

Free From Legalism (Dutch)

by Zac Poonen

The true grace of God is not a license to sin, but a means to overcome sin and follow Jesus' example, and God wants everyone to come to repentance and be saved.

Duration: 1:30:00

Scripture: Luke 2:40, John 1:17, Romans 6:14, Hebrews 2:9, Hebrews 4:15

Topics: "Living Under Grace", "Overcoming Sin"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living under grace rather than the law, highlighting how Jesus brought grace and truth, contrasting it with the Old Testament favor. It discusses the dangers of false grace that leads to a license for sin and the need to distinguish true grace. The sermon encourages seeking God's mercy for past sins and His grace for future victories over sin, drawing examples from Jesus' life of overcoming sin by grace from birth to death.

Transcript

Do you know that there was no grace in the world until Jesus Christ came? It's very important to understand that. I want you to turn with me to John Gospel chapter 1 and verse 17. We read here that the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

The grace that the New Testament speaks about was never known until Jesus came. And nobody on earth experienced it until the day of Pentecost. What people had in the Old Testament was favor, God's goodness.

In the days of Noah it says, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Nobody got New Testament grace. So we need to understand what it means to live under law and what it means to live under grace.

Because there are a lot of Christians who are living under law. As I said yesterday, Romans 6 verse 14 is a very important verse. Let's look at it again.

Why does sin rule over some believers? Because without knowing it they are under law. As long as you live under the law you can never overcome sin. In very simple language it is like this.

Law is man struggling to keep God's commandments. Grace is God enabling us through His Spirit to keep His commandments. There is a false grace.

There is a cheap grace. And there is the true grace of God. This is not something which has come up only recently.

In the first century, before the apostles died, there were people preaching false grace. Turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 5. Peter writes a long letter. And at the end of that letter, see what he says.

He gives a title to his letter. What is the title? What is the whole subject of his letter? In the last part of verse 12, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

Why doesn't he say this is the grace of God? Why does he say this is the true grace of God? You need to speak of something true only when there is a counterfeit, a false. So even in Peter's time, he says you need to distinguish between what is the true grace of God and the false grace of God. So even in Peter's time, he says you need to distinguish between what is the true grace of God and the false grace of God.

Let's take a look at the book of Judas. Judas is the last letter in the Bible. After that comes the book of Revelation.

But here you see the last letter. And he says here, I wanted to, verse 3, I wanted to write to you about our common salvation. He says I wanted to write to you about something like Romans, the steps of salvation.

But while I felt like writing that, the Holy Spirit sort of compelled me to write about something else. That often happens. I mean, I experience that sometimes when I'm trying to preach.

I wait on the Lord and say, Lord, what do you want me to speak in a meeting? I think something is appropriate. And then as I get up to speak, the Holy Spirit says no. There is something else.

That's happened to me many times. So Jude also felt like that. He was wanting to write a letter and the Holy Spirit said, write about contending, verse 3, earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Write again what is the true faith which has been given to the saints. Because, he says, certain persons, verse 4, have crept in unnoticed into the church. Ungodly persons, it says here.

What was their crime? They did not murder anybody or commit adultery. Look at their crime. They turned the grace of God into licentiousness.

Or to paraphrase it, it means they took the message of the grace of God and turned it into a license to commit sin. Think of a driving license. You can't drive a car until you get a license.

But once you get a license, now I can drive a car. So, the meaning here is some people are preaching grace as now, it doesn't matter if you sin. But the meaning here is as if you got your license of sin through grace, as if you can now sin.

You now have grace. That is a license of sin. Do you know that there are many believers who think that way about grace? The law came through Moses.

And the true grace came through Jesus Christ. But there are people who have twisted it into a license for sin. It's not preached as license to sin.

It's in a very subtle way, where many believers think, well God is not so strict now like he was in the days of the law. In the law, he was very strict. If you did this, you were punished.

If you did that, you were punished. But now God has become very merciful. He has changed from that Old Testament God that he was.

After Jesus died. Now is the age of grace. It doesn't matter if you slip up now and then.

God will forgive you. And if you slip up again. And you fall and fall and fall.

God will forgive you and forgive you and forgive you. This is the preaching of false grace. But you are chosen.

So you will go to heaven. And this is the way the devil deceives people so that finally they all land up in his lap in hell. And people who have been brainwashed to believe in this.

It's very difficult for them to hear the true grace of God. You know in the early days of communism. There were people brainwashed into believing that communism is the thing that's going to save the world.

And the same way in the days of Hitler or Stalin. Or where so many young people joined Hitler's crusade. They thought we're going to rule the world.

Young people were brainwashed. And Christians have been brainwashed today with the false grace of God. And it's possible some of you have been like that.

And what you hear may be completely contrary to what you have heard. It's very important to listen with an open mind. It's very difficult to have an open mind when we have been brainwashed into something else.

I'm asking you to have an open mind to come to scripture. So you know Peter says this is the true grace of God. So let me show you a few things from one Peter.

Which we just saw he called it the true grace of God. He speaks about election or being chosen. See being elected by God is a big subject of dispute among Christians.

Does God just pick out certain names and say okay you're going to heaven. And say all the others are going to hell. But the people who go to hell can't blame.

