Whose Fault Is It?

Author Unknown

A preacher and an atheistic barber were once walking through the city slums. The barber said, "This is why I cannot believe in a God of love. If God was as kind as you say, He would not permit all this poverty, disease and squalor. He would not allow these poor bums to be addicted to drugs and other life-destroying habits. No, I cannot believe in a God who permits these things."

The preacher was silent until they met a man who was especially unkempt and filthy. His hair was hanging down his neck and he had a half-inch of stubble on his face. The preacher said, "You cannot be a very good barber or you would not permit a man like that to continue living in this neighborhood without a haircut or shave."

Indignantly the barber answered, "Why blame me for that man's condition? I cannot help it that he is like that. He has never come in my shop. If he were to visit me, I could fix him up and make him look like a real person! No barber would never let that man leave his shop without him looking well-groomed."

Giving the barber a penetrating look, the preacher said, "Then do not blame God for allowing these people to continue in their evil ways, when He is constantly inviting them to come and be saved. The reason these people are slaves to sin and evil habits is that they refuse the One who died to save and deliver them." The barber saw the point. Do you?

1 Peter 4:11-13 [11] If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. [12] Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

Sick

Richard Wood (Melanie Smith's Uncle)	Ray Hambric (Elder at North Gardendale)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Josie Keith (Friend of Heath Fowler)	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)	Jerry Sandlin (Megan Lee's Grandfather)
Gaylord Huffman (Jennifer Daniel's Grandfather)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Mary Smith (Nathan Smith's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's brother)	Larry Alexander (Friend of Phillip Box)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Betty Bradford	Ann Robinson (Sharon Bailey's Mom)	Debra Lowe (Toni Herd's Friend

January Birthdays

1 - David Ogle
2 - Chuck Hunt
4 - Phillip Box
5 - Rusty Weldon
6 - Erica Seymore
6 - Daniel Rogers
7 - Hunter Collins
11 - Shepherd Hall
11 - Spencer Hall
14– Roy Liu
18 - Scott Vaughn
21 - Jacob Jerkins
23 - Conner Godwin
24 - Melanie Daves
25 - Caleb Daniels
28 - Clay Jones
31 - Jennifer Daniels

News and Notes

☒ Matthew Johnson has returned from overseas and is with family in Germany!

☒ Laura Humphrey's dad, Frank Hand, continues to be treated for kidney failure.

☒ Fran Snyder's funeral was on Wednesday. Let us remember the family in our prayers.

☒ Angela Fowler's uncle, Tommy Maxey, died suddenly last weekend.

☒ Let's continue to remember our expectant mother, Candy Long, in our prayers.

☒ Perry Hill Rd. has a meeting with Gary Henry Fri-Sun, Jan 6-8. Fri - 7PM, Sat - 1, 2:30 PM, Sun - 9,10AM, 5PM

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The Auburn Beacon

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**

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Thoughts to Ponder

God salvages the individual by liquidating him and then raising him again to newness of life.

Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or E-mail: LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Class .....9:30 AM
Worship .....10:20 AM
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Grace and Permissiveness

By Dale Smelser

There is cause for concern in some current ideas premised upon the grace of God. What persons with such ideas are saying of grace per se is often fine, but their projected applications are unjustified, especially when they suppose that the fellowship of false teachers and errant brethren is necessitated because such by grace still possess righteousness in Christ. As we examine the subject of grace relative to these problems, we are not alluding to any one person's conclusions, to our knowledge, but considering numerous ideas drifting about in various quarters that do appear to our understanding to be ultimately of one fabric.

The fact of God's favor extended out of love and for his own glory to undeserving sinners is exceedingly precious, and one can only thrill at its exposition in Paul's treatise on justification by faith, the epistle to Rome. The Jew gloried in the law, circumcision, and his Abrahamic parentage. To show that none of these established righteousness, Paul argued that to sinners, which all are, the law is an instrument of condemnation rather than justification. He argued that God's real concern is the cutting away of sin from the heart rather then flesh from the body, and that instead of lineal descendants he wanted spiritual sons of Abraham who imitate his faith.

