

The Gospel of Grace

by David Wilkerson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of justification by faith, the cornerstone of grace, and warns against the dangers of legalism, which is based on pride and an outward show.

Duration: 55:39

Scripture: Romans 5:1-17, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Justification By Faith", "Gods Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the concept of being justified by faith and finding peace with God through Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that our salvation is not based on any inherent righteousness or goodness in us, but rather on the grace of God. The preacher also shares personal anecdotes about his own journey and the role his wife played in humbling him and helping him grow spiritually. He encourages the audience to prioritize their relationship with God and not be distracted by worldly pursuits.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit Series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, Post Office Box 260, Lindale, Texas, 75771, or by calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. Turn to Romans, the fifth chapter. Romans, the fifth chapter.

The gospel of grace. Beginning of verse one. Therefore being justified by faith.

Justified by what? Justified by faith we are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith under this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Verse 15.

But not as the offense so also is the free gift. For through the offense of one man many be dead. Much more the grace of God and the gift of grace which is by one man Jesus Christ is bounded unto many.

Verse 17. For if one man's offense doth reign by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ. Look this way if you will please.

Beloved, I'd like you to think back at that time just before you were saved. Before you gave your life to Jesus Christ. Back to that time when you were an enemy to God.

You were lost. You were in blindness. You had the wrath of God abiding on you according to the scripture.

Now how did you find peace with God? How is it that the wrath of God was dispelled from your life? In what way were you made right with God? In what way were you pardoned from your sins so that you can sit here tonight rejoicing in the love of Jesus Christ? Was there something good in you that Jesus saw and responded to? Was there some inherent righteousness in you? And the Lord said, I see something in you. I'm going to come down and I'm going to do something for you. I'm going to save you because I see goodness in you.

Was it your good works? Did you start doing something very special for God? Did you become specially obedient and faithful to God? And because you were faithful, God came down and rewarded you with the gift of salvation? Is that how you were saved? No. We are not saved by our works. The Bible said that we all are as an unclean thing.

And all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. All of our good works, all of our obedience in the flesh. All of that in order to please God or merit our salvation is in vain.

Now, the theological definition of grace is the unearned pardon, mercy and favor of God. Now, here's what the Bible says. But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, which is justification, and sanctification and redemption.

Now, don't get turned off by those theological terms. I don't understand them all myself. No one will fully understand all of these terms.

We only see through a glass darkly now. But it says Jesus Christ, who is sent to us from God, has been made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Now, in simple terms, what the Bible is saying, grace includes everything God has done for us through Jesus to bring us back to Himself.

It includes everything that you find in this book. Grace covers it all. Grace is that coverall definition of every good thing God has done for us in Jesus Christ to redeem us from the power of the devil and put us into the kingdom of life.

That's grace. All of it. Now, justification is the cornerstone of grace.

Now, listen to the word justification. I want you to say it. Justification.

Again. Justification. Now, some have made it easy and said that means being just made just right before God.

Justification means to be acquitted of God. It means to be forgiven of all of our sins and all of our guilt removed and to be considered holy and righteous before God, accepted by God by faith alone in what Jesus did on the cross. To be justified means to be made right before God, accepted before God, forgiven, cleansed by nothing that you have done by your own hands or your own goodness or your own merit, but simply by what Jesus did by going to the cross, dying and being resurrected and ascended to the Father.

That is called justification. You cannot become holy by good deeds or simply by obedience and faithfulness alone. Now, obedience, faithfulness, good works are all the result of justifying faith.

Now, I want you to follow me, please. The Scripture says, For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It's the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

That's Ephesians 2.8.9. 2 Corinthians 5.21. Don't turn, but listen closely. For He hath made, that's God has made Him to be sin for us. Christ was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Galatians 2.16. Knowing that a man is not justified, he's not made right before God by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we may be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law shall no flesh, shall no flesh be justified.

Acts 13.39. By Him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beloved, listen to me, please. This is the foundation of our faith.

This is the foundation of your Christian walk. If you don't know how you're made right before God, you can have no peace with God. The peace I have in my heart with God is not based on anything I have ever done.

It's based on my faith in the absolute complete work of Jesus for me in wiping out my sins and making me acceptable before God. Folks, I'm so glad He didn't tie my salvation to my feelings. He didn't tie it to my temptations.