They can tell God you can't blame us you never chose us. That is a lie. That is a false picture that the devil paints of a loving God.

So Peter speaks about that subject first. The false grace of God that teaches a wrong teaching on election. The very first verse.

The first subject he takes. This is the true grace of God. One Peter 1 verse 1. He says I'm writing to you who are all these places.

Different names he mentions. Who are elected or chosen. But how were they chosen? That's the important thing.

Did God just shut his eyes and pick some names and say oh you're chosen. No. It says they are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.

God does elect. He chooses. But he chooses not randomly but according to his foreknowledge.

Now it's very difficult for us to understand foreknowledge. Because we don't have foreknowledge. We don't even know what's going to happen this evening.

Much less what's going to happen next year. But when you think of God. Infinite eternal God.

Who had no beginning and no end. He can look forward into time and see everything that's happening right up to the end of time. Long before he created Adam.

Long before he created the angels. He knew what would happen. When the head of the angels Lucifer fell and became the devil.

That God was not surprised. He knew that before he created him. When Adam fell.

God didn't get a surprise. What should I do now? No, no, no. He knew about it before he created Adam.

That is foreknowledge. He knew everything. And he knows everything that's going to happen next year and ten years from now and right up into eternity.

But he doesn't influence and force us to choose something. If God were to force us to do something. If the grace of God was something like some people say you cannot resist it.

It will just overpower you. Then we are being forced. Then God has made us into robots.

There's a big conflict in the mind of many people between God's sovereignty and the free will of man. And there's a big conflict in our minds often between God's sovereignty and the free will of man. It's not easy for us to understand that.

It's like two parallel lines. And in general people think that two parallel lines are two lines that never meet. But that is not the correct mathematical definition of two parallel lines.

The correct mathematical definition of two parallel lines is that they meet each other in eternity. Any mathematician can tell you that. So here are two parallel lines.

God's sovereignty and the free will of man. It looks as if they never meet. They cannot meet.

If God is sovereign man cannot have a free will. And if man has free will then God cannot be sovereign. But they do meet at infinity.

In the infinite mind of God there is a place for free will of man and the sovereignty of God to meet. Now we can't understand that fully. Because God's wisdom is like an ocean.

And the cleverest man sitting here, your mind is like a cup. And a cup cannot contain the ocean. And we have to humble ourselves and say, Lord my cup cannot contain your ocean.

To use an illustration. The difference between a dog and a man, let's say it's about 6 inches. Oh yeah, maybe 15 centimeters.

The difference between man and God on that scale is millions and millions of kilometers. So think of that again. The difference between a dog and a man is say 15 centimeters.

And between man and God is millions of kilometers. So if a dog cannot understand a man, how can he understand God? A dog can understand a few things about man. My master loves me.

My master cares for me. If I'm injured my master will take care of me. My master will give me food to eat.

He'll protect me. In the cold he may even wrap me up in a blanket. My master is very good to me.

All that a dog can understand. And there are certain things about God we can understand too. God loves me.

He cares for the birds. He has numbered the hairs on my head. But there are many other things about a man that a dog cannot understand.

For example a dog thinks. Why do these human beings wear clothes? We never wear clothes. Why do they go to school? We dogs never go to school.

Why do these human beings have bank accounts? We dogs don't have bank accounts. Why do these human beings fight about money and property? We dogs never fight about some currency note lying on the ground. Many things a dog cannot understand.

Because it's a dog. But if it's a child, a human child, in five, six years it understands many things. Humility is to acknowledge there are many things about God I cannot understand.

But the things that are written in scripture we can understand. God has revealed to us the things we need to know. So foreknowledge is something like this.

We can watch a video of what has taken place in the past. If you see someone has taken a video of something. Two people fighting with each other.

You're not influencing that, you're just watching it. Or one person doing some kind act for somebody else. You're not influencing it, you're watching it.

Now God can watch a video of what's going to happen a thousand years from now. He sees somebody doing something a thousand years from now, he can see it. Before he created Adam.

He could look into the future and see your life. And foreknowledge means he could see what you would do when you heard the gospel. And he could see what somebody else could do when he heard the gospel.

And he could see how somebody else would react to the gospel. He could see in his foreknowledge that you would accept Christ. And he could see in his foreknowledge that another person would not accept Christ.

He does not influence that. Just like you don't influence something you see in a video. You're only watching the video.

And God is watching the video. So and so accepts Christ. And this person does not accept Christ.

He knows it. That's called foreknowledge. On the basis of that foreknowledge, those who accept Christ, elects them.

That's what Peter says. This is the true grace of God. It's very difficult for those who are brainwashed to change their mind about this.

But it is so clear. Elected according to the foreknowledge of God. Not according to God's sovereign choice that he does what he likes.

It's very important to understand that. There's something else I want to show you about the grace of God. Chapter 1, verse 16.

You shall be holy, because I am holy. And he tells them, therefore, verse 14, don't be conformed to the former lusts in your ignorance. But like the holy one who called you to be holy, you also must be holy in all your behavior.

He's not saying you'll automatically be holy. You have to choose to be holy. You know, free will is the one thing that God will never take away from a man.

