

Conclusion and Appeal

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and living out the doctrines of grace, which are the foundation of Christianity, and the responsibility of those who preach the gospel to accurately present the truth.

Scripture: Romans 6:14, 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, Galatians 1:8, Ephesians 2:8, Colossians 2:10, 2 Timothy 2:15, Titus 2:11, 2 Peter 3:18

Topics: "Salvation By Grace", "Christian Living"

Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer emphasizes the significance of grace in Christianity, highlighting how it is through grace that sinners are saved, preserved, and transformed to be like Christ. He explains that believers, under grace, are dead to the law but inlawed to Christ, living by the principles of grace empowered by the Spirit. Chafer stresses that those saved by grace are of a new creation, perfectly saved and enabled to live pleasing lives to God. He warns against misrepresenting the Gospel and underscores the immense responsibility of accurately sharing the message of salvation through Christ.

Transcript

Grace, more than any other single word, is the expression of the sum total of all that enters into Christianity.

The various divine undertakings in grace have been stated in these pages and it has been seen that, through the work of Christ on the cross and through the divine purposes and decrees for this dispensation, it is through grace that hell-deserving sinners are saved, it is through grace that they are preserved and are to be presented like Christ in glory, and it is "under grace" that the saved one now lives. Being under grace, he is "dead" to the law, and "delivered" from the law, whether the law is conceived of as being a rule of life, an obligation to establish merit before God, or a reliance upon the energy of the flesh.

On the other hand, the Christian is in no wise an outlaw. Since he is in Christ as the new sphere of both his standing and his state, he is now inlawed to Christ and is therefore under the governing principles of grace. These principles provide both an explicit and complete rule of conduct which is superhuman, and the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit which is supernatural. This manner of life which is to be lived in the power of the Spirit is addressed to, and designed for, the people of the new creation in Christ.

These teachings of grace may be defined as: that superhuman rule of life which grows out of acceptance with God and which is first wrought in the heart and then achieved by the enabling power of the Spirit.

Grace makes all conformity to the will of God to be voluntary. Christian conduct and service must arise from within and be the expression of a free choice. Only such action is acceptable to God since it alone is in harmony with the new facts of relationship under grace.

By faith in Christ the believer is instantly made complete in Him and the possessor of every spiritual blessing, the Spirit is given to indwell him, and he is "made accepted" in the Beloved.

The Christian's life must be keyed to these new facts, and when this new relationship under grace is really comprehended, it is seen that there remains no ground for legality in any form whatsoever.

The people who are now saved by grace are of a new order of beings. They are a new creation.

The people of the old creation are ruined by sin; the people of the new creation are renewed by the Spirit.

The people of the old creation are wholly lost;

the people of the new creation are perfectly saved.

The people of the old creation are doomed forever;

the people of the new creation are entirely safe in Christ Jesus.

The people of the old creation have always failed to realize the holy will of God in their daily lives; the people of the new creation may now live well-pleasing to God by the new provisions in grace.

They may know unbroken victory even on the plane of the high ideals and standards of heaven.

A clear understanding of the doctrines of grace will result in a discrimination between the transforming accomplishments of divine power through grace on the one hand, and the corresponding consistent manner of life which grows out of the salvation on the other hand.

The relative importance of these two aspects of grace is also revealed.

Failure on the part of religious leaders to recognize the all-important, supernatural salvation which is in Christ for all who believe is largely responsible for the present tendency to treat Christianity as though it is merely an ethical system, and as though its standards of living were designed of God to be applied to a Christ-rejecting world.

The unregenerate can hardly be expected to see more in Christianity than its ethical teachings, but the people of God should be led on to the full knowledge of the great realities in grace.

For those who attempt to explain the truth of God to others, there is need of a constant consideration of the measureless responsibility which accompanies any presentation of the gospel.

No amount of attention or painstaking study will be too great for the adequate preparation of a gospel messenger.

In the light of eternal issues it would be better that a tongue should be stilled in death rather than to voice misstatements concerning the way of salvation through Christ. Dealing with the destiny of people is a responsibility as limitless as eternity to which they hasten.

The law of the state demands that a medical doctor who proposes to deal with the temporal, physical ills of people shall be fully educated for his or her task, subject to the closest examination by the government, and shall be held under severe legal penalty for any malpractice. All this is most reasonable and commendable; but how much greater is the responsibility of the person who traffics in those issues which determine the destiny of the soul!

The state could not assume to educate, examine, and, in turn, punish the failure of those who assume to preach the gospel to dying people. No human authority is capable of such action and no human sentence would be a proper penalty for the damage done through such failure. God alone must be the judge.

Three passages when taken together state the divine appeal and warning:

"[God] hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation"; therefore, "study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"; for, "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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (2 Cor. 5:18; 2 Tim. 2:15; Gal. 1:8-9).

The order and force of this truth needs no comment.

It is deplorable that Christian sentiment is not aroused to greater appreciation of the responsibility which is assumed by those who dare to preach, or to direct the steps of the lost. Good intentions and zeal cannot be substituted for the accurate knowledge of the exact facts which enter into the divine way of salvation by grace alone. The commission is given to every Christian and with it both the appeal for painstaking study, and the warning as to the terrible consequences for the misstatement of the gospel.

Pause, reader, and consider!

Are you attempting to explain the Gospel to others without the exact knowledge of your theme?

Would you choose to take a remedy which had been compounded by a blind druggist?

Are you persisting in error because of indolence, carelessness, or mere theological prejudice?

Failure to state accurately the Gospel of saving grace may result in the damnation of the misguided, and the meriting, at least, of the anathema of God on the part of the blind guide.

After due consideration, no sane person will treat these facts lightly.

Again, the daily life and service of the one who is alive to God must be recognized as assuming infinite proportions when its issues are seen.

Nothing short of that manner of life which is normal under grace glorifies God.

Nothing short of this will be fruit-bearing with its eternal rewards.

Nothing short of this will result in that personal experience of overflowing love, joy, and peace, without which the empty heart remains as a living witness against the truth of God.

The importance of a daily life lived in the full measure of divine blessing provided under grace is likewise beyond human estimation.

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and for ever. Amen."

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