



## **The Demands of Grace Part 1**

### **Matthew 5:17-20**

**In the Month of May we worked our way through a series entitled “Pillars” during which we addressed the Doctrines of Our Great Church. Today I will be starting a new series entitled, “The Demands of Grace” and throughout the month of June I will be teaching through what Grace is and what it is not. We currently live in a climate amongst Christendom where there seems to be two opposite extremes concerning the teachings of Grace and what is required of a New Testament believer. There are those who cling to solid Biblical fundamentalism, heed the Word of God, and make a stand for righteousness sake. They have a moral compass and spiritual grit that makes them true Victors in the Kingdom. The Bible**

**says what it says, they believe what it says, and that settles what anyone else can say.**

**Then there are those who propagate an ideology concerning Grace who declare in their teachings that the Holy Spirit doesn't convict the Believer of Sin and, by the use of Scripture they defend a loose morality by stating that Christ died for all of my sins past, present and future thus one can act a fool, or sleep around, or even use abusive and foul language because it's all under the Blood of Christ! Everyone is already saved; they just don't know it yet" This, my friend, is an absolute manipulation of Scripture and a poor theological view of what Grace is and does in the life of the Believer.**

**The writer of the book of Hebrews addressed this very issue in Hebrews 10:26-29, "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and fury of fire will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he has sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of Grace?"**

**It is imperative that we understand that the Blood of Jesus is priceless but there was a price paid for that Blood. And for us state to**

that the Grace of God places no demands upon us as believers is to deny the very foundation upon which our Faith was firmly set. The Grace of God demands some things... The Grace of God is not the relaxing of standards but rather the raising the standard to another level.

I want you to turn with me to the Gospel of Saint Matthew Chapter 5 beginning in verse 17 and we will read through verse 20.

#### **Matthew 5:17-20**

**17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.**

I desire to draw your attention to the last verse; verse 20, for this will be the Scriptural launching point for our time together. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

**With this Scripture in mind, allow me to set the stage and provide some context for this section of Scripture.**

- **Matthew chapter 4 records Jesus' baptism and temptation in the wilderness. He then began to call his disciples while passing through Galilee.**
- **Matthew chapter 5 opens with the greatest sermon ever preached in Jesus' earthly ministry. It is after the Beatitudes that Jesus began to speak on many things but He sets the stage for the rest of Matthew 5 with the text that we read in verses 17-20.**
- **Jesus is speaking to a crowd of Jews who honored the religious system and had an elevated reverence for the Pharisees.**
- **Jesus' statement can seem condemning at face value but the depth of this text far exceeds that shallow understanding. Verse 20 is a challenge to their level of living.**

**This annotation of exceeding the righteousness of the Pharisees was pointing to a way or level or standard of living...**

**And what the masses believed to be a level of perfection in the lives of the Pharisees, Jesus called "mediocrity". Grace demands a higher level of Living!**

**1) Observe the Power of your Emotions**

- a. **Matthew 5:21-22 - “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.**
- b. **Jesus said that a man’s emotional response towards others will directly affect his eternal dwelling!**
- c. **In the Gospel of Saint John in the fourth chapter, the Apostle John unveils the deeper truth of what Jesus is teaching in response to what the Pharisees asked.**
- d. **The Apostle John said in the Gospel of Saint John 4:20, “Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.”**
- e. **JOHN IS TALKING TO THE CHURCH!!! HE IS TALKING TO YOU!!! HE IS TALKING TO ME!!! HE IS TALKING TO US!!! HE’S NOT TALKING TO THE WORLD! HE’S NOT TALKING ABOUT OUR LOVE FOR THOSE IN THE WORLD, HE IS TALKING ABOUT OUR HATE TOWARDS OTHER BELIEVERS!**
- f. **1 John 3:15 declares, “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life**

**abiding in him.”**

- g. We have the heart of Cain when we have no remorse over the death of others and then cast off our responsibility by sarcastically stating to God, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” We have a responsibility to one another as Christians to love one another and to not allow the circumstances around us to turn our foolish hearts darkened...
- h. **1 John 2:9-10, “<sup>9</sup> Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. <sup>10</sup> Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.”**
- i. Here we well! We are not held responsible for happens in the world around us but we are responsible for what happens in our Church! We must refuse to allow the antichrist spirit of this world to influence our churches and allow the culture of the world to set the culture of the church itself! This world is ruled by the god of this world, Satan, and we partake of an antichrist spirit when we partake of the divisions of the world and vomit our vileness into the body of the Lord Jesus Christ!
- j. **Grace Demands a Higher Level of Living!**
- k. **Jesus Demands a Higher Level of Self-Control!**
- l. **We must observe the power of our emotions!**

