the throne is that because of the sacrifice, the blood-covering of Jesus, we are accepted. Anything we can do to make the people around us feel accepted by God and go to that throne of grace and receive that help is building up the need and speaking grace. It's placing the cornerstone on that building and helping them make Jesus their Lord. **(Col.4:6) *Let your speech be always with grace*** (In

the Greek this word is *charis*, which means “favor.”), ***seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one.*** Grace can be either human or divine; grace doesn’t come just from God. We can have grace with one another because it means “favor.” There are three words in the Bible that all come from the same root: “Forgiveness” (*charizomai*), “grace” (*charis*) and “giving” or “gift” (*charisma*). They all mean “giving unconditional favor” to someone else, whether it’s from God or you. We unconditionally give favor to people around us; we give grace to them, we forgive them and we give to them. Let the favor show through, “seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one.” You have to be careful because you can use too much salt. Salt will burn if it gets in a wound, but it will also heal it. It’s like the Word of God when you have a problem: it will burn but it will heal.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Manifesting Christ in Us Through Suffering

A lot of people have been going through suffering and the Church is about to go through great suffering. We need to learn how to handle suffering because it's one of God's greatest tools for bringing about the righteousness of Christ in us. **(1Pe.2:18) Servants, [be] in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward** (or "unreasonable"). **(19) For this is acceptable** (Greek: "grace"), **if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully.** It's alright with God for you to endure griefs and suffer wrongfully. **(1Pe.2:20) For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted [for it,] (There's no reward for that, is there?) ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer [for it,] ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable** (Greek: "grace") **with God. (21) For hereunto were ye called** (In other words, you have been called to suffer for doing right.): **because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously.** So Jesus left it all in the Hands of His Father. When He suffered, He didn't threaten.

When you suffer is when your lowest, most base instincts rise up and especially when you're suffering at the hands of another person. All kinds of pride and anger and

rebellion come up in your heart. And it happens in circumstances, too. You become angry at circumstances and you sometimes even become angry at inanimate objects. It's "the stupid vacuum cleaner" or whatever, for example, and then you can get angry when there's nobody else involved. It's just that suffering has a way of bringing out your basest instincts. God is bringing us through suffering because of the lusts of our flesh and just as our example, Christ, suffered for doing good, we are to suffer for doing good, too. **(1Pe.3:14) But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, [blessed are ye:] and fear not their fear, neither be troubled; (15) but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord....** You know, your first temptation when you suffer at the hands of a person or circumstance isn't to make "Christ as Lord" in your heart. It's every other fleshly desire that comes up first. But Jesus "committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" when He was suffering. In other words, He wasn't thinking of taking vengeance; He wasn't falling into the flesh; He was leaving it up to God. And Peter tells you the same thing, to "sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord."

(1Pe.4:1) Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind.... Do you have a mind like that? No. Our mind is to run from any kind of suffering in the flesh, isn't it? Our mind is to avoid it at all cost. You know, the thing we need the most, the thing we run from the most, is suffering. Christians in America especially need suffering and suffering is coming. It's coming because God wills it and it's coming because people need to be delivered from their selfish interests, their self-centeredness. Suffering has a way of delivering you from self-centeredness. **(1Pe.4:1) Foras-**

much then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.

When your flesh is suffering, it's because it's not getting its way. When it's not getting its way, it's because you're not sinning. It's so simple, isn't it? When the old man's not getting his way, you're not sinning and so we're called to suffer in the flesh. Jesus left us an example to suffer in the flesh. We want to avoid it at all cost and yet suffering is our most precious friend. ***(1Pe.4:2) That ye no longer should live the rest of your time in flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.*** You need suffering so that you can live the rest of your life free from the bondage of the flesh, a servant of Jesus. That's why you need suffering. That's why you need suffering in the flesh. When you understand God's purposes in suffering, that makes it a lot easier for you to endure. And, when you see the purpose behind it, you're not so deceived by Satan into wrestling with flesh and blood, or into blaming, or into anger, or whatever.