Do you know what will happen if God takes away your free will? You will be like a robot. That means you cannot do anything on your own. You know what a robot is.

It's programmed with a computer to do whatever the master has programmed it to do. And some people have an idea that God has made man like that. Then we'd be like the planets.

They have obeyed God for thousands of years. Never disobeyed God. But even though they are obedient, they cannot be children of God.

Because they don't have free will. If you don't have free will, you cannot be a sinner. You cannot be a child of God.

A tree, an apple tree, it has no choice. It has to produce apples. It cannot produce mangoes or oranges.

It's programmed by God to produce apples. So there's nothing great about that tree that produces apples. It is programmed to produce it.

And if God had made Adam like that, like a robot, and he'll walk up to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the program inside says you should not eat this, so like a robot he turns around and goes to the tree of knowledge, the tree of life, and the program says you can eat this. And he eats it. What is so wonderful about that? There's no free choice.

God is a father. He wants children, not robots. I mean, you and I are fathers, many of you.

You know what we like. Would you like a small robot, the size of a three-year-old child? Supposing you don't have any children, and somebody makes a little robot for you, and when you come home from your office, this little robot walks up and says, hello daddy, I'm so happy to meet you. Can I bring you your slippers to wear? Can I bring you your sandals to wear? Now there are robots even that make coffee.

You don't need a wife. The robot will make the coffee and bring it to you. Would you like a robot? One advantage of robots, they'll never disobey you.

Your wife may disobey you. Dangerous. Children may disobey you.

Dangerous. Robots will never disobey you. So fathers and mothers, would you like an obedient robot or a naughty three-year-old child? Give me a naughty three-year-old child any day.

Because when that three-year-old child hugs me and says, daddy, I love you, you cannot equal that with a hundred thousand robots. God is a father. He doesn't want robots.

He wants children who love him. Some will be naughty, some will be disobedient, okay. But one child that loves him makes God so happy.

That is why he has given you a free will. That's why he tells you, if you want to love me, you love me. If you don't want to love me, you don't love me.

But I'm not going to force you. There's a second thing that God has given man, and that's called a conscience. See, dogs also have free will.

They may obey you, they may not obey you. But something a dog doesn't have is a conscience. That's what elevates man above trees and planets and dogs as well.

Men and dogs have free will, but man has got a conscience. A conscience that tells him what is right and what is wrong. And God has put that conscience in man to see how he will exercise his free will.

When Adam and Eve went to that tree of knowledge of good and evil, their conscience told them, you must not eat this. God has forbidden it. How do we know that? Because as soon as they ate it, they felt guilty.

And do you know what Adam did? It says he went and hid behind a tree. Sin makes a man stupid. Do you think you can hide behind a tree and hide from God? That is the first stupid thing that Adam did.

He thought if I hide behind a tree God won't see me. It's like some hide and seek game. Foolish.

But he also felt guilty because he had to cover himself from his wife. He never felt like that before. That was conscience.

God has given us a conscience to choose. And Peter says, in 2 Peter, in chapter 3, why is the Lord waiting so long to return? He says, there will be mockers in the last days, 2 Peter 3, verse 3. There he says, there will be mockers in the last days. They will say, where is the promise of his coming? Why is the Lord delaying? See what he says.

Verse 9. This is a very important verse. This is the true grace of God. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some count slowness.

But he is patient towards you. Now listen to this. God does not want a single person to perish.

He wants everyone to come to repentance. If there are 7 billion people in the world today, how many does God choose to come to repentance? According to this verse, everyone. Every single person in the world today, God wants them to repent.

How can we say then that God has chosen some people to go to hell and some people to go to heaven? Peter says, this is the true grace of God. He wants everyone to come to repentance. Paul says the same thing.

See 1 Timothy in chapter 2. 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 3 and 4. He talks about what God, our Savior wants. 1 Timothy 2 verse 4. God wants all human beings to be saved. He wants all 7 billion people in the world to be saved.

So if He was just choosing people according to election, He would choose all 7 billion. Because He wants all of them to come to repentance. He wants all of them to be saved.

And not only that. Verse 4. He wants all of them to come to the knowledge of the truth. That's the theme of our conference.

You should know the truth and the truth will set you free. Free completely from sinning. How many people does God want to be free from sinning? Everyone.

And it says here, God wants everyone to be saved. He wants everyone to repent. He wants everyone to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Why aren't they repenting then? Why aren't they saved then? Why aren't they come to the knowledge of the truth that will set them free from sin? Because God will not make a man into a robot. He has given him freedom of choice. God doesn't want robots moving around in heaven in eternity.

He wants people with a free will who have chosen to love him. This is the true grace of God. And Peter goes on to say something else.

1 Peter chapter 2. He tells us why we have been called. Why have we been elected by God? Why have we been chosen? Why did God choose us in his foreknowledge? He tells us in 1 Peter 2 verse 21. You have been called for this purpose.

Christ also suffered for us. Leaving you an example is very important words. This is the true grace of God.

The true grace of God is not something where you just live as you like and expect God to keep on forgiving you. The true grace of God is where you look at Jesus as your example. Listen to this.

You got to read this very carefully. An example you are to follow in his steps who committed no sin. Let me repeat that.

