

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. John 8:32

MAY 5, 2024

## IS GRACE GRANTED UNCONDITIONALLY?

by Jim Stauffer

It seems the subject of grace and how God has chosen to offer it has for years been bandied about based on the precepts of men rather than what God has actually said.

### Grace is offered to all

It is true God has offered His grace to all men. *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, (Titus 2:11).* This passage is not a soundbite for men to draw conclusions about the entirety of God's word on grace. If it were, the Universalist would be correct in that God will save everyone and all discussions of biblical authority would be finished.

### That grace is conditional

The truth is grace is conditional just as salvation is. The two are obviously tied to each other. John tells us, *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)* Within the promise of eternal life is clearly the condition of belief. In the same way, Paul tells us we are *....saved by grace through faith....Eph. 2:8,9.* Therefore, the salvation provided by the grace of God is conditioned on the faith of mankind.

### Faith is the condition for grace

Paul further makes the connection of grace and faith in **Romans 5:1,2**, *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.* Here peace with God is equated with standing in His grace. That peace with God, that standing in His grace is accomplished when one has faith. A biblical faith that leads to obedience which brings our justification. Grace comes to those of faith.

### Now let us understand faith.

Now we know James gives us a detailed explanation of what biblical faith is in **James 2:14-26.**

The first part of this text explains how useless is it to say you have faith when you do not back it up with action stimulated by that faith. His example is when a person needs food and clothing it is of no value to tell them how much you care if you do not provide what they need. He concludes the person who wishes them well and gives them no food or clothing has demonstrated faith without accompanying action and has been useless to them. This point is further embellished by the examples of Abraham offering Isaac in compliance with God's instruction and with Rahab trusting the God of Israel by harboring the spies at Jericho. Both took action in response to the instruction of God. Both received the gracious kindness of God in response to their obedience. He concludes the point with **verse 26**, *For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*

### Faith to grace to obedience

Now, we can understand such passages as, *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. (Mark 16:15-16)* It is undeniable that the salvation offered to the one who obediently submits to baptism based on his belief in Christ is due to the grace of God. He has indeed been saved by grace through faith, the kind of faith Abraham had when told to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Look at the response of those on Pentecost when they learned they had crucified the Son of God. Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, *"Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:37-38)* These people obeyed the instruction of Peter as he

spoke as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance (**vs. 4**). They now understood Jesus was the Messiah who had come to provide salvation for all mankind. They were saved by the grace of God because they had biblical faith that led to obedience.

If we are to be saved by His grace, we must obey His instructions given to creation out of His love for all. Do we really believe in Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God, the personification of His grace intended for our justification? We must! It is our only hope, our only option.

### ***“You Have To Pick Your Battles”***

We hear an expression fairly often these days: “You have to pick your battles.” That concept is applied in politics, in business matters, in personal relationship situations, etc. While there may be some fair applications in those realms, we are seriously concerned when we hear folks saying this about religious issues. Even some of our own brethren are picking up this faulty notion.

The expression ‘pick your battles’ suggests that on some things you have to compromise. Perhaps it’s not what you really want or think is right and best, but sometimes you just have to let the other fella have his way. What about this idea?

First, if it is a doctrinal matter, there is no ‘picking’ for us to do. God has already revealed the truth on the subject and faithful Christians cannot choose to ignore a situation where others are violating His will. If it is an issue of truth and righteousness, we must follow the pattern set by the apostle Paul. When false teachers attempted to push their error, Paul said *“we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Galatians 2:5)*. We ought to do likewise – the battle is engaged already – there is no ‘picking’ for us to do.

When the issue is not doctrinal, but rather an opinion or judgment matter, there’s no ‘picking of battles’ here either -- because there should be no battle at all! In this sort of scenario we ought to *“be subject one to one to another, and be clothed with humility” (1 Peter 5:5)*. So many church problems could be avoided if all had this attitude.

“You have to pick your battles”? – no, not in service to God. There is no place for that approach here. Think!  
**by Greg Gwin**

### **Three prophets warn the rulers**

**In Jonah**, God tells the rulers of this world that He loves them and is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

**In Micah**, God warns the rulers of this world, “I know what you’re doing; I know the evil you’re planning and doing; don’t make me come down there!” (**Mic. 1.2–3**). Further, Micah gives the quintessential instruction to those who bear the weight of tyrannical oppression: look to God to make things right, wait for God to make things right, know that God will make things right (**7.7**).

