

Why Grace?

Part 3: Holding onto Your Testimony & Effortless Change

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Time to Ask!

Recently Renee was with some saints in California and they received a word that 2019 was a year for “asking.” We have not because we ask not. Ask and receive that your joy may be made full! This is the Christian life. The world will know the disciples by the ones who’ve asked and received.

So, asking is not optional in the Christian life. Faith is not an a la carte item in the Christian life. Faith is THE way of life for the righteous.

“But I don’t know if I’m righteous.” Well, in your own flesh you aren’t. But if you’re righteous by the blood of Jesus, and know it and believe it ... you are! As He is, so are you in this world! If you are righteous by the blood of Jesus then you get to live by faith!

As a believe, faith is not something you turn on sometimes. It is actually the WAY of life for the righteous! The only reason most believers turn off their faith is they disconnect from the Father’s good pleasure in being your “yes” and “amen.” In other words they forget who they are in Christ. They step out of a righteousness consciousness and into a consciousness of their flesh and thereby step out of faith. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God ...not by looking at our flesh!

Recalibrating to the Goodness of God After having Experienced Loss

In the process of mourning, we have to keep a wheel on one railroad track (mourning) and also the other railroad track (holding onto who God is). Both.

Strong Christians will often think “well I know who God is and I know I shouldn’t be mourning.” That’s wrong. The New Testament would not say “rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep” if the New Testament saint was never to weep - so you are supposed to mourn.

The other things is you have to hold onto who God is. If you just mourn and you lose sight of who God is, the enemy of your soul will have a hay-day with you and you’ll get into a place of depression.

That’s all “Mourning 101.” Now let’s look at a few scriptures for what I would call “Mourning 201.” I am going to share this because it’s actually going to release in you an ability to again ASK!

Sometimes our “ask” goes down because our recognition / calibration to the goodness of God has gone down. Sometimes we don’t even realize it’s happened. The gradual experience of loss in our life has built up and we’ve lost some of the sense of the goodness of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 28:47 says *“Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything ...”* There is something significant about serving the Lord our God with joy and gladness of heart for the abundance of everything. The Hebrew root word for gladness in that verse actually refers to the goodness of God. So what makes you glad? A recognition of the goodness of God!

Because you didn’t serve the Lord with joy and a remembrance of His goodness, you’ll serve Him in lack. When you lose sight of the goodness of God you will actually start to operate in lack!

God never has lack for His children.

I’ve been young and now am old, yet I’ve never seen the righteous forsaken nor his children begging bread. (Ps. 37) Are you righteous by the blood of Jesus? OK - are you going to be forsaken? And if you are a believer with children ... you have a promise that they will never beg bread! That’s powerful! God never has children to serve lack.

What I am releasing right here is not something you can catch with your intellect. This message carries an anointing. For some of you something supernatural is going to come upon you and break a cycle in your life!

Psalm 27:13 says *“I would have lost heart (despaired), unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”*

The Lord spoke to me and said “do you know what despair is?” He said “despair is mourning that has passed its expiration date.”

Two tracks: mourning and who God is.” You are supposed to keep a wheel on both of those railroad tracks, but then what’s supposed to happen is the goodness of the Lord is supposed to merge in and overtake the entire track. The goodness of the Lord - who God is - is supposed to overtake the track of mourning. The world’s method for doing that is to try to get mourning to go away and they try to put it out of their mind and I’m saying “you don’t need mourning to go away, you just need the goodness of the Lord to come upon you and overtake mourning so that mourning doesn’t pass its expiration date and cause you to enter into a place of despair where you no longer believe that you’ll see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”

By the way, this is the power of being in the Word of God because it gives Holy Spirit a lot to work with. He will bring to remembrance everything that Jesus told you. When you read the Word you

are meeting with God Who is named The Word! So if you read The Word meeting with Jesus, then Holy Spirit will bring to remembrance everything that Jesus told you from the Word!

So when you're in the Word, now Holy Spirit has a lot to work with. He starts ministering one verse to you and He connects this and that and this and that. If you didn't have the raw goods in the kitchen of your heart already it is much harder for Him to get it to you. I know He's God and He can get anything to you, but, generally speaking, the more raw material you have on your pantry's shelves the more He can pull together when He whips up that meal for you or for others!

Isaiah 61:3 is talking about the Spirit of the Lord being upon Jesus. Jesus shared this about Himself in Luke 4:17-19. The Spirit of the Lord is on Jesus to *"console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy (gladness) for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."*

The oil of joy (gladness) instead of mourning! If this is an "oil" it is an anointing! Remember Samuel anointing David? "Why do I have to get all this oil on me?" Trust me, you want all the anointing you can get! It is an oil (anointing) of gladness instead of mourning! If it is an anointing, is it natural or supernatural? Is it intellectual or is it spiritual?