You are to follow the example of Jesus Christ in his steps who committed no sin. So the true grace of God is that which will enable me to walk in Jesus' footsteps who overcame sin and did not sin. It is the opposite of the false grace which says it doesn't matter now if you sin because God will forgive you.

And not only who committed no sin but in whose mouth there was no deceit or lie. That means there was no hypocrisy in his life. He did not appear to be one of those one person in public and another in private.

Do you know which was the sin that Jesus condemned the most? You read through the gospels. Do you ever see him condemning a woman caught in adultery? He hated adultery. From heaven he gave one of the commandments to Moses Thou shalt not commit adultery.

That's Jesus who gave that commandment to Moses from heaven. But when he came to earth there was the woman caught in adultery disobeying the commandment he gave from heaven and the Pharisees said kill her. Moses said you must take stones and kill a woman caught in adultery.

Jesus couldn't say no, no, no that law is changed now. No, he said I will not change the law. He who is without sin among you throw the first stone and they all went away.

Do you know who went away first? You read in John 8 the eldest. Why didn't one of them say I will throw the first stone. They were scared Jesus would have publicly announced all his sins for everybody to hear.

They knew that Jesus can see through their hearts. So they quietly went away until only one person was left who had not sinned There was one man who was qualified to pick up stones and throw and kill the woman. Jesus himself.

And he had said that the one without sin can pick up a stone and kill her. Why didn't he do it? He said that. A man without sin first can throw the first stone.

Why didn't he do it? Because God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world. Jesus did not come to heaven come to earth with stones in his pocket. He came to save people.

Today we have many Christians who got stones in their pockets. Many preachers who got stones in their pockets. They stand in the pulpit and they take a verse and fling it at that man over there.

Take another verse and fling it at that poor sister over there. Oh, I've heard so many preachers like that. They're throwing stones from the pulpit condemning, condemning, condemning.

And the one who could condemn never condemned. Because he came to save people. He did not come under the law.

He did not come with the law. He came with a higher law, the law of love. That did not mean that he'd say, okay, adultery is not serious, go ahead, keep doing it.

He preached the full gospel to that woman. Today people talk the full gospel in some other way. I've heard people say the full gospel is this.

Jesus saves you from hell, baptizes you in the Holy Spirit, heals you of your sicknesses and he's the coming king. Four things. Savior, baptizer, healer, coming king.

But a lot of those people live in sin. They're not saved from sin, they're saved from hell. That's not the full gospel.

Let me show you the full gospel the way Jesus preached it. He told the woman caught in adultery in John chapter 8. They're not four things, just two things. John 8, 11.

Woman, concerning your whole past life, verse 11, I do not condemn you. That is the first message of the true gospel. To everyone who will acknowledge their sin.

If you don't acknowledge your sin, then you cannot be forgiven. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us. If this woman had pretended saying, no, no, no, I didn't commit adultery, these people are accusing me falsely.

If this woman had pretended that she didn't commit adultery, no, no, no, these people have it all wrong. Then she would not have been forgiven. Do you remember the two thieves on the cross? Either side of Jesus.

Both were equally bad. Maybe both of them killed 10, 15 people, murdered them. They were thieves and murderers.

And you know, the Romans did not crucify everybody. People like Barabbas and all, they just put them in the prison. But these people were so bad that life in prison was not good enough.

Just like in many countries today, they hang them because they are so bad. So the worst punishment in Roman times was crucifixion. So these were terrible criminals.

Why did one go to heaven and the other go to hell? Was it because one was chosen and one was not chosen? No! It's because the one man said, if you are the son of God, bring me down from the cross. What is he saying? Yeah, I've done a few bad things. Maybe I deserve 10 years in prison.

That's okay. But not crucifixion. No, I'm not so bad.

Bring me down from the cross. I'm not so bad that I should be crucified. He went to hell.

The other man, you read that in Luke 23, he said, I'm guilty. I deserve to die. I don't blame my parents for bringing me up badly.

I don't blame the bad company who led me astray into bad habits. I don't blame the judge who condemned me to death. I deserve this punishment.

I deserve to die. And if I were to paraphrase Jesus' words, he was saying, really? You mean you deserve to die? You acknowledge your guilt? Paradise is made for people like you. I'm dying for people like you.

Come with me to paradise. Not 2,000 years later. Today! And the angels watch in wonder as soon after Jesus dies.

Jesus died at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The soldiers came a little later and broke the legs of the thief and he also died. The same afternoon, 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening, the angels watch in wonder as Jesus and that murderer walk hand in hand in paradise.

That is the grace of God. That can save a person at the last minute. Not because he was elected, but because he acknowledged I'm a sinner.

What is the difference between him and Adam? When God came to Adam and said, did you eat from this tree? There are only two answers to that. Yes or no. But he doesn't say that.

He gives a third answer. Lord, this wife of mine, the whole problem is with her. If she had not plucked that fruit, I would not have sinned.

But you can ask Adam, did you open your mouth? Putting the blame on others. Do you know where you see the first example of a husband pointing his finger at his wife? Adam. And all the children of Adam have acquired that habit.

Blame somebody else. Your fault. Yeah, I did it, but you made me do it.

