

Uncovering the Mystery of Righteousness: Stewarding Grace

The crux of the matter:

Jesus Christ lives His ministry empowering people to do **ALL** that He did and more. Walking on water, translation, healing, deliverance, raising of the dead, but what about the forgiveness of sin?

After going through the cross and defeating sin and death, the final impartation He releases is the ministry of reconciliation through the release of Grace.

NOTE: The reality of glory and authority to steward the Grace of God is built upon the foundations of

1. The Finished Work of the Cross
2. The Mystery of Union. Neither of these truths are manifest in purity without an impartation and revelation of Love.

In the following notes, the verse reference is given along with commentary, but the actual verses aren't listed. Versions used **NASB, MSG, ESV, KJV, TPT**

John 20:19 ESV On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

John 20:19 - This is the most depressing prayer meeting on record. Everything they had envisioned in their minds about what the Kingdom was going to be now looked beyond impossible. Their only point of unity is fear. It's in this context that Jesus appears in a locked room and declares peace over them. He knows how to make an entrance.

John 20:21 - After a second declaration of peace He says, "As the Father sent me, I send you." With the same ministry, power, mandate, He releases them to re-present Him and bring the Kingdom.

John 20:22 - There are only two places in Scripture where God breathes on man. The first is in **Gen 2:7**, where God declares His unified (let Us make...) intention to make man in His image and likeness.

NOTE: In creation, God speaks to the environment in which the created thing is designed to live within and draw life from.

For example, in creating fish He speaks to the water saying "Let the sea bring forth...", and when He creates land animals and plants He says, "Let the earth bring forth...". **But when He creates man, He speaks to Himself.** You carry the literal DNA of God within you, and like a fish

cannot breathe outside of the environment it was designed to live within, so your Spirit cannot breathe without the presence of God. Acts 17:28 “In Him we live and move and have our being.”

The second time God breathes upon man is right here in verse 22, and in doing so He restores man to His original intention, filling Him with His Spirit.

NOTE: There is often question of the difference between this filling and the **Acts 2** outpouring of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Spirit is the environment in which we live and comes in **John 20:22**, but the power of the Spirit is what came upon the church in Acts 2. The presence of the Spirit is constant, but the power of the Spirit is unique and to be pursued. It uniquely belongs to the hungry who are willing to pay a price to go after it. (This is not a salvation issue so the argument that works are unnecessary isn't applicable. There are impartations in God beyond salvation that require obedience to His voice to obtain and steward. This is the context by which James writes “Faith without works is dead.”)

Consider the mandate to tarry in Jerusalem until you're filled with power. They had no idea how long, and they had no idea what to expect when it happened.

Additionally, the manifestations they experienced in the filling were things that were not foretold and they had no previous reference for.

Peter attributes it to Joel's prophecy of the last days. But Joel makes no mention of tongues, wind, and fire. Yet it's a perfect fit, because it's not the manifestations that validate the move.

Additionally, the tongues phenomena is a reversal of the Babel curse, in which the barrier of communication is broken down in the context of magnifying the wonderful works of God.

John 20:23 - This is certainly one of the most misunderstood and overlooked verses in the Bible. It sounds like He gives mankind not just the command to love, but the measurable tool by which it is determined whether people are loved or not. We are either going to be famous for love or for judgement.

Up until now, what has the church been more famous for? It appears also that He is tying His hands to ours, and is willing to be as radical or as restrained with Grace as we are willing to be. “Whoever's sins YOU forgive...”

He's not restricting it to certain people, or even to certain sins. He says **“WHOEVER”** and sets no rules or restrictions upon it.

There is doctrine and argument to support the point of personal decision and an act of will to accept Grace as in the case of the rich young ruler who walks away, but there is also the case of those at the foot of the cross who have just driven the nails into Jesus and are literally draining the life from the Son of God. Over them **He** says, **“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”**

His release of Grace is not dependent upon their decision, obedience, or even awareness that it's happening.

Were those words for nothing?

Was that request denied?

2 Cor 5:19 says that God was IN CHRIST (on the Cross) reconciling the world unto Himself...not counting their sins against them.