Jesus is anointed - which means we (believers) are also anointed for this specific task - that those who mourn would have a supernatural anointing of gladness or joy come upon them that would so outmatch the mourning in their life that it would overtake it!

So right now in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth I release to you the oil of gladness instead of mourning that every area of your life would be recalibrated to the goodness of God that you would never serve Him in lack!

I believe that most believers experience loss and when they are done with the mourning process 6 months later if you could somehow measure the expectation of the goodness of God (before and after) it would be perhaps 20% less. And then 3 years later they experience some other loss God forbid - and now it's 20% less than that. And now their expectation of the goodness of God is only 64% of what it was before. And this happens over and over and over.

You can't get recalibrated to the goodness of God apart from the oil of gladness coming upon you. It's a supernatural deal. God doesn't have for there to be a gradual reduction in our expectation of His goodness.

God has not changed since before your loss. His goodness hasn't changed in the 3 months or year or 3 years. May your expectation get strong again - may your hope soar again in that specific area! May you be recalibrated to the goodness of God because of the oil of gladness coming upon you so that you can serve the Lord with gladness because of the abundance of everything - not conscious of lack

or loss but conscious of abundance - so that you would not despair (or keep mourning past when you were supposed to be mourning) but instead you would expect to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Don't Let the Enemy Kill your Testimony!

The enemy IS opposed to your testimony.

If you recall, Brad's knee had been hurt for 2 years. The Lord gave a word of knowledge about the specific part of his knee. The congregation prayed for his knee. It was healed. A few weeks went by with no pain. He decided "I ought to give this testimony to some folks." Within 3 hours of giving the testimony, he had pain in his knee again. Brad said "satan, you're not doing that" because Brad knows what satan will do to a testimony. Satan is opposed to your testimony.

You might say "whys is satan against my testimony?" Remember in Revelation it says we overcome satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony! If all believers' testimonies "held" and they could communicate that testimony to others plus the reality of the blood of the Lamb and the power that's in His blood, we would overcome satan at such a higher rate than what we typically experience.

"What do you mean 'overcome satan'?" People being healed. People being set free. People being saved. All those things. Kingdom come. His will be done. On earth as it is in Heaven - that's what I mean!

The blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony overcomes the evil one.

Is satan opposed to the blood of the Lamb? Yes - he is called anti-christ. He comes against that message. He is also opposed to the word of our testimony. One of the ways he is opposed to the word of our testimony is he just tries to keep our mouth shut. But God says "open wide your mouth, and I'll fill it" so if you actually start speaking He'll give you the words to say and it's going to be a deliverance to people. Proverbs says a faithful witness delivers souls. Faithful witness to what? To what you've seen Him do!

David often said "I will not keep silent ... I will not keep these testimonies away from the next generation." (Ps. 78) David was saying "the next generation needs to hear what God has done!" Stones of remembrance were the same idea. What God has done needs to be propped up - and built up - as a remembrance of all He's done.

So in the same way that satan is anti-christ, he is also anti-testimony. And when I say "anti-christ" I mean "against the gospel - against the knowledge of what the blood of the Lamb has done." Anti-christ opposes the gospel through pastors. I'm not being harsh. I'm just saying the world is not

preaching the finished work of the Cross. Who's supposed to preach the finished work of the Cross? Like Paul we are supposed to be thinking "heaven forbid that I would ever preach another gospel - there is no other gospel!" Paul was saying "let anyone who preaches another gospel be accursed." I think that curse still stands. It's a sobering reality.

So if the church doesn't preach the gospel ... if we allow a different gospel and the philosophies of man to enter in, what is actually happening is the anti-christ spirit is actually watering down or substituting something else for the gospel of Christ. So we see throughout the epistles (such as Galatians) "who bewitched you?"

So there is an anti-christ spirit that is against the gospel - the pure gospel that is supposed to be boldly proclaimed - as I'm supposed to speak and every believer is supposed to speak. And Paul was saying "pray for me that I would speak thus (boldly)." But there is also an anti-testimony spirit.

A lot of us are not sharing what God has done in our lives because we are afraid to open wide our mouth. That's because the enemy knows the power that's on our testimony. So the prince of the power of the air is putting intimidation between you and your testimony being released. So the first step is to release your testimony but then you also need to sometimes know how to contend for your testimony - how to protect your testimony after you release it ...because sometimes after you release your testimony the enemy comes to try to steal, kill, or destroy your testimony.

