

Grace of God V Grace Upon Grace

Fred R. Coulter—March 2, 1985

I just want to mention that sometimes in reading in the English out of the Interlinear—because I've studied the Greek and prepared for the sermon—I will just go right through something so fast that you will miss the point. Or, knowing the meaning of the Greek word, I will insert the meaning of the Greek word rather than going through and stopping and saying what the Greek word means. Sometimes I will pronounce the Greek word, which is 'Greek' to everybody; it is Greek to me because it's Greek, but it may be just a little too fast in some cases, and I may do a little creative thinking from the point of view of leaping ahead without filling in the background as I'm going along. So, if that occurs, or if I do that please let me know; I want you to understand.

It is not my intent to do anything other than have you understand and have you learn and to grow in grace and knowledge and closer to God. That's certainly the most important thing that needs to be. That will help you to help me. What I'm really asking is that if I do that I want you to help me, and you can just raise your hand and say, 'Hey, I don't understand, and that's *Greek* to me' That would help out an awful lot, and you don't have to feel that if you ask a question like that, that I am thinking that you don't know, you don't understand,' because that is not the point. That would not be even a thought in my mind. What I'm trying to do is have it so you can understand it.

Part of the difficulties that come in, is that it was written in Greek. Some of that Greek has been translated out of the Hebrew into Greek—certain portions of Matthew, Mark, and possibly Luke, so you're twice removed from what was originally said. Then you come into English and it's translated into the *King James*, and the *King James* is almost 400 years removed from what we're using today.

So, when you attempt to get back to what was really said, you can get closer to it when you get to the Greek. You can get the next step closer when you read through the Greek Interlinear. You can come closer if you know how to use concordances and things like this, and try and put it all together.

This is where I've been coming from in it, so it's not my intent at all to go so fast. But in just listening to myself on the tapes I can see where I was going so fast on some of these things, and I assumed that you understood this, that and the other

thing, and maybe it really wasn't as clear as it ought to be.

I know that in dealing with people who know more than one language, if you know two languages then you're in a situation where that you have greater knowledge than other people, however if it gets in a situation where the Greek is really 'Greek' and confusing, then help me by raising your hand and we'll back up and we will go over it so you understand it, because I think this is really very important that we understand it. I hope that will encourage you to help me in the situation.

Don't by any means, ever have it in your mind that if you ask a question I will look down on you for asking the question, because that's not the point. I would be derelict if I did not answer the question so you would understand. We're trying to grow in grace and knowledge, and we're trying to come to a point of understanding God's Word that will be very helpful to us.

I've caught it on the tape when I was listening to the sermon, that I will mention things and I will mention a Scripture and I'll give you one clue. Unless you see me turning the page to go to that Scripture, don't go to it, because I will mention a Scripture and start talking about it and you're busy turning trying to find it and I'm only using it as a reference. 'Over here it says that, and over there it says, this, and over here it says this.' I could just picture someone trying to keep up with it. I didn't intend for you to turn to all of those Scriptures. I hope that I can try and get this in the proper perspective.

1-Corinthians 12:1: "Now brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant concerning the spiritual gifts. You know that you were Gentiles, *and* were carried away with dumb idols, as you yourselves were led away again and again" (vs 1-2).

To some people that would be a very insulting statement. I suppose if I ever had the opportunity to walk into Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, I ever had an opportunity to stand up in the pulpit and say, 'You Catholics are led away by these dumb idols,' I don't think I'd last too long. They would take that as a very insulting statement. Lots of things that God has inspired to be said when people like that take it in a sense where they might consider it insulting. It really is not meant to be insulting. He's saying it just as it is.

Verse 3: “Therefore, I am letting you know that no one speaking by *the* Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed...” That was a particular problem at that time. One of the things they had to do before they could speak in the synagogue was they had where the one would read the Scripture, then you could have others who had the authority to read Scriptures. They wore a little badge on their phylactery, and the one who was the leader of the synagogue could invite them to come and read some Scriptures. Then you had the ones who could get up and they could talk.

When Jesus became such a central figure in Judea and the heavy Jewish populations, what they did to insure the purity of the synagogue was for those Jews to show that they did not believe in Jesus, they had to stand in the synagogue and curse Christ. By cursing Christ they claimed that they had the Holy Spirit of God because Christ was not of God. This is not quite the same problem that we have today. That was the particular unusual problem at that point.

There also may be some pagans who believed in their own saviors, who would call Christ accursed from their religion and claim they have the Spirit of God. You know, things in the world, there’s a multitude of everything. It’s a Babylon of confusion and everybody thinks they have this or that or the other thing. That’s why we have to go by the Word of God.

“...and no one can say *that Jesus is Lord*, except by *the Holy Spirit*” (v 3). That is not just a statement like a Catholic would say ‘I believe that Jesus is Lord.’ What Paul is saying here in believing Jesus is Lord is that the Lord has complete absolute control over your life. That’s what that means. Whereas, like with the Catholics, as we read here with the pope, be faithful to the teachings of the church, and the pope is lord over you.