He didn't tie it to my feelings. Otherwise, every time I was tempted, I'd think I was going to hell. Every time I had a moment of temptation, I would feel that I had lost my salvation.

Folks, some of you lose your salvation 20 times a day. And that is totally unscriptural. He's not waiting around for you to trip and fall and say, I caught you.

No, He went to the cross and shed His own blood to justify you before God by His own blood. And I believe and I stand on the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, on righteousness by faith. Hallelujah.

Paul did not want to be found standing before Christ having his own righteousness. Well, he was a good man. He was a Pharisee.

His name was Saul first. He diligently kept all the numerous rules and regulations of the law of Moses. He paid tithes faithfully.

He loved God with all his heart. He attended all the functions of the synagogue. He studied the Word of God faithfully.

He went about doing good. He loved his fellow man. He was a perfect man according to the law.

But he said, when I saw what Christ did for me, that all became dumb. He said, I counted that all lost. Because when the law came to me, when I saw the law of God, that I could not be holy by all these things that I would call to.

I thought I was a holy man. But God showed me His commandments. He showed me what He required.

If I was going to be saved by the law and by good works, I had to keep every one of them. I had to keep the 3,000 some precepts. And if I fell in one, I was going to go to hell.

He said, I realized the law came home to me and it killed me. It swore me. Folks, I know what that's like.

I know what it's like to go along in just a little bit of a lazy Christianity, being a minister preaching to thousands. And not praying as I should, not seeking God, and just getting spiritually lazy. And have a man put a book in my hand, a Christian in complete armor by the Puritan William Gurnall.

And I wasn't 20 pages into that book when the law of God exposed my heart and my spiritual laziness. And it literally killed me. And what I mean is that it came home to my heart, exposed the sinful attitude in my heart, and I was slain by the Spirit of God.

Convicted. And Paul said, But what things were gained to me, I then counted lost for Christ. And I do count them all, but doubt that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

The righteousness of God which comes to us by faith. Hallelujah. Well, to be made righteous by faith is the hardest thing in the world for our flesh to accept.

The flesh hates it, because the flesh wants to help God. The flesh can say, Well, look, now wait a minute, my obedience has to count for something. All this hard work, you know, we don't mind getting saved by faith, but we don't want to live by faith.

It's almost a thank you, Lord, but I'll take it from here. You saved me by faith, but now let me do it. And there's so many of us saying, Well, God, you mean I'm going to believe and I'll be made righteous? And so, we don't want that.

We want to bite the bullet, and then temptation comes and overwhelms us. Bless God, I'll get victory! If it kills me, then it will kill you! That's not the path to victory. The obedience to faithfulness comes as a result of being steadfastly on that rock of justification by faith alone.

And I'm going to share in just a minute that all faith is not just divine faith. We have many sincere believers in this church who have not yet submitted to the righteousness of Christ, still going about trying to please God by their good deeds. They have a zeal for God, the Scripture says.

They're very zealous, they're sincere, they love God. Paul loved God before he came into the righteousness of Christ. But it's not according to knowledge.

For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believe it. Now look, it says they tried to establish their own righteousness.

Now that's been called legalism. Legalism. Now folks, we really don't understand legalism.

We use the term, and I don't think many ministers understand it. I don't think I understood it until the Holy Ghost began to reveal it to me. And I've been studying it for many, many years, trying to get a handle on it.

I believe the Lord has shown me something about it. I used to believe that legalism had to do with man-made rules and regulations, sincere, godly people trying to be holy by just a coat of dress, restrictions

on dress and rules and regulations, trying to become holy before God. I used to call that legalism because it had to do with do's and don'ts.

But folks, legalism is much more subtle than that. It's far beyond that. When I was a boy, a young man, I used to go to camp meeting, Living Waters Campground in Cherry Tree, Pennsylvania, and I'd hear Evangelist thunder against the sins of the day.

You know, I still remember when Evangelist preaching against bobbed hair. That's when permanence had just come out. I'm trying to tell you how old I am right now.

When permanence first came out, permanent ways, bobbed hair, women started coming to church with their hair bobbed. And I'd hear preachers were thundering against it. That was worldly.

Open-toed shoes came for women. And that was added to the list. Oh, I heard some strong messages on those naked toes.

Almost everybody in those days, many, many preachers in Pentecostal preaching against makeup, the red kind. Now, you could use all the white powder you wanted, and so the church is full of white-faced women, but no red. And what you had, finally, it ended up in a bunch of spiffy-dressed preachers with grabbed wives with beehive handkerchiefs and painted white.

