

WHY is so little interest shown in reaching those for whom this greatest message was revealed: the heathen Gentiles? Doubts enter my mind and I am a missionary!

WHERE is this Grace Gospel represented around the world? As knowers of grace, are we sacrificing all and everything to reach out worldwide with this message?

WHY NOT, INDEED? Honestly, do we dare to hold this solemn responsibility of being saved by grace while showing preference for luxury and class...and not offering equal time for the heathen who die without knowing mercy or grace when we can open up our Bibles to Acts 20:24 and confront Paul's challenging testimony? *"None of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."* Paul's long ago proclamation shouts the answer! Paul put into practice what he received from the Lord Jesus Christ: the full Grace Gospel... and Paul himself was full of **GRACE TO THE MAX!**

Believer in grace, **DO YOU SEE** the answer? You have heard about grace for how long? I have preached it for years, love it with all my heart, cherish it even as our own family. But when it comes to making it known: giving up social status, pleasure, financial stability, time, home, loved ones, money...just knowing and loving grace truth is not enough. For sure we have grace. But **DOES GRACE HAVE US?**

We are not full **TO THE MAX!** as Paul was. Paul not only said, 'Believe what I teach,' but also, 'Do as I do...follow me,' which may mean hardship, sacrifice, sickness, hunger, pain, nakedness, peril, sword. For such a life walk (Paul called it his manner of life) we not only need the Grace Message, but we need that grace filling us until we overflow.

WHAT IS THIS GRACE we like to talk about? Most answer quickly: 'Unmerited favor, a favor, pardon or forgiveness which is not deserved.' Look at these two words **mercy** and **grace** and note the difference between them.

NEWS BULLETIN!

**MINERS TRAPPED IN UNDERGROUND SHAFT!
ARE THE MINERS DEAD? OR STILL ALIVE?**

Caring men and women work slavishly for hours, even days, suffering weariness and misery, until a rescue is accomplished. All this effort pictures **mercy**, rightly deserved favor. Another story tells of a Korean Christian father whose beloved son was killed by a Communist youth. When the killer was caught, the father insisted that the young man come into his house to take the place of his dead son! The Communist youth was forgiven and pardoned though completely undeserving. This example pictures **grace!**

**Deserved help is mercy;
Undeserved love is grace.**

WHY DO WE MIX UP GRACE AND MERCY? We all possess mercy. For example, when a child cries out or a friend asks help due to a sudden calamity, we rush to help. Such is mercy, and it is good...but it does not compare with grace. No greater expression of grace has ever been witnessed than at the Cross of Calvary where Jesus our Lord was stretched between heaven and earth with nails tearing at the flesh of His hands and feet, his life blood streaming out. *"Forgive them!"* He calls out. *"They know not what they do!"* That cry from the Cross continues to this day, and what we must see today is that God's **GRACE** was very much evident on that Cross. Jesus drank the cup which His Father ordained. Nothing moved Him from that supreme sacrifice of His life blood for the whole world.

Paul certainly displayed Calvary grace burning in his soul when he drank his cup and said, *"None of these things move me* (the persecutions promised him by the Holy Spirit), *neither do I count my life dear unto myself."* It is no wonder the Thessalonians shouted, *"These that have turned the world upside down have come here also!"* Paul's reputation came, not because he knew the Grace Message, but because he was full **TO THE MAX!** with the grace of Jesus Christ—it literally surged within his body, motivating him to go on and on. Paul could not rest. After being brutally stoned outside the walls of Lystra city, he took courage and braved entering Lystra the second time to minister. He wrote to Timothy: *"Share with me in the suffering for the gospel."* (2 Tim. 1:8)

Our moment of truth dawns—**WHY WE CAN'T** get out of soft chairs, soft beds, the soft life, to **MOVE** the Gospel of Grace out. We are just not filled, not overflowing **TO THE MAX!**

Another word in the Greek language that expresses the same concept as grace is *agape*. Translated as love, it carries along the idea of grace. *Agape* is love irrespective of right. Picture a type of love that flows purely from within, not influenced by outward appearances or circumstances, like when a mother maintains strong love for her child, love comes because that child is hers. She suffered to bring her child into the world. What type of love did Christ have for us...*"when we were yet sinners"*? Christ's type of love models grace, and this grace love is *agape*. Yes, mankind loves the lovely and the lovable.

WHAT ABOUT THE UGLY? The murderers, robbers, perverts, sinners? More likely, we despise them. More than likely, our outreach with Grace halts within the confines of the lovable: our family, our close friends, our church. But Jesus commanded, "Go to the street corners, out to the highways..and bring them in."

