

## **ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS #6**

### **I. Introduction**

Tonight we continue our teaching on “Asking for the Old Paths”, a text taken from Jeremiah 6:16; something God said through the Prophet to a backslidden church and a nation at the crossroads. Sounds like our own day!

God’s people had forsaken the ‘old paths’ and the godly way in favor of ‘new paths’ that put them in peril. In our day these new paths have become ‘sacred cows’, a term taken from how the Hindus in India will starve to death before they will kill a cow they think could be a reincarnated relative!

But when we speak of ‘sacred cows’ today, it carries a different meaning...

### **“Sacred Cow”**

**An idea, tradition, or custom considered to be above criticism**

Our cultural sacred cows include Evolution, Global Warming, Women’s Rights.

Touch these-expect a fight!

But the Church has its own ‘sacred cows’.

### **Series Theme**

**Sacred cows in the Christian church are the ‘new paths’ of modern American Christianity. They are the dearly held doctrines, beliefs and traditions allowed to live even though they produce false converts and put God’s people in political paralysis.**

To get back to the ‘old paths’ we have to begin by...

### **Killing Sacred Cows**

If you haven’t been with us, some of the sacred cows we’ve killed are...

### **SACRED COWS REVIEW**

- ‘CONVENIENT CHRISTIANITY’
- AN ESCHATOLOGY OF DEFEAT/A SECRET RAPTURE
  - THE SINNER’S PRAYER

Tonight I want to kill one more sacred cow commonly allowed to live in many American Churches...

## **“Cheap Grace”**

### **II. Killing the Sacred Cow of “Cheap Grace”**

#### **A. Where Does It Come From?**

1. ‘Cheap Grace’ is a term coined by the great **German Lutheran Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, one of the few Christian clergymen who stood up against Adolf Hitler’s Nazi Party in WWII. He was arrested by the Gestapo in 1943 and executed by hanging in 1945, even as Allied forces were liberating Berlin.

2. Bonhoeffer believed that **the preaching of 'cheap grace' in Germany's Christian churches disempowered the Church and paved the way for Adolf Hitler's rise to power.**

a. The Catholic Church capitulated quickly to Hitler; then the Protestant Lutherans followed in surrender. Bonhoeffer blamed it on cheap grace.

#### **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

**We Lutherans have gathered like eagles around the carcass of cheap grace and we have drunk the poison which has killed the life of following Christ.**

3. In his most famous book, “The Cost of Discipleship”, he went farther....

#### **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

**Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of the Church. It has been the ruin of more Christians than any commandment of works.**

4. What did he mean by ‘cheap grace’? We need to ask ourselves, ‘what does it mean to call something ‘cheap’?’

#### **“Cheap”**

**Obtainable at a low price. Of small value.**

**Modern Usage: Inferior; a cheap imitation**

5. Bonhoeffer applied the word 'cheap' to grace because it was a grace 'obtainable at a low price'; of small value; He saw 'cheap grace' as 'inferior' grace or a 'cheap imitation' of true grace.

a. Here is his full definition...

### **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

**Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ.**

### **B. Take A Look At This List**

**'Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without requiring repentance':**

1. Our modern American pulpits preach cheap grace when they offer eternal salvation to all who attend an altar call and repeat a so-called 'sinner's prayer' *without any verification that the candidate has been truly and deeply convinced and convicted of their condition.*

a. Cheap grace offers forgiveness to those who have never been fully convicted of their need of forgiveness.

b. Cheap grace offers salvation to sinners without any conditions; it offers grace to sinners who have never been convinced that they need grace.

c. Go study the preachers and the preaching of America's previous 'Great Awakening' revivals...there's no 'cheap grace' to be found.

**2. For example, look at the preaching ministry of the great revivalist Gilbert Tennant, (1703-1764). He was one of the leaders of America's first "Great Awakening". He preached sermons designed to disturb what he called the 'sinner's security'.**

a. Dr. Cheryl Ann Rickards analyzed the success of Tennant's preaching ministry as based on his ability to disturb the 'security of sinners'.

### **Cheryl Ann Rickards on Gilbert Tennant**

Tennent called the unsaved 'the secure' because such a person is unconvinced and unconvicted of sin; he is a "secure" sinner. In order to convince and convict, Tennent preached on judgment and damnation in order to inform and alarm the congregation, and to affix conviction in order to ensure conversion.

b. How many modern American preachers dare to 'preach on judgment and damnation in order to alarm their congregations into convictions that ensure conversion'?

c. George Tennent explains how he approached his preaching:

### **George Tennent**

The secure sinner needs to be convinced of his sin and unrighteousness and then convicted. There is a difference between being convinced and being convicted. A murderer may be *convinced* that killing is wrong but commits murder anyway because he does not care that it is wrong. A murderer is *convicted* (not legally, but spiritually) when he feels a deep distress in his heart.

