

UNCONDITIONAL GRACE 2

INTRO: In message one on unconditional grace we sought to answer these two questions: 1 What is Grace? And 2 Is Grace Unconditional? I said that grace needs to be viewed from three standpoints: the one who gives something to another; the thing that is given; and the one who receives that which is given. One of our men asked after the last message; would it be right to say that grace is a vehicle, not a blanket? What he is saying is that grace is the means by which we get something. It is not a blanket that covers our sin. It is a means by which we get power to overcome sin.

Turn for a moment to Romans 11 (read 5-6). Election, the choosing of people to salvation, is by grace. All of salvation, as I see it, is by grace. And verse 6 gives us two vehicles, or two ways in which we get things: either by grace or by works. We can either receive things by working for them or by them being given to us. It cannot be both. It is one or the other.

One of the great questions with regard to grace is what is its relationship to the law of God? It is most common to view law and grace as being opposed to each other. Turn to a verse I have pondered for over 20 years, John 1:17 (read). Grace seems to be opposed to law here. But a translation that is more likely correct would go like this, "Because the law came by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Consider as well, Romans 10:4 (read). It seems that when we come to Christ, He is the end of the law. The law has come to an end. But here, the idea is not that He is the end of the law, but that Christ is the aim of the law. The law seeks to drive us to Christ. Christ is the aim of the law.

II. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF GRACE TO LAW?

Now, before we get into the relationship of grace to law, let me show you briefly how I see the grace of God as related to other attributes closely connected with grace. As I see it, first in line is God's mercy. Mercy is the feeling of compassion for someone in need. You will remember the picture of the black boy in Africa and the vulture. This feeling of compassion causes God to want to do something to help

the one in need. That is love. But love is based on truth. Truth checks with justice to see if this action is right. God's justice does not allow Him to satisfy the feelings of compassion unless that action is just. Justice says, "Just a minute. Are there any conditions to be met here? If you give without any requirements from the recipient, will you not spoil the person and make him worse? So justice checks and says, "Aha. There are two qualifying factors that must be met. The person must first be repentant, and second, he must exercise faith in the divine instructions of God's Word. When it is determined that all is in order, grace reaches out to supply that need. That is grace.

So, what is the relationship of grace to the law? Today, grace and acceptance or tolerance of sin, go hand in hand. Whenever one claims that Christians must deal with sin, one is called a legalist. Whenever one sets a standard, one is called a legalist. The writers of grace, such as Charles Swindol and Philip Yancey resist any lists of do's and don'ts and call it legalism.

Now I understand that there are legalists. They have lists of manmade rules. In our own culture it is things like not driving rubber tired vehicles etc.. That is pure legalism. But that is not Christianity. There are many do's and don'ts in the Bible that are not legalism. Someone has well said that grace is not the right to live as we want, but the power to live as we ought!

So, this new grace, the grace of today, is unconditional and takes the do's and don'ts out of Christianity. That has brought disastrous results in the modern North American church. This new grace is now giving Christians both freedom and fun.

He writes in the introduction, "Scarcely a day passes when I am not reminded of the need for a book emphasizing the full extent of grace, giving people permission to be free, absolutely free in Christ. Why? Because so few are! Bound and shackled by legalists' lists of do's and don'ts intimidated and immobilized by other's demands and expectations, far too many in God's family merely exist in the tight

radius of bondage, dictated by those who have appointed themselves our judge and jury. Long enough have we lived like frightened deer in a restrictive thicket of negative regulations. Long enough have we submitted to the do's and don'ts of religious kings of the mountain. Long enough have we been asleep while all around us the grace killers do their sinister nighttime work. No longer! It is time to awaken. The dawn is bright with grace.

"Too many folks are being turned off by a twisted concept of the Christian life. Instead of offering a winsome and contagious, sensible and achievable invitation of hope and cheer through the sheer power of Christ, more people than ever are projecting a grim-faced caricature of religion-on-demand. **I find it tragic that religious kill joys have almost succeeded in taking the freedom and fun out of faith.** People need to know that there is more to the Christian life than deep frowns, pointing fingers, and unrealistic expectations. Harassment has had the floor long enough. Let grace awaken."

Then quoting another, he says this, "You may be able to compel people to maintain certain minimum standards by stressing duty, but the highest moral and spiritual achievements depend not upon a push but a pull. People must be charmed into righteousness."

