

## In Christ: by His *Mercy* and *Grace*

“The bending of the mind by the powers of this world has twisted the *gospel of grace* into religious bondage and distorted the image of God into an eternal, small-minded bookkeeper. The Christian community resembles a Wall Street exchange of works wherein the elite are honored and the ordinary ignored. The institutional church has become a wounder of the healers rather than a healer of the wounded.”

Brennan Manning (*Ragamuffin Gospel*)

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### Sin's Work Against Us (Eph. 2:1-3)

In these three verses, Paul gives us a full-length picture of our terrible spiritual condition prior to entering into our position *in Christ*

1. **We (are) were dead (v. 1)**
  - a. this means spiritually dead – Col. 2:13; Rom. 6:23
  - b. unable to understand and appreciate spiritual things – 1 Cor. 2:14
  - c. he possesses no spiritual life, and he can do nothing of himself to please God.
  - d. The unbeliever is not sick; he is dead!
  - e. **Our problem is not what we do, but who we are!**

God did not become flesh and die in our place to make us good – He came to give us life – His life – but only through our death with Him by faith! (**Gal. 2:20**)

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### Sin's Work Against Us (Eph. 2:1-3)

2. **We (are) were disobedient (vv. 2-3a)**
  - a. This was the beginning of man's spiritual death – his disobedience to the perfect will of God
  - b. This is our constant battle – I can do it! Freewill.
3. **We (are) were depraved (v. 3b)**
  - a. The worldling lives to please the desires of the flesh and the indulgences of the mind – Rom. 8:5-8
  - b. The worldling is completely incapable of doing anything to merit salvation or to meet the perfect standards of a Holy God. – Isa. 64:6
4. **We (are) were doomed (v. 3c)**
  - a. By nature, children of wrath—by deed, children of disobedience. – John 3:18; 2 Pet. 3:8-10

## In Christ: by His *Mercy* and *Grace*

**The Problem:** How can Holy God be reconciled (restored fellowship) to sinful man?

God' work for us, so He could live in us! (**Eph. 2:4-9**)

The focus now switches from sinful us, to Jesus!

1. **God loves us unconditionally (v. 4) – Rom. 5:8**
  - a. God is Love! – 1 John 4:8
  - b. **God doesn't love us because of what we do or don't do, God loves us because He is Love!**

In our extremely limited and myopic understanding of God, we see that He has two *kinds* of attributes:

1. Those that He possess of Himself – Intrinsic  
e.g. Life, Love, Holy, Spirit, Truth
2. Those by which He relates to us – Relative  
e.g. faithfulness, justice, grace, mercy

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God' work for us, so He could live in us! (**Eph. 2:4-9**)

- **God is Truth → faithfulness**
- **God is Holy → justness**
- **God is Love → mercy & grace**

How can Holy God be reconciled (restored fellowship) to sinful man?

What His Perfect Holiness demanded, His Perfect Love provided for us in Jesus! – **Rom. 5:8**

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- **Mercy (v. 4)** leniency and compassion shown toward offenders by a person charged with administering justice  
– **Not getting what we deserve.**



“A doomed, guilty prisoner lies in the depths of a dungeon chained to the floor. He is serving a life sentence and his guilt has been established without any doubt. One day **Mercy** sends a letter to the Prison warden and orders the prisoner pardoned and released. The warden unshackles the prisoner, opens the main gate and lets the prisoner go free. The freed man sits on the sidewalk. He is free, but has no place to go.” *Glen Miller*

- **Titus 3:5!**

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God' work for us, so He could live in us! (Eph. 2:4-9)

- **Grace (v. 8,9)** favor, kindness, friendship
  - **Getting what we don't deserve.**
  - “*Grace* then sends a limousine and picks up the man at the curb. He is taken to the palace of the king where he showers and shaves and is given new clothes. Then the king invites the man to his banquet table and announces that the man is his adopted son and heir and will share the throne and royal palace from that day onwards.” *Glen Miller*
- “Abraham represents faith; Sarah represents grace. It is impossible to separate them. If the one is gone the other is useless... Faith that does not rest on God's grace is valueless. You cannot sacrifice Sarah.” Nee (Eph. 2:8,9)
- **Rom. 5:1,2 – grace is not only the door, but is the very room in which we stand, live, and grow.**



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“Our huffing and puffing to impress God, our scrambling for brownie points, our thrashing about trying to fix ourselves while hiding our pettiness and wallowing in guilt are nauseating to God and are a flat denial of the gospel of grace.”

“Perhaps the real dichotomy in the Christian community today is not between conservatives and liberals or creationists and evolutionists but between the awake and the asleep...the awake Christian knows he/she is a ragamuffin. Although truth is not always humility, humility is always truth: the blunt acknowledgement that I owe my life, being, and salvation to Another. This fundamental act lies at the core of our response to grace.”

*Brennan Manning (Ragamuffin Gospel)*

**Heb. 4:9-16**

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**Matthew 4:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit...”**

– the poor in spirit have made peace with their flawed existence, they are fully and deeply aware of their lack of wholeness, their brokenness, the simple fact that they don't have it all together. They understand and believe it's by grace alone that one enters into the Holy of holies, into complete intimacy with a Holy God.