3. The amazing success of the Great Awakening preachers was the result of preaching messages designed to disturb the security of sinners.

### **The Most Famous Sermon in American History**

It's no accident that the most famous sermon ever preached in America was Jonathan Edward's sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"! (Preached on July 8, 1741!)

a. Edwards used vivid illustrations of hell and the perilousness of life in order to force people to consider the reality of their eternal destiny and to invoke a decision to receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

### **Jonathan Edwards**

**"It is only the mercy of God that keeps people from falling into hell, and God is free to withdraw that mercy at any moment."**

b. The sermon so powerfully convicted sinners of their sin that eyewitnesses said grown men were weeping and holding onto the pews for fear of falling into hell at any moment.

c. Imagine preaching a sermon like that today! The idea that God is 'angry'; that God is 'angry with sinners'! But friends, it's in the Bible!

**Psalm 7:11-13**

**God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for Himself instruments of death; He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.**

d. Some who hear this message will cringe at a sermon on 'Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God' because it touches the 'sacred cow' of cheap grace so many of us are used to. But look at the results!

4. The Great Awakening Revivals not only saved sinners but transformed entire cities and states! Churches were filled. Bars and whorehouses shut down.

5. But the 'cheap grace' of modern American evangelism produces counterfeit converts who never make an impact on the culture. Cheap grace never mentions the holiness of God, the sinfulness of sinners or the reality of hell; instead, it offers salvation to those not deeply convinced and convicted that they need it!

**Leonard Ravenhill**

**We are trying to save people who don't know they are lost.**

6. Testimony: I believe that how much we love the Lord is directly proportionate to how much we are amazed by God's grace.

a. In Luke 7, Jesus dines at the house of Simon the Pharisee. During dinner, a 'woman who was a sinner' anoints His feet with expensive oil and tearfully wipes his feet with her hair. The Pharisee wonders why Jesus doesn't know she's a sinner. But Jesus asks him a question.

**Luke 7:40-44**

**And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you."**

**So he said, "Teacher, say it." 41 "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me,**

therefore, which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged."

**Luke 7:44-50**

Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. 45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil."

**Those who come to Christ by way of 'cheap grace' are like Simon the Pharisee. They are unconvicted of their sin. They love little. They offer Him no water, no kiss, and no oil.**

Jesus compares how Simon treated Him to how the sinner woman treated Him. Grace was cheap to Simon who saw himself OK; but it was amazing to the woman who knew she was a sinner...

**Luke 7:47**

**Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."**

Testimony: Why do some people saved as a child, and who have grown up in church seem so lukewarm about the Lord. I was 27 when I got saved!

**Luke 7:48-50**

**48 Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."**  
NKJV

**7. When people come to Christ by cheap grace they're like Simon;** they don't see themselves as sinners. They love little'; they offer Him no water, no kiss and no oil. They can't weep and don't worship. They think it's all about them. Then they find a church that satisfies their needs...

**Cheap Grace Church**  
**Welcome to Cheap Grace Fellowship Church**  
**Narcissistic Denomination**  
**“It’s a little about God; it’s really about me.”**

8. These are those who never had a sense of the depth of their sin so they have no sense of the greatness of God’s grace. They love little because they never saw themselves that bad.

a. They want their sins forgiven but their lives unchanged.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

**Cheap grace means the justification of the sin without the justification of the sinner.**

9. Cheap grace sinners get saved but not sanctified. They are satisfied just to be saved. If you confront them with the Word they call you a legalist. They cannot be convicted because the grace they received was cheap grace.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

**Cheap grace is the idea that ‘grace’ did it all for me so I do not need to change my lifestyle. The believer who accepts the idea of ‘cheap grace’ thinks he can continue to life like the rest of the world. Instead of following Christ in a radical way, the Christian lost in cheap grace thinks he can simply enjoy the consolations of his grace.**

10. The modern American church has become so obsessed with the message of grace that it’s become a ‘sacred cow’; if you preach sermons on subjects like the Law of God or keeping His commandments or being engaged in the culture you are seen as an enemy of ‘grace’.

11. But look at the fruit of cheap grace preaching. Many of our churches are irrelevant. And our country is under attack. The late Vance Havner connected our political problem to our problems in the pulpits.

