

North Christian Church -

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11/6/16 - The "Difficult" Passages - Grace and Works -
Part 17

The Essence of God

When we think of God, we must think of His activities and His will as absolutely the same. We must also recognize that all of His attributes function synchronously at all times. Therefore, we should avoid using words like "can't" or "must" in favor of "won't" or "desires", respectively.

The Essence of God

If we observe God through a finite lens (mankind's), we often inadvertently put Him into a struggle with Himself. However, if we seek His perspective, we observe that it's by the very will of God that things happen. God never contends with Himself.

The Essence of God

To say that God's grace somehow "overrides" His justice, or vice versa, is to presuppose that one of His attributes has tension with another. This is never true. Man is the one with such internal struggles (ala Ro 7) - we mustn't ascribe such things to God.

The Essence of Man

Egocentrism precludes its host from being objective about God. An egocentric person is an arrogant person who demands the world be "known" from their perspective.

The Early Signs

All infants are egocentric. They are born fleshly. They demand that the rest of the world exist to serve them. They expect that everyone else sees things the way they do (that they are the center of the Universe). Infants then grow up!

Ecc 1:9

*That which has been is that which will be,
And that which has been done is that which will be done.
So there is nothing new under the sun.*

Your Perspective

Since life preexists you, your personal perspective on it cannot possibly be the

source of wisdom. True wisdom is from above, given to us through the Word and the Spirit. Stubborn egocentrism frustrates our receiving such things.

The Essence of God

The essence of God is offensive to the person averse to ALL of His grace. They say things like, "How can a loving God crush His own Son...or ANY human being for that matter?" This is a person who doesn't understand God, or His love.

God Is Immutable

- Heb. 13:8-9a Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings.

- Jas 1:17b ...the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

Step Back

Stop being so mechanical. Start focusing on God, Himself, instead of His attributes or even His commands as individual, bitwise, categorical doctrines. Instead of thinking of "assembly lines and gears", think of synchronicity and "being".

Grace Perspective

God's grace is what's best FOR you, not TO you (not what you think). When perceived as for you, you understand that His will is done. However, when perceived as to you, you understand (falsely) that your will be done.

A Broken Clock...

Even a broken clock is correct twice a day. A person can sometimes be correct, but for the wrong reason. Just because your will happens to align with God's will doesn't mean you are righteous.

Wholly Different Perspectives

A righteous person seeks to reconcile to God's perfect will. An unrighteous person desires that God's will reconcile to their own.

On Life and Death

If God makes us alive in Christ, we can never die again, can we? ("How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" (Ro 6:2)! A gospel that subtracts from God's will/grace at salvation "leaves room" for "believers" living in sin after "salvation".

On Life and Death

Man seeks to impose His will over God's. He wants God to accommodate him, and then call it "grace". But you see, that's not God's grace at all, it's a perversion! God's grace accommodates His perfect righteousness, to His glory.

Grace and Works

Man is born egocentric...so much so that he supposes his own definition of salvation is the one that needs satisfying. The only way to construct such a salvation is to suppose his own definition for grace. As grace goes, so goes his definition for what grace produces, namely works. The whole system is a perversion.

Grace and Works

It's impossible to understand "works" in the Bible if your concept of grace is limited. A limited viewpoint means a limited perspective, which can only lead to confusion. This confusion is NOT from God (1Co 14:33), nor is any pain involved in extracting it the "surgeon's" fault.

Grace and Works

Any confusion about works is preceded by confusion about grace!

Grace and Works

Anytime God's grace is reduced in scope and effect, it actually perverts the Gospel of Jesus Christ, manufacturing a different "gospel". This false gospel may proclaim "grace" because it is more accommodating, but it's a deceptive trap.

Grace and Works

If your version of "grace" doesn't include all facets of God's plan for salvation, then your Gospel is surely suspect. By grace, God reveals fallen man's darkness/sin to the unbeliever, for that man cannot see out of darkness. Only the Light from God can illumine/quicken man's perspective, by grace. This is the beginning of God's plan for salvation.

Satan hates grace because it leaves no room for arrogance.

Misdirection

Satan has done a masterful job of sowing misdirection, even from pulpits, resulting in folks "asking the wrong questions!" The question we ought to be asking folks is "WHAT do you believe?", not "DO you believe?" The focus of contemporary Christianity is WRONG!!!

Misdirection

Many "Christians" believe that salvation by grace means a free ride out of Hell and to Heaven <- that is their "gospel". Jesus taught, as did His disciples, that His Gospel was salvation from sin. The prior is an incomplete, emasculated version of grace - certainly not the grace that Jesus embodies (Jn 1:14).

Misdirection

You might ask, "How does Satan pull this off?" Easy, he deceives the masses the way he deceived Eve "from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (2Co 11:3). He "leads astray" (phtheiro = "corrupts") the person of Jesus, leading to "another jesus" (2Co 11:4). He undermines Jesus by spoiling grace.

Jesus' Gracious Words

Jesus was perfectly gracious when He said, *"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men"* (Mt 4:19). Likewise, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me"* (Mk 8:34). Both statements are equally gracious! Jesus could never say anything inconsistent with His own nature.

Jesus' Gracious Words

By grace, at salvation, YOU have been given a new nature. Like Jesus' perfect nature, your new nature cannot say/do anything inconsistent with grace! Your old nature is just the opposite, hence Paul's own admission of his struggle between

the two in Ro 7.

The New Creature

A true believer, a person who has been saved by grace through faith, has been made "new". This new nature is a partaker of the divine nature of Jesus Christ. This is a grace gift given at salvation, or not at all. It is not something a person chooses after being saved; for that supposition implies a person has not been truly saved from sin (Ro 6:2).