Even when people apologize. I've discovered very few people know exactly how to ask forgiveness and apologize for something wrong they did. I've heard people apologize like this.

If I have hurt you, please forgive me. If I have hurt you, please forgive me. You know what that means? I don't really believe I have hurt you, but if you are stupid enough to think I hurt you, okay, forgive me.

Is that asking forgiveness? That is accusing that other person. The real way to ask forgiveness is not if I have hurt you. Many husbands and wives may talk like that.

Okay darling, if I have hurt you, forgive me. I don't believe I have, but if you are stupid enough to believe that, okay. That's not the way to ask forgiveness.

That's like Adam. The right way to ask is that was completely my fault. I'm really sorry.

How can I set it right? Please forgive me. I don't want to do it again. There is no if.

The thief on the cross never said if. I'm guilty. Forgiven.

The woman caught in adultery. Forgiven. I don't condemn you.

I want to ask all of you here, my brothers and sisters. When you confess your sin to God or man, do you confess it like that? Do you go to God and say, my Lord, I'm 100% guilty of that? If you do that, you will start walking with Jesus in paradise right that moment. Your home will become like a paradise if you take the blame yourself like the thief on the cross.

So that's the first part of the full gospel. Woman, I do not condemn you. And I hope all of you who believe you are saved have heard that word from the Lord.

There is no condemnation. It doesn't matter how much you have sinned in the past. The promise of the gospel is Hebrews 8 verse 12 I will not remember your past sins anymore.

I will look at you as if you've never sinned in your life. Many of us know 1 John 1 7 the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. Not covers us, but cleanses us.

Do you know that in the Old Testament there was no cleansing from sin? Psalm 32 verse 1 says blessed is the man whose sin is covered. Sin was covered in the Old Testament by the blood of bulls and goats. So, there is a big table here with all my sins written down on it.

The blood of bulls and goats put a sheet over it. You can't see it. Covered.

Covered. When you lift the sheet you can see it. It's all there.

But the blood of Jesus cleansed it. It's gone. It's nowhere here now.

I will not remember your sins anymore. Romans 5 verse 9 Justified by his blood. What is the difference between being cleansed by the blood and justified by the blood? Justified means just as if I had never sinned.

How many of you know that? There is no condemnation. God looks at you as if you never sinned in your whole life. You don't have to live under the condemnation of the law.

Oh, I did this, I did this and God may be remembering it. Haven't some of you, many of us have the habit of confessing some serious sins that we committed in the past again and again and again? Some terrible sin you did in the past maybe in your unconverted days or even after you were converted which is really

bad. Really, really bad.

And you confess it more than once and again and the devil reminds you remember 20 years ago you did that? You think you're such a holy man and you say oh Lord, yes I did it please forgive me. You're saying that for the 100th time because you don't believe when God says your sins I will not remember anymore. Hebrews 8, 12 I will not remember their sin anymore.

Then why do you confess it for the 100th time what you did 20 years ago? I'll tell you why because you have not come to the place of no condemnation. You need to hear the Lord saying to you I do not condemn you I do not remember your sin anymore. This is to be free from the law.

Under the law there is always condemnation. There's always a Hebrew says a constant reminder of sins committed in the past. Who is the one who keeps on reminding you of sins you committed in the past? Revelation 12, 10 says the accuser of the brethren.

Anyone who reminds you of the past is the devil. If you have not confessed it then the Holy Spirit may be reminding you. That's called conviction not condemnation.

The devil is the accuser and Revelation 12, 11 says we overcome him by the blood of the Lamb. When the devil reminds you of all the sins you've committed you've got to tell him make the list complete. I've committed more than that.

And then right across it the blood of Jesus cleansed me from all of that. And God will not remember it anymore. Isn't it wonderful to stand before God like that? I believe Hebrews 8, 12 that God does not remember my past sin anymore because whatever I know I've confessed long ago.

And if I did anything this morning or yesterday I immediately confess it. So it's gone. The blood of Jesus cleanses it.

I live in the constant cleansing of the blood of Christ. there's no condemnation. So when I stand before God I say Lord I've never sinned in 76 years don't you love me? Can you look at God like that? And say Lord in my entire life I have never sinned.

Don't you love me? Can you say that to God? I don't think most of you can say that. You live under such condemnation I don't know whether God's accepted me. It's the devil who wants you to live like that all your life.

And that's why there's no joy in your life. The joy of sin is forgiven. The joy of knowing that God keeps his word he is faithful and just to forgive us.

And it's because you don't believe God that you don't have joy. And if you've lived under that condemnation till today my dear brother and sister listen to Jesus my son I do not condemn you. My daughter I do not condemn you.

That's the first part of the full gospel. Today is the day you're going to be liberated from the condemnation of the law. Now here's the second part of the full gospel.

What did he say to the woman? John 8 verse 11 It's all here in one sentence in one verse. I do not condemn you Second From now on don't sin again. A woman could have said you mean I'm not to sin again? Am I not under grace? I can commit adultery tomorrow I'll confess it you'll forgive me again? That's

a false grace.

I do not condemn you From now on don't sin again. That is the full gospel. And you say how in the world can I do that Lord? I find this sinful tendency in me called the flesh.

