

WHY GRACE PRODUCES RIGHTEOUSNESS

Our approach to the Christian life always has to be, "What does the word of God say?" It can never be that we come with what we think, or what seems logical to us, or what makes sense to me. What makes sense to the world is that they are all good enough to earn their own salvation. But God says you are not good enough and you have to be saved through ^{his} Son on the Cross. And that only makes sense to us when the Spirit of God opens our eyes. But once we become Christians, God says you are not under law, you are under Grace; saved by Grace, ~~because~~ you are to continue in the Grace of God, and Grace will produce holiness. Once again, this makes no sense. If I tell you that if you don't live holy lives, God is going to throw you into hell, and you are going to lose your salvation, that would make sense to you. It would make sense then that we ought to try to be holy; otherwise, what would the consequences be. So when someone comes along and says that the reason you are to be holy is not because God is going to condemn you, but because he is not going to condemn you at all, that makes no sense at all. Once again, God's ways are higher than man's ways. And when I speak of the Grace of God and the fact that we are under God's grace, and not under his law, and that grace produces righteousness, I may violate some of the logical conclusions we would like to have; but I stand firm on the clear teaching of the Scripture.

I am being a fundamentalist; I am taking the Bible word for word and believing it. I want to explain why the Cross of Christ in love and the life of the believer, why ~~the~~ grace of God for the believer, ~~why~~ why when God has wiped away all of our sins and paid for them all, why that produces righteousness in the life of the believer. It would seem to all of us that if God is not going to punish us for our sins, let's just sin up. That is what seems logical. The opposite is what happens. The first reason that it produces righteousness is this: The Cross of Christ sets God free to work in your life. The question that people always bring up is that if this is true, people will just sin all they want; they are forgiven anyway. This situation is anticipated by Paul in Romans 6:1. He says this will never be; it is exactly the opposite of what will happen. He says that God's grace has its own way of making us holy. God says that when you believed in Jesus Christ, ~~God said that~~ in a spiritual and almost mystical way, you were put in union with Jesus; we are united with Him and what happened to Him -- His death. We have been buried with Him in order that as He was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we might walk in newness of life. Paul goes on to say that if we are united in His death, we shall be united in His resurrection. We rose with Him; and we are in union with the new life. The "old man" of Romans 6:6 is not the flesh, or the sinful nature; it is the unregenerate man. ^{It is} You, before you met God.

The Bible says there are two men: The "new man" is the regenerate man after you have been born again; the "old man" is you before you were born again. What was crucified is all that you were before you met God. The old you is nailed to the cross with Christ so that the body of sin might be done away with; made inoperative as a basis for sin so that you are no longer slaves to sin because he who has died is justified from sin. As a person lives his life, he sins. The sins pile up as a child expresses his ~~his~~ temper, and ego, and asserts himself. As they grow older, they find other ways to express ~~it~~ these sins. Finally, at the end of one's life, all these sins must be paid for. And what is the wages of sin; the wages of sin is death. When one dies and is separated ~~from~~ from God (and that is the picture of death) and spends eternity being apart from God, the question is settled. Nothing else can be done about it; the individual has been consigned to the fate he deserves. In law, when a criminal has been put to death, the law has no more claim on him. Death justifies a man from sin; death lays its hold on the ~~man~~ man with reference to sin so that the issue is settled. When Jesus died, he settled the sin issue, and if I am in Him, then the sin issue is settled for me. In Romans 6, the phrase "die to sin" does not refer to ~~the~~ dying to the power of sin. Christ is the one who died to sin; he did not die to the power of sin be-

cause the power of sin never had a hold on Christ. Christ died to the penalty of sin. Christ took the rap for our sins and as a ~~xxxx~~ result of his taking the rap, and my being in him, I have taken the rap too. And if I have taken the rap for ~~all~~ all of my sins, the sin issue is settled. Christ did not just stop by taking the rap for sin; once it was all paid for, once it was all settled and God's requirements were satisfied, he then rose from the dead. The resurrection is proof that sins are paid for. It is more than just a demonstration of the ~~diety~~ deity of Christ and the supernatural power of God. If Jesus had committed just one sin, there would have been no resurrection; death would have held on to him if death had a claim on him. God ~~has~~ would have had no right to resurrect this ~~man~~ man and break the power of death over him. Death could only have had a claim on him if he personally had committed his own sin. ^{Romans 4:25 says} Christ was ~~xxxxxx~~ delivered up because of our transgressions and was raised because of our justification. The resurrection is proof that you are justified. And since he rose from the dead and has passed through death, and since I am united with him, I have risen with him, and death no longer has a claim on him, then death no longer has a claim on me.

