

PRIVILEGED – God’s Favor Is For Everyone

Sunday, November 4, 2018

PRIVILEGED – REVIEW

I. For the past month, we’ve been in a series entitled “Privileged”, where we’ve been looking at the wonderful privileges we have, as God’s children.

A. When you’re a child of a king, you have some privileges.

1. When you’re a child of the King, you have some even greater privileges.

B. The fact that you & I have a relationship with God the Father, opens up a whole new world of blessing to our lives.

1. A scripture Pastor Frank has read every week is Romans 5:1-2, it’s a foundational scripture for this study...

Romans 5:1-2, NLT

Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

²Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory.

2. This “undeserved privilege” is available to all, but not everyone gets to enjoy it.

a. Romans 5:2 says: “...because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege...”

b. A door of opportunity stands open for all who receive Jesus; for all who have faith/believe that He is who He says He is, & He did for us what He said He did.

C. Over the past four Sundays, Pastor Frank has brought us some great teaching about this privileged life that God’s provided for us.

1. He’s shared many scriptures about God’s grace, God’s goodness, God’s willingness to bring to us what we don’t deserve & what we could never earn.

PRIVILEGED

I. Today, I want to take a look at some things, that I think will bring a greater understanding to you of God’s grace, & a greater freedom to you in your daily/practical life with God.

A. I want to challenge your thinking, as far as how you view three things...

1. God.
2. Your relationship with God.
3. God's acceptance of you.

B. If you've been with us for one or more of the teachings in this series, you may have noticed that this life of privilege our heavenly Father provided for us, is only available to us for one reason: Jesus!

1. Many of the scriptures Pastor Frank has shared say specifically that the reason we can live in God's grace & goodness is because of God's Son, Jesus.
 - a. Go ahead & put up Romans 5:1-2 again...

Romans 5:1-2, NLT

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

² Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege...

2. Even in the scriptures that pastor has shared that don't say specifically say it's because of Jesus, there's a big clue that He's what it's all about: There all in the New Testament.
 - a. Of all the scripture references I've been able to write down during pastor's teaching, not one has been from the O.T.
 1. Why is that? Because Jesus hadn't shown up on earth in the O.T. (He shows up in the N.T.), & the grace & privilege we receive from God hadn't been made available to people in the O.T.

John 1:14, NKJV

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

3. Grace = (speaks of) undeserved privilege; unearned blessing from God. Jesus coming to earth brought us a fullness of this grace.

John 1:17, NKJV

¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

II. Our focus of this series is on the last part of John 1:17, the grace we have in Jesus. But let's take a few minutes to look at the first part of that verse, "The law was given through Moses..." Let's take some time & journey back to the O.T.; journey back to this law that God gave through Moses.

A. The O.T. begins in Genesis, ends with Malachi, 39 books in all. It's the majority of the pages in the Bible, about 75% of the Bible.

B. If I were to ask the question: "What was/is the primary purpose of the O.T.?" We'd probably get a lot of responses.

1. "So we could learn about God"; "So we would be instructed on how to live right (10 commandments & others)"; "To give us godly examples to follow (Abraham; David; Esther; Daniel)"; "To give us wisdom (Proverbs)."

2. All those are true: From the O.T. we do learn about God, get instruction on living right, examples, wisdom.

a. But none of these things are the primary purpose of the O.T.

III. Galatians chapter 3 is a great comparison of the O.T. Law & the N.T. faith in Jesus.

Galatians 3:2, NLT

² Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ.

A. Paul is bringing to people's attention: their relationship with God didn't come by their works – because they kept all the rules & laws. It came because they had faith in Christ.

Galatians 3:3, NLT

³ How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?

B. Paul continues to challenge these people who had accepted Jesus by faith, but then kept on trying to obey the O.T. law, to try to get God to continue to accept them, to continue to work in their lives.

1. Galatians isn't written to unbelievers; it's written to those who had faith in Jesus, were born again.

- a. To these believers Paul writes: Don't think your works are going to get you to God, or keep you connected to God.
2. We see today in many churches that preach about God, maybe even preach about Jesus/salvation, but there's still a message that you have to live "just right" for God to do anything in you, for you, or through you.
 - a. Ex: I was raised in a religious church (as many of you were) that taught: "If you do things just right, you have a chance at God accepting you."
3. When a church communicates the message that your works are the way you'll get in right standing with God, or that your works will earn you the right for God to do anything for you or in you, the focus is not on N.T. grace but on O.T. law.
 - a. Again, John 1:17: For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

C. You may ask: "Why would a church that believes in Jesus, & believes in the grace Jesus came to give us, communicate that our works somehow get us anything from God?"