Verse 4: “Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are differences of operations, but it is the same God Who is working all things in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for *the benefit of all*. For to one, a word of wisdom is given by the Spirit; and to another, a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; and to a different one, faith by the same Spirit; and to another, gifts of healing by the same Spirit; and to another, *the working of miracles*; and to another, *prophecy*; and to another, *discerning of spirits*; and to a different one, various languages; and to another, *the interpretation of languages*. But the one and the same Spirit is operating in all these things, dividing

separately to each one as *God Himself desires*” (vs 4-11).

I just might mention that in some of the things that I’m trying to do, I know that I’m not a worker of miracles. I know that I am not one that goes around laying hands on people and they become healed every time I lay hands on them. God does intervene, and He’s healed people that I’ve anointed, that is true. There are some that I have anointed who have not been healed in the sense that they have physically recovered.

I don’t think that I am one who is lacking in faith, but I am not the kind like Stephen who is filled with faith. I am not a person who has a direct revelation of prophecy. I understand certain prophecies. I think some of the prophecies can be understood more clearly than others. I am not necessarily one that can discern spirits. Walk in a room and say oh, here’s this spirit or that spirit or the other spirit. I’m obviously not one who speaks in tongues, although I can read Greek. I can pronounce the Greek and some German, and that’s about it. And you haven’t heard me speak in any so-called ‘heavenly tongue’; obviously, I don’t do that. And you haven’t heard me stand up and interpret for anybody, so obviously, God has not given me that gift.

The only gift that I can see that God has given me in the way of a ministry—I hope that will be helpful—is to another the *word of knowledge*—the knowledge of God’s Word. This is what I’m trying to impart to you. So, if I go beyond where you are in your knowledge of God’s Word so you don’t understand it, I’m not serving and fulfilling a purpose for you.

I hope that by the Spirit I’m getting the word of wisdom. I think some of my experiences indicate I’m not filled with wisdom. I’m not lacking in some sense. But if I were filled with wisdom no one could do things to me. I would have it all figured out before they had it done, and such is not the case. I think it’s good, once in a while, and we’ll see as the Apostle Paul did as far as grace and ministry, there is a lot more to the ministry in relationship to grace than maybe we’ve given understanding about. But we’re not to credit ourselves with any great thing. *We’re to give glory to God in everything we do!* About the only thing I feel that God has given me, has been the word of knowledge concerning God’s Word to be able to just put it together. I’ll let it just stand at that.

I find that with my study, I have to go beyond the English *King James Version* of the Bible to study and to grow in grace and knowledge. Does

that mean that a person cannot have the understanding of God's Word if all they have is the *King James Bible*? *No, it does not mean that*, because God made sure that in every translation of the Bible there is enough of the knowledge of salvation.

I want us to get deeply into the Word of God as we can to understand God's Word as much as we can but I don't want to do it with a penalty to any of you of not being able to understand and follow along. For example, when I would say in the sermon here concerning grace, that not one *work of law* will bring you salvation, don't think as though I'm saying in any sense of the word that we are not to keep the commandments of God. We are to keep the commandments of God, absolutely, yes we are. But that is not going to give you eternal life. Jesus Christ alone, as a gift, will give you eternal life.

When I say you cannot earn salvation, that doesn't mean that you don't have your works. For example, if someone told you that you would inherit, if you did certain things, a fantastic tract of land. What could you do to earn it?

- A) you can't buy it
- B) there is no hourly wage, or there is no set thing to earn it, but it will be given to you provided that you follow all of the conditions of the will

So, it's the same way with eternal life. God will give us eternal life provided we follow all the conditions of the will—the New Testament—showing the will of God, which means *keeping His commandments*. That's part of it, but what can we do to *earn* the universe? I mean it's all we can do to struggle from month-to-month to earn enough to pay the people we owe. What could we do to inherit eternal life? How much could we give? **Nothing!** We could give everything and still not have it.

Look at Howard Hughes. I hate to use an example because I don't want anything like that to happen to me. So, I say it very cautiously. In the world we see so many examples of rich people such as Howard Hughes, who have billions! They can buy this, they can buy that, they do the other thing. They can snap their fingers and Presidents squirm. But look at the miserable life that Howard Hughes led, and became an absolute recluse. Yet, he had control over Presidents of the United States, but look at his life. That's just an example of living.

That's why Solomon said, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!' When I say that there is nothing that you can do to earn salvation, does not in any way diminish from keeping the commandments of God. That's a requirement to receive the gift of

eternal life. Too many people look to commandment-keeping as the means to eternal life, the tool for eternal life, when the means is through Christ, and the tool is the Holy Spirit. The condition in which we stand before God is grace. To stay in God's good favor and grace we need to keep His commandments.

