

"Mistaken Grace"

Pastor Derek Melton

www.pryorcreekcommunitychurch.org

*Romans 6:1-2 (KJV) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

Living in a Christian nation, not to mention the Bible belt, it seems to be a challenge to find someone who doesn't think they are a Christian. Everyone really feels they are living right and that they are in good with the "big Guy upstairs". Of course we now have openly professed homosexuals taking pastorates across our land and the general consensus is that our God is a God of grace and thus it is permitted.

Somewhere down the line we have mistaken this little five lettered word "grace" for something it is not! It is very apparent here in Paul's letter to the Romans that the Spirit of Truth wanted to bring home a revelation that the people in the Church needed to hear. This revelation is very needed in this hour of mistaken grace! This is the revelation of grace to conquer sin and not grace to tolerate sin! Somehow we have misread this text and came to the conclusion that grace increases as we increase in sin! Paul said to the Romans: "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound". This is the revelation of God's grace overcoming the sinful nature! Not vice-versus!

This is exactly what the Apostle is warning us against. Moderns might phrase it thus: We can continue living in sin because God's grace provides us sufficient and special tolerance on God's part to us-ward concerning sin. Beloved, the grace of God is not special tolerance on God's part towards our sin! Our sin is absolutely grievous and obnoxious to God and His grace is divine ability to conquer sin, absolute deliverance from sin and the nature therein.

Paul said, God forbid that we should continue in sin after we receive God's grace! Yet, multitudes of Evangelicals are misappropriating the very essence of this beloved gift of God. We are teaching sloppy grace and the result is sloppy living! Paul told the Galatians "those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts". In essence he was saying they have rightfully appropriated God's grace! Through the grace of God they had conquered the flesh and all of the carnal impulses of the old adamic nature.

Brethren, I am greatly concerned that we are misappropriating and teaching this revelation of grace. We have used grace as a license to sin instead of a divine writ freeing us from sin's power! Paul was so grieved at the very thought of this perverted doctrine that he said: GOD FORBID!!! John Newton's famous "Amazing Grace" describes this grace with amazing clarity.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believ'd!

Post-modern believers would rewrite this stanza thus:

'Twas grace that allowed me to drink beer
And grace my conscience reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour sin first conceived!

The grace of modern evangelicalism omits the revelation of grace teaching our hearts to fear! Yet, without fearing hearts we can only expect the continuation and perpetuation of the sinful nature that God forbids. When Paul addressed the church at Philippi saying: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" he was not referring to external activities perpetuating or obtaining salvation. No, he was referring to the inner workings of grace that leaves the seeker fearful and trembling concerning his lost estate thus revealing the highway of grace's divine ability to lead such a weary seeker to the peace and rest of true salvation.

We must also note: "grace never leaves the seeker in the miseries and discomforts of sins brutal discovery even though it has led them there. True biblical grace brings the weary sinner through the brutal valley of sins startling discovery into the bountiful beauties of graces ultimate deliverance from sin in its entirety."

Paul said, "I do not frustrate the grace of God!" In essence Paul was saying, "I am not mealy mouthed and forked tongued concerning God's grace" He was definite and singular concerning grace. Jude the half-brother of Jesus warned about this lukewarm age that would turn the grace of God into lasciviousness or lawlessness. Permitting carnality and excusing it in the name of grace! We have a shaking warning in Jude's epistle of coming judgment and destruction for all those perverting God's grace.

God's grace is no more a license to sin than a marriage license is a license to commit adultery! That marriage license is a binding agreement to keep one from such ludicrous acts! It is such with God's grace. It is not a license to sin; it is a divine writ that frees us from the dominion of sin!