

# North Christian Church -

## Pastor Ed Collins

[www.nccdighton.org](http://www.nccdighton.org)

10/4/16 - The "Difficult" Passages - Grace and Works -

### Part 3

#### **J. Gresham Machen**

*Faith is the acceptance of a gift at the hands of Christ. . . . It is a very wonderful thing; it involves a change of the whole nature of man; it involves a new hatred of sin and a new hunger and thirst after righteousness. Such a wonderful change is not the work of man; faith itself is given us by the Spirit of God. Christians never make themselves Christians; but they are made Christians by God. . . .*

#### **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 very thing that the Christian does, therefore, is to keep the law of God; he keeps it no longer as a way of earning his salvation-for salvation has been given him freely by God-but he keeps it joyously as a central part of salvation itself.*

#### **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**

Today's so-called grace gospel muddies the waters, because it allows for inconsistencies between proclaimed faith and actions. It compromises God's

grace, supposing it possible that God's grace isn't effective in the lives of some "believers".

### **1Co 14:33**

*for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.*

### **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.

### **Confusion Regarding Salvation**

The epistles support and complement the Gospel given by Jesus Himself, not the other way around! What a shame to minimize our Lord's own words and declarations regarding His Gospel, putting them in the background to keep an accommodating version of the gospel.

### **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.

### **John 5:24 NIV**

*"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

### **The Sovereignty of Jesus**

Believers are happy to be under His sovereignty, because they have reconciled that He rescued them from sin, and certain death.

### **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).

### **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).

### **Grace in Action**

In three years, the Lord showed His disciples more grace than He ever could have taught them in a classroom. Jesus "embodied" grace. His life was God's love, front and center, as alive and active as could be. Their lives were changed forever, not because of book knowledge, but because they were shown how to live, how to fish, and how to love.

### **Grace in Action**

The believer builds his house on the Rock, Jesus Himself, following the examples of His grace. The unbeliever builds on the sand, trying his own ways for salvation, relying on self for happiness and even eternal life. Mat 7:21-27

**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).