As far as what I'm trying to do here, please help me. When I ask: Do you understand? I look around I think, 'Ok, you've got it.' Fine, I'll go to the next one, when maybe you don't have it. You can help me to help you if you just raise your hand and we'll get everything all clarified that way and that will help our. Once you learn and you go forward the way God wants you and God's knowledge, it becomes very exciting. It becomes very uplifting. It becomes very positive because you have an extra tool of the knowledge of salvation through which the Holy Spirit can work, the Holy Spirit can lead you and help you. And that's really what the whole goal is.

Let's review just a little bit what we've covered. It's very interesting, especially getting through the situation with the series in the Gospel of John, that John does not spend much time on the *grace of God*. But he prefaces his whole Gospel here:

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the glory as of the only begotten with the Father*), **full of grace and Truth.**" So, he's prefacing everything that he is saying here in the rest of the Gospel of John based upon:

- a) that Christ was the God of the Old Testament and He was God
- b) that He's the light of all men
- c) that He was full of grace and Truth

Why did Christ have to be full of grace and Truth? *Because He was the very Son of God!* He was God on earth. He was bringing the Gospel of Grace.

One of the things that the Apostle Paul said concerning grace, 'This is the true grace of God.' I think that if we take those statements for what they are and think about them, if he says this is the true grace of God, then that means that there was a false grace called the grace of God, which was not the grace of God because it was not the true grace of God. We live in a confusing world. Who is the author of confusion? *Satan is!* He loves to counterfeit everything that God does. He comes along with a grace, which allows you to do anything you want to do, and that's called the grace of God, but that is not the true grace of God.

I don't know how many of you saw the news last night, but I saw on the news that they ran a test of U.S. currency in Florida. What they did, they just went around asking, 'Do you have a \$10 bill?' *Yes!* 'Would you exchange it for this brand new ten?' *Certainly!* They did this to a lot of people. They took the money and they analyzed it and every bit of that money had traces of cocaine on it; just the money that's in circulation in the general population, which tells you that the drug trading down there is so massive, it is so commonplace that you can go at random and you can pick up currency from anybody and it's tainted with cocaine. That's really something—isn't it?

It is just like what Satan does. He will take the Word of God—part of it—and he will use it to his own advantage although it's tainted. Just like that currency is tainted with cocaine, the doctrines of Satan are tainted with his way and it is not the true grace of God.

We have the example of Matthew 4 and Luke 4, where Satan does use Scripture to his own advantage. When John writes and says that the Word became flesh and He was *full of grace and Truth*, he's prefacing everything that he says about Christ all through the rest of the Gospel of John based upon that grace and Truth.

Verse 15: "John [the Baptist] testified concerning Him and proclaimed, saying, 'This was He of Whom I said, "He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was [existed] before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received... [What is the fullness of Christ that we receive?] ...**grace upon grace**" (vs 15-16).

What does the term *grace upon grace* mean? Remember, I had the one definition there for the definition of grace, that is *grace that increases to more and more*. It was very awkwardly phrased and it kind of left you dangling. Well this is what it means:

- by grace we are *saved*
- by grace we are *called*
- by grace we *stand before God*
- by grace we *overcome*

It is **grace upon grace**, and all of these things are a *gift*. All of these things are given to us so that we don't boast in what we can do, but we boast in the glory of God.

When we come before God, we don't do as the Pharisee is saying, 'God, I thank you I am not as other men, or as this publican down here. I fast twice in the week. I tithe of all that I possess. I'm not an extortioner. I'm not unjust. I'm not an adulterer.' But he missed the whole point. He missed the whole

thing of the grace of God. He was trying to receive salvation by works. 'God, I do all of this, I must be in good standing with you because I do this.' No, it is *grace upon grace*. That's why the publican down here, and he beat on his chest and said, 'God, be merciful to me, *a sinner!* I'm a dirty wretch.' God gave grace to him. He said, 'I tell you, that man went to his house justified rather than the other.' So, this is what it means, *grace upon grace*.

Verse 17: "For the Law was given through Moses..."—which is true. The Law is important. The Apostle Paul likens the Law in Gal. 3 to a tutor while we were children before we became adults. Is it important that you had a childhood, whether for good or whether for bad? *Sure it is*, because you couldn't be an adult unless you had a childhood—correct? Do you cast away your childhood? *No!* Did you learn from your childhood? *Yes!* So, it's the same way.

The Law was given *to lead us to Christ*. Christ did not do away with the law. He specifically said so. But He came to bring something greater than the Law. Something greater than the Law gives, because the Law could not give eternal life. The Law cannot give grace. That's why when a person is hauled before a judge on account of breaking a law, the judge must make a determination. In some cases he is bound by the law because the law doesn't speak. And he can do nothing.

