**Expiation – The Wall Between God and Man – BD01-02**

**The Word of God**

Matthew 4:4 reminds us of a statement made in the book of Deuteronomy repeated by the Lord, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” It is our business in the local church ministry to remind people that they cannot take their spiritual lives and come to a certain point and say, “Now I have gone to a certain degree of maturity in my spiritual experience and I don’t have to worry about anything from here on out,” because unless you continue feeding the spiritual life on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God you will shrivel up and you will soon find yourself a spiritual derelict. The same thing holds true on a physical level, the same thing holds true on a spiritual level. We require for the spiritual life the daily intake of the Word of God if we are going to sustain a healthy spiritual level. Bible doctrine is the food that God has provided.

So to Timothy who was a young man in the ministry, the apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 4:6, “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, that is the things of the Word of God, thou shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ.” That’s a very dramatic statement. It sticks in the craw like a broken chicken bone of the professional preacher and of many congregations who have a stereotype of a minister. You see Paul didn’t say that you would be a good minister if you visit all the folks in your neighborhood and ask them if they would please come out to church.

I once sat in a meeting of pastors and the discussion was carried on as to how they should go about visitation and there were fantastic problems that they confronted about the time of the day and who was at home, who wasn’t at home, and you could see that this was an agonizing point of difficulties- the exhaustion of their energies, the consuming of their capacities and their time. So here there were professional preachers knocking around with one another on how to solve this problem. Now usually in groups like that I try not to say much because I don’t seem to make too much of a hit among professional preachers. But this time I finally listened to this for awhile and then I raised my hand and said, “I wonder if the question might be whether we should be visiting at all?” You never saw such a deathly silence unless you’ve been at a funeral and nobody said a thing. It just fell like a “bam”, a lead balloon. Finally the moderator who was a seminary professor picked it up and carried it off someplace else, but it never even came up for discussion. This was such a bombshell of a shock that it was too traumatic to even consider that they were not going to be good ministers if they did not run around patting their members on the head, and on the back, and other places to encourage them to be faithful and cooperative and everything else that human gimmicks devise in order to draw spiritual results out of people and it never works.

We’re going to go into this doctrine a little more deeply in the future, but I sense that this bothers people— the whole idea of taking in the word of God through a pastor-teacher whose business is that and nothing else. His business is not all the other things that he might do even administratively that he ends up doing. His business is to see how many other people can finally end up running the church and how decentralized the church operation can be as God’s people interrelate among themselves and they just run the show. When those services come, he’s a good minister if he stands up there and he reminds them of the things that the word of God has laid out. This is the greatest thing that you can experience as a Christian— to be able to breathe in the word of God into your soul.

**Bible Doctrine**

So Paul says, “Thou shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ if you put people in remembrance of these things nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine.” “Dedgaskalia” is the Greek word and that means “teaching-good teaching unto which thou hast attained.” So that’s our business this morning and in order to perform this function, I have be under the control of God the Holy Spirit which means I have to have sin confessed so that there is no clogging up of the lines of communication. You have to be free of any known sin so that you too may be filled with the Spirit and thereby be able to take in the word of God. Shall we bow in a moment of prayer and if necessary, take advantage of the opportunity to confess sin to open up the lines of spiritual communication that you will not only understand, but you will be responsive to the word.

“Our Father, we thank you for the fact that Thou has given us a grace method by which we may receive the word of God apart from our human intelligence. We thank Thee that this system works automatically for every Christian who exercises positive volition toward the word of God. We pray that Thou shall help us to reach out this morning to this Thy word and receive it as that which will nourish our spiritual lives which will give us direction and purpose and happiness and joy such as Thou has designed for us. We pray in Jesus’ name- Amen.”

This series of studies on Basic Bible Doctrines is designed to concentrate on a few basic spiritual foods in order to nourish your spiritual life to the point where you have an edified soul. An edified soul is a subject in itself that we’re going to have to deal with one of these mornings. What is it to have an edified soul? Some of you have it, and some of you don’t. That is the whole point of the Christian life. For out of an edified soul flows Gospel witnessing, flows all of the variety of the ministries of the church for the building up of the body of Christ. It’s the key to everything.

**The Great Wall of Separation**

So let’s review what we have said thus far for we are now looking at the subject of the great wall of separation between God and man. We have in brief indicated that here is man, here is God, and there is a wall between us. This wall is made up of specific blocks. It is made up of the block of our enslavement to sin- Romans 3:23. It is made up of the penalty of sin which is spiritual death- Romans 6:23. It is made up of the fact that when we are born physically we receive an old sin nature- Ephesians 2:1. Another block is the perfect character of God which means that God has absolute righteousness against our relative righteousness. God is absolute justice against our sin penalty which is due us- Romans 3:12, Romans 3:25-26. Finally, there is the fact that we are all by birth, by natural birth, in a position where God sees us in Adam. So we are guilty of the disobedience of Adam in the garden -1 Corinthians 15:22. There is no way through this wall- around it, over it, under, by man’s capacities alone. It takes something on the part of God himself to remove the wall.