And I thought that was legalism. I thought that's legalism. I remember speaking at a church upstate New York years ago when I was a young Evangelist, and a very godly man, with very sincere people, but the pastor and the elders had taped a yardstick at the entrance.

They had one entrance at the door, and he taped a yardstick on the doorpost. And every service, either the pastor or an elder, stood there and watched the women come by. And they had amazingly the length of the dress, and they couldn't come in if they weren't at least, they could be no more than six inches or so off the ground.

That's the truth. And they'd be tapped and said, your dress is too short. There were a lot of preaching against short dresses.

And I may preach against short dresses if it keeps getting worse. But I thought that was legalism. Very sincere, but I thought that was, in those days it was called holiness preaching.

In fact, when I first came to New York City, I was shocked by all the rigid rules in Hispanic Pentecostal churches. Oh, I was shocked. We would go out in the street with our workers, and we'd get these fellas and girls right off the street that were drug addicts, and they'd cry and pray.

We'd take them into local Hispanic Pentecostal church, and the girls had jeans and makeup, and the pastor caressing at her, the deacon said, you can't come in here. And I remember one pastor said, go home lady and dress like a woman and come back. We don't allow women in this church.

That was holiness, the way you looked. If you had jeans, you didn't ever go to church. I'm not going to get into that.

That's another message. But you see, that was called legalism. Legalism.

Folks, just a few months ago, we had a young couple from England come to this church. They'd been getting our tapes, and they responded to the message of holiness, and they made a trip over here, and after a Sunday morning service, they approached us in the back, and they were hurt. They were crushed.

There were tears in their eyes, and they said, how could you do it? Do what? Your women didn't have a coven on their heads. How can you believe God and the Holy Ghost to work in this church when you are not obeying the commandment of the Lord to have the heads of the women covered? They were shocked. They left the church hurt.

Went back to England. I guess they're telling people, the Holy Ghost is not attached to our church because our women don't have beanies. Now, folks, I can show you from the Scripture where that is a form of legalism, but that's not the heart of it.

We're not making fun of that because you have to see the whole picture of that. That's a whole other area that I don't have the time to get into right now. I have been hearing in the past few months from all kinds of people who attend prayer groups and small charismatic churches, and they write to me and they call us on the telephone and they're confused by all the teachers coming by with all these various rules and regulations.

One couple tearfully told us last week, we had a pastor, a teacher come by our church a few months ago and he told us that the only way God can hear prayer in the church is when you kneel. So we all started kneeling. All the time.

We kneeled every time you prayed. A month later another comes and says, you don't have to kneel. That's Catholic.

That's Catholic. So we started to sit around the table of the Lord. Now here I don't know whether to sit or stand.

Because one preacher is saying this, another preacher is saying this. One group said, we were told that when the Scripture is read, you stand. You have to stand to honor the Word of the Lord.

It's disrespectful if you don't stand. When the preacher gets up to preach, if you don't stand, many churches stand when the Word is read. Another evangelist came and said, you don't do that because when Jesus gave the Word, He made us sit.

I know some of you have been judging this church because we don't stand at the time you think we should stand or sit when we think we should sit or don't have something on our head. Or somebody got earrings too long for you. You like the short ones, but you don't like the long ones.

Folks, we could produce a list that long of people who are offended by these things. That's been called legalism. Folks, legalism is much more subtle.

It's far worse than that. And I'm going to tell you that you and I and everybody in this house have been living with legalism. We all have a bit in us and I want God to knock it all out of us tonight.

I'm going to show you what legalism is. Hopefully. That may be a part of it.

You see, legalism is based on pride. It's an outward show. It's a facade.

It's a pretending of holiness to impress people. Legalism is not trying to impress God but people. It's not trying to be justified before God but before men.

Now that's the heart of legalism. Wanting to have an aura of holiness. An aura of being a prophet.

Of being a man of prayer. A woman of intercession. And foster that image.

And feed that image. Amen. But you see, the legalist is not out trying to earn righteousness.

He's trying to keep up the facade and appearance impressing other Christians. That he's devoted, pious, he's serious. He's all out for God.

I am a deeply religious person and everybody ought to see it. Now, the Talmudic writers listed seven classes of Pharisees. Among them were the Shechemites.