There is a recent case of that. I forget exactly what it was right now, but I think it had to do with a murder, and since it was not specified in the law about a certain thing the judge could not allow a certain thing to come into evidence, and therefore the man was released. The Law is very specific, whereas grace is broad and general. Grace is a whole area and arena of living with God, which is greater than just living with the Law.

Verse 17: "For the Law was given through Moses, **but the grace and the Truth** came through Jesus Christ." The word *came* is the same Greek word that means *came into being*. The same word used over in v 3, that all things came into being through Him.

So, **the** grace and **the** Truth came into being so it would be manifest to men and for God to man through Jesus Christ. Not that God didn't have it. Not that God was not gracious. That's not the point. But it did not come into being for mankind until Christ came.

For example: you can take many different chemical things, and until you have the right mix of it and come up with the right formula, you have not brought something into being; the same way with

Jesus Christ. Eternal salvation was not open to all men until Christ came bringing *the* Grace and *the* Truth. It came into being through Jesus Christ and in His very person.

Verse 18: “No one has seen God at any time...” This tells us the whole basis of what God is doing. God is interested in grace, not sacrifice. That sacrifice means animal sacrifice, or the sacrifice of human endeavor or deprivation so that you can prove to God how good you are.

When *Shogun* came on we recorded it this last time. There’s one part in there that really shows the attitude of works. This is where the Jesuit priest, ‘father’ Albeto, and the Japanese Jesuit candidates were together and there was another Catholic priest. Before they would let them continue in their Jesuit training, each of these Japanese candidates would have to confess their sins. This one Japanese fellow confessed his sins and asked forgiveness and then came the word. Yes, you are going to go without food and you’ll have only rice and water for 30 days, and do this, and furthermore you are going to be scourged.

And the fellow said, ‘I’m Samurai and I cannot be scourged,’ and just would not relent. The priest would not relent. He was ready to come over and kill him rather than let the guy get off from being scourged. But if a person has repented and asked forgiveness and they really believe it was to God, what on earth good would a scourging do? *That is salvation by works!* The works of so many of this, and so much of that, that’s salvation by works. That’s forgiveness by works. Whereas, when it is by grace, it is God’s free gift.

Here is the whole basis of the Apostle Paul’s ministry. Acts 20:24. “But I myself do not take any *of these* things into account... [none of the warnings that he would be in trouble if he went into Jerusalem] ...nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.”

That’s the whole basis of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is about the grace of God. I don’t want anyone to take me to task because I may say that it has been emphasized in the past concerning the Kingdom of God, which is true. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God must be preached in all the world as a witness, that is true. The Kingdom of God is coming on the earth, that is true. Jesus Christ is the King, that is true. But no one is going to get into the Kingdom of God without grace. That’s why there is the Gospel of Grace.

“...so that I might finish my course...that I

received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify the Gospel of the Grace of God” (v 24). That is fantastic good news—isn’t it? And gospel means *good news*, or as you will read the English in your Interlinear, it says *glad tidings*. The proverb says that good news from a far country is like a well of spring water, which rejoices the person.

If someone comes up to your door and knocks on your door and they say ‘Your car has been burned down in the driveway.’ What happens? *Your heart sinks* and you look out there. Sure enough here is the cinderling hulk of your car; it is gone. Some people just recently in San Jose smelled a little smoke and they had to get out their apartment; it burned everything they had. Some of these people were just new immigrants to the U.S. They lost everything! That’s bad news!

It’s the same way when we find out about how sinful we are as human beings. That’s bad news. That’s terrible bad news. What is the good news? *If we repent to God and accept the sacrifice of Christ and the grace of God*, that is the *good news* and that is the *glad tidings* that we are accepted of God.

I suppose that if we received a telegram, which said, ‘This telegram is from Heaven saying that you are in good standing with God,’ we would hold on to that and say that is great, but it doesn’t come that way; it comes by faith and belief. The grace of God is the good news that God isn’t going to hold your sins over you if you repent. That is fantastic good news. And then the Gospel of Grace also has to do with receiving eternal life. That’s great good news! That’s the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Verse 25: “And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God... [he relates the Gospel of the Grace of God and the Kingdom of God together] ... will see my face no more.”

This is one of the very key things concerning the grace of God that we have to keep in mind. This is why regardless of whatever happens, don’t get discouraged. Or, if you do get discouraged, don’t let things weigh in on you so much that it overwhelms you because God is the God of grace. Remember how we read that we receive of Christ *grace upon grace*. That refers to the grace that we stand in. That refers to the grace that we continually receive of God, continually coming.

1-Peter 5:10: “Now, may **the God of all grace**... [That’s a very interesting statement—isn’t it?] ...Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after *you* have suffered a little while,

Himself **perfect you, establish, strengthen, and settle you.**” That’s what that means, to *establish you in His grace*. That’s quite a very inspiring Scripture. This is the one I turn to when things get tough. I always turn to that. That one always encourages me; holds out some hope. Even if things are tough, God is there. Even when things look kind of bad, God is there and He will help in every circumstance.