And so, today people are being charmed into 'righteousness'. They have Tim Horton's in church. Today's Christians have been set free to live in about every kind of unrighteousness, while they are still wonderfully victorious Christians; so they think. And with this new freedom and fun, as Christians are being charmed into righteousness, you can be converted while you are in the tattoo business, stay in the tattoo business after you became a Christian, tattoo other Christians; and it is all grace. In much of today's church, this so called grace has been awakened! And I say something has gone very wrong!

The seeker friendly movement quickly came on the scene, which then, in a very short time, gave way to the emergent church and New Age ideas in the church. And in the last 20 years, there has been a grace awakening that has given license to sin, and it is

all over the North American church. And of course, while you burn that tattoo on the next person, you tell them about Jesus! Yes, you are a wonderfully saved person. And out of all that grace, today we are in the deepest trouble the Church has ever been in, in North America. And our North American brand of Christianity is having an impact on many other countries. And one of the things that has contributed to this is this new understanding of grace, as we desperately seek to charm people into righteousness, and give them fun in their new found freedom.

David Cloud, in an article in April 2012 writes this, "In the name of 'freedom,' people frequently leave good Bible-believing churches to join one of the looser, easy-going congregations that abound in these apostate times. Commonly, they are lackadaisical about church attendance, putting more emphasis upon personal and family relaxation and recreation, upon sports and the great outdoors and an endless variety of fun. They exchange their feminine dresses for pants and shorts and other immodest attire, even joining the near-naked crowd at the poolside and on the beaches. They trade the sacred hymns of the faith for jazzy charismatic "praise" music and Christian rock. They develop a more tolerant attitude toward doctrine, emphasizing, instead, "love" and "unity," fellowshiping with anyone who "loves Jesus." As they pursue this new path, their ecumenical sympathies and appetite for "liberty" increases, as does their aversion to biblical separation.

"When asked about the change, they say: 'I feel more liberty now, more love; I am having fun; I am glad to be free of legalism; I don't hear criticism at my church; no one judges what others do. It's a breath of fresh air. We're finally free of Pharisaical bondage.'"

Some time ago Cloud covered the subject of homosexuality in his "Friday Church News." He tells of Donald McCullough, President of Salt Lake Theological seminary who wrote a book called, "*If Grace Is So Amazing, Why Don't We Like It?*" The subtitle is, "*How God's Radical Love Turns the World Upside Down.*" In this book he wrote, "in a world turned upside down by grace, we must distrust

whatever feels natural" (pp. 201, 202). What he meant is that it seems very natural that homosexuality is wrong, but we must distrust what feels natural. So, since God's grace covers all sins, you must learn to accept all sin into the Christian circle. You cannot get more debased in your thinking than that, and all of it in the name of grace!

Philip Yancy, a name I have mentioned to be aware of, in an article called, "Amazed by Grace" in the Gay Magazine called, "Whosoever", writes, "When it gets to particular matters of policy, like ordaining gay and lesbian ministers, I'm confused, like a lot of people." And this is a Christian leader who writes on the subject of grace?

One person wrote this to David Cloud: "You are the blasphemer. The Beatles are not satanic. I know people who are a lot more Christian than you that love the Beatles. Do you think you're helping people? I have shown many people Christ through bands like the Beatles. If Jesus were here now, he would most likely be at crack houses and rock concerts, not reading the outdated KJB. You should check out my church. We just got done telling the story of Jesus through tattoos and on Good Friday we are telling the 'Crucification (sic) According to Radiohead.' Tell me where GOD says to not listen to rock and roll. This is ridiculous, blasphemous, and your beliefs are the exact opposite of what Christians are called to do. I'm gonna go read my NLT Bible and or listen to As I Lay Dying, a pretty brutal metal Christian band that preaches more good in one song than you have your entire life. Thanks for the laughs" (5/3/2012).

Well, you have heard me quote LE Maxwell many times. He said, "The hardest thing in the world is to keep balanced." They called it Maxwell 1:1, *keep balanced*. I think Ephesians 2:8-10 gives us a very good balance. The balance is between how we get saved, verses 8-9, and how this salvation is to affect our lives, verse 10.

So let me define legalism, as it relates to Christianity. "Legalism is requiring certain works to obtain salvation." So Ephesians 2:8-9 says we are saved by grace through faith, and that this salvation

is not of works. Verse 10 then says, "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." There is a place for good works in Christianity. Good works should be there. Those are the do's. Sin should be overcome. Those are the don'ts.

If you check the Bible, say even just Colossians 3-4, you will find many do's and don'ts. But how do they related to grace? That is our question.