Instead of futilely glorying in a legalism that could never save because of man's inability to perfectly keep law, Paul declares that we are justified by faith **(Rom. 5:1)**. A synonym for faith in this sense is trust. We place our trust in God and rely upon his scheme in Christ. It is a scheme relying not merely on conduct, but having the provision of perfect atonement for imperfect conduct, if we qualify.

> A synonym for faith in this sense is trust. We place our trust in God and rely upon his scheme in Christ. It is a scheme relying not merely on conduct, but having the provision of perfect atonement for imperfect conduct, if we qualify.

An atonement is necessary because we have not merited salvation by perfectly keeping the commandments of God's law. And we have not, nor can we, do enough good acts to eliminate the guilt of our disobedience through which we are consequently lost. **(Isa. 64:6).** Thus justification, if any at all, must be by grace **(Rom. 11:6),** a gift undeserved **(Rom. 6:23).**

But God has made the reception of this grace conditional upon our faith. We are saved by grace through faith (**Eph. 2:8-**

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9). God of his own love has freely provided the basis upon which he can justly pardon our iniquities, having satisfaction made for them in the suffering of Jesus **(2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24)**. But we must trust, or have faith in, the divine provisions and conditions in order to appropriate that atonement. One's keeping the conditions by which he is accounted righteous through Christ, rather than by which he actually is righteous, is thus not being saved by his unblemished works, but by faith, or trust in something apart from himself. He is trusting God's arrangement to effect what he has not and cannot. One rejecting or perverting these conditions, which both appropriate and retain God's grace, rejects salvation thereby. And God's grace is something that must be retained, else there is no such thing as falling therefrom.

The implications of this last point, especially, are given inadequate attention in the theology of brethren who continue to impute righteousness through Christ to many who have come to prefer innovation and perversion to the revealed pattern, or plan, of service. We are made just through what Christ has done, not by what we do, we are reminded. This application is only a restatement of the "man and not the plan" concept. Imputing righteousness to the continuing disobedient ignores the fact that God has required certain things of us if we are to be justified by what Christ has done.

Our salvation being, not of our doing, but trust in God's, has often tempted man to minimize, or even eliminate, human responsibility. Even in the apostolic age it was necessary to guard against perverting grace, using it as an excuse to overlook sin **(Rom. 6:1-2)**. It is today being misused to diminish the significance of error in those of the disparate segments of the Restoration Movement. In the past, a similar attitude taken to extreme has occasionally culminated in antinomianism. The true antinomian holds that since we are under grace, submission to a structured system of service and ethics is unnecessary. He is unable to make the distinction between meriting salvation through legal impeccability, and faithfulness to a Savior, which involves devotion to that Savior's desires. And mark this, anyone mitigating the necessity of complying with those desires, and the pattern constituted thereby, is unfaithful to that Savior! But to the antinomian, studied faithfulness is only legalism. Once he is in Christ, he is free from any strict requirement of conduct, and any sinful action and indiscretion is tolerable. He is saved by Christ, not by merit, he says. Some contemporary harangues in the name of grace, ridiculing faithfulness as "commandment keeping," thus sound ominous.

It is in the end a de-emphasis of human responsibility to suppose that in the Restoration Movement the purveyors of doctrinal error such as institutionalism and instrumental music remain justified by grace. Those errors are not merely ideas of personal imprudence, but ideas corruptive of the collective service and worship of God. The feeling of humanity experienced in tolerating the practitioners of such is deluding, and occurs because it is rooted in short-sighted humanism. One is ignoring God's arrangement in deference to men. Actually, the possibly current controversy is not so much, grace versus legalism, as it is, humanism versus the sovereignty of God; the former concerned more with the cordial rapprochement of diverse human elements than with unity in obedience to God.

This fawning humanistic tolerance implies that while God is quite particular as to what conditions appropriate the benefit of grace (faith, repentance, baptism), he is really not too particular about what he has said as to how his children are to serve him, that is, how grace (favor) is retained, and that after all, their right to their inclinations as free men and continuance to embrace one another in fellowship, regardless, is more important than his desires.