Rather than go through every single Scripture, I will go through the main Scriptures. However, I will mention concerning the grace of God that all of the Scriptures from Rom. 3:24 clear through Rom. 8:4

- explains the entire operation of the grace of God.
- explains the entire need of the grace of God
- explains why God has to give His grace
- explains why salvation by works cannot bring you eternal life

Now let’s go back and see some of the other Scriptures, which will be a progression through the New Testament. I think we need to also refresh our memories that the New Testament Church was not without its problems. It had its problems. Obviously, those problems were created because of the Jew/Gentile conflict. We don’t have exactly the same problem we have today as they had back then.

Let me just mention that the Jews were saying that a man had to be circumcised in the flesh in order to be saved. When they said it was necessary that means that it was *obligatory*, that there was no eternal salvation without circumcision. That’s what was being preached, and that’s what the problem was.

Acts 15:6: “Then the apostles and the elders gathered together to see about this matter. And after much discussion had taken place, Peter stood up and said to them, ‘Men, brethren, you know that from *the* early days, God made *the* choice among us *that* by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the Word of the Gospel, and believe” (vs 6-7).

That is true! Peter was the first one to speak to a Gentile about the salvation of God and in the person of Cornelius and his household and God had to send him there by dream and vision and revelation. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have gone there because the Jews couldn’t even be in the same room with a Gentile. That was a Jewish law, *not* a Law of God.

Verse 8: “And God, Who **knows the heart**... [That’s the key important thing concerning grace. *God knows the heart*] ...bore witness to them

by giving them the Holy Spirit, even as *He did* to us.” Very important point here: When they said it was obligatory to be circumcised to receive salvation they were saying in effect it was obligatory to be circumcised before you can receive the Holy Spirit, because if you don’t receive the Holy Spirit there is no salvation. That is self-evident.

So he gave them “...the Holy Spirit, even as *He did* to us, and made no difference between us and them, *and* has purified their hearts through the faith” (vs 8-9). And that purification of the heart by faith is an act of grace. That’s part of *grace upon grace*.

Verse 10: “Now therefore, why do you tempt God by putting a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” Let me be sure and just interject here what he was talking about was not just circumcision alone but all of the traditions and rituals of Judaism, which they could not bear. Even Jesus corrected the Pharisees and Sadducees for that. What it was, it was that there was a certain sect of the Pharisees (v 5).

So you had the problem of the Pharisees coming in there and saying they have to do this, and after they’re circumcised they have to do that, they have to do this, and they have to do the other thing. *No!* That puts a yoke of bondage of salvation by works. That’s why God dramatically gave the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and his household before they were baptized because God was teaching them that the Holy Spirit is going to come with repentance.

Verse 11: “But by the grace of *the* Lord Jesus Christ we believe we shall be saved in the same manner as they also.” You are saved through grace. That agrees with what we already covered in Eph. 2:4-10. By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. “...we believe we shall be saved...” through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s a *future* salvation. That’s not just being saved from our sins and from Satan the devil and the present time. That is, shall be saved in the future, even as they. So then, they went on and talked about the agreement that they would have there.

Verse 21 talks about that Moses was read in the synagogue every Sabbath Day. We are not talking about *non*-Sabbath-keepers; we are talking about Sabbath-keepers.

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Acts 18:27 is talking about the preaching of the Lord and so forth: “And when he [Apollos] was determined to travel to Achaia, the brethren wrote to the disciples, exhorting *them* to welcome him; *and* after arriving, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace.”

What we're going to see is that the grace of God is the main vehicle that God uses in everything relating to us. We believe through grace. We are granted repentance (Rom. 2:4) through the grace of God. We then stand in grace and this brings us in contact with God all the time. So we see *this grace upon grace* as we're continuing.

I just wanted to mention in this one Scripture out of Romans in particular, Romans 4:16: "For this reason *it is* of faith, in order that *it might be* by grace, to the end that the promise might be certain to all the seed—not to the one who is of the law only, but also to the one who is of *the* faith of Abraham, who is *the* father of us all." ***It is by faith! It is by grace through faith!*** Those go hand-in-hand. It's very much like, if I could use the analogy that I have before, water. You have to have hydrogen and oxygen to make water. You need them both. You need to have faith so that you can have grace. You need grace so that you can increase in faith. You have to have both.

What I'm covering now is the grace of God having to do

- with faith
- with belief
- with salvation
- with redemption
- with hope

That's quite a bit!

2-Corinthians 2:14: "But **thanks be to God**, Who always leads us triumphant in Christ, and manifests the fragrance of His knowledge through us in every place." Remember, one of the definitions of grace is *thanks*. This is grace be to God for all that He has done, is the summation of it, so that we can be in God's sight pure.

Verse 15: "For we are Christ's sweet perfume to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to those *who are perishing, we are* a stench of death unto death; but to those *who are being saved, we are* a fragrance of life unto life..." (vs 15-16).