The New Testament does not speak much of believers dying.

The word it uses is that believers sleep. Death for the believer is not dying; it is sleep; it is a gentle thing; it is passing into the presence of God. We do not have to go to the full death. We just have to take a little bit of the sting. Death has no claim over us, for the death that Jesus died, he died once for all, and the life he lives, he lives to God. Because your sin ~~is~~ ^{is} all wiped out, you can now consider that you are alive to God. You are now able to live for God and respond to Him. Why? Because your sins ~~are~~ are all paid. God can work in your life. God loves the unbelievers of this world and his love would like to do things for these people, and he would like not to send them the hell. His love would like to behave this way but his righteousness say no. God cannot help the unbelievers. This ~~is~~ makes him a distant figure to unbelievers; there is a barrier between Him and unbelievers; and he does not do a lot of things in their lives. The things he does in their lives, aside from sustaining them as he does the whole world, are things directed to ^{ward} ~~bringing them to the place~~ bringing them to the place where they have passed out of their sinful status. God's righteousness poses a barrier because of my sin. The death of Jesus eliminates the barrier, and now God is free to work in my life. God's Holy Spirit cannot dwell in unbelievers because it would ~~be~~ be unrighteous/ for a righteous God to indwell

a sinful individual. God's love, which was behind the gates of the dam, held back by his righteousness, the gates can now be opened and the love come forth. His love, his ~~kindly~~ Holy Spirit, his power, can now operate in the life of a believer. And how do you think these are going to operate? To lead ~~him~~ out of sin. So, does the ~~xxx~~ Cross and Grace produce disobedience and sin? No, because God is free to work in my life. It is not only that God is free to work in my life (and this is very important), one of main things that he ~~xxxx~~ does in my life is to produce love. As a result of the work of the Cross, the love of God has been poured out within our hearts; our love for him, and for others. The ~~divine~~ love begins to work in the heart of the believer, and this could never have ~~happened~~ under the law. This love is the greatest force for producing obedience that there is. To try to get ^{out} obedience with this love is folly. John 14:15: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." This is a promise; not a command. With the love that has been given to you, you love Christ and you keep his commandments. The obedience flows naturally from love. Romans 13:8: "Love is the fulfillment of the law." Love wants to do the best thing for ~~me~~ others; this becomes the motivating thing of your life and your life is automatically going in ~~a~~ righteous direction and you respond with joy to the commandments of God.

When you love Christ, and God's love flows out through you, you do not want to commit sin. You do not need a written list of rights and wrongs, as the legalists and Pharisees did, you just need to know that as this love is flowing out through you, you will begin to act righteously. A third example of this love; John 13 spells out in concrete form how this love behaves; how this righteous love acts. Jesus, the Son of God, washes the feet of the disciples. Peter tells Jesus that he will never do that; ~~he~~ ^{Peter} gives him an order. The Disciple gives the Lord an order. Jesus says that if you are my disciple, you don't give him an order. So Peter in his usual manner says "Not my feet only, but everything." Jesus tells him that he who has bathed, needs only to wash his feet which have been defiled on the way back from the ^{public} baths. The washing of the feet is the cleansing of defilement; ~~the~~ the bathing is salvation. If you are bathed you don't need to be bathed again; so if you have salvation you never need to get it again, but you do need to be cleansed of daily defilement in the world. This illustrates that it is not a cleansing you do for yourself; it is something that others do for you. It is not confession of sin as that is something you do for yourself. This is washing one another's feet, not washing your own.