

Grace and No Other Gospel

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

Copyright © 2003

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	5
---------------------------	---

<i>Chapter 1</i>	7
------------------------	---

MIXED MESSAGES TROUBLE THE HEARERS

<i>Chapter 2</i>	11
------------------------	----

*MERCIES FOR YESTERDAY, TODAY AND
TOMORROW*

<i>Chapter 3</i>	15
------------------------	----

PROMOTING THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST

<i>CONCLUSION</i>	20
-------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION

Since the first tablet was used to record a story, millions of books have been published. Only a few have survived through the centuries as “classics”—works of enduring excellence. And of those, far above them all, the Holy Bible remains unparalleled in its purpose, potential, and pertinence.

The Bible was written to reveal the heart of God to man. The thread that is woven through every page and ties it all together is the Gospel of Grace. This gospel proclaims that salvation depends on nothing of ourselves; it is the gift of God, paid for by the blood of His Son (Ephesians 2:8). The work is finished! God saves people by grace, through faith. One only needs to believe it and receive Christ into his heart.

This Gospel—the Gospel of Grace—is what we need to be telling the world: *this* Gospel and no other message. It is our prayer that this booklet will help people to see that God waits so that

He may be gracious to us (Isaiah 30:18*a*). He wants to reveal His tender heart of mercy to us through a personal revelation of the glorious Gospel of Grace.

Chapter One

MIXED MESSAGES
TROUBLE THE HEARERS

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

“Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-8).

Paul remarked, “I marvel—I am shocked—that some of you are so soon removed from the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” Hundreds and thousands of people have no idea that they are hearing another gospel—which is *not* the Gospel. It may be called a gospel message, and it may have Bible verses quoted throughout. But if it requires anything more than believing that

Christ paid for their sins and receiving the gift of grace (which includes the *gift* of repentance), they are hearing a perverted gospel. Any other message will trouble the hearer. It is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God does not take this matter lightly. In verse 8, the apostle Paul wrote that if anyone preaches any message that adds to or takes away from the Gospel of Grace, "...let him be accursed"—*anathema*, doomed for destruction, without hope of being redeemed. Does that sound too strong? Do you think that Paul may have been a little out of line when he said that? Apparently, the Holy Spirit doesn't think so. The admonition is repeated in the next verse.

Certain preachers—and I used to be one of them years ago—can't preach a message without speaking against long hair, short skirts, and smoking cigarettes. They have no other message but to speak against those sins, immoral lifestyles, and all sorts of problems.

Of course, I do have proper godly convictions. Someone once asked me, "Do you think I can smoke and still go to heaven?"

I said, "Yes, and a lot sooner, too."

The point is that except for the sins of self-righteousness, most people are already painfully

aware of their sin. Once the light of the Gospel shines on them, even before it shines in them, the Holy Spirit convicts people of sin. That is His job. Even unsaved, unchurched people have God-consciousness, based on moral light, to tell them what is right and wrong (John 1:9). So to keep harping on sin from the pulpit reveals a lack of Bible doctrine on the part of the speaker.

God Loves Us Just as We Are

A little boy in Rochester, N.Y., wrote an essay titled, "A Dog Is Man's Best Friend." This is what the boy wrote: "My mom says, 'Do.' My dad says, 'Don't.' My brother says, 'Stop.' But my little dog just loves me as I am."

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

It is beautiful to understand that God loves us just as we are—to know that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ really loves us.

Think about it. Honestly, how many people do you know who would die for you? If, at this moment, someone had to give his life so you would live, do you know anyone who would do it?

If an alcoholic or drug addict were about to

be hit by a car, would you rush out, knock them out of the way and take the hit so that they could live?

That is exactly what Jesus did for us. He died, the Just for the unjust, bearing all of our sins (1 Peter 3:18, 1 Peter 2:24). It is an amazing story, and I am so grateful to God that He has made it so simple and practical.

Billy Graham told the story of a mother who made the mistake of giving her boy iodine instead of cough syrup. She called after the boy's sister and said, "Quick, give him some cream." That neutralized the iodine and the boy was okay.

The principle is this: Why take poison when we can have the Gospel of Grace? Through a weak eye, it may look similar, and it may sound similar; but it smells bad and the results are terrible. Legalism is poison. Works programs are poison. If the production of your life is of works—following the letter of the law without having the joy of the Lord or the life of the Holy Spirit—it is not of grace (Romans 11:6). Don't take poison. You can't grow on poison, but you can grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter Two

MERCIES FOR YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

“It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

“They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Grace can be defined as God giving us what we do not deserve, and mercy as God *not* giving us what we do deserve.

The mercies of God take care of every single thing about your past (Psalm 25:6). The mercies of God take care of everything that is going on in your life right now (Psalm 119:77). According to Psalm 77, the mercies of God take care of everything in your future.

Mercy takes care of every single sin, right now (Luke 1:77-78). The Lord’s tender mercies will comfort you in every type of suffering (James 5:11). He has plenty of mercy, according to Psalm 103:8. Nehemiah 9:19 tells us that the

mercies of God are “manifold”—they are on every side. According to Psalm 136, His mercies endure forever, through every kind of trial. They never cease. In Psalm 23, His mercy follows you and will never stop following you. In Psalm 89:14, His mercy is before you.

God’s mercy is in front of you, behind you, around you. His great mercy comforts you, taking care of your past, your present, and your future. He has made us vessels of mercy, prepared for glory (Romans 9:23). Oh, this is the glorious Gospel of Grace.

Restored by Mercy: Fresher Than a Child

“Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah” (Psalm 77:9).

“Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

“His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s: he shall return to the days of his youth” (Job 33:24-25).

