

North Christian Church -

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10/2/16 - The "Difficult" Passages - Grace and Works -

Part 2

J. Gresham Machen

It is quite inconceivable that a man should be given this faith in Christ, that he should accept this gift which Christ offers, and still go on contentedly in sin. For the very thing which Christ offers us is salvation from sin-not only salvation from the guilt of sin, but also salvation from the power of sin.

J. Gresham Machen

The faith of which Paul speaks is, as Paul himself says, a faith that works through love; and love is the fulfilling of the whole law. . . . The faith that Paul means when he speaks of justification by faith alone is a faith that works.

"I am He"

"He" is not actually part of the original language in Jn 8:24. The original translates plainly, "I AM", which has great Hebrew theological significance; it means Jesus is God. If this is true, the Jews were in a quandary, for they thought Jesus a liar (God cannot lie).

Confusion Regarding Salvation

Satan, the great attorney, has done a great job at turning so-called "Christianity" into a 3-ring circus. People are fundamentally confused about grace and therefore about Jesus, Himself, and God's plan for salvation.

The Great Perversion

That salvation is "from Hell". The truth is that grace saves (delivers) a person "from sin". Sin is the real issue, not Hell. Hell is a destination for those remaining "in their sins" because they rejected God's grace. God's grace includes ALL aspects of deliverance from sin, spiritual death, and its dominion over all humans born into it.

The Great Perversion

As a result of this perversion, many have believed that "grace" is merely a free trip to Heaven, and their gratitude should be focused on the fact that they "won't be

going to Hell". In reality, God's grace is much, much greater!

True Grace

The Lord is able, not only to pluck you from eternity in Hell, but more importantly, from the throes of spiritual death, as all are born in sin (1Co 15:22). His grace delivers you completely from the sovereignty of sin to the sovereignty of righteousness. It's impossible to remain "in sin" and claim Jesus as Lord as these are mutually exclusive realities.

The Gospel

The good news about God's plan to save us FROM SIN. We are not "saved from Hell", strictly speaking, as that is not the key problem statement. We are not born "in Hell", we are born "in sin". If we don't accept God's grace, we will "die in our sins" (Jn 8:24).

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!!!

The Gospel

The real question we ought to be asking people we are trying to evangelize is, "If you believe that Jesus is the Savior, what is it, exactly, that He has saved you from?" An "I don't know" or "from Hell, of course!" answer may be cause for concern.

Paul, the Gospel, and Grace

While the specifics, and more poignantly, the application, of grace were certainly different, the fundamental premise of grace, especially regarding the Gospel of Jesus Christ, never changed! Paul defended grace against outside perversions with the tenacity of a lion because he knew its import to the Gospel.

Jesus, the Gospel, and Grace

The Bible does not record Jesus, in His incarnation, as using the word "grace". Does this mean we ought to suppose the Creator of the Universe doesn't understand grace? As the Spirit's been teaching us, we ought never hang our hats on word-studies in the Bible.

Learning Grace

Ask yourselves, who did Jesus' disciples learn grace from, including Paul? Answer: JESUS!!! To suggest that Jesus somehow didn't teach grace is to suggest that His own disciples invented it on their own.

The Holy Spirit

Jesus promised His Spirit to His own. That is grace. His Spirit teaches and reminds His disciples of Jesus' words. That is grace. The "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22-23) includes peace (v27). That is grace. The Spirit and Jesus share the same objectives.

The Spirit, the Gospel, and Grace

If you are saved, you are "in the Spirit". This is the same "Spirit of God" and the "Spirit of Christ". This Spirit is a gift to believers, and every gift from above is perfect, with "no variation or shifting shadow" (Jas 1:17). The Spirit will always teach grace wholly and the Gospel consistently.

True Grace

Jesus didn't just teach grace, He embodied it. He is the representative work of grace in the flesh. He is our prototype "end goal" concerning our own maturity towards grace (Jn 1:14; Ro 8:29a).

Mt 7:24 ff

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock..."

1Co 3:10

According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

Grace

True grace is evidenced through good works. Merely understanding the "blueprints" of grace is not the same as actually possessing grace and realizing it through experience ("grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ" - Jn 1:17).