1. That's a good question. I have a good answer: Because churches are led by humans!
 - a. It's human nature to think we can/have to earn things from God, we have to be good enough & try to live right before God.
2. Here's another item to be aware of: you're human! Meaning: that same human nature is at work in all of us, to try to get us away from believing in God's grace, away from living the privileged life God's provided.
3. On top of that, we have a devil that is constantly at work to try to deceive us into not believing what God has said in the Bible.

IV. Let's continue this journey back to the O.T, where God has given laws for His people to follow.

A. One of the main messages God gives to His people in the O.T: "Here are my laws & commandments. If you keep them all, you can have a relationship with Me."

1. That sounds reasonable. It makes sense. God's perfect, so in order to have a relationship with Him, we have to be perfect.
 - a. Of course, there's one big catch in the plan: Nobody can do it!

- b. No one can live in such a way that they never sin, never break any of God's commandments.

B. "What if someone keeps most of the commandments, or almost all of them? Doesn't that mean they can have some sort of relationship with God based on their works?"

Galatians 3:10, NLT

¹⁰ But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law."

James 2:10, NKJV

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

1. God makes it clear: when it comes to having a relationship with Him through our works, we're in 1 of 2 camps:
 - a. Living 100% clean & pure with no sin, & "in" with God based on our works...
...OR...
 - b. We've sinned it in at least one area, making us 100% guilty & dirty, & "out" with God based on our works.
1. There is no in-between. Sin is not graded on a curve. We're all in one camp or the other.
2. In case you'd unsure if you're in the "I've never sinned" camp or the "I have sinned" camp, let me read what God says...

Romans 3:23, NLT

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

2. Because we've all sinned, none of us can attain to "God's glorious standard"; that sinless level of perfection where we can be in relationship with God.
 - a. There is one human who did live perfect without sin. Jesus did it.

V. I asked a question a while ago: "What was the primary purpose of the O.T?"

A. Let's go back to Galatians chapter 3 to get an answer to that question. God answers it clearly here...

Galatians 3:19, NKJV

¹⁹ What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made...

Galatians 3:19, NLT

The law...was given...to show people their sins...

Romans 3:20, NLT

No one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

1. So we see that one purpose for the O.T. was to show us that we're sinners; we all have a "sin problem."

Galatians 3:21-22, NKJV

²¹ Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

2. If a law – keeping God's commands & doing the right things – could have made us right with God, God would have gone with that plan.
 - a. But because none of us can keep all the commandments/laws, there had to be another plan in place to get us in right relationship with Him.

Galatians 3:23, NKJV

²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

3. The law guarded people, gave them guidelines to live by, until Jesus came & did what needed to be done to get us into relationship with God.
4. Sometimes we think: If people would just live by the 10 commandments – live by the laws & guidelines in the O.T. – the world would be wonderful!
 - a. I'm may offend some of you by saying this but: God doesn't agree with that.
 - b. God is not trying to get people to obey His commandments & laws. God is trying to get people to His Son, Jesus!

1. Once we get to Jesus, our life on the outside will reflect the God we have on the inside.
 - a. We don't need to know all of God's commandments. We need to know Jesus!
2. And this world doesn't need to hear more about God's commandments & laws. It's needs to hear about Jesus.
 - c. Look at Galatians 3:24, this is a key verse in our study today...

Galatians 3:24, NKJV

²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor (teacher) to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified (made right with God) by faith.

5. The question, "What was the primary purpose of the O.T?" is answered here in vs. 24.
 - a. The primary purpose of the law/O.T: to bring us to Christ.
 1. "How does the law/O.T. bring us to Christ?" By showing us we can't connect with God any other way.
 2. The O.T. law was not given so we could keep it; the Old Testament law was given to show us we couldn't keep it.
 - a. You can see the dilemma we run into, whenever we try to be accepted by God because of our works, or stay in relationship with God by our works.
 3. The law taught us we can't be justified by our works, we can't have a relationship with God on our own. We need a Savior!
6. All that we've looked at over the past weeks, as far as the privileges God extends to us, is based on this truth: Jesus alone can bring us to our heavenly Father.
 - a. No other person can do it; nothing you do can make it happen; keeping a set up rules & laws won't do it.
 - b. Only Jesus opens the door to the Father.

Galatians 3:25

²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

7. Again, vs. 24 tells us the “tutor” is the law/O.T. Vs. 25 says after faith (Jesus) arrive, we’re no longer under a tutor.
 - a. That means any time we think fulfilling rules or obligations is going to help in our relationship with God, our thinking is wrong.

B. This is so important!

1. If we think, “I haven’t prayed enough, I’m not doing enough good things, I haven’t read my Bible enough, I’m not spiritual enough, I don’t talk to enough people about my faith” ...if those thoughts lead us to think we’re in any way in less relationship with God, we’ve missed the whole purpose of the O.T. & the whole reason Jesus came.
 - a. News flash! You’re no longer under that tutor!
 - b. A “works mentality” – thinking we get anything from God because of what we do – is totally contrary to scripture, & totally removes why Jesus came.

