

REVIEW:

Who You Are and Why You Are Here:

I am an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.

- SPIRITUAL – in substance; that's what makes me up.
- ETERNAL – in God's plan; I did not take Him by surprise. We have a God that is great enough to pay attention to every individual.
- (NEVER-CEASING – in duration; RULING – creative governance)

GOD'S INTENTION FOR EACH OF US IS THAT WE SHOULD GROW TO THE POINT WHERE HE CAN EMPOWER US TO DO WHAT WE WANT. TRAINING FOR REIGNING (REV. 22:5).

- The woman with the coins gave more, because she gave *with* God.

Session 3: What Grace Is

- Grace is God acting. Acting in our lives to accomplish what we cannot accomplish on our own.
- Of course, it is unmerited favor. But it is not just for guilt, it is for life.
- 2 Cor. 9:8; Rom. 5:17; Heb. 4:16, Psalm 18:31

Hebrews 4:16 *Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.*

GRACE is God is acting in our lives to accomplish what we cannot accomplish on our own.

As finite human beings, we are engaged in the effort. We are people who are relying on God...**what you rely on you don't have to always be thinking about.**

Life in the kingdom:

- Our mind is set towards God; we are keeping him in our vision, on the margin,
- But we're focused on what we're doing and God is working with us. That's the life of grace.



WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE

The Biblical understanding of salvation and being saved is deliverance.

- Hymn: *Rock of Ages: 'Praise, be of sin, that double cure.' What's the double cure? 'Saved from wrath and make me pure.'*
- Wesleyan hymn: 'He breaks the power of canceled sin and sets the prisoner free.' Sin that has been canceled can still be powerful. It's not enough just to be forgiven.

GRACE BEYOND SIN

If we had never sinned we would still need grace to live the life God intended.

- We are the kind of beings that are meant to live our lives towards something that we cannot possibly accomplish on our own.
- **Genesis 1:26:** That's why we're here. God creates creators, and then he lives with them and enables them to do the good that he has placed in their heart.
 - Human beings know they are responsible.
 - They want to be good.
 - We're going to need divine assistance (we've had it, too).
 - The advance of science and technology is a very great part of God's plan.
- **Eph. 4:29** – *"Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word, as is good for edification, that builds people up, according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear."*
 - Grace is being conveyed by your words.
 - A kingdom works by words, by speaking.
 - Paul is referring to the largely pointless, if not harmful nature of human conversation. He says, however, you can speak in such a way that what you say brings grace to those who hear.
- Remember: grace is God acting in our lives to accomplish what we can't accomplish on our own.
- As children of grace, you and I can speak in such a way that people experience grace from what we say. What an incredible blessing that is! Imagine that being something that moves out into the community and into the businesses and the government...
- But think by contrast, what our words often convey, which is anything but grace: sometimes fear, anger, hopelessness, an improper sense of the importance of things.
- You speak with a consciousness of God with you.

THE CHEERFUL GIVER

Being a cheerful giver can become a natural part of what we are doing because we are immersed in the abundance of God's grace.

- Why does God love a cheerful giver? **2 Cor. 9:7**
- A cheerful giver is a giver, who realizes the abundance of the kingdom.



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- We have a hard time with money in our churches because we don't understand that money is kingdom stuff!
 - If I'm holding on to my money, I'm holding on to my kingdom.
 - It's out of my abundance, the abundance of the kingdom to me, that I am cheerful when I give. I am happy to turn something loose.

First steps in Kingdom living are giving and prayer...they are the ways you begin to experience the reality of the Kingdom in your life.

- It takes grace out of the category of perhaps once in a lifetime events and makes them a part of our ordinary life.

MINISTRY IS GRACE

- Paul's ministry to Gentiles was a "Grace." **Eph. 3:10** – *"Of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace, which was given to me according to the working of his power."*
 - Paul was engaged in something that was unthinkable in his own younger life...and that is that the kingdom of God would come to people of all kinds.
 - Paul looks at what he has done and what God has given to him, and says: 'This is God's grace.'
- Ministry is a gift.
- God does not expect you to accomplish that ministry on your own!
- **1 Cor. 15:10** – Ministry as a special work for Christ and for God is in itself a grace and is to be accomplished entirely by the power of grace.

GRACE IS NOT INACTION

- Grace doesn't make you passive!
- Putting off the "old" person and putting on the "new." Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:23-24.
- Diversity & pluralism – you cannot attain that on your own, it takes a grace to get there.
 - And if you don't have it by grace, at most, you will wind up with some form of tolerance – which isn't a bad thing...but it's very different from loving everyone, and learning to live and care with them as your neighbor
- We learn to meet our world in expectation, and grace, as we act, will act with us.
 - **John 14:15-16.** *"Keep my commandments and I will send the Holy Spirit."* That's the order it works in.
 - That's what allows our character and our will to grow...we act, and then God helps.
- **Grace is not opposed to action, but is opposed to earning.**
 - When I act, I don't act to earn anything... that's not the same as not doing anything.
- It's when we act that grace comes.
- When Jesus performs a healing, it is nearly always by asking people to do what they cannot do: Go wash in the pool of Siloam. Stretch out your hand. Take up your bed and walk!



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- Acting doesn't need to be flamboyant and noisy. It just has to be acting in confidence that the interactive relationship of grace will meet us and help us know the reality of what has happened.
- **Grace is not opposed to (the efforts of) action, it is opposed to an *attitude* of earning.**
 - Understand that and then we are free from pride in our ministry or in our various activities because we know that it's God who did it.
- This interactive relationship is the life of grace.
 - 'Grow in grace' means we're growing in interactive relationship.