I do not know how well I recognize careful and deep thinkers, but in my humble estimation, few meet the likes of D. Martyn Lloyd Jones. And on the relationship between law and grace he writes, "The last question must be this. What then is the relationship of the Christian to the law?" And later he says, "Now I think the whole trouble tends to arise because we become confused in our minds as to the relationship between the law and grace. Let me put it like this. We tend to have a wrong view of law and to think of it as something that is opposed to grace. But it is not. ... Nor must the law be thought of as being identical with grace. It was never meant to be something in and of itself. The law was never meant to save man, because it could not. Some people tend to think that God said to the nation, 'I am now giving you a law; you keep that law and it will save you.' But that is ridiculous because no man can save himself by keeping the law. No! the law was 'added because of transgressions'. It came in 430 years after the promise was given to Abraham and his seed in order that it might show the true character of God's demands, and that it might show 'the exceeding sinfulness of sin'. The law was given, in a sense, in order to show men that they could never justify themselves before God, and in order that we might be brought to Christ. In Paul's words it was meant to be 'our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ'..."

Then again later he writes, "We must realize, therefore, that all these aspects of the law are but our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, and we must beware lest we fall into a false view of the law. In the same way, people have a false view of grace. They think that grace is apart from law and has nothing to

do with it. That is what is called antinomianism, the attitude of people who abuse the doctrine of grace, in order to live a sinful, slack or indolent type of spiritual life. They say, 'I am not under the law, but under grace, and therefore it does not matter what I do.' Paul wrote his sixth chapter of Romans to deal with that. 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid', says Paul. That is an absolutely wrong and false view of grace. **The whole purpose of grace, in a sense, is just to enable us to keep the law.** Let me put it in this way. The trouble with us is that we so often have a wrong view of holiness at this point. There is nothing more fatal than to regard holiness and sanctification as experiences to be received. No; holiness means being righteous, and being righteous means keeping the law. Therefore if our so-called grace (which you say you have received) does not make you keep the law, you have not received grace. You may have received a psychological experience, but you have never received the grace of God. **What is grace? It is that marvelous gift of God which, having delivered a man from the curse of the law, enables him to keep it and to be righteous as Christ was righteous,** for He kept the law perfectly. Grace is that which brings me to love God; and if I love God, I long to keep His commandments. 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them' Christ said, 'he it is that loveth me.'" We must never separate these two things. Grace is not sentimental; holiness is not an experience. WE must have this new mind and disposition which leads us to love the law and to desire to keep it; and by His power He enables us to fulfill the law."

Ray Comfort, one modern writer who has a good grasp on the relationship of grace to law has written a book called, "God Has A Wonderful Plan For Your Life." I recommend that book to you and I want to give you a number of quotes from this book. He quotes John MacArthur like this, "God's grace cannot be faithfully preached to unbelievers until the Law is preached and man's corrupt nature is exposed. It is impossible for a person to fully realize his need for God's grace until he sees how terribly he has failed the standards of God's Law."

Comfort then later quotes John R. Stott who said, "We cannot come to Christ to be justified until we have first been to Moses, to be condemned. But once we have gone to Moses, and acknowledged our sin, guilt and condemnation, we must not stay there. We must let Moses send us to Christ." That, of course, reminds us of what Paul said in Galatians 3:24 which says, "Therefore, the law was our tutor (or KJV, schoolmaster) to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." That reminds us again of Romans 10:4, that the Christ is, not the end, but the aim of the law.

Ray Comfort says, "The tragedy is that just over one hundred years ago, when the Church forsook the Law in its capacity to bring the knowledge of sin and drive sinners to Christ, it thereafter had to find another reason for sinners to respond to the gospel. Modern evangelism chose to attract sinners to Christ, it therefore had to find another reason for sinners to respond to the gospel. Modern evangelism chose to attract sinners using the issue of 'life enhancement.' The gospel degenerated into 'Jesus Christ will give you peace, joy, love, fulfillment, and lasting happiness. To Martyn Lloyd-Jones, one of the most influential preachers of the twentieth century, this is not evangelism at all..." Then Comfort quotes Jones like this, "There is no true evangelism without the doctrine of sin, and without an understanding of what sin is. I do not want to be unfair, but I say that a gospel which merely says, 'Come to Jesus,' and offers Him as a Friend, and offers a marvelous new life, without convicting of sin, is not New Testament evangelism. The essence of evangelism is to start by preaching the Law; and it is because the Law has not been preached that we have had so much superficial evangelism. True evangelism... must always start by preaching the law."