What if Jesus was showing us just how radical He meant love to be, by defining the words, “this is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”

Is there anyone you would forgive if you knew that your grace over their life would bring them into reconciliation with the Father? Is there anyone whose sins you would retain, condemning them to eternal torment? What if it really is up to you? **(Each of these questions is hypothetical, to simply get us to think about the power and responsibility of Love, and our mandate and identity as people made in the very image and likeness of Love Himself.)**

James 5:16 - The confession of faults/sin to another person is Biblically encouraged, but if we can't release grace, what are we to do with that? We MUST be able to release the grace of God, and as James says, in the context of confession to man (confess your faults) and communion with God (pray one for another) the result is healing and wholeness (that you may be healed). Judgement and unforgiveness (both of yourself and others) locks people into a lifestyle of brokenness.

Mark 2:5-12 - The story of the paralytic is a profound one because of a couple of significant things that happen.

First, in verse **5**, Jesus releases grace, “...**when He saw the faith of his friends.**” His love was released in response to their love. In verse **7**, those hearing this say what any good believe would say. “This is blasphemy, for who can forgive sins but God alone?” It is commonly thought that Jesus did everything He did because He is God, and their reasoning is valid because they weren't aware that He was God. But throughout the Scriptures, Jesus refers to Himself as “Son of Man” and in doing so, demonstrates the normal Christian life and what is possible for everyone who puts their faith in Him. In verse **10** He says, “...**that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...**” He just demonstrated what love looks like through those made in His image in whom His Spirit dwells.

John 8:1-12 This is the story of a woman caught in adultery. She's brought before Jesus by the religious leaders and is clearly condemned by the Law of Moses. After Jesus says the famous line about casting the first stone, everyone leaves. He says to her, “**Is there no one to condemn you?**” In **John 20:23** Jesus is inviting us to release His love and grace and implies that He will agree with ours.

At this point in the story of the woman, **there is nobody there for Him to come into agreement with in her condemnation, so He simply agrees with Himself saying “neither do I condemn you”.** The next thing He says is, “Go and sin no more.” In the declarations of Jesus is the power to achieve what He has declared.

Peter getting out of the boat responds to Jesus saying “**Come**”, the disciples bring healing and deliverance in response to Jesus declaring authority over them in **Luke 9:1**, so in this moment there is far more than a hopeful wish. It's a supernatural declaration of freedom from the

bondage of sin. He gave her an encounter with literal Love, Himself, and in that encounter there is freedom and access to the identity of righteousness.

Luke 7:36-47 This is the story of a woman who was known as a “sinner” (vs 36). She begins to wash his feet with her tears in gratitude. This continues for the entire meal and the religious leaders present logically question the discernment of Jesus. (Consider that!) The response of Jesus is that she’s loving so much because she’s been forgiven much. The term much isn’t a term of substance but rather a term of time. It means that she’s been forgiven “often”. When you’re in an atmosphere and culture where grace is stewarded and released often, there is freedom in that your failure isn’t fatal or final. Instead of always identifying your sin, your glorious identity is always affirmed.

A word on REPENTANCE:

Romans 2:4 tells us it’s the kindness of God that leads us to repentance. Modern theology has taught us that it’s man’s repentance that releases the kindness of God. But the Scripture clearly states that it’s the other way around. A revelation of Grace is a key to a renewed mind.

Neither faith nor repentance persuade God to forgive, but both are supernatural responses to the revelation of what God has already done. Repentance is the GK word “**Metanoia**”. It may include regret, but it is not synonymous with regret. Metanoia does not mean to confess sins. It literally means to come to your senses, or to change your mind.

In Scriptures it means to change your thinking in accordance with the revelation you have just received. Or in other words, to allow revelation to shift how you think.

To confess sin is far more than just acknowledging it’s existence. It is to come into agreement with what God says about it which is expressed in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 6:14-15 Up until now, we have studied stories of grace being released in radical ways, but what of the retention of sin?

What if there are those who we are unwilling to forgive, even for justifiable causes?