(1Pe.4:12) Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you.... You see, that's the problem. When we fall into the midst of suffering, we think it's strange. We think there's something not quite right about it, but we need to change our mind about that. We need to have the mind that was in Christ; we need to expect that we're going to suffer for the name of Christ. What I mean by "suffer for the name of Christ" is suffering so that His nature, which is what "name" means, can be manifested in you. That's what it's all about. And it comes upon you to prove you, to perfect you, to purify you. ***(1Pe.4:12) Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you,***

which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: (13) but in-somuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy. If you can manage to rejoice in the midst of suffering, it will be a lot easier. So as the Bible commands us, let us ***rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh stedfastness*** (“perseverance”) (***Rom.5:3***); ***(4) and stedfastness, approvedness*** (“character”); ***and approvedness, hope***. All these things come from rejoicing in tribulation. We’re commanded to rejoice, so “that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy.” This is what suffering is all about: to bring about the revelation, or revealing, or the manifestation, of the glory of God in us.

The Scripture goes on to say that, ***“if ye are re-proached for the name of Christ, blessed [are ye]”*** (***1Pe.4:14***). ***(19) Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.*** You’re like the clay in the Creator’s hands (Romans 9:21) when you do this. It says “Creator” for a purpose because that’s how God creates in us the righteousness of Christ. You know, suffering can be wasted. In the midst of suffering or a trial, you need to commit your soul in well-doing, in doing what is right, in the midst of that trial. Otherwise, you can be wasting the suffering. The suffering is coming upon you for a reason and the reason is to refine you and to bring about the righteousness of Christ in you, but you can waste that suffering. I tell you, one thing I don’t want to do is waste any suffering because I don’t want to go through

it again. We need to make it all useful in God's Kingdom and the way to make it useful is to commit your soul in well-doing in the midst of it. You can't stop the suffering but we can do what's right in the middle of it. **(1Pe.5:8) *Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (9) whom withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world.*** The world suffers with the same things we suffer with, but here's the difference: **(1Pe.5:10) *And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you.*** God's promise is that He will perfect you through suffering. If you look on suffering as God's method of perfecting you, that makes it much easier to take, doesn't it? And it also makes you not so willing to run out of it or run away from it. As I said, the thing we need the most is the thing that we run from, that we seek to avoid the most. But, if you have a mind to please the Lord in the midst of suffering, if you have a mind to live Godly, first of all, you're going to suffer. **(2Ti.3:12) *Yea, and all that would live godly (those who desire to live godly) in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*** And not only persecution. Persecution is just one area of suffering. Those who desire to live godly are going to suffer; you cannot avoid it. It's God's method of deliverance. It's God's method of setting us free.

You know, I remember a guy from when I used to work at Exxon years ago, back before I was a Christian. He was a tool man in one of the tool trailers that they hauled over to turnarounds. Whenever they were overhauling a section of

the plant, they would pull one of these big tool trailers over there and they would station a man in the trailer who would give out tools. And, of course, there were several men who worked in those trailers but this one particular man really stuck in my mind because I never could understand him before I became a Christian. He was a well-hated person throughout the plant and it wasn't because he was evil. He was the most diligent worker at that time whom I had ever seen. He was righteous; he would actually check the tools out, since they had to keep records, so that the plant would be sure to get their tools back. Otherwise, if they just gave you the tool, you might take it home with you. And a lot of people did. And I did it myself, too, in those days. So we used to love to get a tool trailer men who would just hand the tools over and not do the regulation thing of signing you out and putting your name down. A lot of the tool trailer people were "good ol' boys" who enjoyed being liked and respected by the men, so they would do that and especially for their buddies. A lot of tools ended up at people's houses and most everybody out there had a wonderful set of tools. (I actually brought my set of tools back years later after I came to the Lord.) Anyway, this guy's name was Major Pace. I'll never forget him. He was just so diligent. You couldn't get the guy to be emotional one way or the other. You couldn't get him to laugh, but you couldn't get him to cry and he never cursed. He never told ugly jokes like the rest of the guys. He was just diligent in doing his job. If you needed something, he wouldn't be sitting there chatting with you (SLANG) and doing other things. No, he'd run back there and get it, and he'd put it in your hands. He was as quick as he could be and did his job right.