WHO? ME? To black Africans or heathen Asians? To street kids? To dying AIDS patients? You who know the Grace message forward and backward, would you consider depriving yourself of luxury living, even for a while, in order to offer this gospel to the lost souls for whom it was intended? Not sure?

WHY NOT? Does it make you feel uncomfortable, seem unreasonable? But can you immerse yourself in the spa of overflowing grace while others die in the dust?

**"The worst crime in the desert
is not MURDER or THEFT, but
knowing where there is water, and not telling."**

- Dr. Helen Huston

Do we practice spiritual apartheid toward the rest of the world when God's grace is meant to be worldwide? For an individual to possess truth, and still not show one iota of interest to let anyone else know, is not uncommon.

WHY DO WE ASK THESE QUESTIONS? Because many believers in Christ, who have little awareness of the Gospel of Grace, achieve fantastic work for God simply because they are implementing grace. Biblical Israel is a good example of those who possessed the Word of God, but the Word did not possess them. They received all the oracles of God, experienced all the privileges of a national relationship with God. Yet Israel failed miserably and their condemnation was and will

be great for knowing God's truth and not doing that truth. As God says: "So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of My mouth." (Rev. 3:16) What of us? We stand in the privileged place today that Israel stood in before. Ours is a heavenly position—we can even see why and where Israel failed.

WILL WE BE EVEN WORSE than Israel? The day of Grace is coming to a close. A dispensation has been committed to us, but are we dispensing it? 2 Cor. 6:1 warns us: "We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain." How can we be full of grace, yet avoid receiving His grace "in vain"? There is only one way, and it is not by going deeper into Bible study, but by the way that leads us back to the Cross: "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17)

At the foot of the Cross we can fill up with grace, when we remember the grace pouring from our Savior. How He loved! We as living sacrifices (Rom.12:1,2) can afford to stay right there at the Cross where our Savior sacrificed Himself totally to redeem us, stay there until we too are filled with grace. Prophet Jeremiah tells his soul experience, "Then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name,' but His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not."

ARE WE AWARE that Christ's death is in vain for those we fail to tell? We stay by His Cross and fill up with His grace...until our words express, 'It is burning in my bones, I cannot stay.' Being filled with God's grace expresses itself as 'no ocean too wide, no mountain too high, no sacrifice too great.' Love fills us as Christ loves us. God's grace snatches away selfishness, personal desire for fame, glory and fortune. Grace especially focuses the spotlight on the Cross—upon those for whom the Cross is **Priority #1: THE LOST!**

God's grace yearns for us to understand how much love was embodied in Him to die for the lost. At the same time He wants us to gain this same grace and this same love so that we too will determine to offer our life for those for whom He gave His life. Paul says it from his heart in Philippians 3:10: "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." Evidently Paul did not visualize himself a bystander at the foot

of the Cross, merely marveling at the wondrous grace of God that nailed Christ there. But Paul wanted to identify with Christ upon that Cross **TO THE MAX!** He wanted to taste grace...to experience the sufferings grace entails. Yes, it is true: we receive salvation at the foot of the Cross when we perceive our Savior's amazing grace toward us.

WHAT REMAINS FOR US? Identify with Christ's experience, be warmed by fellowship with Him in every way. Where else can we find such grace? Look back to the Cross...see His grace flowing out...desire to taste His love. It is like leaving the foot the Cross and climbing up to join our Savior as He looks out at the world in its need. Are you still gazing up at His feet or looking down from alongside Him? Does being in Christ make you desire communion with His suffering, to live and die for a world so sinful and becoming so desperate?

Read again the book of Acts and the epistles of Paul and marvel how a man could endure such adversity and mockery and still continue on right to the end...

TO THE MAX! Why would Christ want to endure that Cross? Simply expressed: He was God's grace filled up. You are in Christ positionally...are you taking your blessings for granted or to the full...seeing through His eyes, loving with His love, filled up by Him with grace?

Yes, it is one thing to know the Message of Grace; it is quite another to become a messenger of grace, to know ultimate joy by experiencing an overflow, a flood of grace, pouring out from your own crucified life!

*Lord, what can I do to show You my feelings, to let you know how I appreciate your matchless grace to me? Please open me up to your truth...**TO THE MAX!**...that not only YOU, but the lost, pagan world will have the chance to see and hope...**TO THE MAX!***

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