

## GROUNDING – 23<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2014

### Transforming Grace – Hand Out

**Transforming grace - Does grace mean I can do what I want? Grace is the ONLY way to live as a Christian, avoiding the traps of legalism and license. Getting past the idea that grace is for non-Christians but Christians have to struggle to change on their own. God's grace changes us so we want to live for Him and are able to – so why would we want to live our old lives instead?**

#### INTRODUCTION

Grace is a gift word Greek - *charis*. It has to do with what God has given, done, made available to me or for me. Strongs Concordance: "... *the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life.*"

- 1) 'Common grace' – God's acts of benevolence to all men regardless of faith.
- 2) 'Saving grace' is the means by which I am made a child of God. It is God's work in my life – it is his gift. There is of course a part that we have to play – we have to respond (Jn 1:12).
- 3) 'Transforming grace' is the means by which I am changed into the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ (II Cor 3:18). Once again this is God's work in us but there is a part we have to play (Phil 2:12-13).

"We preach grace to the non-Christian and duty to the Christian." (Bridges, J; *Transforming Grace*; p.91).

#### ROMANS 6

Paul deals with two separate but related matters that arise from his teaching in Rom 5:20-21 which is that grace always trumps sin. He anticipates objections to his teaching – see also Rom 3:5-8. This is the one of the errors referred to in the brief I have been given – theologians call this *antinomianism* = 'against the law'.

Paul addresses two objections to his teaching both of which arise from antinomianism:-

v.1 – "... *Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?*"

v.15 – "... *Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?*"

In both cases there is a strong retort – "*By no means!*" and Paul goes on to address these objections on the basis of what we already know (vv. 3, 6, 9, 16).

Paul addresses these objections separately. In both cases he teaches a discontinuity between our old lives before we were saved and the new life we have in Christ Jesus. Using the language of Paul to the Corinthians we are new creations (II Cor 5:17).

#### 1. We are in Christ (vv 1-14)

**NIV heading:** *Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ*

The basis of this is that, through the work of God's Holy Spirit in bringing us to faith, we are **united with Christ** and that this fact makes all the difference to the way we live our lives. Look at the way Paul describes this:

- 1) We died with Christ (vv. 3, 8) – we have also died to sin (vv. 2, 6)
- 2) We were buried with him (v. 4) – sin has no more control over us (vv. 6-7)
- 3) We will be united with him in his resurrection (v.5) – we too may live a new life (v. 4). See also Col 2:12; Eph 2:6.

These are all stated as historical facts in the experience of Jesus. They are doctrines of our faith. They are also expressions of personal experience for the believer

#### Question:

**In what ways does being united with Christ help us to live transformed lives (vv.11-14)? See also Gal 2:20-21; Eph 2:1-10; Col 3:1-3.**

## 2. We are under new management (vv 15-23)

**NIV heading:** *Slaves to Righteousness*

This raises the question: 'Who is your boss – to whom are you enslaved?' The fact is we serve a new master.

The Roman Christians would have been familiar with the concept of slavery. The slave was completely at the disposal of his master. Jesus made use of slavery imagery in his teaching (Matt 6:24). The one to whom we are obedient demonstrates whose slave we are! The essence of Paul's teaching is that we have a change of owner and we are no longer free to obey our previous master.

Consider the following statements of fact:-

- 1) You are slaves to the one to whom you offer yourselves to obey (v. 16)
- 2) You used to be slaves to sin (v.17) [it had dominion over you]
- 3) You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to obedience which leads to righteousness (v.18); [you serve a new master] – i.e. set free from the condemning control of sin and its enslaving power.

We were slaves to sin                   =>                   leading to death

We are slaves to obedience       =>                   leading to righteousness

### Question:

**In what ways does being under new management help us to live transformed lives (vv.17-20)?**

The term "set free" in v.18 denotes a decisive action that has been taken one and for all on our behalf by God. We have been made new creations in Christ (II Cor 5:17). We have been set free to live in the light of their new status.

Notice the contrasting statements: **Just As, So Now** (v.19) and **When** (v.20); **But Now** (v.22)

Notice from v.23 that under our old owner (slaves to sin) they **earned wages** – death. In contrast to this, under our new owner (slaves to God) we **received a gift** – eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*"The law is no longer our master and it no longer condemns us ... We are now 'slaves of righteousness' ... We are not saved **by** obedience to the law, we are saved **for** obedience to the law."* (Edwards, B; *Grace, Amazing Grace*; p.81)

### Conclusion

Our transformation into the likeness of Jesus Christ is the work of grace through God's Holy Spirit in our lives. Without such a work no transformation would be possible even though we have been saved and forgiven. Not content with saving us God is committed to our transformation.

In the same way that our salvation requires a response from us (Jn 1:12), so our transformation requires our co-operation. This does not mean that it depends on us; this is a denial of God's grace. What it does mean is that is normal for a true work of grace in our lives to manifest itself in transformed living. We will display the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-25). *"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit"*.

In Rom 7:7-25 Paul goes on to describe the battle between the sinful nature and the new nature. Most Christians take this to be a description of the believer. If this is the case then Paul makes it clear from Rom 7:24-25 that we have the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is a further statement stressing the transforming grace of God in the life of the believer.

**KNOW** that you have been crucified with Christ and are dead to sin. **RECKON** this fact to be true in your own life. **YIELD** your body to the Lord to be used for his glory.

**Recognise** what you are **in Christ!** **Be** what you are **in Christ!**

**Geoff Weekes – November 2014**