But everybody hated him. When we'd go up to the tool

trailer and we'd see Major Pace stick his hand out, we would cuss because everyone wanted to get their tools for nothing. You'd either go put them in your tools and the company didn't know you had them or else you'd take them home; one or the other, you know. So everybody cursed the poor guy and I'm sure he heard people do it. I wondered as I studied this guy, even while I was still a heathen, "What makes this guy tick? He's so diligent and what he does is right." I never heard him cuss. I never heard him say anything about the Lord, but he did things right and he suffered for doing things right. He suffered the loss of friendship among the people for doing things right. There was another Christian, by the way, who worked in the tool trailer and he liked being a "good ol' boy." He liked to be accepted. He handed tools out to his friends and he knew they were going to take them home. He even handed them to me. So he knew what was going to happen to those tools but he didn't do what was right and he didn't suffer. Now Major Pace did what was right and he suffered for it. This thought came to me one time: "I wonder if it was his training in the military that gave him this diligence?" But a lot of people who come out of the military just go back to their old ways, don't they? But then I found out one day, I think, what made Major Pace that way and, besides, I have a sneaking hunch that he was a Christian. You know, when he left work he went home to an invalid wife. He spent the rest of his day cleaning his house, doing things that needed to be done, taking care of his wife who couldn't walk or even get out of bed. And he did this year after year. He suffered in this way for many years and I suspect that suffering put such peace in him that he didn't mind if people didn't like him, as long as he was doing what was right for the Lord.

Of course, as a heathen, I couldn't understand what made the man tick. What would drive a man to do what was right when everyone hated him for it? It was suffering; I'm convinced it was suffering. Have you ever seen, for instance, a hen-pecked husband who has been that way for many years? Have you ever noticed how easy and docile that person can be? It's what they've had to put up with, maybe a nagging wife, for all those years, that made them that way. It was suffering that made them that way. I never knew if she was a Christian or not, but I once lived next door to a lady whose husband was very domineering and overbearing. And she was just as humble and submissive as can be. He would holler at her to get something and she would circle off and go get it, not saying a word. She probably ended up being that way in self-defense; it was either war or that method that she chose. What made her humble and submissive? Now I'm not even saying that she was a Christian, but you know, suffering works even in the natural world, doesn't it? What made her that way? It was suffering that made her that way.

Why do you think the Lord tells us to **“resist not him that is evil” (Mat.5:39)**? I'll tell you what, if you do that, you'll suffer, won't you? You'll suffer internally and you'll suffer externally. First of all, you'll suffer internally because when you “resist not him that is evil,” every lust of your flesh is going to rise up on the inside of you. You know what I'm talking about; it happens, doesn't it? You suffer. You suffer on the inside and you'll even suffer on the outside. For example, I've had people rebuke me because I wouldn't do something to somebody that they thought I should've done as payback. Have you ever had that happen? I've had employees working for me who wanted me

to do something to so-and-so and they were really angry with me and fell out with me, not wanting to talk to me anymore. You'll suffer inside and out that way, when you "resist not him that is evil." God designed His commandments and His principles so that they'd cause you to suffer. If you obey God's Word and sanctify in your heart Christ as Lord in the midst of that suffering, you are going to bear the pain of that in your flesh; you're going to feel it in your flesh.