**Vance Havner**

**We are suffering much from the preaching of cheap grace. Grace is free but it is not cheap. People will take anything that is free, but they are not interested in discipleship. They will take Christ as Savior but not as Lord.**

12. This is why Bonhoeffer told us...

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

**Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of the Church. We are fighting today for costly grace.**

### **C. So What is 'Costly Grace'?**

1. We need to ask ourselves this question; "What did it cost God to provide the grace by which we are saved?" The answer is "EVERYTHING"!

**Andrew Farley**

**God's grace is free but it's not cheap. It cost God everything.**

2. But the question we fail to ask is; "How much will it cost YOU to receive the grace God has provided?" The answer is, "EVERYTHING"!

**Billy Graham**

**Christ did not suffer and die to offer us cheap grace. Jesus did not go willingly to the cross so we could have an easy life or offer a faith based on easy-believism.**

**As someone said, "Salvation is free but not cheap." It cost Jesus His life.**

3. It cost God everything to give us grace; it will cost us everything to receive God's grace because grace is a 2-way street; it's a covenant.

4. Dave Daubenmire coached high school football for 35 years when he was sued by the ACLU for praying with his players at games and practices. He won the suit and went launched a ministry that calls on Christians to wake up and engage the culture by taking the fight to the enemy. Ministry. He has some great teaching on grace as a covenant.

**Dave Daubenmire**



**Christianity is a covenant, a deal if you will. Noah Webster defined covenant as 'a mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, to do or to forebear some act or thing; a covenant is a contract.**

**Dave Daubenmire**

**What do we bring to the table in exchange for HIS life? The answer is, OUR life. True Christianity will cost you YOUR life. But modern Christianity has lost this message. We are constantly reminded of HIS sacrifice...HIS love for us. But what is OUR skin in the game? That is the missing link in the New Covenant signed in HIS blood.**

5. Cheap grace is a one-way street; Jesus died for us; true grace is a 2-way street; Jesus died for us so we might live for Him!

**Dave Daubenmire**

**Jesus dies for us and all He requires is that we live for Him. It's a covenant. A quid pro quo. He dies for us and we live for Him.**

6. The problem with cheap grace is that it ends with the 'Sinner's Prayer'.

**Dave Daubenmire**

**'Christ died for our sins' does not even begin to touch the varnish on what it actually means to be a follower of Jesus. In today's culture of 'easy-believism', simply identifying as a Christian doesn't mean much.**

**Dave Daubenmire**

**Simply 'believing' is wrought with booby traps as the Scriptures tell us that even the demons 'believe'. Christianity is more than simply repeating a 'sinner's prayer'. The nation is full of folks who walked an aisle and repeated that prayer.**

7. Remember Bonhoeffer blamed Germany's collapse into Hitler's hands on the church doctrines of cheap grace; will America make the same mistake?

**Dave Daubenmire**

**The nation is in the condition we are in because, for the most part, most Christians are not willing to lay anything on the line for the cause of Christ. This one-way covenant has hindered the advancement of the Kingdom because too**

**many Christians have counted the cost of getting personally involved and determined they are not willing to make the sacrifice required.**

8. Our country is in the critical care unit because countless Christians sit on the sidelines rather than resist the authoritarian mandates of the majority party.

a. Cheap grace won't pay the price. But...

**Dave Daubenmire**

**A costless Christianity is no Christianity at all. Jesus died that you might live. Live for Him. He is counting on you. If you remain silent God's voice is silenced. He is living and speaking through you. It is time for us to keep our part of that sacred covenant.**

#### **IV. Close**

##### **A. Consider the High Cost of Free Grace**

**What did it cost God to give you grace to be saved?  
What will it cost you to receive God's grace?**

1. What did it cost God to give you the grace to be saved?

a. It wasn't cheap. Our sin separated us from Him. God's justice required our death. The only way God could give us grace was for the Innocent to die for the Guilty. Innocent blood had to be shed. But since no man born of Adam is innocent, He sent His Son to live a sinless life and die as a Lamb, sacrificed on our behalf.

2. If it cost God everything to provide us the grace to be saved under a new covenant, how can we not respond with giving God our everything?

3. After 11 chapters of theology on how God saves us, the Apostle Paul gives us a 'Therefore'...

**Romans 12:1**

**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**

a. Jesus died for us. But God doesn't want us to die for Him. He wants us to live for Him; a 'living sacrifice'.

b. This is our 'reasonable service'; which could be translated as 'the least we can do'.

4. The choice before the Church is clear: Cheap grace or costly grace?

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

**Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of the Church. It has been the ruin of more Christians than any commandment of works.**

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

**Costly grace is the treasure hidden in a field; for the sake of it a man will gladly sell all he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods.**

**Communion and Prayer**