The Shechemites were Pharisees who said long prayers in public to be considered holy but on the side they were robbing widows' houses. They were stealing widows' estates. But to cover things, said these long prayers.

They were called Shechemites. They had another group, a class of Pharisees called the Stumblers. These were Pharisees who were so mock-humble they went shuffling along looking this way and that.

They are so holy they dare not lift their feet before a holy God. So they are shuffling along the Stumblers. It's in the Talmud.

They had another group called the Bleeders. These were so mock-modest, so mock-humble they dare not lift their eyes lest they look at something evil. And the reason they call them Bleeders they're always walking in the walls.

And the more blood, the more holy. They hit a wall and back off. Glory to God.

We've got Stumblers and Bleeders all through the church of Jesus Christ. They're sitting there and they are so holy they don't want to worship with us. They're sitting there stumbling and walking in the walls.

They don't want to lift their hands they want to clap because you see they're shut in with God. They're shut in with God. Holy.

Above everybody else. Oh, come off your high horse. Tell yourself, come down off the tree.

The reason I'm laughing. We play such legalistic games to feed this idea this concept that we have really arrived. Boy, did God show it to me.

I'm going to say something. My wife never heard this before. She's going to learn it for the first time.

I warned her tonight that I had to make a confession. I said, what's it about, David? I said, wait. See, we play games to try to foster this impression this Bible calls it an outward show that we are holy.

That we are something. I thank God for sending Gwen into my life. God sent her into my life to knock the pride and pomposity out of me.

I wouldn't be here tonight without my wife. God, when he let her walk down the aisle gave her a Holy Ghost pin to put in my balloon. She's been picking balloons ever since she married me.

I remember when I first came to New York City I weighed 115 pounds I'm not a prophet. You know that. You know I've made some prophets that haven't happened.

I'm not a prophet. I'm a watchman, but not a prophet. In those days they were calling me a prophet way, way back.

I weighed 115 pounds. My cheeks were sunken. We were at a businessman's luncheon at the United Nations dining hall.

Sponsored by Mrs. Hoving. Mr. and Mrs. Hoving were millionaires who had a major stock in Tiffany's. I had just spoken and people were crying and I sat down and Mrs. Hoving was sitting next to Gwen, my wife.

She said, Gwen, I like my prophets. I like to see prophets gaunt, which means skinny, holy, and dressed in black just like David. And with that twinkle in her eye, Gwen said, Mrs. Hoving, have you ever tried to live with a prophet just like David? The pin.

Let me tell you exactly what legalism is. There's no question about it. Let me explain how the Lord showed it to me.

Last year we were on a vacation with some friends down in Florida. Dr. Rice and his wife, dear friends of ours. And we were staying in Orlando at a hotel.

And this was vacation time and after the second week after we'd seen Disney World and Epcot, they had a night off and we had a night off. And Gwen said, let's go to the Rice's room and let's play dominoes. And right in front of Rice's, because you know, Rice's have always considered me a righteous man, and I figured I don't want to blow it.

We were in the lobby of the hotel. I said, because you see, we've been to Disney World and they haven't seen me go off and pray yet for a whole week. How am I supposed to be holy in front of these people if they don't see me go pray? So I said, I'm sorry, I can't play dominoes.

I need to go to my room and touch God. You all go. You know what I'm really saying? I don't have time to waste like you poor earthlings.

You worldly-minded ones, you go and tinkle around with those dominoes, the prophet's going to get shut in with God. I'm sure going up to the elevator must start, boy, that's something. How do you play dominoes when you know this man's over there pleading with God? I go in the room, and it's only 8 o'clock, and I thought, well, just a half an hour of CNN news, and then I'll pray.

An hour later, CNN announces a special program of the rise and fall of Hitler. And I said, that's prophecy, I have to see it. It's quarter to ten, I've already seen Hitler rise and fall, and I hear Glenn coming down the hall.

I run to the TV, shut it down, close the lights, fall on my face, and come to the bed. I think Glenn knew it all the time. And I'm sitting there in this very holy position.

I'm rubbing my eyes. She comes in, I tell her, you look good, honey. Poor Glenn, Glenn's thinking, here I've been playing dominoes, he's been seeking God.

That's legalism. Folks, I hope you're laughing enough to drive the truth down into your soul. We play games, trying to maintain a facade of holiness before people, that a true mind of God who has the righteousness of Christ doesn't have to put on holy airs.