The Christian church has made a big thing out of martyrdom and rightly so because martyrdom is a big thing. But what do you think is greater: to have a sudden end of your life for standing up for Jesus or to go through a slow process of death because you're continually standing up for Jesus? For example, faithfully bearing with some unthankful, obnoxious children for a number of years. You know what that brings? A slow death. It is suffering that brings death. Or how about an abusive husband? You put up with that for years and you stayed faithful to the Lord in that. Well, that suffering is going to bring about a death in you. Or it can be a nagging wife, or obnoxious neighbors, or whatever; it doesn't matter. That's your opportunity right there. It can be circumstances, continual circumstances that keep coming against you. You know how your frustrations rise up when this breaks or that breaks and you get angry, and so on and so forth. That's your opportunity right there. That suffering has come in order to work Christ in you, in order to bring the glory of God in you. That's what it's all about; that's what it's for. Some people think that families were made just to bring pleasure. I think families were made to bring tribulation. You know the old saying, "Familiarity breeds contempt"? Well, people really "let down their hair" when they're with their family, more so than with other

people. And your “real you” comes out more there, too, but that’s the very place where you should be suffering by denying yourself, by giving up your self-centeredness. God designed the family as a microcosm of this world. Everything you can find out there in the world, you can find in your family. The same kind of tribulation out there, you can find in your family, except your family knows you really well, so that makes tribulation even more possible.

I think that God has designed everything, even sickness. You say, “Wait a minute, David! The Lord designed healing!” That’s true. But we don’t have to take redemption at the expense of suffering and we don’t have to take suffering at the expense of redemption because they work hand-in-hand. You may have faith that God has healed you at Calvary and between here and when your healing manifests, there may be some suffering. It’s during that suffering where you’ll have a chance to deny or accept Christ and His ways. You can patiently take suffering, rejoicing like the Scripture tells you, or you can fail in it, all the time believing that you’re healed. And if you believe that you’re healed, healing is going to come. But what about the poor brother and sister who don’t believe that they’re healed? Have you ever seen people like that, who’ve suffered years and years in sickness? It works peaceable fruit in them, doesn’t it? Even though they don’t believe God’s healed them, it works peaceable fruit in their lives because suffering does a lot more than bring you to healing; suffering delivers you from all the lusts of the flesh. So when a person becomes sick, don’t think that it’s just so they can have faith and so they can be called righteous, in order to get their healing because there are a lot of other things involved. You know yourself that you can believe God for healing and it may happen in

days, hours, immediately, or it may take years but God still expects you to confess what the Word says while you're suffering and it's hard to do, isn't it? But He expects you to do that. Don't think that the person who suffered and never expects to be healed, don't think that they're not going to receive fruit from that because they are. If they go through that faithfully, if they learn patience in that, then God will bless them in that.

There are all kinds of suffering because there are all kinds of flesh that needs to be sacrificed. The only thing I'm saying is, don't waste your suffering. Don't waste the suffering that you go through on self-pity, or animosity, or anger, or rebellion. Especially don't waste the suffering that you go through on rebellion. Let me tell you what the first rebellion is that you have when you go through suffering. You run from it. You want to run. Jesus didn't do that. When Jesus was going to the cross, He said, "***father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done***" (Luk.22:42). The cup of what? The cup of suffering. Jesus wasn't going to take it away. Jesus wasn't going to run from it. But He said, "Father, if it's Your Will, take it away." Finally, He came to the revelation that it wasn't God's Will to take away the cup of suffering. Jesus went through it patiently. He didn't stand up for Himself. He, "***when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously***" (1Pe.2:23). He just put Himself in the Lord's Hands and He suffered patiently. That's suffering that's not wasted. Suffering that's wasted is if you act in the flesh in the midst of it. That's wasted suffering. You know why? Because it's just coming around again. Jesus didn't waste suffering. All

of His suffering was useful and that's what we want. We want the suffering that we're going through and the suffering that we're going to go through, to all be useful, to all have a positive outcome in our life. We need to stop and think. We need to have the mind of Christ. **(1Pe.4:1) *Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.*** **(1Jn.1:9) *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*** So you get a cleansing either way. If you're humble enough to confess your sins, He is faithful enough to cleanse you of all unrighteousness. You're going to get your cleansing; have faith in that.

