

For Our Information

Bill Venable will have a heart valve procedure this week. Joyce Venable has not been feeling well this past week.

Ruben Keisler is still dealing with knee pain. Brenda Keisler has been doing much better the last few days.

Adene Gray is in Oklahoma for the next week visiting with Carolyn and her kids for Christmas.

The holidays will bring travel to most families one way or another.

Keep our brothers & sisters in mind

We seek only to serve God according to His Will!

constantly striving to do all that he wants in my life. But I do not rely on my own power to stand in right relationship to God. He is the one who enables. His grace makes it all possible. When I realize this, then I can have a happy and confident walk with God. The "blessed assurance" comes from him rather than from my own ability or power.

I am so thankful for the grace of God that reaches down into this sinful world and saves me and all who come to him in faith. Because of what he has done, I must bow in total submission to his will. I may not understand all of it perfectly, but I must be constantly seeking, learning, and following. And some glad day because of his grace and love, I can be with him in that glorious city where there is no sin and no sorrow and where I can praise him while eternity's ages roll on and on. Friend, won't you join with those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb? You, too, can glorify God in your body while you live here on this earth.

Guardian of Truth—June 2, 1988

(This article does a fine job of helping the willing mind to "get a handle on" the idea of "grace through faith." Let us hear. DLH)

Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about our work in the Lord's Kingdom.

Church of Christ

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Suking His Righteousness

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The Paradox of Grace

Forrest D. Moyer

Peter spoke to the gathering in Jerusalem on the question of circumcision and law keeping and said: "*Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are*" (**Acts 15:10-11**). The yoke of which Peter spoke was the Law of Moses. Some of the Judaizers were trying to bind some segments of that law upon the Gentiles who had become Christians. Paul and Barnabas had strongly resisted such an effort at Antioch (**Acts 15:1-2**). Now in the meeting, Peter likewise resists such Pharisaical demands. He wants the Jews to realize that their salvation, like that of the Gentiles, is by the grace of the Lord Jesus. The meticulous keeping of the law of Moses could not bring salvation to them.



For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9



1512 Tanner St. Malvern, AR

Meet With Us

Worship Services

Sunday 10:20 am & 5:00 pm

Bible Classes

Sunday 9:30 AM

Wednesday 7:00 PM

TannerSt.com

Paul beautifully demonstrates how salvation comes to us in **Ephesians 2**. Based on the fact that God is rich in mercy, that he has great love, that he shows us the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness, he saves us, raises us up with him and sits us with him in the heavenlies in Christ (**vv. 4-7**). Then in **vv. 8-9** Paul avers: "*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*" Since I am not saved by works of human righteousness but by God's grace, some have concluded that man has nothing whatsoever to do with his salvation.

Here is where the paradox of grace enters. It is true that nothing that I do can merit salvation for me. It is by his marvelous grace. And yet, strangely enough, our Lord demands all that we have and are. He expects us to deny ourselves and take up his cross daily and follow him (**Luke 9:23**). He expects us to "*present our bodies as a living sacrifice*" to him (**Romans 12:1**). He expects my body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit (**1Corinthians 6:19**). He urges me to "*hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering*" (**Hebrews 10:23**). He tells me that Jesus is the "*author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him*" (**Hebrews 5:9**). Really, he demands my everything - my every thought, my every action, my every word, my heart, soul and mind. And yet he says that I am saved by his grace. How can it be that I am saved from past sins and continue to be saved from current sins by his grace and yet have him demand all that I am? If his grace saves me, why should I need to deny myself and take up his cross? Why should I be concerned about obeying him at all? This is the paradox of grace!

You see, the reason that I cannot be saved by works (of any kind) is that I would have to perfectly work or obey the law under which I live. Paul said that in **Galatians 3:10-12**: "...*Cursed is every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them.'* Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for '*The righteous man shall live by faith.'* However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, '*He who practices them shall live by them.*'" To be

Store In My Heart

Ephesians 5:18-19

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heard,

We are to be spiritual people, motivated by spiritual things. Paul calls us to avoid things of this world and to focus on filling self the Spirit.

Those who are focused upon filling self and brethren with the things of God will have no room in their heart for the things of this world.

Coming together for worship allows us to join together in praise of God. This praise, when offered from the heart, will provide us with teaching that will remain in our thoughts even when we are apart.

justified by keeping a law, one would have to keep that law perfectly. Since no one perfectly keeps the law (any law), he cannot be saved by perfect law keeping. Even if we could be saved by perfect obedience, then we would have occasion to boast in our perfection. We would glorify ourselves. God's plan is for all glory to be given to him through Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 3:21**). Since I am weak, frail, imperfect and unworthy, I must have one who is all-powerful and totally perfect in which to put my faith. When by faith I receive salvation by grace, I give him all the praise. I cry out, "*Worthy art thou!*" (**Revelation 5**)

But not only so, when I put myself under Jesus as my Lord and do what he says (**Luke 6:46**), I am giving glory, not to myself, but to him. When I take up his cross daily and follow him, it gives all the glory to God and none to myself, for I must deny myself. The way that I glorify the Father is by honoring the Son (**John 5:23**). I do that by total submission to him. The only way that I can show my love to God is by obeying him (**1John 5:3**). My purpose for being on this planet is to glorify God. I could not do this by my own works of righteousness or by meriting a right-standing with him. Consequently, God's plan for my glorifying him is by my faith taking him at his word. That faith is a response to his love and his grace. When in response to his will, I repent and am baptized for the remission of sins, all the glory goes to him since it is his plan and not mine. Those who refuse Bible baptism are refusing God's grace and are not glorifying him. In the same way, Christians who do not accept his will for our lives in living for him do not glorify him. They become like those "*whose God is their belly and who glory in their shame.*" The only way to give all the glory to God is to do what he says in his word.

Does this mean "perfect obedience"? No, John tells us that "*if we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us*" (**1John 1:8**). So, I do not live a perfect life or render perfect obedience. I falter, I slip, I fall. To glorify God in such an instance as this means that I turn from my sin in genuine repentance and confess it to him. His grace then forgives, and I keep on walking in the light of his glory. I will be