What he's saying to the world is that if you really believe in Christ it's like *death unto death*, but before God it's like *life unto life*. We are a sweet savor to God because of God's calling. We may appear to be a foul stench to the world because they don't understand us or Christ. And I think that would be self evident, especially in a public setting if you really had to say what needed to be said. You would become an absolute foul stench in their nose.

"...And who *is* qualified for such things? For we are not like the many, who for *their own*

profit are corrupting the Word of God... [Were there a lot of people corrupting the Word of God? *There were a lot of people!*] ...but we speak with sincerity, as from God, *and* before God, *and* in Christ" (vs 16-17).

Example: In some of the dealings that I'm having now, I'm in contact with a man who is a minister of a church in San Francisco. He's a black man and he has his own church. We were discussing several things concerning some project he is working on, and I said, 'Well, maybe I can come up and have a conference with you. But I'll make you a deal...'—because he knows I'm a minister, too—'maybe I could come up on your Bible study night and I would cover the topic *what you will look like in the resurrection*.'. He said, 'Oh boy, that sounds good. Yeah, I'd like to know what we'll look like in the resurrection. You've got yourself a deal.'

And I thought to myself, if I had to stand up there and really lay everything open the way it is in the Word of God I would be just like *a savor of death unto death and might not escape with my life*. I think the best way to do is do like the Apostle Paul when he was in Athens. He wanted to tell them something about God that they didn't know anything about. So, I think that's the best approach if I have that opportunity. But notice what he said. He said, 'Boy that is interesting. I would like to know that.' Here he's the pastor of the church and has regular Bible studies and so forth.

2-Corinthians 6:1 has to do with the day of salvation: "We then, working together *with Him*, are also exhorting you not to receive the grace of God in vain." Why would he say that, that you would not receive the grace of God in vain? *Because it could be misused!* I think that if you read all of 1st and 2nd Corinthians you will see that obviously they were misusing the grace of God.

If 1st and 2nd Corinthians were not there you would not realize what could happen in a Church of God. It becomes very mind-boggling; it really does. It becomes very, very hurtful the things that go on. Let's hope that we can learn the lessons from that. So let's not receive the grace of God in vain. Let's receive it in profitability and in Truth.

2-Corinthians 8:5: "And not *only* as we had hoped, but they gave themselves first to the Lord, and to us by *the* will of God.... [This is about helping and serving and relieving the brethren who were in deep poverty, and so forth.] ...So then, we exhorted Titus that as he had begun *this service*, so he might also with you **make this gift complete**" (vs 5-6).

This is the gift of helping someone in distress. This is part of your belief in helping people who are brethren in the Church—brethren indeed—not brethren in wolves clothing who come along just to take. But those who have need, that when you help them this is an act of grace on your part as motivated by God’s Holy Spirit. So this is part of our salvation in helping each other.

It blends into the spiritual salvation rather than just the physical salvation of food to eat while you are hungry, or food to eat because there’s a famine.

Verse 7: “Now even as you are abounding in every way—in faith, and word, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in the love *that* you have for us—so you should also abound in this gift [grace].” In other words, let all of the physical things that you do show the grace that God has given to you. Not that you use it as a gauge or a measuring stick, but as the Scripture says when you do your alms don’t let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. In other words just do it abundantly from the heart as you are led from God’s Holy Spirit. That’s what it’s mainly speaking of here.

Verse 8: “I am not saying *this* as a command, but *I am exhorting you* through the diligence of others...[that is who have already given for this relief going to the brethren in Judea] ...in order to prove the genuineness of your love. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: that although He was rich, He became poor for your sakes, so that by His poverty you might become rich” (vs 8-9).

What he’s saying here is that you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then with the background, with that thought, what he’s really saying is, Who was God before He became Christ in the flesh, Who came to this earth, Who offered Himself in sacrifice, and that is the grace. He became poor. He gave up everything so that we could become rich, that is that we could receive eternal life.

Galatians 1:3_[corrected]—here’s where the Apostle Paul was also having trouble and he makes this statement: “Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is interesting. We’ll talk just a little bit about the openings because I’m only going to cover a few of those. You will notice in almost every one of the Epistles of Paul in either vs 1-4, and in one occasion it was in v 5, he says, “Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

That’s really a very comforting statement when you read it and understand it. If you take away the grace from our Lord Jesus Christ and from God

the Father then you have friction; you have hostility. Isn’t it much better to be in harmony and be in the grace of God? *Yes!* When he’s saying grace and peace, now that’s the peace that comes from God, because before we are called, we were what? What does it say in the New Testament? *We were enemies of God by wicked works in our minds!* Which means that if you were an enemy you were *at war!* *You were at war with God through your sins!* Here is peace from God. You are no longer an enemy. There is peace. That’s what reconciliation means. You are reconciled. You have peace. That’s quite a thing!