The Lord says I'll help you. I'll give you the power of the Holy Spirit within you. I'll give you the true grace that lifts you up from sin.

That is the message of the gospel. See Romans chapter 7 Paul was a very honest man. He did talk here about being free from the law from legalism.

In Romans 7 he speaks about one particular commandment. You know in the law there were ten commandments. The first four were related to God.

And the next six were related to man. You can read about it in Exodus chapter 20. You shall have no other gods but me.

And you shall not take the name of the Lord in vain. You shall not worship idols. You must keep the Sabbath day holy.

Four commandments. And then six related to man. Honor your father and mother.

Don't commit adultery. Don't murder. Don't steal.

Don't bear false witness in a court. And the last one which nobody could keep. You know that nobody could keep the tenth commandment? You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.

You shall not desire your neighbor's daughter. Every girl who walks down the road is your neighbor's daughter. He's not saying you shouldn't touch her.

You should not even desire her. You shall not desire your neighbor's job or his car or his house or anything. Nobody could keep it.

You know even when Jesus spoke to the rich young ruler who came to him Mark chapter 10 Jesus said keep the commandments if you want eternal life. He went from commandments five, six, seven, eight, nine and stopped there. Read that in Mark chapter 10.

He never mentioned the tenth commandment to that rich young ruler. Because he knew Jesus knew nobody can keep that. So when he came up to number nine the rich young ruler said I've kept all that from my childhood.

That is how Paul also said it. Philippians 3 according to the righteousness in the law, blameless. He told the chief priest in Acts 23 verse 1 I have lived all my life with a good conscience he said.

Paul really? You really kept all the commandments? Well not really. I couldn't keep the tenth one because nobody could keep the tenth one. That's what he says in Romans 7. He says when I read the commandment verse 7 the last part that said you shall not covet or lust.

Paul says I'll tell you honestly verse 8 sin taking opportunity through the commandment produced in me lusting of every kind. Look at the honesty of this man. I'll tell you honestly brothers Paul says there was lusting in my heart of every kind.

Whenever I saw somebody had something which I wanted I lusted every kind of lust. Paul says I'll tell you honestly I lusted after my neighbor's wife and some of my neighbor's daughters I really lusted after them. And I lusted after people who had more than me and who were better than me.

I'll tell you God loves honest people. Jesus condemned hypocrisy. He never condemned adulteresses and murderers but he condemned people who pretended they were holy when they were not.

There is no salvation for people who pretend. But for honest people like Paul Lord there is every type of lust in my heart. I lusted after this woman and that woman and the other one I can't even count the number of women I lusted after Paul says.

I said Paul you were like that? Paul says yes but I'm not like that now. I was like that an utterly rotten sinner. He called himself in 1 Timothy 1.15 the chief of all the sinners in the world.

The greatest sinner for whom Jesus died. Why did he feel like that? Externally he had not done anything wrong but in his heart he saw lust of every kind and he said I must be the worst sinner in the world. That's why he became one of the holiest men at that time.

To be the holiest person you have to first recognize that you are the worst sinner of all. God loved him because he was so honest and he says I could not overcome it. Was he content with this defeated life? That's the difference between Paul and many Christians today.

Today many Christians say yeah I'm lusting I'm lusting I'm lusting but what to do that's what I am our flesh is weak. But Paul was different. You know what he said? Verse 24 Oh wretched man that I am who will deliver me from this wretched body? He was so fed up with his defeated life.

He said I want to be free but who will set me free? Then he gives the answer Romans 8 verse 2 The law of the spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death. Because earlier on he says there's another law in my members in verse 21 of chapter 7 I find this principle that evil is present in me even though I want to do what is good. Is this your experience? Verse 22 I agree with the law of God that it is right.

I'm sure all of you agree on that. But Paul says I see another law in my members dragging me down into sin. I don't know how to conquer it.

Verse 16 I do the very thing I don't want to do. I agree the law is good. But there is verse 18 there's nothing good in my flesh.

Verse 19 the good I want to do I don't do. But the thing which I don't want to do I do. Don't all of us have had that experience? You wanted to do good but you couldn't.

You decided I'm not going to lose my temper anymore. And within 24 hours you lost your temper. You said I'm not going to lust after women anymore.

And within 24 hours you did it. Are you honest about it? Not just honest. But you say like Paul oh wretched man that I am how will I ever be free? Like I said yesterday the children of Israel in Egypt saying oh God when will you deliver us from this slavery? Jeremiah 29 and verse 13 says you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.

And then he experienced that liberty. Paul did not live defeated all his life. He came to a life of victory.

And he says in Romans 8 2 the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. There is a law of sin and death which is like the law of gravity. What is living under the law? It is trying trying trying to keep the law and falling falling falling falling.

What is grace? Grace is God's power to keep me from falling. Let me use an example. I think this is you.

There is a law of gravity here. Wherever you go it falls it falls it falls. The law of sin and death is like that.

Always wherever you go you will fall. Because this law operates everywhere. The law of sin and death is like in your body is like the law of gravity.

You cannot overcome it. You cannot overcome the law of gravity. If you jump off the roof you fall.

The law of gravity is not checking up whether you are a Christian first of all. It is not bothered. The law of gravity operates on everybody.