The common, ordinary people know how to laugh, they know how to enjoy Jesus, and the fellowship of the saints. This is the end of side one. You may now turn the tape over to side two.

A righteous person doesn't walk around with their nose in their head, up in the heavens, saying, don't touch me, I'm holier than thou. Those who are really righteous are involved in other people's burdens and needs. They don't sit their son in trying to maintain an image.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Now, beyond legalism is the perversion of the gospel of grace.

Grace, as it's being preached in many churches today, is producing a class of Christians who are still lovers of pleasure, still bound by their sins, and going around saying, I am the righteousness of Jesus, which is a lie. Folks, I've stood outside of churches that are called grace churches. Now, this is not a Baptist doctrine, this is not a Presbyterian doctrine, a Pentecostal doctrine, the gospel of grace is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It doesn't belong to any denomination. Folks, listen to me please. I have heard churches, I'm thinking of a town, we lived there for a season, and I would go by that church when I was off in crusades, and I'd have a Sunday off, and go past this church, I'd wait to another church.

And I knew these men, these were deacons of this church, and these men were outside, all of them smoking, some of them were shaking off a hangover from a drunken binge the night before. We knew three of them that were adulterers, the whole city, the whole town knew they were adulterers and fornicators and cheats. Some were in business and were big cheats, but they were deacons in the church.

And this particular church preached what was called a grace message, that simply by faith you're made the righteousness of Christ. And then to question that pastor, who I knew, and I knew he was a good man. It wasn't that he was not a righteous man, but there was something wrong with his gospel.

He did not preach in an entire gospel, because he kept saying, well, David, I really believe in righteousness. If you really have the righteousness of Christ, it will produce holiness in you. And my mind goes on, well, wait a minute, you've been here eight years.

When will it ever happen? When is that going to come forth and fruition in the hearts of your people? Your young people are dying and going to hell. They're having illegitimate babies. Your young people are going to hell.

They're full of the devil. You know what's happening. You know that.

Now, I preach without reservation, justification, righteousness by faith alone. I'm saved by faith. I'm righteous by faith.

I'm kept by faith. That's the foundation of the gospel. But, not all faith is justifying faith.

The Bible clearly speaks about two kinds of faith. One that justifies, and one that's no better than the faith of devils. Because James said, you believe, he said, good, even the devils believe and tremble.

He was talking about a dead faith. He was talking about a temporary faith. Jesus talked about that temporary faith, which they have for a while.

They endure. They accept it joyfully, endure, and then when temptation and trial comes by the Word, they fall away. It's a temporary faith.

It's a dead faith. There is a faith, the Bible said, that purifies the heart. Acts 15.9 Simon the magician.

The Bible says, believed. Simon himself believed also. He was baptized.

But you see, this man didn't have the faith that purifies the heart. There's a faith, a true, sanctifying, justifying, purifying faith. He didn't have that kind of faith.

And when he offered a bribe to Peter, Peter said, your money perish with you. He said, I perceive that you're in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. Your heart's still bound by sin.

He believed. He was baptized. But what he believed was not with justifying faith.

His faith was not a justifying faith. It was not the kind of faith that brings the righteousness of Christ. It said of Jesus, many believed on Him when they saw the miracles which He did.

But Jesus did not commit Himself to them because He knew what was in man. They had a belief in Christ. But they didn't have the kind of faith that receives power to become the sons of God.

There's a faith that produces power to become the sons of God. Jesus warned that some believed for a while, but they have no root because they don't believe unto righteousness. James speaks of this dead faith.

You say you have faith. You believe in God. Good.

The devils also believe in Drembel. Now listen, please. I said to you, justified may write before God by faith alone.

But let me qualify something here now. And I agree with the great Puritan writer John Owen. I want to quote something from him because he says it better than I could ever say it.

He said this was written over 250 years ago. We absolutely deny that we're justified by that faith alone which can be alone, which means this, without a principle of life and obedience in all things. He says no such thing as justifying faith unless in it there's a principle of life and obedience.

There has to be a power in it. There has to be an element in it of a desire to obey, to be faithful to God in all things at all times. He called it a universal obedience.

But we recognize, he says, no faith to be of the sanctifying kind but that which virtually, radically contains in it an obedience at all times. Yes, we acknowledge no faith to be justifying which is not itself a spiritual, vital principle of obedience and good works. Let me explain that to you.