Comfort then quoting another says, "According to Paris Reidhead, 'We have gospel-hardened a generation of sinners by telling them how to be saved before they have any understanding why they need to be saved.'" Comfort then quotes D. L. Moody like this, "It is a great mistake to give a man who has not been convicted of sin certain passages that were never meant for him. The Law is what he needs... Do not

offer the consolation of the gospel until he sees and knows he is guilty before God. We must give enough of the Law to take away all self-righteousness. I pity the man who preaches only one side of the truth-- always the gospel, and never the law."

And once more Comfort quotes George Whitefield, of whom he said that he was perhaps the most famous figure of the eighteenth century, understood the necessity of presenting the law before the gospel. He then quotes him like this, "First, then, before you can speak peace to your hearts, you must be made to see, made to feel, made to weep over, made to bewail, your actual transgressions against the Law of God."

So, what has happened to the meaning of grace from the time of the older theologians until now? The older theologians used the law to show sinners how far away they were from God and how that if they died, they would go to hell. This brought about conviction in the hearts of many sinners and produced repentance and thus faith and salvation. Today, we charm people into righteousness. We don't convict them to become righteous, we charm them to become righteous. So they go to church and have Tim Hortons and all kinds of other 'fun'.

And what happened when we began to charm instead of convict? We produced the seeker friendly church. And what happened when we had produced the seeker friendly church? We produced the emergent church. And what happened after we produced the emergent church? Christianity was no long Christianity. We graced ourselves right out of Christianity.

So then, in conclusion to this point, what is the relationship of the law to grace. The law was never meant to bring about salvation. It was meant to show us we need salvation. It was meant to show us we are sinners. Once we have been brought to understand we are sinners, and that we are lost and will go to hell if we die, and if we are willing to humble ourselves to repent and believe, then grace will help us in our time of need.

III. EXAMPLES OF GRACE IN SCRIPTURE

Let us go to the first occurrence of the words grace in the Bible in Genesis 6 (read verse 8). Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. How did he find grace? From Hebrews 11 we learn that Noah was a man of faith. Faith requires humility, so Noah found grace by humility or faith. Who was the giver of this grace? Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord is the giver. And what is it that the Lord gave to Noah? Well, it begins in verse 14 (read). So the Lord instructed Noah in what to do in order that he would be saved from the coming flood. That came by grace. He did not earn it.

Go to Genesis 18, for the second occurrence of this word (read 1-3). You see, the Lord, after many years of patience towards Sodom and Gomorrah had determined to destroy these cities. But Abraham was His friend. So look at verse 17 (read). It was by God's unmerited favor and it was by Abraham's faith that the Lord showed him this grace. And you know how the Abraham pleaded for these cities because his nephew Lot was there. You see, there is grace all through the OT.

Well, the Lord went to Sodom and Gomorrah because there was a man of faith there, though his faith was quite weak. So look at Genesis 19:1 (read). Well, you know the sordid story of that night. So look at what happened in the morning in verses 15-19 (read). In verse 19, the word 'favor' is our word grace. And notice how it is related to mercy in this verse as well. You see, God felt compassion for Lot. Why? Turn, for out last Scripture, to 2 Peter 2 (read 4-9). Why did the Lord show grace to Lot by saving him? Because he was a righteous man, and that requires faith.

We could take a long time just in the OT to show God's grace. It has been my view over the past many years that all of salvation is by grace through faith. Election and predestination are by grace through faith. You can find those messages on sermonaudio.com/lhec. Regeneration, justification, sanctification and any other doctrines in the larger doctrine of salvation are all by grace through faith. Every aspect of salvation is by grace through faith. That means every aspect of salvation which comes by grace is conditioned on faith. Grace, in salvation is

conditional. To change that is to destroy the doctrine of salvation.

CONCL: So, let us conclude our thoughts for the morning. What is the relationship of grace to the law? Well, simply put, the law shows us the Lord's righteous requirements. It was not intended that we should be saved by trying to keep the law. It is too late for that because we have all sinned. But we do not all know that, so the law shows us we have sinned. And now, to get saved we must repent and believe, but we do not have the power within ourselves to humble ourselves to do that, and so God grants us the power to do those things. This causes great humility within us. So grace gives us the power to overcome sin. But grace also provided the salvation. Salvation is a gift that comes by grace. We cannot earn it. So the law shows us what God wants from us, and grace helps us to repent and then to obey God's law.

So listen to Romans 8:1-4: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

So, as I have said so many times before, "Live right!" Grace will help us live right! And righteousness is a breastplate to ward off the darts of the wicked one.