In John 11, Lazarus was raised from the dead. In verse 48 the chief priests and Pharisees say "*If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him ...*" Jesus doesn't need a lot of help.

In the next chapter, we see "*Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.*" (Jn 12:9) You could almost say "they came not for the blood of the Lamb' sake only - but that they might also hear Lazarus' testimony!" Lazarus here represents the testimony. We overcome satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony! They came to see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. "I heard about that! Let me see Lazarus! Who's Jesus?" They came for the testimony!

What's the next verse? "*But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.*" Satan is trying to put your testimony to death. He wants to kill your testimony. I have in my Bible next to this verse "don't allow the testimony to be killed."

In all of human history, satan has never created anything apart from the words of man. What did he do with Jesus in the desert? What was satan tempting Jesus to do? To speak "thus." Satan was trying to get his words into Jesus' heart and out of Jesus' mouth. It's the only creation process the enemy has in all of the earth: his lies into a person's heart and out of their mouth.

The only creation process God has in all of the earth is HIS words in our heart, coming out of our mouth. That's why literally death and life are in the power of the tongue!

How do you not let satan kill your testimony? Don't speak his lies that he is trying to tell you about your testimony.

In Jesus' Name I pray right now that the full strength of any testimony that's been lost would be restored!

Satan wanted to put pain back in Brad's knee hoping Brad would speak "thus" about that and create with his words the demonic world the enemy wants to create.

Stand firm!

If you have the enemy hurling lies at you, take cover in the Lord and know that "this too shall pass." "Praise God I'm healed in Jesus' Name!" And you just keep declaring the Truth and that's what will be created, maintained, and sustained in your life.

Sometimes we don't have a testimony in certain areas because we've never spoken the word of God in that area. We've only spoken the word of the enemy. We've spoken death over that area of our lives. I'm not trying to put something heavy on you. I'm just saying that people that don't have any friends are often talking about not having any friends.

So, death and life are in the power of the tongue and those that love that reality - those that love their tongue - will eat the fruit thereof. If you don't speak life, you'll eat the poop there of. Sorry.

Either you get these beautiful apples or these rotting things on the ground ... it just depends what you spoke.

This is the faith life. It's the Christian life!

Why Grace?

Without a vision people perish. You need a vision for "why grace." It's impossible to plumb the depths of grace.

Ephesians 2 says "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

We're going to spend all of eternity so that God can show us all of His grace. So if we spend all of this year, so that we can see some of His grace, we'll be very much in line with what Heaven is like!

Point 1: Grace is your answer!

Why grace? Point 1 is grace is your answer! Grace is your arrow to whatever target you need! I could say it like this: grace is God's only plan! Another way to say it is found in Romans 1:16 ... grace is THE message that carries power!

The first reason "why grace" is because it is IT.

Many believers are having a lot of trouble because they don't realize that grace is THE answer. They are trying to address targets by taking about them instead of addressing issues with the gospel of grace!

The gospel of grace is the love of the Father. The love of the Father is the gospel of grace. Why did God send His Son? Because of how He loved the world! How did He love the world? The way He gave His Son! The gospel of grace and the love of the Father are the same thing. In fact many people will have an encounter with the love of the Father but they won't maintain that perception of the love of the Father because they don't know the truths of grace.

The most surefire way for me to position everyone to have an encounter with the love of the Father is to teach the gospel of grace. Grace is the foundation from which we start to understand the love of the Father from.

Grace is THE answer.

No there are not other answers. A lot of believers are looking for other answers. What about my effort? What about will power? What about works of the law? Can't I have something I can boast in? We don't say it like that but that's what we are thinking. You get down to talking with them and you realize that's what they were thinking. You get down to talking with yourself sometimes and realize that's what you were thinking too! But that part doesn't have the power on it. That part (your effort or strength) doesn't have the solution in it!

The power is only in ONE message.

Paul said he determined before going to the Corinthians to know nothing else except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Think about this ... did Paul know anything else? Paul was the most revelatory man that has ever walked the planet aside from Jesus! Even Peter who spent 3.5 years with Jesus and was a very senior apostle said it was tough to understand some of the revelation Paul had. Paul said he received it by revelation.

Paul though, before going to the Corinthians, DETERMINED ... in other words he made a decision that among them he wasn't going to know anything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Why?

The Corinthians were a hot mess. They had contentions among them. They had prophecy like crazy but it was out of order and out of protocol. People were stepping on everyone's toes. They were having the Lord's supper and not waiting for one another. There was sexual immorality going on. Paul said "I decided not to talk about anything with you all other than the gospel of Jesus Christ!" There were issues that told him they needed that message re-established. So on the boat or horse-back ride to Corinth Paul was probably praying and in talking with God he determined he was only going to bring one thing: and that's the gospel of grace.