He says you have *peace* from God the Father and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ, v 4: “Who gave Himself for our sins, in order that He might deliver us from the present evil world... [and that is through grace, by grace have you been saved] ...according to the will of our God and Father; to Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen. I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel” (vs 4-6).

We’re going to see a little later, he talks about the true grace of God. So here’s the warning, that if you get into another gospel you are falling or removed from the grace of God. That is very profound when we think about it. We have all experienced the process that happens when you are being removed from the grace of God by a change in the Gospel that rejects Christ. You can see what happens, “...to a different gospel.” I think I’ve heard another gospel preached.

Verse 7: “Which *in reality* is not another *gospel*...” [There is not another gospel. There’s only one Gospel.] ...but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ.” How does one pervert the Gospel of Christ? We’ll just make a little summary.

1. You leave off the name of Christ. You cannot preach the Gospel of Christ without the name of Christ.
2. You cannot preach the coming Kingdom of God as an unseen hand from nowhere coming to save everything everywhere. That is perverting the Gospel of Christ.
3. You cannot say that it is in the person of one being, human being—like the pope or some other person who claims something—because that is perverting the Gospel of Christ.

The Gospel of Christ and the grace of God, as it says here, v 3. “Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Gospel of Grace is that you have access to God the Father and

Jesus Christ *directly*; anything else is a perversion of that.

Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For *the life* that I am now living in *the* flesh, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God...” (vs 20-21).

How could you frustrate the grace of God? *To make or to render not as effective, the grace of God in your life!* How can you make the grace of God not as effective in your life, but by relying on the dos and don'ts, rather than relying on Christ. Where he said when they withdrew themselves, when Peter came down. They separated themselves, all the Jews. Did that make them better before God? *No!* Did that frustrate the grace of God? *Yes!* It gave two stages of salvation.

1. Gentiles over here
2. Jews over here

That Jewish attitude is still a problem in the world today. Not concerning salvation, but just that attitude in general. He doesn't blunt the grace of God.

“...for if righteousness *is* through *works* of law, then Christ died in vain” (v 21). His whole act of the death and resurrection and His act of grace is a thing in vain. This refers back to what he was talking about perverting the Gospel of Christ.

Galatians 1:8: “But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!” There's the penalty for changing the Gospel of God. I think we've seen in the lives of people we know what happens when they change the Gospel of God. Have they not been under a curse because they've done it? *Yes, sure!*

What he's saying very strongly here, even if we—any of the other ministers under the Apostle Paul, and even the Apostle Paul himself—came preaching any other gospel than that which was given to him by Jesus Christ, you're cut off from God. Even if it be an angel from heaven or a purported angel from heaven it isn't true, because God's way and God's grace and God's salvation is absolutely set through Jesus Christ and through the grace of God. Can't come any other way. That's what it's saying there.

Verse 9: “As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of

Christ” (vs 9-10). That has to do with the grace of God.

We just read in Acts 15^[transcriber's correction] where God put no difference between Jews and Gentiles, and then how dare Peter come down there, and some of the other Jews, and then separate themselves and say, ‘We're not going to sit down with these other Gentiles and fellowship with them. We're going to go into another room here because we are better than they are. Therefore, because we are better than they then we stand before God better than the Gentiles, so we are justified by separating ourselves.’ That's the whole rational in what they were doing. That is not the case and that's why he was so hard on Peter.

I just want to touch on salvation and redemption, Ephesians 1:6: “To *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*.” That is very profound verse that we have been accepted of God *in* Jesus Christ, and we could also say *as* Jesus Christ. That's why the Grace of God is so fantastic.

Verse 7: “Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence” (vs 7-8). That's what it is, *grace upon grace*. What we're doing today is going through and seeing all the aspects of *grace upon grace* that is given to us.

As we're going through Col. 6 I will maybe give you an example of how you can do a word study in the Bible or a concordance study, because this is literally what we are doing. We are going through every place that has the word grace in reference to the grace of God.

Colossians 1:6: “Which has come to you... [that is the Word of the Truth of the Gospel] ...even as *it* also *has* in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, just as *it is* among you, from the day that you heard **and knew the grace of God in Truth.**” There we have the grace of God in Truth.

Jude 3-4 shows the grace of God *not* in Truth, v 3: “Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints.... [here again is this attack upon the Truth of God] ...For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness...” (vs 3-4).

I wanted to tie that in directly with Col. 1:6, because this shows that the grace of God in Truth is going to be the message that Christ brought, whereas there may be a counterfeit which turns the grace of God into lasciviousness or license to sin, which goes against what the Apostle Paul taught when he said, ‘What? Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid! Don’t let this thought even come into your mind. Don’t even let it come into existence.’