The law of sin and death operates on everyone. But see now it is not falling. The law is operating here.

But there is another law. The law of life in my body that is holding this up against the law of gravity. That is what Paul says in Romans 8.2 The law of the life of Jesus Christ The law of Moses was 10 commandments.

The law of the Holy Spirit is verse 2 life in Christ Jesus. So when the life in Christ Jesus comes into me and that is through the Holy Spirit verse 2 this is the whole purpose of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is not just to speak in tongues.

I am not against any of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I find in my ministry in India I need the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve Him. If you go into the villages in India and you don't know how to cast out a demon you won't be able to serve God there because there are demon possessed people there and you have to command the demon in Jesus' name to go.

A demon possessed person doesn't need counseling he needs deliverance. So I would not even think of going into the villages without having the authority to cast out demons. So I believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

All of them but that is to serve. But to overcome sin I need the Holy Spirit giving me grace. The life of Jesus coming in me lifting me up so that He keeps me from falling.

I don't know how to explain it but I'll tell you one thing. The day you get fed up with yourself and you see your own wretched man that I am all wretched woman that I am how will I ever be free from this sinful habit? When you come to that point God will deliver you. He waits till you come to that point but if you have not come to that point you'll keep on falling.

You have to come to the point where you know you can never never overcome sin by yourself. Think of the story in John 21 where the disciples went fishing. Maybe 6 o'clock in the evening Peter said to the others let's go fishing I'm fed up with being an apostle.

And they all go fishing. Now Jesus knew they will never get any fish there. They tried 7 o'clock 8 o'clock midnight No fish.

Try, try, try. It's like trying for victory over sin. Try, try, try defeated, defeated, defeated.

Isn't it true that many of you have made resolutions I'm going to overcome that? And you were sincere but you couldn't keep it. Try, try, try no fish. Try, try, try no victory over sin.

After some time they say it's difficult to catch fish today. By about 5 o'clock in the morning after they've been trying for 11 hours they say it's not difficult now it is impossible. Then the Lord appears on the shore and you know Jesus has a sense of humor He says well boys did you catch any fish last night? Who said he doesn't have a sense of humor? He knew very well they got nothing.

Boys, any fish? No, Lord. It's impossible. It's impossible to get victory over sin.

I tried, I tried, I tried I give up. I'm going back home. No, no, no, the Lord says don't go.

Cast your net on the other side. And the fish were so many they had to struggle to get them into the boat. That's how victory over sin comes.

When you have come to the end of your own struggle you say Lord I cannot do it. I'm going to give up. Then the Lord says don't give up.

And in a moment your boat is full. You say how did that happen? How did I overcome that lust which I had? How did I overcome that bitterness? How did I overcome that anger which I was a slave to for so many years? How did my boat suddenly become full of fish? Because you stopped living under law. You stopped struggling.

And you let Jesus come in with His life and the Holy Spirit. And He brought you into what the Bible calls the Sabbath rest of God. In Hebrews 4 it says there is a Sabbath rest that belongs to God's people.

It's a rest of victory over sin. Do you know that Paul experienced it? The same man who said I found lusting of every kind he experienced the spirit of life lifting him up. What is his testimony after that? 2 Corinthians 2 Look at his testimony now.

2 Corinthians 2 verse 14 Thanks be to God who always leads us in His triumph in Christ. And you say Paul did you say always? You mean 24 hours a day 7 days a week? Is it really a 24-7 victory? Yes. How did you do it? I just got fed up I was so defeated Paul says.

I was worse than you he says. I was the chief sinner in the whole world. Because I was lusting after everything possible.

But I came to an end of myself. I stopped blaming other people. I said Lord the fault is with me.

And I trusted Jesus by the Holy Spirit to keep me from falling. I can't take any credit for it. Because I didn't do it.

Jesus keeps me from falling. I remember in the early days when God took me years to get there slowly brought me to a life of victory over sin. And I used to say I got victory.

And the Lord said don't say that. Don't say I got victory over sin. Say Jesus keeps me from falling.

I've learned to say that. Because otherwise the emphasis is on me. I got victory over sin.

And the moment I say that I've fallen into pride. That's the worst sin of all. See to fall into lusting is falling into a hundred foot pit.

But to fall into spiritual pride is a thousand meter pit. It's very easy to fall into that pride. The Lord can keep us from falling.

And he says here he spreads the sweet aroma of his knowledge in every place. We are the fragrance of Christ. He doesn't mean we are perfect.

We don't become perfect until Jesus comes again. But we go from one class to another. We go from the kindergarten to the first grade and second grade and third grade.

And at each grade we can get a hundred percent. That's the meaning of victory. Think of mathematics.

A kindergarten student gets a hundred percent in mathematics. Does that five-year-old boy know everything about mathematics? No. But at his level he's perfect.

Next year he goes to first grade. Then he's got to learn some more. He has to overcome some more.

And he gets a hundred percent again. And then another year. Again a hundred percent.

Like that he goes all the way up to a PhD. But at each stage a hundred percent. This is spiritual growth.

You don't have to fail in any class. But you still have to press on to perfection. So that's how the Christian life is.

According to the light I have, I've overcome sin. But there are many other areas in my life where there are many unchrist-likenesses in my life even today. But I don't see them.