Why grace? It is THE answer. It is THE message. It is where all THE power is. It is THE solution. There is no other solution other than the gospel of grace. Don't look for it in any place else. It's not there!

When you put a puzzle together you have to build the boundary first. It can be enticing when you start to see a few internal pieces come together. You start to want to work on that, but right now I'm just building boundary and one of the pieces of the boundary for this entire series is "there isn't another message. There isn't another foundation. It is THE answer. It is THE solution. The power is not housed anywhere else!"

Point 2: Effortless Change

Grace produces effortless change.

Part of the motivator for "why grace" should be "effortless sounds good!"

The other reason "effortless change" should be a motivator is because again, there is no other mechanism for change in the Kingdom!

Let's look at Mark 4:13-20 "*And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? **How then will you understand all the parables? 14** The sower sows the word. **15** And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. **16** These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; **17** and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. **18** Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, **19** and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. **20** But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who **hear the word, accept it, and bear** fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."*

Jesus typically used parables to describe the Kingdom of God. Why did He use parables to describe the Kingdom? Because we couldn't see it. He was trying to describe something His disciples couldn't see in the natural so He would say "it's like this ... you could think of it like this ... it works like this

...” The parables are often about the Kingdom and about this parable in Mark 4 Jesus says “if you don’t understand this parable you won’t understand any of the parables.” In other words, Jesus said “if you don’t understand this parable, you won’t understand the Kingdom.” THIS parable is the foundational parable that will help you understand how the Kingdom of God functions - how the Kingdom of God works.

If you rise up to 30,000 feet what do we see in Mark 4? How does the Kingdom of God work?

1. Hear the Word
2. Accept it
3. Bear fruit

There’s the Kingdom!

Sure there is a lot more to it, but that’s the basis of it. You hear the Word of God, accept it in your heart, and the Word becomes flesh in you.

Effortless change!

How is this parable about sowing the Word describing grace? Lets look at Ephesians 3:2-4 “*if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of **the grace of God** which was given to me for you, how that by **revelation** He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ ...*” Do you see the parallel structure? Verse 2 says “the grace of God.” Verse 3 says “revelation.” They’re the same!

What’s revelation? The Greek for “revelation” refers to “revealing” or the “pulling back of a veil.” Who’s the veil being pulled back from when you get a revelation? The Father! When you see the Father, that’s revelation! Revelation is God revealed to your heart! That’s it. Paul said he had received a grace, but then he called it “revelation.” They’re the same.

2 Peter 1:2 shows the same “*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord ...*” What’s the knowledge of God? Revelation! As the Father is revealed to you, grace and peace are multiplied to you!

The Word of God coming into your life IS how grace comes into your life! There is not another Kingdom mechanism for it. In the boundaries of this puzzle of grace that we are piecing together there is not a mechanism inside of that boundary where you can get apart from the process of the Word of God about grace getting into your heart in revelation format such that grace is multiplied to you!

There is not another mechanism! You can't think yourself into it! You can only get the Word of God into you which will do the work and you'll get it.

Grace produces effortless change but you have to understand how effortless change occurs. It doesn't occur by your will power or your philosophies. The effortless change comes from grace (revelation of who God is) doing the work in the human heart.

Remember, satan puts his word in human hearts but God wants to put HIS Word in your heart! That's the way the Kingdom works and Jesus said "if you don't understand this process you aren't going to understand how any of the parables - any of how the Kingdom works!" The Kingdom doesn't work how the world works.

The Kingdom works by getting God's seed in your heart and if you don't give your heart to other types of seed, your heart will naturally bear Kingdom fruit on its own!

Mark 4:26-29 says *"And He said, 'The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, **he himself does not know how.** For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."*

You don't need to know how! The earth (your heart) yields crops by itself! It is going to be the Word of God literally doing the work in your heart such that you are bearing fruit for the Kingdom. That's how the Kingdom works!

Why grace? Effortless change! Why do you want effortless change? (1) because effortless sounds great! (2) There isn't another Kingdom mechanism ... outside of the effortless change, Word in your heart, new fruit in your life mechanism. There's not another Kingdom mechanism. The will power mechanism isn't it. It's the Word of God in your heart transforming you. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind - the renewing of your heart - according to what the Word of God says - and your life will start to prove out the will of God.

So there is a labor - a labor to enter His rest! (Hebrews 4:11) Jesus Himself said that in order to do the works of God we simply must "believe in the One whom He sent."

The Christian life is a faith life and by faith you access a grace life! Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. This entire process of grace is effortless change. It's not a bootstrap situation. It's simply the Word of God in your heart producing the fruit of God in your life.