Verse 4: “For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2-Thess. 2:13-17 is a real key section because this, in addition with Rom. 3:24 thru Rom. 8:4 shows the process of salvation. 2-Thessalonians 2:13: “Now we are duty-bound to give thanks to God always concerning you, brethren, who are beloved by *the* Lord, because God from *the* beginning has called you unto salvation...” That is a gift—isn’t it? *That is grace!* The very calling of God is grace. He chose us to salvation, and salvation is grace.

“...through sanctification of *the* Spirit... [We receive the Spirit by faith through grace—don’t we?] ...and belief of *the* Truth... [we believe the Truth of God] ...unto which He called you by our Gospel... [which is the Gospel of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God] ...to *the* obtaining of *the* glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 13-14). Now that’s quite a statement—isn’t it?

How do you obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ? *There are two ways you obtain it;* remember just before He was crucified He said, ‘Now am I glorified. Now is the Father glorified.’

1. You receive the glory of Christ by accepting His sacrifice for you, which was an act of grace that God brought to the world.

That is called a glorious thing, and that is why we observe the Passover so you receive the glory of God that way.

2. the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ at the resurrection, referring to what we will be when we are resurrected.

So, these statements—though you read through and they sound very beautiful and flow right along—are jam packed with meaning—aren’t they?

Verse 15: “So then, brethren, stand firm, and hold fast the ordinances that you were taught...”

These were obviously then the things that they were to carry on traditionally based upon God’s Word, not some new tradition that they could invent.

“...whether by word... [as they were taught] ...or by our epistle. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God—even our Father, Who loved us and gave *us* eternal encouragement and good hope through grace—” (vs 15-16).

If you follow all the way through everything the Apostle Paul is talking about in v 13

- about your calling
- about your salvation
- about the sanctification
- about your belief in Truth
- the calling to the Gospel
- the obtaining of glory
- the standing fast in what were taught
- that God has directly dealt with us
 - ✓ has loved us
 - ✓ given us an everlasting consolation
 - ✓ and good hope

All of that is through grace. That’s why this is a very key section in understanding the operation of grace. All of that is through grace! Then he says v 17: “Encourage your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”

Titus 2:11 also talks about grace and salvation: “For the grace of God, which brings salvation for all men, has appeared.” The grace of God that brings salvation. That is the whole operation of salvation. You are saved through grace. There again, and again, and again.

Titus 3:3 shows another part of the operation of grace. When I have said that you cannot overcome on your own, but the grace of God in you with God’s Spirit will do the overcoming if you are led of the Spirit of God. I do not mean in any sense that we are not to do anything. We are to do all we can.

Titus 3:3: “For we also were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving all kinds of lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful *and* hating one another.” That sounds like some churches I know.

Verse 4: “But when the **graciousness** ... [the grace of God] ...and the **love of God** our Savior toward man appeared... [the grace of God] ...not by works of righteousness which we practiced...” (vs 4-5). In other words if you got every good person together everywhere and had them all doing good, would that constrain God to appear to you? *No!* Christ appeared because it was the time that God had

determined, not because anyone was doing good. That's what he's talking about.

"...but according to His mercy He saved us, through *the* washing of regeneration and *the* renewing of *the* Holy Spirit, which He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior; so that, having been justified by His grace..." (vs 5-7).

I went through several Scriptures before we came down to this of *justified by grace*, showing again the whole operation of grace depends upon the love of God, the kindness of God, and that's how we are justified by grace.

Hebrews 12:28: "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, through which we may serve God in a pleasing *manner* with reverence and awe... [We have something here very interesting. That we still serve God with reverence and Godly fear though we are of the Family of God, though we are the friends of Christ, etc.] ...For our God *is* indeed a consuming fire" (vs 28-29).

Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." What we're talking about, the grace of God as received by God the Father through Jesus Christ is *the same* yesterday, today, and forever.

Verse 9: "Do not be carried about by all kinds of strange doctrines. For *it is* good *for* the heart to be confirmed by grace... [we are established in the salvation of God and our hearts are established with grace, with God's goodness and kindness and mercy.] ... *and* not *by* foods, which have brought no *spiritual* benefit to those who have been preoccupied *with them*"

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
- 2) John 1:14-18
- 3) Acts 20:24-25
- 4) 1 Peter 5:10
- 5) Acts 15:6-11
- 6) Acts 19:8-27
- 7) Romans 4:16
- 8) 2 Corinthians 2:14-17
- 9) 2 Corinthians 6:1
- 10) 2 Corinthians 8:5-9
- 11) Galatians 1:3-7, 3
- 12) Galatians 2:20-21
- 13) Galatians 1:8-9
- 14) Ephesians 1:6-8
- 15) Colossians 1:6

- 16) Jude 3-4
- 17) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17
- 18) Titus 2:11
- 19) Titus 3:3-7
- 20) Hebrews 12:28-29
- 21) Hebrews 13:8-9

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Galatians 3
- Romans 3:24-8:4
- Acts 15:5
- Ephesians 2:4-10
- Acts 15:21
- Romans 2:4

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *Gospel of John*