

North Christian Church -

Pastor Ed Collins

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10/30/16 - The "Difficult" Passages - Grace and Works -

Part 14

God Saves, Man Resists

"Then who can be saved?...With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Mt 19:25-26). The attitude of humility and surrender is hard to come by because the flesh resists such things.

God IS Grace

The concept of grace is fundamental, not only to the Gospel, but to God, Himself.

Humility

God loves humble creatures, and He graces them out! Knowing this is wisdom, given by grace. (e.g.: Pr 8:17; 11:27)

"prove yourselves"

refers to James' emphasis on truly saved people "being doers" not just those who "do" something, like those who are "merely hearers" who "delude" themselves (miscalculate the way professing, unsaved "Christians" do)

"Your will be done"

One of Satan's greatest devices is to get even believers to question the simplicity of actually "doing" God's will. He uses misdirection, inserting an unholy disrespect for the plainness of "walking" for His purposes, in the way in which believers are created to do!

Humility

If a man is humble, God will HELP him! This pattern begins at salvation and continues through all "phases" of sanctification. The very first spark of humility is understanding that God is sovereign and holy, and man is not.

True Humility

If a person is able to stand in front of God and not be humbled by His sovereignty, that person does not fear God the way they should. They are arrogant, the antithesis of humble. That person is "without excuse" (ala Ro 1:20).

Jas 4:6b [Message]

..."God goes against the willful proud; God gives grace to the willing humble."
"Willful" implies "full of human will", which points to the flesh "doing"; whereas, "willing" implies "not already full, but open to being filled", which points to the humble.

Able Versus Avail-able

Only God can make us able, for He is able to do so. We can only avail ourselves to His sovereign will (we are avail-able). Humility is tantamount to availability. This is how grace works.

*** Avail diagram ***

Able Versus Available

The greatest example we have in our lives is that God is able to save us, in every sense of the word, but we are not. We can only be willingly available (aka humble).

Able Versus Avail-able

God's good work ALWAYS results in ROI. He "opens a brand new investment account" when He saves someone. That new "account" WILL have a return (Lk 19:12-27), though it may vary (Mt 13:8). A person who does NOT bear any ROI (a person who never bears ANY fruit) represents an UNSAVED person in both parables.

Rev 3:15-17 [Message]

"I know you inside and out, and find little to my liking. You're not cold, you're not hot-far better to be either cold or hot! You're stale. You're stagnant. You make me want to vomit. You brag, 'I'm rich, I've got it made, I need nothing from anyone,' oblivious that in fact you're a pitiful, blind beggar, threadbare and homeless."

Two Gospel Perversions

People talk about "adding to salvation" (faith + works = salvation), pointing to legalism. But, how often does anyone talk about the other Gospel perversion, "subtracting from salvation" (faith - [God's] works = salvation), pointing to religions that actually SUBTRACT some of God's grace in saving man? (Deu 4:2)

The "other" Gospel Perversion

This theology, "subtracting from salvation", supposes that God actually does LESS than He does when He saves a person.

Perversion Means Unrighteousness

Anytime we misappropriate Holy Scripture, it is no longer holy. In fact, we have taken something perfect and perverted it. Since God's Word is perfect, the perversion is not. Any derivative of such a perversion is also no longer righteous.

The Flesh Merely "on hold"

By subtracting from God's plan for salvation, Satan has managed to propagate a perverted gospel, where "believers" are saved from the penalty of sin, but nothing practical. It supposes that man later decides, for himself (as if he has the right), on the issue of the sovereignty of sin. If this were true, God didn't really "save" them from sin, itself.

Two Great Mistakes

Man is notoriously good at dismissing that which he cannot see. He cannot see God, so he assumes sovereignty over himself. He cannot see angels, so he presumes Satan's no threat.

Man's Attempt At Sovereignty

Man does not have the RIGHT to dictate HOW God chooses to save him; NOR does he have the RIGHT to dictate the boundaries of God's grace in doing so! God is sovereign. God chooses.

Election

God saves the humble! When the Bible speaks specifically about justification, it is implied that God has chosen them for salvation. Therefore, justification comes to the humble. (Lk 18:10-14)

"I chose"

from eklego - means to elect; is translated as such in the NT (e.g. Mk 13:20; Mt 24:22, Mt 24:24, Mt 24:31; Col 3:12); refers to those God chose to save, personally

"appointed"

from titheimi - to put, place, lay, set, fix, establish, destine; in context, refers to Jesus', the God-man's, assigning the privilege of who would "go and bear fruit"; this removes any pretense of human works

Barnes on Jn 15:16

It was not that by nature they were more inclined than others to seek God, or that they had any native goodness to recommend them to him, but it was because he graciously inclined them by his Holy Spirit to seek him.

Barnes on Jn 15:16

The grace of Christ...went before them, commenced the work of their personal salvation, and thus God in sovereign mercy chose them as His own. Whatever Christians, then, possess, they owe to God, and by the most tender and sacred ties they are bound to be his followers.

Exercising Faith

Let us not always try to rationalize God's supernatural work in man, especially at salvation. Let us rather accept what the Word of God states plainly at face value.

Missing Faith

Man is only confused because in his quest to dominate God, he has attempted to rationalize, hyper-analyze, and over-categorize the "the surpassing [hyperballo - transcendent] riches of [God's] grace" (Eph 2:7)!

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.