**In Nahum** God unleashes His wrath on the nations of the world who refused His love and ignored His warnings. *“The Lord avenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries. And He reserves His wrath for His enemies” (1.2)*.

In a time like this, when the institutions of government are increasingly turned against believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, it’s good to remember these lessons from the prophets:

**God will not allow sin to go unpunished.** Jonah didn’t want the Ninevites to get away with the evil for which they were known. Although God is slow to anger (**Jon. 4.2, Nah. 1.3**), it’s not true that He never gets angry. And when He does, woe to him who is the object of His anger.

**God is aware of the entrenched wrong in a nation.** He knows what the deep state is up to.

**Wicked governments/nations will ultimately suffer what wickedness must suffer.** Let the Jonahs among us rest assured: the Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries.

**Kenny Chumbley**

## ***The Biblical Approach versus The Denominational Approach***

It is all a matter of direction and perspective. The Biblical approach is to look at the Bible, and to accept it as the complete and sole authority. The denominational approach is to look at the church, the denomination, and to accept it and its teachings as a satisfactory standard of faith and practice.

A man will settle in his mind what he will believe and practice according to the standard he accepts. The atheist, by the fact he does not believe in God, has no standard outside of himself that he holds as authoritative, so he reasons within himself and goes by his own sense of what is reasonable and good.

The pagan looks to his idol and what he considers to be the sacred words of his god, and that is what he goes by.

The denominationalist looks to his church and accepts its interpretations as binding and final. He views the Bible as a "church book", as though it draws its strength from the church. The conclusions of the church, to him, are the highest law, and the church may therefore teach and practice whatever it deems to be good, even if it is not in the Scriptures. The Bible is the tool of the church! It is something the church uses; it is not something by which the church is ruled! This is why no effort is even made to cite Biblical precedent and authority for all that is preached and practiced.

The Christian looks to Scripture, specifically to the New Testament, for he holds it to be the gospel, the word and will of Christ. No church has a right to extract what it pleases from Scripture, but is obligated itself to be in complete conformity and obedience to the sacred "thus saith the Lord".

Jesus, not the church, is Lord. Men make up the church, but that gives them no license to make law, nor exempts them from simple obedience to the teachings of our Lord.

***by Jere E. Frost***

## **UNNECESSARY BAGGAGE**

***David Egner***

**In 1845, the Franklin Expedition** sailed from England to find a passage across the Arctic Ocean. The crew

loaded two sailing ships with much they didn't need: a 1200 volume library, fine china, crystal goblets and silverware for each officer. Amazingly, each ship took only a 12-day supply of coal for their auxiliary steam engines.

**The ships became trapped** in vast frozen plains of ice. After several months Lord Franklin died. The men decided to trek to safety in small groups, but none of them survived. Two officers pulled a large sled 65 miles across the treacherous ice. When rescuers found their bodies, they discovered that the sled was filled with table silver.

**Those men contributed** to their own deaths by carrying what they did not need. Do we not sometimes drag baggage through life we do not need? Evil thoughts that hinder us, bad habits that drag us down, grudges we will not let go? It is a cold world, but sometimes we make it worse than need be. *"Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb 12:1).*

## **MORE BEYOND**

In Valladolid, Spain where Christopher Columbus died in 1506 there stands a monument commemorating the great discoverer. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the memorial is a statue of a lion at the base of it where the Spanish National Motto is engraved.

The lion is reaching out with its paw and is destroying one of the Latin words that had been part of Spain's motto for centuries.

Before Columbus made his voyages, the Spaniards thought they had reached the outer limits of earth. Thus their motto was "No More Beyond." The word being torn away by the lion is "No," making it read, "More Beyond." Columbus had proven that there was indeed more beyond.

And the same is true for those who have discovered Jesus. There is "more beyond." Everyone who is born into this world will also have to leave it, and for most people their deepest instincts and convictions tell them there is something beyond the grave, We need to give thought to where we will spend eternity, for surely there is more than just this life.

***—Via The Reminder, Bellaire, Texas—***

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:00 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

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**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

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## NEWS AND NOTES:

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BIBLE CLASSES:

SUNDAY MORNING 9 AM

BILL MILLER-AUTHORITY

WEDNESDAY 7 PM

JIM STAUFFER-MINOR PROPHETS

SUNDAY SERMON: WHAT HINDERS

YOUR TOTAL COMMITMENT?



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10