**Not only must we observe the power of our emotions, we must also observe the power of our thoughts! Point #2...**

## **2) Observe the Power of your Thoughts**

- a. **Matthew 5:27-30 - “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.**
- b. **Jesus said that if a man looks upon a woman with lust then he is guilty of adultery.**
- c. **Matthew 6:22-23 - “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**
- d. **If we are not willing to govern our eyes then we will lose control of our thoughts! What you look at and what you read and what you post and what you share and what you discuss and what you ponder will always bear fruit in our lives! What kind of seeds are you sowing in your own mind? Because the Bible says to be not deceived for God shall not be mocked, whatever a man sows he shall also reap...**

- e. **Matthew 18:7-9 - “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.**
- f. **There’s an old hymn that rings true with these verses in mind! Oh, be careful, little eyes what you see! There’s a Father up above looking down in tender love! Oh, be careful, little ears what you hear! Oh, be careful, little tongue what you say! Oh, be careful, little hands what you do! Oh, be careful, little feet where you go! There’s a Father up above looking down in tender love!**
- g. **Grace Demands a Higher Level of Living!**
- h. **Jesus Demands a Higher Level of Thinking!**
- i. **We must observe the power of our Thoughts!**

**Not only must we observe the power of our thoughts, we must also observe the power of our relationships! Point #3...**



### **3) Observe the Power of your Relationships**

- a. Matthew 5:31-32 - “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**
- b. Jesus said that a Divorce without just cause is a violation of Covenant Relationship!**
- c. Covenant Marriage? What does that even look like? In an age where people are enamored with the idea of getting married and weddings, we fail to understand the lifelong commitment of what it means to be in a covenant of marriage. It is more than vows and candle lighting ceremonies. It is the union of two souls who promise to walk with one another through valleys and mountains and celebrate life together in so that they do not have to go through life alone.**
- d. The Catholic view of marriage is more than a covenant but a Sacrament, which is to be eternal and intimate. The sad reality is that when the Protestant Reformation began and started to propagate change, the idea of marriage lost its position as a sacrament and the option of divorce was more easily palatable. John Witte noted in an article entitled, “The Meanings of Marriage” the following, “Because [the Protestants] rejected the sacramental concept of marriage as**

**an eternal enduring bond, the reformers introduced divorce in the modern sense, on grounds of adultery, desertion, cruelty, or frigidity, with a subsequent right to remarry at least for the innocent party”.**

- e. Most Christians have no idea of what a true covenant marriage is because marriage has been presented as a cheap relationship opportunity with the opportunity of exit at any time. I believe that Covenant Marriage is the closest covenant relationship that we can attain between two humans that allows us to understand the covenant that we have with Christ. If we view our marriages as cheap then we will view our covenant with Christ as cheap as well.**
- f. Grace Demands a Higher Level of Living!**
- g. Jesus Demands a Higher Level of Covenant Relationships!**
- h. We must observe the power of our marriage and our homes!**

**Not only must we observe the power of our relationships, we must also observe the power of our words! Point #4...**

#### **4) Observe the Power of your Words**

- a. Matthew 5:33-37 - “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by**

**your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.**

- b. Jesus said regarding Oaths that our Words are Powerful and Binding!**
- c. Jesus declared in the Gospel of Saint Matthew 12:34 states, "You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."**
- d. If the heart is full of love, joy, and peace then love, joy and peace will be found within a man's words. If the heart is full of hate, lies, and sin then hate, lies, and sin will be found within a man's words. Your mouth will always tell truth of the human condition...**
- e. One of the most emotionally stirring messages that I have ever heard is a sermon delivered by Pastor David Wilkerson entitled, "A Call to Anguish".**
- f. Even though Reverend Wilkerson has gone to be with the Lord, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is upon that message. Here is an exert from his message...**
- g. "But the Truth of the matter is, in all honesty, that there are numbers among us that are changing! And they don't know it, you've lost your fight. You see, when you read the book of Joshua, it's almost a book of failure because they lost their heart, they lost their fight. And that's all the Devil wants to**

**do is to get the fight out of you and kill it. So you won't labor in prayer anymore. So you won't weep before God anymore. You can set and watch television and your family go to Hell."**

- h. Proverbs 18:21 declares, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."**
- i. The Apostle Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 4:14-21, "I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?"**
- j. When we have many words but little power, when we spend more time talking than we do demonstrating the Power of Christ in the earth, we are hypocrites! Paul says, "But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power."**

- k. And the charge I lay before all of us today is this, I see our words, I hear our words but where is the Power? Our power in Christ? Our power to love? Our Power to heal? Our power in our unity? Our power must precede our words!**
- l. Grace Demands a Higher Level of Living!**
- m. Jesus Demands a Higher Level of Communication!**
- n. We must observe the power of our words!**

**Not only must we observe the power of our words, we must also observe the power of self-control! Point #5...**

### **5) Observe the Power of Self Control**

- a. Matthew 5:38-42 - “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.**
- b. It is imperative that we observe Self-Control in regards to Violence! These are the words of Christ!**
- c. Jesus spoke to the ideology of Retaliation and taught the value of Self Control in regards to Violence! Violence Begets**