He says there's no such thing as justifying faith unless that faith desires at once, in fact, in itself, that faith is an element of obedience and a desire to please God. That's justifying faith. This other faith is just ascending faith.

That means, well, I believe that God is, that He's there, and I believe that His Word is true. But it does not lay hold of God. It does not have that element in it, this desire to obey and to receive the fullness of Jesus Christ.

Purifying faith in itself is a vital force. It's a principle of total, everlasting obedience and love for God. Now, let me put my finger on the problem with much of the grace preaching in America today and around the world.

Hear it now. They've done away with the law before they've allowed it to do its work. They have done away with the law before they've allowed it to do its work.

Beloved, we're not saved by the law, but we're convicted by the law. Here's what the Scripture says. For by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Paul said, I wouldn't have even known I was a sinner. I wouldn't have known the exceeding sinfulness of sin unless I saw the law. Describe its horror.

The law is a mirror to show you what's inside your heart. The Bible said, the question is asked by the apostle, why is there no fear of God before their eyes? Because nobody's preached them under conviction. They've never had the law.

All they've had is this message of love. They've not had this experience with the law. Folks, if you've been attending Times Square Church, you've had the law presented to you.

You have had that law held up. That mirror's been held before you. It's exposed things you never thought you had in your life.

The law is holy, Paul said. It's just and it's good. Oh, I cringe when I hear ministers mock the law.

I hear ministers demean and put down the law of God. I thank God for the work of the law in my heart. How God showed me the exceeding sinfulness of sin through the commandments.

And how I couldn't achieve it on my own. The law drives you to Jesus. And Jesus takes you back to the law to regulate your life.

You have been delivered from the law as a way of salvation. But you've not been delivered from the law as a way of conviction. The law is holy and just and good.

Within that which is good may death unto me, God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, works death in me by that which is good. That sin, by the commandment, might become exceedingly sinful.

What's he saying? I couldn't really confess my sins until I knew they were sins. I couldn't seek after the holiness of God until I saw how far from Him I was. And that's the work of the law.

Oh, we get accused in times for a church of preaching a hard message. But you know when Peter stood on the day of Pentecost and he offered the multitudes the grace of God. First of all, he preached the law

so much that they were pricked in their heart so much so they cried out, What must we do, brethren, to be saved? They were pricked in their heart by the law of God because Peter pointed a finger in their face and said, You crucified Him with your own hands.

You took the Son of God and murdered Him. And when they saw the law of God hit them in the face, it slew them with conviction. Slain with conviction.

Folks, the modern preaching of grace has no preaching of conviction whatsoever. We have a people that are offered forgiveness from sin who don't even know they're sinful. They're offered justification for sins they never even felt guilty of committing.

They're offered deliverance and freedom when they didn't even know they were bound. They're offered justification for which they do not hunger or thirst after or value. No, the law can't save you, but it's got to expose you so much so that it drives you to Christ.

Another Puritan writer, John Flavel, said, We are freed from the penalty of the law, but not from its precepts. We are no longer under its curse, but we're still under its conduct. The law will send you to Christ to be justified, but Christ will send you the law to be regulated.

Faith does not free us from obedience. We've got people going about living like the devil and saying, I'm the righteousness of Christ, which is a lie from the pit of hell, because they have never had the justifying faith. They've never had that faith that has the element in it that cries out, Oh, Jesus, I want you, I desire you, and I know that obedience brings glory of Christ to my soul.

Hallelujah. I like what I heard an old-time preacher say once, Faith is the flight of a convicted sinner into the mercy and the hands of Christ. It's the flight of a convicted sinner.

How can these people flee to Christ for refuge when they don't even know there's any danger? Why would you flee? Folks, we stand in this pulpit and we preach the law of God, not as a way of salvation, but as a way of conviction to drive you to Jesus Christ, to show you that the law is so holy, it's so pure, it's so unattainable by your own merits, but until you see that adultery is hated before God, until you see that you can't sit in God's presence and have any kind of righteousness and live like the devil, that's the purpose of the law, and that drives you to the arms of Jesus Christ, and you cry, Mercy, Lord, mercy, I can't save myself, I can't fulfill your law, but I've seen the sin of my heart. Hallelujah. Now, there's a spirit of lawlessness in the land, and I'm not going to preach much longer, but get this, please, there's a spirit of lawlessness in the land. Have you ever heard this, Give me my rights, the right to be a homosexual, to be a lesbian, the right between two consenting adults to do anything they please with their bodies, the right to abort, and it's all from a spirit of lawlessness, and they say, I want my rights, and I don't want to pay any penalty.