The beautiful and terrifying paradox of forgiveness is that we are subject to the measure of grace that we are willing to release. The verses immediately following the Lord’s Prayer, which tie into context with the prayer, affirm this reality. Jesus literally says, **“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive other, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”**

It is often assumed that this only applies to those who sin against us, but that’s not specifically detailed here, so it is rather a safer assumption to make that it is within both the sphere of our right and responsibility to forgive everyone. **HOW COULD WE ACCOMPLISH THIS IF WE HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN THE ABILITY TO STEWARD GRACE?**

Matthew 18:21-35 Peter here asks a most practical question. How many times do I have to forgive people? How many chances do sinners get, especially when it’s against me personally? Peter thinks seven chances is a bit much. Jesus thinks that number is a bit low. This launches Jesus into the parable of the servant who owed his master a large sum.

NOTE EACH POINT.

1. The master says he's going to sell the servant's family and possessions to pay the debt. Remember this punishment.
2. The servant begs mercy and is forgiven the entire debt without further discussion.
3. He then finds a **FELLOW SERVANT** who owes him very little. He threatens the indebted servant by telling him he will cast him into prison to be subject to the tormentors until the debt is paid.
4. The master hears of the first servant's lack of mercy for his fellow servant and calls the first servant before him again. He reinstates the debt because of his lack of gratitude, and **THEN APPLIES THE SERVANT'S OWN IDEA OF PUNISHMENT TO HIMSELF.**

The point is clear. When you judge others, you're inflicting judgement upon yourself. When you release grace to others, you release grace to yourself. Consider this truth. What if the measure of grace you get to live with is the measure of grace you release to others?

How much grace do you want to release now?

Romans 11:31-32 This is a stunning passage of massive importance. In **verse 31** Paul is transparent that grace will come to others **"because of the mercy shown to you"**. That you are surrounded by the disobedient both for their sake and for yours.

You never know how much grace you have to release until you're surrounded by those who need it.

In that atmosphere, will you judge or will you love?

Will you condemn or will you forgive?

Whatever you do, your spiritual authority in this moment marks the Body by what you release, making the Body of Christ famous for either judgement or love.

Matthew 24:12 - Anger over sin is normal and justifiable. Sin should make us angry, *but righteous indignation should stir a greater love, not kill compassion cold dead.* **What if the present condition of the world is less a result of the lawlessness of mankind and more a result of the coldness of the church to the lawless?**

What if love burns hotter (and grace is released), rather than grows cold (and grace is withheld)?

2 Cor 5:14-21 - Paul is possessed by Love, having come to this conclusion. **Jesus Christ died, not just for you, but AS you.** Vs 16, Paul determines that He will now no longer be recognizing people by the flesh any longer. He sees beyond the flesh and into the Spirit, finding the treasure/Christ within you. **JESUS DIED TO REDEEM THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD WITHIN YOU.** God was IN CHRIST vs 19 reconciling the world to Himself, (and that ministry is defined as) not counting their trespasses against them. He then turns at the end of vs 19 and gives us the same ministry!

Romans 3:22-25 This is one of the most common verses used in witnessing, for we have been taught that in order to receive grace you have to first be convinced that you're a sinner "...for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." However, in context, this section actually says so much more about your righteousness in Christ. **Vs 24 says the "all" who have sinned have now actually been justified by grace, redeemed by Jesus!!!** Don't leave people stuck in

the identity of sinner in their mind of yours. Vs 25 says that in the cross, He passed over all the sins previously committed. Grace on the cross transcended the progression of time, extending both into the past and the future.

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1 Peter 4:8-11- Keep your love hot (as opposed to the love growing cold) because fervent love covers a multitude of sins. Vs 10, Peter reveals the understanding that we are stewards of the Grace of God.

2 Peter 1:9 - The qualities listed before this are often applied in discipline and discipleship with the motivation that we will attain to some degree of spiritual gain or purity. But this verse reveals the stunning conclusion that the **only reason you lack these qualities is because you're blinded to how clean you really are.** ***When you remember how pure you actually are, these qualities are automatically manifest apart from your own striving and efforts.***