"KNOWING CHRIST"

- Paul's turn from "flesh" (Phil. 3:4-7) in order to "know Christ." vs. 8-10.
- Paul's testimony in **Philippians 3**. *"I put (it) all aside, that I might pursue Christ...that I might know him and the power of his resurrection. And the fellowship of His suffering having been made conformable, to his death, to know Christ."*
- Interactive relationship, again.
- Grace as God acting in my life to accomplish what I can't accomplish on my own.
- Knowing and grace go together.
- Knowing Christ is something that we take into every aspect of our lives.
- We seek that which is above – Christ is above, but above means right here.

GRACE AND MOMENT TO MOMENT LIVING

- South Africa – Methodist churches in the mid-80s called themselves "societies."

[From John Wesley]
*Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as you ever can.*
—John Wesley

- Don't make this a legalism! It's an orientation in life, towards God's rule.
- With peace and joy in our hearts, we can keep God before us and live in His presence, knowing his care for us, and then our life becomes the easy way to live.
 - Some think the more sanctified you get the more miserable you are...NO. It's the opposite.



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- It is by devotion to what is good under the action of God(grace) that we reclaim the creation covenant given by God in Genesis 1:26.

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH SALVATION?

- If you mean going to heaven when you die, you need to think about not just if you are going to make it in, but **will you like it if you get there?**
 - Can you imagine someone who doesn't want to have anything to do with God here, going to heaven? When they get there, there's going to be one great unavoidable fact: God.
 - If you don't like God, heaven is not the place to be.
- Get to where you really like God! Do you like God?
- The manifest presence of God and the whole universe bathed in the light of His person – that's what we have to look forward to.
- **What does it have to do with salvation?**
 - It has to do with learning to like God.
 - To be delivered from all of the terrible images and to come to think of him as **the great fountain of life**.
 - To know him as such a magnificent being that he couldn't not exist.
 - God is so wonderful that he could not, not exist.
- Thus our lives are "saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10) into eternity. Rev. 22:5



QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Q: You mentioned the kingdom of evil, attacking. And you mentioned the kingdom of darkness. And we know the devil exists, Matthew tells us quite clearly, and yet, you haven't talked much about it. I feel that this is an important factor, which I would like to see if you're going to talk about at all.

- Not much, but there's a reason for that.
- **The most effective form of spiritual warfare is obedience to Christ.**
- Satan exists; he's real; if you give him a chance he'll jump all over you. The way of the world gives him a chance at the group level.
 - He is the one who comes to kill and to destroy, that's his business.
- How to take care of the approaches of Satan is to turn to God. If you need to, you can tell Satan that you don't belong to him, so leave, and he will.
- In terms of practical living, the eternal kind of living, the important thing is to stay with God.

Q: Earlier you quoted the verse that includes the phrase, "What can man do to me?" The question is related to what you want to say about suffering in this context. How do we think of it and experience it, since we know it happen.

- Suffering is allowed by God in this life
- This seems to be a part of the continuing warfare between God and Satan.
- God keeps his hand on those who are drawn into suffering if they look to him and expect him to deliver them.
- Job is a symbol of what you do when you suffer.
- Your best defense in suffering is to worship.
 - You need to be in shape for that before the suffering gets here!
- Before (suffering) comes we should have a knowledge of God that in the midst of suffering, enables us to worship.
- Don't try not to hurt or not to cry or to be brave.
- **Keep your eyes on God. Keep your eyes on Jesus.**

Q: My question comes from the morning session, around demons. You had said at one point, it's an emotion, thought and will that takes on a complexity of its own. So is there a difference there...is this something that creating our own demons versus the supernatural demons?

- I don't actually think you can create them.
- You can open yourself to them.
- You can cultivate thoughts and emotions and choices that will hurt you.



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- In reference to demons that take on an active role on their own; you're not going to create one of those. You might invite one.

If it's your own emotions, thought and will, then the state you become or get to, will invite them in?

- If you just decide to rebel against God and live on your own, that's an invitation.
- Hold close to Christ and trust Him and follow Him; learn what you can from Him.
- You can step out of the care of God – it doesn't mean God has nothing to do with you. It just means you're not under his care and you will not be protected as you would be if you simply had decided to do, by grace and effort, what God wants you to do.
- The quickest way out of trouble for anyone is to do the 10 Commandments.
- God's law is a record of his actions.
- One way of answering the question, "How do you seek the kingdom of God? is to inform yourself on what God is doing, and do it and he will be with you.
- The law is a way of, as Psalm 19 says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." How does it do that? Because it brings the soul into the ways of the kingdom

Q: How do you distinguish or differentiate between soul and spirit?

- There is a sense of spiritual in which anything, not physical, is spiritual. Your mind is spiritual. Your experience in general is spiritual.
- The spirit in man and woman is your will.
- Your soul is that part of you that integrates everything to make one life.
 - The soul is like a computer that runs the whole operation.
 - Your will is the executive center of the self, and that's your spirit.
- The Holy Spirit is a person unique and higher.

Q: I thought you had said that sin that had been canceled could still be powerful. Could you say something more about what you mean by that?

- The words are taken from the hymn. What they're referring to is this, that a person can be forgiven, but still be under the power of sin.
- When we enter a living relationship with God, I believe we are forgiven. But we have not solved all our problems.
- In the spiritual life there's a distinction between sins and weights.
 - Fear is definitely a weight.
- After I have received faith in Jesus Christ, from the Holy Spirit, I still have issues to deal with. That's where breaking the power of canceled sin comes in.
- You have some people that are miraculously delivered from addictions but that's not the usual case.



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Q: Would you say that the experience and encounter that the disciples on the Emmaus road had with the Lord would be a good example of grace and how we can expect as disciples of the Lord to encounter his help with questions on our journey of seeking him?

- It's an excellent illustration of that very fact. Often we don't know, or recognize, the grace when it's acting.