It's like the second grade student saying there are many areas of mathematics I still don't understand. But according to my level in second grade I got a hundred percent. The only victory we can have is over conscious sin.

And like that we go stage by stage to perfection in Christ. And I believe God wants every one of us to live like this. And each of us may be at a different stage.

One is in the second grade. One is in the fourth grade. One is in the sixth grade.

The one who is in the sixth grade has got more light over his unchrist-likeness than the one in the second grade. That's why we should not look down on another believer who is defeated in some area. That's why a husband must never look down on his wife who may be defeated.

And that's why a wife must never look down on her husband if he is defeated. You have to say to your husband, look at yourself. Maybe he doesn't have light in that area.

You see if a tenth grade student looks down on a second grade student and says, you don't know mathematics like me. Who is the fool? The tenth grade student. Isn't that foolish for a tenth grade student to look down on a second grade student and say, you don't know maths like me.

No, we don't look down on anybody. A true disciple of Jesus never looks down on any other human being. But he lives in victory at his level.

And even if he reaches the tenth grade, he says, I've got to go on to university. And even if he reaches the sixth grade, he says, I've got to go on. I've got to go on to university.

It never ends. In John chapter 3, on a day when Christ comes again, verse 2, we shall be like him completely. In John 3, verse 2, we shall be like him when he comes.

In John 3, verse 2, we shall be like him when he comes. But what shall we do until we reach that day? We will purify ourselves just as he is pure. That is what the grace of God does.

I want to say one last thing. We have a person who went ahead of us. Jesus, our forerunner.

Hebrews 4, 15 says, he was tempted like us, but he did not sin. How did he overcome sin? By grace. And we can also overcome in the same way.

Hebrews 4, 15, he was tempted in all points as we are, but never sinned. Think of that. Jesus was tempted.

Just like us, it says. But he did not sin. Not in thought.

Not in word. Not in deed. Not in his attitude towards anyone.

Not in a wrong motive. Never! And he says, so we say, so what? It says in the next verse, if Jesus lived like that, therefore, let us go to the throne of grace and get the same grace that he got to help us today in our time of need. But we need mercy first.

You know the difference between verse 16, mercy and grace? Mercy is for forgiveness of our past sins. Jesus did not need mercy because he never sinned. When we come to the throne of grace, the first thing we need is mercy.

That's for our past. And then we need grace for the future. Mercy for the past, grace for the future.

First we get mercy and we say, now Lord, give me grace to help me in my time of need. In that context, what is the time of need? Verse 15, temptation. My time of need is when I'm being tempted.

When I'm just about to fall, I say, Lord, give me grace. It's something like climbing a mountain. Here is a mountain climber and he slips and he's hanging by his fingers from a rock but he's too proud to ask for help.

He tries, tries and he slips and falls and he breaks his bones. Then the ambulance called mercy comes. Lord, forgive me and mercy comes and picks us up and fixes our bones and then he starts climbing again and again I'm tempted and I'm too proud to ask for grace.

Again I slip and fall Lord, be merciful to me and the ambulance is always ready to forgive our sins. Is that how you're living? Always slipping and falling and getting mercy, mercy, mercy. There is a better way.

Next time when you're about to slip and fall into dirty thoughts or anger or an unforgiving spirit or pornography you know what you should do? It says, ask for grace. Lord, I'm slipping. You'll find grace lifts you up and makes you stand and you say, how was that? I didn't fall this time.

Because you were humble enough to ask for grace. That is how Jesus lived. Many people do not know that Jesus overcame sin by grace.

So let me show you these last two verses. Luke chapter 2, verse 40 talking about Jesus. See what it says.

Luke 2, verse 40. The child Jesus continued to grow and become strong and increasing in wisdom. What does it say? The grace of God was upon Him.

That means He was under grace. The grace of God was upon Him. He was under the grace.

Romans 6, verse 14 says when you're under grace sin cannot rule over you. Jesus was the first man who was under grace from childhood. Sin could not rule over Him because He was under grace.

So that's how He was from birth. The second verse I want to show you is about His death. Birth to death.

Hebrews chapter 2. Hebrews chapter 2, verse 9 talks about Jesus. How did He taste death on the cross for us? It says in verse 9 by the grace of God He went to that death on the cross. Say Lord, how did you overcome that sin to avoid the cross? That was the last temptation.

Don't go to the cross. He said I'm going. How? By the grace of God.

So He had grace from birth to death. Romans 6, verse 14 says when you're under grace sin cannot rule over you. So He was tempted in all points like us never sinned because He was under grace.

let us go first get mercy for our past sins because the blood of Jesus cleanses us. And then say Father give me the same grace through the Holy Spirit that Jesus had that I can walk in triumph so that instead of the aroma of ash coming forth from me the aroma of Christ will come forth from my life. This is how we are free from the law and come under grace.

The way is open for everyone. What shall we say? He who has ears to hear let him hear. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father we don't want to live in a theoretical knowledge of these things. We want to be so fed up with our defeated life that we experience victory. We want to cry out like Paul, O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from this body of death.

And we also want to have His testimony that the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. So that we can say thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ. Help us to experience the true grace of God.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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