Just as tragically, such permissiveness is often called love. And those being tolerated can be especially sweet-spirited. But neither permissiveness nor pragmatic sweet-spiritedness is evidential of the kind of love for the brethren required by God: "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments" **(I Jn. 5:2)**. If we are the children of God those who do not obey God do not really love us! They use us. One proves his love for the children of God, and for God, in sharing obedience with them. When those with supposedly new enlightenment glory rather in an expanded fellowship, beyond those who prove their love for God by faithfulness to his order, while in tending to tell us something about their gracious love for man, they tell us rather that they have more regard and love for man than for God. Such expanded fellowship is not an application of the doctrine of grace. It is grace perverted. It is humanism. And, oh so very, very contemporary. Humanism pervades our society and our young are inundated by it in secular education. That is one reason why some of them are so susceptible to any premise for overlooking significant differences among brethren.

In a nutshell, while grace implies lack of human ability, it does not imply lack of responsibility. The philosophy of permissiveness does. - **Truth Magazine, July 25, 1974**

Paul and Sosthenes

By Jim McDonald

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" **(1 Cor. 1:1f).**

"And Sosthenes our brother." Sosthenes is one of three men whom Paul includes in his salutations in the various letters he wrote, the other two being Silas (1 and 2 Thessalonians) and Timothy (2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon). Only one other time is the name *"Sosthenes"* found in the New Testament. There was a ruler of the synagogue in Corinth who was beaten by a Gentile crowd after Jews had tried to enlist aid from Gallio the proconsul of Achaia to drive Paul from Corinth or worse, to punish him severely. They failed in that attempt **(Acts 18:12-17)**. There is no way to ascertain that the Sosthenes of Acts 18 and the Sosthenes Paul joins with himself in addressing these brethren are the same. Some suppose this Sosthenes is the man who actually wrote the letter. Such is possible, for on one occasion one who was Paul's stenographer personally saluted the brethren the letter was addressed to: Tertius **(Romans 16:22)**. Others suppose that the Sosthenes of Acts 18 is the same as the Sosthenes of this letter; that through the interval of time he came to believe and obey the gospel and, having now come to Corinth, is included in the salutation. Circumstantial evidence might lend some merit to this latter theory: he is called *"our brother,"* the brother of both Paul and Corinthians, perhaps a subtle reminder that while Paul was in Corinth, Sosthenes had opposed him but the gospel's power was not lost on him; he, being an honest and sincere man, had surrendered to the Lord, becoming his disciple. This would be wonderful if it were the actual truth of this matter, but there is no way to know certainly.

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth." We will do well to remember that as the letter unfolds and the ills of these brethren come to light, that despite all their problems, they were the church of God. They were the temple of God and their bodies were temples of the Holy Spirit **(1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19f).** The expression *"Church of God"* was not called upon these brethren as a personal noun; the term was used to show possession. The Corinthian church belonged to God. The church is God's people; His possession, the sheep of His pasture.

> May we never forget that we belong to God; purchased by His blood. Remembering that will help us to seek at all times to conduct ourselves in such a way that our Savior is glorified in us.

There are various phrases which show the truth that the church is the possession of God. Later Paul will remind these brethren, *"Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price"* **(1 Cor. 6:19)**. Peter said, of the brethren to whom he wrote, they were *"a people for God's own possession."* The Ephesian elders were urged to take heed to the *"church of God which he purchased with his own blood"* **(Acts 20:28).** In this sense the church is called the *"church of Christ"* and *"the church of God in Christ Jesus"* **(Rom. 16:16; 1 Thess. 2:14)**. The well remembered words of Jesus to Peter: *"Upon this rock I will build my church,"* further establishes this point **(Mt. 16:18).** When the apostle addresses the partyism among Corinthian brethren when brethren there were saying, *"I am of Paul … Apollos … Cephas … Christ,"* we will do well to remember this had been allowed to occur because the brethren had forgotten that no matter how much we may esteem one who has either introduced us to the gospel, or greatly aided our spiritual understanding; he/she is just a human, an earthen vessel, a minister who acted as a servant in sharing the gospel of Christ to us but to whom the church does not belong; it belongs to Christ!

May we never forget that we belong to God; purchased by His blood. Remembering that will help us to seek at all times to conduct ourselves in such a way that our Savior is glorified in us.