

(Secrets of Victory) 8. God Gives His Grace to the Humble

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes that God's grace is given to the humble, enabling them to achieve victory over sin and life's challenges.

Scripture: John 1:17

Topics: "Gods Grace", "Humility Before God"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the importance of humbling ourselves before God to receive His grace. He explains how God's grace, unlike the Law, empowers us to overcome sin and live victoriously. Poonen emphasizes that victory over sin is our birthright under the new covenant, but it requires humility and dependence on God's grace to shatter self-confidence and pride.

Transcript

There is yet another reason why God wants us to humble ourselves - and that is, in order to give us His grace. God cannot violate His own laws - and one of the laws that He has bound Himself by, is to resist the proud and to give grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5). However much He may love us, He cannot give us His grace, if we are proud. And if we don't get grace from God, we cannot live in victory. The power of temptation can be overcome only by the power of God's grace.

"The Law came by Moses but grace came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Under the Law (the old covenant), people struggled and struggled against temptation in their hearts, but were always defeated.

Saul of Tarsus lived a perfect life according to the external standards of God's laws. In Philippians 3:6, he gives his testimony concerning his own life, "As to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless". Yet he found that he was powerless against lust and covetousness in his heart. He says in Romans 7:8,

Sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind.

The Law could not enable people to keep their hearts pure from lust. It was not meant to. The Law was meant to show man his sinfulness and his helplessness against the lusts of the flesh, and to keep him from external sin through the fear of punishment. A man could have a perfect life externally, in the eyes of

men, through the Law. Yet his heart could be like a sewer of sin! That was the best that the Law could accomplish.

But the good news of the new covenant through Jesus Christ, is that what the Law could not do, grace can. God's grace is not just His undeserved favour forgiving our sins. It is more than that. It is God's power that can enable us to overcome sin.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, 'grace' is equated with 'power', for the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."

This grace (power) comes to help us when we are tempted. Hebrews 4:16 says,

Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

"It is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace" (Hebrews 13:9). Then we can keep our heart from being defiled by lust and covetousness. This is the good news of the new covenant.

In Hebrews 8:10 God says, "I will put My laws into their minds and I will write them upon their hearts". Under the old covenant (the Law), God told man, "Thou shalt.... and "Thou shalt not....". But notice (in this verse) that under the new covenant, God Himself takes the responsibility saying, "I will put...., "I will write..... God does His work in our minds and hearts through the Spirit of grace.

Through grace, "God works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Thus "the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled inside us" (Romans 8:4). This was the main purpose with which God poured out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It was 'the Spirit of grace' that God "poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem on that day" (Zechariah 12:10).

That river is still flowing as a waterfall from God's throne to earth today. The inhabitants of God's heavenly Jerusalem (the church) may still come under that waterfall and be drenched with God's grace.

Then the promise in Romans 6:14 will be fulfilled, "Sin shall not be master over you, for you are under grace, and not under law."

There is only one condition, in order to come under this waterfall - and that is that we humble ourselves.

Grace can exalt us over sin, over our circumstances, over depression, over bad moods, over Satan, over bitterness, over hatred, jealousy, lust and every other evil.

Humble yourself therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you (1 Peter 5:6).

What is "the mighty hand of God" that we are to humble ourselves under? It is the hand that orders all the circumstances and people that cross our daily path. To humble ourselves is to gladly submit to all of God's dealings with us - in all our circumstances - even when He allows people to ride over our heads.

We need never fear that this will become too much for us to bear, for God watches the gap in the hedge and knows how much to open at a time. He also knows when to close it.

If we are overcome by any sin, there can be only one reason for our being defeated - our pride. We cannot overcome sin if God does not give us grace. And God does not give us grace, when we are proud. Each

time we find ourselves defeated, we need to go to God and say,

"Lord show me where the pride lies in me that hindered You from giving me grace to overcome."

If we are quick to judge ourselves in each failure, like that, victory can be ours in a very short time.

Victory over sin is our birthright under the new covenant.

Don't let Satan deprive you of it through ignorance or pride. If it takes time to get victory, it is because it takes time for God to humble us. It takes time for God to shatter that self-confidence that we as children of Adam are filled with.

One form of pride is to think that we have the strength to overcome sin. We think that all we need is a little more determination, a little more self-discipline, a little more prayer and fasting and a little more Bible-knowledge. When we read about victory in a book like this, we can think that now that we have grasped the doctrine clearly, victory will be easy.

We go forth with great confidence, but we don't realise yet that our confidence is still in ourselves and not in God's grace. And lo and behold, we fall so miserably.

But do you think that we learn the lesson with one fall? No, we don't. And so God has to allow us to fall again and again - repeatedly - until one day we give up all hope of ever getting victory, because we have fallen so often, despite all our good resolutions. That is the zero-point, at which God can lead us into the promised land of victory.

In the Old Testament, God brought the Israelites who left Egypt, to the borders of the promised land, two years after they had left Egypt. But they could not enter in, because of their unbelief (See Numbers chapters 13 & 14). And so God allowed those proud, self-confident Israelites to wander in the wilderness for another "thirty-eight years, until all the men of war (symbolising the strength of Self) had perished" (Deuteronomy 2:14). Then they came to a zero-point. And then they could enter in. Then the Jerichos fell before them, without any effort on their part.

God has to reduce us to zero, before He can do His work in and through us. It doesn't have to take forty years. You can enter in within a year or two, if you are radical, and if you are determined to humble yourself at any cost.

As long as we keep blaming our circumstances or other people we can never hope for victory. But if we humble ourselves, believing that God controls all our circumstances, and that no temptation will ever be too much for us to overcome, then victory is assured.

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