**Violence! Hate Begets Hate! Death Begets Death! We cannot heal as a humanity by perpetuating hurt!**

- d. One of the greatest misnomers about this present age is that everything is focused on self-help and building a solid relationship with others. The regrettable truth of this situation is that it is impossible for someone to fix themselves nor is it possible to build a relationship with others that will be an enduring adventure of security. In the second chapter of the Book of Galatians, Paul said this, “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”**
- e. From Self-Help Gurus to the Self-Help Gospel, our world is full of philosophies, ideologies, and systematic approaches to finding peace within one’s self or to assist someone in “finding their center”. No matter how someone looks at it, the strict adherence to a philosophy or idea is vain when it comes to thinking that a person can adhere to rules and regulations; thus generating the byproduct of self-control.**
- f. For me to restate in greater length, in my own words of course, what the Apostle Paul was saying in Galatians 2:21, it would be fit for me to say it in this manner. “I am smart enough after enough trial and error to come to the conclusion that I am broke and malfunctioning, and there is**

**nothing that I can do about it in my own strength. I had adhered to rules and regulations in a vain attempt to resolve an issue in my life that was bigger than me. Thus I find myself at the foot of the Cross having to come to terms with the fact that I cannot fix me. If I could have fixed me in my own strength then I would have already done so. Now I find myself at a cross roads of frustration because I want to be a better person but I realize now that the only way that this is even remotely possible is through the Cross of Christ unto forgiveness and by the power of the Holy Spirit unto Holiness and Self-Control. Thus I resolve myself to the fate of the Holy Spirit and will no longer strive against my flesh but rather strive in the Spirit. But I will be careful that I do not frustrate the Grace of God nor get on God's nerves by trying to say that my own self works and self-help can make me any better or cleaner than the blood of Jesus. I will not trust in my own works to find my own righteousness because if my works could generate righteousness then why did Jesus have to die upon the tree?"**

- g. We cannot have healthy nor eternally productive relationships with others nor ourselves without first having a healthy relationship with our Heavenly Father and that can only come through His Son, Jesus Christ. Thus we must be right vertically before we can ever be right horizontally. I'm going to say it again: we must be right vertically before we**

can ever be right horizontally. It is the Power of the Cross and the Anointing of the Holy Ghost that can set a man free. No man will ever experience freedom apart from the Blood of Jesus!

**h. Grace Demands a Higher Level of Living!**

**i. Jesus Demands a Higher Level of Self-Control!**

**j. We must observe the power of our actions and see the value in self-control!**

**And in closing... Not only must we observe the power of self-control, we must also observe the power of love unhindered! Point #6...**

## **6) Observe the Power of Love Unhindered**

**a. Matthew 5:43-48 - “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only**



**your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”**

- b. Jesus said that we should Love our Enemies and Pray for those who Persecute us!**
- c. Ian Paisley said it best when he declared, “If ever there was a time that God’s people needed to be awakened, it is today! The Sprit of God operates by awaking people, and then when they are awakened; when God’s people are awakened, this fire of prayer starts to burn! There’s nothing so dead as a dead prayer meeting! There’s nothing more alive than a live prayer meeting! If you want to feel life in your soul, then get into an ole fashion white heart prayer meeting. Where men are praying and they’re not stringing sentences together. And they’re not saying the old things that you’re sick hearing in prayer meetings. Oh, No. They’re praying. They are pleading with God. They’re crying to God... Sometimes it’s a groan, sometimes it’s a tear, sometimes it’s a broken sentence, Sometimes it’s a sigh! but its prayer!”**
- d. I ask you this question today, “Are the things you are living for worth Christ dying for?”**
- e. It is time to examine our lives, it is time to repent of our ways, it is time to turn our hearts back to Christ, it’s time to love our enemies, it is time to pray for those who persecute**

**us, it is time for us to forgive others... I close with this Scripture...**

- f. Jesus said in Matthew 6:14, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”**
- g. Grace Demands a Higher Level of Living!**
- h. Jesus Demands a Higher Level of Love!**
- i. We must observe the power of our love unhindered!**

**If we are to be representatives of Christ in this present age, then His teachings and disciplines must be found in our lives daily. I am so tired of hearing about revivals and their impacts; here is the problem with revival... If we made the effort to stay alive then we would never need a revival to resurrect us from our deadness... Everyone is praying for revival but my simple prayer is this... Lord let your teachings, your disciplines and your spirit be found in my life daily as I lead, love and pastor your church... “Well pastor, are you saying that we should not pray for revival?” No I am not, I am only asking that you stay on fire for Christ after the revival has come... Revive us again oh Lord but this time, let us stay alive... Let us pray...**