You cannot waste suffering in depression and self-pity, if you're rejoicing. You can't do both at the same time; that's why He commands you to rejoice in the midst of suffering. He says to rejoice and He says to give thanks. And if you realize what suffering is for, then you can give thanks because it is for your perfecting. Jesus became perfect through the things that He suffered (Hebrews 5:8). **(1Jn.3:16) *Hereby know we love (agape), because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*** This is your old life. This is the lusts of the flesh. This is your anger. This is your resentment. This is your rebellion, etc. This is what you're laying down and this is *agape*. It is *agape* to lay that down. It says, "Hereby we know *agape* (love), because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." *Agape* love lays down its life. You know what? *Agape* is the opposite of the flesh-life. Love is the opposite of the flesh-life. Let me prove that to you. For instance, the Bible says, "***beloved,***

let us love (agape) one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God” (1Jn.4:7). You want to know what it is to be “born again”? If you *agape*, that’s born again. If you don’t *agape*, you’re not born again – not in that area, anyway. Everybody who *agape* loves is born of God and knows God. If you don’t *agape*, you don’t know God.

What is this *agape*? Well, first of all, this *agape* is God. ***(1Jn.4:8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*** *Agape* is God. Now let me show you what else *agape* is. ***(1Jn.5:3) For this is the love (agape) of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*** So here you have *agape*. *Agape* is God and it’s obeying the Word. Who is the Word? God. Obedience to the Word, submission to the Word, that is love. That is *agape* love. *Agape* is different from the other two common types of love: *eros* which is sexual love and *philos* which is a friendship-kind of love. Both of those are contingent upon other people’s activity toward you, but *agape* is not, It’s only contingent upon the life of Christ on the inside of you. You can *agape* somebody who doesn’t even like you. *Agape* is not emotion. Sexual love and friendship love can be emotion and emotion is very unstable. But *agape* is not emotion. Don’t worry about feeling really emotional about loving God. He has commanded you to *agape* Him and *agape* is obedience to the Word. Jesus said, ***“if ye love (agape) me, ye will keep my commandments” (Joh.14:15).*** And He also said, ***“if a man love (agape) me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him” (23).*** Here’s another verse that says the same thing: ***(2Jn.1:6) And this is love (agape), that we should walk after his command-***

ments.... This is *agape*, this is love. *Agape* is obeying the Word of God. You know, *agape* is the only love that you have to learn. You have to learn to obey God, so you learn *agape*. *Agape* is bringing your old man to the cross; it's laying down your life for other people; it's giving up your self-centeredness (1 John 3:16). All that is *agape*.

You understand now why Peter couldn't give what the Lord wanted him to give in John 21:16 when the Lord asks Peter, "lovest thou me?" The Lord was asking, "Do you *agape* me, Peter?" Now think about it. Peter had just come through the biggest failure in his life, or at least he thought so, because he denied the Lord three times (John 18:27). He failed completely to obey, to humble himself to what was right. And after this failure, the Lord asks Peter, "**Simon, [son] of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (phileo meaning "friendship") thee" (Joh.21:15).** Peter knew that he couldn't confess to being obedient, to loving the Lord enough to be obedient to what was right because he had just failed the Lord. And I'm sure he was having to overcome this weakness in himself; he had lost his self-confidence. I'll bet before he lost his self-confidence that he would've said, "Oh, yes, Lord, I *agape* you." In fact, in a way, he did. He said, "**even if I must die with thee, [yet] will I not deny thee" (Mat.26:35).** He believed that he could obey of himself, but after that, he lost all of his self-confidence and he wasn't even willing to speak the word "agape." The Lord asked him three times, "Do you *agape* me?" But Peter said, "I *phileo* You," and it grieved Peter. Why do you think Peter was so grieved? He was feeling condemnation by the fact that he knew he couldn't; he knew he hadn't been able to *agape* the Lord. You know