Think about a precious little baby girl. She can do nothing on her own. When she needs to be washed and fed, she depends on her Mommy and Daddy. They love to cuddle her when she is

cleaned up and dressed up. They walk the floor with her, trying to keep her from crying and fussing. They never want to spoil her, yet they can't help but give her their attention.

God's mercies deliver us from the pit and make us feel as we were in our youth, pure and clean. By His Mercy, we are made fresh as children—like little babies all cleaned up.

The Gospel of Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live quietly in this present evil world (Titus 2:12). Grace brings us to a Person where we have personal fellowship with the Father of all (2 Peter 3:18, 1 Corinthians 1:9).

Justification Brings Life to Bloom

"For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

"Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

"Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant" (Job 14:7).

There is something about God's grace. In Luke 18:10-14, the publican was afraid and guilty, and he endured so much condemnation. He did not dare to come near the altar in the

temple. On the other hand, the Pharisee was just thanking God that he wasn't like the publican. He was telling God about all of his tithes and everything else that he did. The publican just beat his breast and would not look to heaven. He knew he was a crook and an adulterer, and just said, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." The publican went home justified.

This is why every day of my life I am so deeply grateful. I want to always express such gratitude toward God, the Father of all mercies. He is the God of all comfort. None of us can understand it fully. James 2:13 declares that mercy rejoices against judgment. Oh, how I love that. Still, it is such a difficult reality to grasp.

Chapter Three

PROMOTING THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST

“Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

“Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:8-10).

“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Corinthians 3:6).

Part of the problem in much of Christianity today has to do with the letter of the law versus the Spirit of grace. The law of the Lord is perfect (Psalm 19:7). But when the Scriptures are read or

when the Word is preached, legalism (which is the letter of the law without the Spirit) becomes the predominant theme. Sometimes it may sound like the New Covenant but it is not. Verses are given that condemn people and legislate to them without a proper balance. The truth is, the Old Covenant was designed to shut *every* mouth (Romans 3:19). No one could live up to it, and God knew it, so He brought in a brand-new covenant (Hebrews 8:6-11).

The New Covenant is an agreement between God the Father and Jesus the Son, that the Son would pay for everyone's sin with His perfect human form. So now those who believe upon the Son come under something brand new. Just by believing on Christ, they become brand-new creatures, and old things pass away.

All things become new under the New Covenant.

The Government of Grace

Certain TV and radio preachers have become quite popular through preaching a message that is 30 to 40 percent law, and they make people think it is grace. People cannot be straightened out by enforcing the law. The minute any of us starts trying to do something apart from the

Holy Spirit of grace, we become self-righteous—and self-righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

We are under the government of God's grace (Romans 6:14). Therefore, God does the keeping. Grace does the teaching. Grace does the ministering. Grace does the giving. We do the abiding. We do the responding. Result: the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts to promote the character of Christ.

Grace is not a license to sin. It is a provision for us *not* to sin, as we reside in a process that keeps us going after God until He finally transforms those areas in our hearts.

Therefore, there is no reason to live in self-condemnation. Every single one of us has a destiny to be perfect. Every Christian will be perfect. And, every Christian *is* perfect in positional truth. Every Christian can rebound if he fails. Every one of us can rejoice because of the Blood of the Lamb. This should be our testimony (see Revelation 12:11).

The Breadth of God's Grace

Let me illustrate the depth of God's grace. Imagine the situation of a woman who had three abortions before she was saved. When she reaches

heaven, she will see and know those children. That reunion will reveal the glory of the Gospel of Grace (Ephesians 2:7).

Based upon what the Bible tells us in Psalm 139:14-17, just like children who were miscarried or stillborn, aborted children go right to heaven. What an example of God revealing His grace throughout eternity:

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

“My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

“Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

“How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!”

Whatever God starts, He finishes and perfects. Whatever He does, He does forever. The Father sees the substance of every person long before they were conceived. God sees their substance and makes note of it in a book. These are the things that concern God, and He perfects that which concerns Him. The fact that we are

saved in an instant is no greater a miracle than God taking an aborted baby to heaven is. He loves to protect life.

Engraved upon Almighty Hands

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

“Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me” (Isaiah 49:15-16).

God does not forget any of us. Our names are etched into the palms of His hands. And just as He knows intimately every child who was conceived, so He knows us intimately and completely. He cherishes us and keeps us and saves us to the uttermost. He will never leave us or forsake us.

That is the only Gospel. It is the Gospel of grace. It is the Gospel that makes us want to worship Him, to love Him, and to serve Him.

CONCLUSION

Salvation is God's gift, purchased by the blood of His Son at Calvary. The payment was made once and is good for all time. This is the Finished Work of Jesus Christ. He came and lived among us, He was crucified, He died, He was buried, and He rose again. It took all of that to make it possible for us to receive the gift of God's righteousness, by grace through faith.

In Luke 15, the father of the prodigal ran to meet his son, embraced him, and kissed him on the neck again and again. The son, who had gone off on his own, kept trying to make his confession, but the father wouldn't hear it. His son was home. That was all that mattered.

"Get my son the best robe!"

"Get him a ring!"

"Bring him new shoes!"

"Slay the fatted calf and get ready for a celebration! We will have a party for my son tonight!"

That was how the father rejoiced over a son who had gone far out of his will. And this is how God responds to people who go astray and then come home to Him. He is not interested in what they did. His only interest is that one of his children received the Finished Work message of the glorious Gospel of Grace and is back home.

Everything about us was resolved at Calvary through mercy, grace, and love. The Finished Work is the Father's response, and it should be our response toward anyone who has failed. Except for an occasional testimony, there should never be one Word about how they failed to measure up. Let's pick them up. We have *good* news—the Gospel of Grace. Let us speak nothing else. There is no other gospel.