C. Ex: I mentioned earlier that I was raised in a religious environment, taught that I could do certain things – go to confession, say enough prayers, be good enough – & maybe God would accept me.

1. All the while I knew I would never measure up.
2. Since being saved, I’ve had to fight past training & religious thinking, & take hold of the freedom God gave me in Christ.
3. After 35+ years of working on renewing my mind in this area, I can now say that I’m enjoying a life of liberty that I never knew existed.
4. I wake up every morning knowing that God fully, 100% loves me, accepts me, & is excited that I’m His child.
 - a. His love is so great that He couldn’t love us any more...accept us any more...be more excited about His relationship with us.
 - b. We don’t even think about, “But I let God down yesterday, & did this last week, & really made a big mistake 5 years ago.”

- c. NO!!! It's not about what we did yesterday, what we're doing today, or what we're going to do tomorrow. It's all about what Jesus did for us long ago: He connected us with our Father.
- d. The only thing we do is believe it...& say thank you!

D. Let's read one more scripture about this, found in Romans chapter 10...

- 1. Here, Paul writes about people who continue to try to earn their way to God by keeping the law, even though the law showed us we need to have faith in Jesus.

Romans 10:3-4, NLT

³For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. ⁴For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God.

- a. To think, "I'll do enough 'spiritual things', be good, help people, give \$ to a charity, & that will help me get right or stay right with God" ...that's 100% opposed to what God tells us in the Bible.
- b. The Bible clearly tells us those things will never get us to God.

VI. Church, if you've received Jesus as your Lord, you can't be more right with God. You can't be "righter" with God. You're as right as you can get.

A. To think that anything we do, can improve upon what Jesus already did, is pretty insulting to the Father who gave up His Son; pretty insulting to the Son who gave up His life.

VII.A question some may ask...and it's a valid question: "If this is true – if we're made right with God by faith in Jesus & not by our works – won't that cause some people to live however they want? Cause them to make bad choices, knowing that their works don't get them in right relationship with the Father?"

A. Paul addressed this in several places in scripture, including Romans chapter 3.

- 1. In this portion of his writing – & elsewhere – Paul said there are some people who were saying we should all sin & live a godless lifestyle, which would prove how much we all need Jesus.

2. Paul's response to these people is (my paraphrase): Those people are crazy! How foolish is that thinking.
3. Paul also wrote about this to the church in Corinth, where some people were telling the believers that they should sin...

1 Corinthians 15:34, NLT

Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don't know God at all.

4. Paul didn't say they didn't have a relationship with God; he said they didn't know God.

B. A person who truly knows God, understands what God gave up for us, & understands what Jesus went through to bring us to the Father, isn't going to desire to sin.

1. In fact, that person is going to want to make choices that are godly, in order to please God, & to be an example for others to follow, so they too can be saved.

C. Understanding this privilege we have in Christ – that we're made right with God by our faith in Jesus – will compel us to want to live like Jesus.

VIII. Three privileges we live in daily, because of what Jesus did for us & God's grace working in our lives...

#1. We have right standing with God. (This is what we've talked about most of this lesson.)

2 Corinthians 5:21, NLT

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

1. Every morning we wake up, one of the first things we can thank God for is: today, right now, I'm right in Your sight!
 - a. God accepts you, loves you, is excited about your right standing with Him.

#2. We have freedom in this life. (I say "freedom in this life" because there's another life we'll talk about in a moment...)

John 8:36, AMP

So if the Son makes you free, then you are unquestionably free.

1. This includes joy, healing in our bodies, peace in our minds, security in our souls, courage, and so much more.

#3. We have an assurance of eternity.

1. Eternity is a reality. It's more real than everything we see around us, as the things we see will one day be gone, but eternity lasts forever (hence the name, "eternity" - everlasting).

1 John 5:13, NLT

I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.

- a. We talk a lot about "next steps" here at Kings Circle; one of our goals is to help you take your next step with God.
- b. One day, each of us will take that that big next step with God, as our physical bodies shut off & we enter into that eternal life God planned for us.
- c. "That sounds weird." It's not weird at all. It's what we long for, it's what we live for, it's the ultimate goal we all desire to reach.
 1. Ex: This past week, at least one of our church families had a close relative enter into that "next step" with God.
- d. We call it "death" because we view things from a human perspective; God calls it "eternal life" because He views it from a heavenly perspective.

IX. I started this lesson by saying: I want to challenge your thinking, as far as how you view three things (I hope today you leave with an understanding about these areas that you didn't have before)...

#1. God – He's head-over-heals in love with you, & because of that love He sent His Son to die in your place.

#2. Your relationship with God – Through what Jesus did, you can have a perfect relationship with your Father in heaven. If you've received Jesus, you already have that perfect relationship.

#3. God's acceptance of you – He fully, 100% accepts you. He couldn't be any more accepting of you.