what? Peter was learning through suffering to *agape*. We become perfect. What is perfect? Perfect is obeying the Word, isn't it? And perfect is *agape*. We learn to *agape* obeying the Word through suffering. *Agape* comes from the inner nature of the spiritual man and it is conquering the carnal man; it is giving up your life (1 John 3:16). Suffering brings about this *agape* love. *Agape* is the nature; it is the way of God's Kingdom. If that is God and what we're looking for is godliness, then we can't help but be, as an end result, *agape*. We can't help but be love.

In fact, you'll know that love is nothing less than obedience. It's not mushy feelings; it's just obedience. When Paul described *agape*, he said it's more important than speaking in tongues, more important than knowledge, more important than faith. In fact, he said if you had these things but didn't have love, you were nothing. **(1Co.13:1) *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. (2) And if I have [the gift of] prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. (3) And if I bestow all my goods to feed [the poor], and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.*** The end result of everything that God wants to do in you is *agape*. He said, ***“but now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love”*** (1Co.13:13). The most important, the thing that's going to get you into God's Kingdom, is love. **(1Co.13:4) *Love suffereth long*** (How do you get longsuffering? That's right, you suffer a long time. You get longsuffering by going through a lot of suffering with peo-

ple and circumstances; otherwise, you aren't going to get it. There's no other way.), **[and] is kind; love envieth not** (Why? Because self is the opposite of *agape*.); **love vaunteth not itself** (In other words, it doesn't put itself forward; it's not self-centered or egotistical.), **is not puffed up, (1Co.13:5) doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked ...** How do you stop being provoked? You become hardened to being provoked by having an opportunity over and over again to be provoked. You suffer with it so long that you give up. You overcome by degrees; this failure is not as bad as the last failure. And overcoming is that way quite often, you know, because you didn't fail God quite as bad this time as you did last time. But suffering can last for years, if you don't jump out of the fire, if you aren't like Ephraim, a cake unturned (Hosea 7:8). If you stay in the fire, suffering can still last for years. But by this repetitive thing that keeps coming against you, you can become hardened to your bad reaction to it. All you have to do is desire to please the Lord and, I guarantee you, you're going to overcome. It's not always like you want, overnight. It's not always that way, but I can tell you, eventually, if you desire to please the Lord in suffering, you eventually will. Suffering does that kind of work on you; that's why we're not going to escape it. Nobody's going to escape suffering. **(1Co.13:5) Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; (6) rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; (7) beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (8) Love never faileth....** Now that's a weapon! Never fails. Love never fails. What I'm calling "love" is what the

apostle just got through telling you is “love.” Love is obeying the Word of God; this is love. *Agape* is not the mushy feelings of *eros* or *phileo*; *agape* is just obeying. Feelings will come later. If you want emotional feelings toward God, well, then, *agape* Him. Believe me, your emotions are out of control and they’re more subject to the flesh than they are to the Spirit. You just keep following the Lord and the Lord will bring your emotions to serve Him, but it doesn’t happen at the first; it happens in the end. Obey first; let the emotions follow the Spirit.

What does he mean by “believeth all things”? I guess it’s not being willing to think the worst of someone. You know, you can always try to think that somebody has a good motive for what they’re doing. It’s easier to think that than to always think the worst because, of course, you’re going to deal falsely with people if you always think the worst of them. You’re not going to be able to deal with them correctly. You’re not going to be able to turn the other cheek. It’s best just to “think on these things.” ***(Php.4:8) Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*** Paul says it is better to just “think on these things” because you can deal with people like that. If you’re meditating on what is evil about them, you’re going to fail in your reaction to who they are.



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