And that spirit's creeping into the church. That spirit. Give me holiness.

Give me righteousness. Give me peace of mind. Give me pardon for my sins, without any cost.

I just want to agree with God that His Word is true, and I don't want to be disturbed. I don't want to have to lay anything down. Just let me have a salvation I can never lose, and do as I please.

Now, that's not what is said, that's what is lived. Because what is said, if you have faith, if you truly have just, if you have true faith in Jesus Christ, that will produce righteousness. That's true if it's justifying faith.

And this spirit is creeping into the church. Give me a freedom. I want to be free to worship Jesus, I want to be able to go to praise meetings, I want to do all these things, but I don't want anybody telling me what to do.

And that spirit's in the church. And that's why we have invented this queasy kind of grace. It's a grace message that has no foundation upon which to build a holy life, to be sanctified before the Lord, because there's been no fear of God produced in the heart.

Before I close, I want you to go to James, the fourth chapter, and with this I'm going to close. You say, Brother David, this is too heavy theologically. I don't understand these terms, justification, sanctification, redemption, all these theological terms.

That's kind of confusing. Justifying faith, getting faith. Look at me please for just a moment.

Let me make it simple. Let me show you how simple it is. Not complicated at all.

James, fourth chapter, verse six. James, the fourth chapter, verse six. God, he giveth more grace, wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

Look at me please. If you're sitting here tonight with any of this pride in you, pride of your holiness, pride of your goodness, pride of having achieved something above the rest of us, mark it down. God's going to bring you down.

He said he's going to resist you. God will resist the proud, but what does he do for the humble? He gives grace. Now you don't have to sit around trying to figure out how you're going to get the grace of God.

How am I going to be justified before God? How am I going to come into this very thing that Brother David's preaching about tonight? The only thing you have to do is be humble. And the word used here is broken before God. Just broken before God.

Say, Lord, I have nothing to give to you. I humble myself before you. Be broken before the Lord.

And the Bible says God will give you his grace. He'll deliver it to you. You don't have to figure it out theologically.

You stay humble and broken before the Lord. Come off your high horse. Don't try to prove anything to anybody.

Be yourself before God and man. God said you just be humble because you're going to go that proud route. Now folks, if you're sitting here tonight and I've wounded you and you feel hurt because of what I've preached tonight, good sign God's already bringing down some pride.

That's why I had to laugh at myself. Can you laugh at your own game? Can you laugh at your own pride? I'll tell you what, you can laugh at the devil right out of your soul. You can laugh him right out when you see it exposed and say, how stupid could I be? Hallelujah.

Glory to God. He said, God resisted the proud. God said it.

God said it. His heart, the Bible said of Uzziah, was lifted up in himself and God had to strike him with leprosy. Submit yourself therefore to God.

Resist the devil. He'll flee from you. Draw nigh to God.

He'll draw nigh to you. Hallelujah. Resist the devil and he'll flee from you.

You don't have to run from the devil. He'll flee from you. Hallelujah.

Not because you've reached some place of holiness, but you've humbled yourself before God and He's poured His grace into your heart. Hallelujah. You don't have to figure it out.

Stay humble before the Lord. Draw near to Him. Submit yourself to His righteousness and say, Jesus, thank You for what You've done.

Before I close, think about it. Can you sit here tonight saying, all my righteousness, all my good works are filthy rags in God's sight without the blood. But because of the blood, all my works, all my obedience, all my faithfulness is received as a sweet-smelling savor unto the Lord.

Hallelujah. That's when we have the zeal of God and the zeal for holiness and righteousness. Not that our own holiness saves us, only His.

Will you stand? Look at me please. I asked the Holy Spirit this afternoon what He wanted to achieve in this service tonight. And the number one thing I received from the Lord, listen closely, up in the balcony here on the main floor, the number one thing God wants to achieve in this service in you and me is to knock out the legalism.

To knock out the false pride. To knock out this need in us to be considered holy, righteous, prayerful, devoted, deeply spiritual. Folks, I heard of a man who got a reputation as being an evangelist who prayed eight hours a day.

I always wondered, how did anybody know that? Well, he told everybody. Until somebody caught him down by the altar in the church with a little transistor and a radio listening to ball games. But you see, he had to keep up that front.

We don't want any fronts. We don't want any facades. Some of the holiest people in this church, you'd be surprised.

You wouldn't think of them as holy. They're not doing anything wrong, but they just go around doing good and they're just simple, humble Christians who love the Lord with all their heart. They're not trying to prove anything.

I think my wife is one of the holiest women I know, but she doesn't act holy. She doesn't put on airs. Don's wife, Bob's wife, the pastor's wife, all of them, I see that simplicity of faith.

They're holier than anybody. I know they're righteous. I see it among many of you here because you're just servants of the Lord.

You're not trying to be something that you're not. You're not trying to put on a show of holiness. So, ask the Lord to turn the mirror, face up, eyeball to eyeball, and look at it and say, Jesus, no more games.

What a relief it is. What a joy. You don't have to pretend you're praying when you're not.

You don't have to pretend at anything. All of you know that my time, I pray from 12 to 2. The reason you know, I've told you a dozen times. Which is wrong.

You see, because there are a lot of times I'm not doing that. I fall asleep. I've walked around this church so bad wanting to be holy before you.

I've wanted everybody to look at me. Folks, I'll tell you what. If I just stay humble before God and don't try to put on any airs, there'll be a witness of the Spirit.

You don't have to say anything to anybody. There'll be a witness of the Holy Spirit. Now, folks, are you willing... God's knocking it out of me.

And with Gwen's help, it'll stay out of me. How about you? Is he putting his finger on something tonight? There'll be a great victory in this church if God can knock all of that starch out and bring us all down together to the low level of the foot of the cross and say, Jesus, I'm nothing. All that I have, You've given to me.

Hallelujah. I don't have to be anything but broken before You. Hallelujah.

And if you've got a struggle in your life, you've been trying to please God so hard by what you do. You've been making Him so many promises. You've not submitted simply by faith to His holiness, His righteousness.

It's a gift. By just trusting with all your heart, Jesus, I have such a hunger for You, such a love for You. I need You, but I can't do it myself.

I give up my own efforts, and I come to You for strength and the power of the Holy Ghost to live this life and to fulfill it in righteousness. Hallelujah. I want you to get out of your seat if God's touched you tonight.

If you've had that kind of struggle. I can't believe I'm the only one that's come through this. I believe there are many of you here tonight.

If you are, humble yourself before God. We're not trying to fill the front. If God's dealing with you up in the front, you need to make that step saying, Hey, God, let me be honest.

I want to be honest, God. Make us honest tonight. Help us not to look on the outward appearance.

Only man looks on the outward appearance. God, You know us. You know what's in the heart.

Help us, Lord, to yield to Your righteousness by faith. Wherever you're at, up in the balcony, go to the steps on either side and come down any aisle here and join us as tried and untried to please God in my own strength, and I've failed and failed. And finally, you just say, Jesus, unless You do it, it can't be done.

And He's already done it. All you have to believe in what He's told you. He told you, if you will have, even the faith He'll give you, He'll give you His faith.

He'll give you a spirit of faith. He'll give you the right kind of faith. You that have come forward, lift up your hands to the Lord Jesus right now and say it right now, Lord Jesus, give me the right faith, the simple faith, the true faith, which is Yours and not mine.

Jesus, You are my righteousness. You are my holiness. I can't stand before God on my own strength, on my own goodness.

I come to You, Father, in the goodness of Jesus and the strength of Christ. I am forgiven by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ who covers my sins because I believe that that sacrifice was enough. Now, Jesus, make me obedient.

Purify my heart. I lay down my sins so that I may trust You with all my heart. Now, in Your own words, while Your hands are raised, just, folks, don't clap.

Let's just thank Him. Just thank Him right now. Jesus, I thank You for Your faithfulness to me.

Thank Him right out loud in Your own words. Jesus, thank You that You're the only one who can make me pure. You're the only one who can make me holy.

You're the only one who can break the power of sin in my life. Break it, Lord Jesus, and set me free. There's a freedom in believing that Jesus has accomplished my salvation.

He set me free from the power of sin. Hallelujah. Lord Jesus, we thank You for the victory of the cross of Jesus.

Hallelujah.

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