**Redemption**

Last week, we very happily found that God took steps to remove these blocks. They are all interrelated, but for instructional purposes we are going to look at them one at a time. We found that God removed the block that deals with sin in one dramatic word. Anybody give me what that word is? How did God remove sin? It begins with the letter “r”- Redemption. We are in a slave market of sin and God crossed out- removed that block by the act of redemption itself. Man is born a slave- Romans 6:17. Jesus Christ came to redeem us out of this slave market. The redemption called for a price. The price was His death- 1 Peter 1: 18-19. Now the basis of this redemption is unlimited atonement. “Unlimited atone” means that God covers the sin of everybody from Adam to the last person that will ever live- completely. In other words, all sins are forgiven. Therefore when you get out into eternity and you may not be a Christian, one thing that God will not bring up will be all of your sins because He’s forgiven all of those.

Somebody gave me a little tract the other day which in many respects is good. It’s called, “This was your life.” It’s a pictorial cartoon-like diagram form of a tract which is very impressive. It has one page, where a man in desperation says, “Why didn’t somebody warn me about all of this?” All around him are the listings of his sins, “hater of God, whisperer, theft, lies, disobedience of parents, hypocrisy, whoremonger,” and so on. That page is not right in this tract because it implies that a man is going to stand out in eternity and they’re going to read all of your sins against you- no. You can be the crummiest unsaved person that ever lived, but God will never bring up your sins. He has covered those through redemption. Redemption paid, and you are forgiven. God is going to bring up one unforgivable sin and that is lack of faith in Jesus Christ. The sin of unbelief is the one sin that is not forgiven. If you do not believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him as Savior, then you are doomed. The only issue between God and man is our willingness to accept the price and the solution that God by grace has made for us. All sins are forgiven. That’s the point. Redemption means paying a price- it’s been done. So sin is removed.

**The Penalty For Sin**

Now let’s look at this second block which is this penalty this morning. There was a penalty imposed when Adam and Eve were put in the Garden of Eden. They were given freedom of choice. Volition is part of the soul. Acts 3:23 indicates that we can choose what we will do. Acts 3:23, let’s look at that verse for a minute, “and it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people.” Now here “will not” is negative. Now the opposite of that of course would be positive volition that means “he will”. Now the original test of volition was made in the Garden of Eden.

**Volition**

Our volition has two poles to it. It has a positive pole and it has a negative pole. It is very important that you understand that God treats you in this way and that you have some decisions to make. There are some people who think they can go along in reference to Christianity and never make a decision and just float along. They’re not really against it, but they don’t want to make any decision. Jesus Christ already dealt with that crowd when on one occasion He says, “If you’re not for me, you’re against me.” So to be neutral- and there’s a lot of that in Christianity today- neutralism is negative volition. Make no mistake about it. You’re either positive or you’re negative in reference to the word of God. Now the original test of volition was required an alternative of choices on a specific issue and that’s exactly what God set up. Turn to Genesis chapter 2 for just a moment. You have this original test of volition set up from which all of the problems that have stemmed in reference to this great wall of separation between God and man. Now this is a basic doctrine. Once you are a Christian, you’ll be able to enter into all the other basic doctrinal foods that we’re going to be sharing here on these Sunday mornings in the future, but this one you have to square away first.

**The Penalty for Negative Volition**

God set up a specific issue on which to judge the volition of Adam and Eve. Genesis 2:15, “The Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to till it and to keep it.” Now this garden was perfect. All of the environment was perfect. The man and his wife were in a perfect relationship to one another and all he had to do was preoccupy himself with tending the garden and advancing this physical landscape to the greatest delights that his heart could find. Now the Lord commanded the man, this is a command. This is an express statement of the will of God and volition responds to commands negative or positive. “Of every tree of the garden thou may eat, thou may freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it. For in the day that thou eat, thereof, thou shall surely die.”

**Death – Spiritual Death and Physical Death**

A man was innocent. The garden was perfect, he knew no evil. God’s test of obedience was this particular tree which was just an ordinary tree of some kind with some kind of fruit. There’s no effect of the fruit itself on man. It was just a testing point. There was a penalty attached to negative volition in response to this test. Now the penalty was spelled out very specifically. “Thou shall surely die.” Now the Hebrew is a little different. The Hebrew says, “dying thou shalt die.” It is very important that you notice that there are two deaths here. One, two. Dying thou shalt die. Here’s what this means: what God said to Adam was if you eat of this tree you will die in two ways. You will die first of all immediately, number one, spiritually. Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:1 speak of that spiritual death. “And thou shalt die” secondly a little later another way. That refers to physical death. So this was in this case spiritual death and this was physical death.

Alright, it took a long time before the second one took place with Adam. He was 930 years old before he did die. Now what is death itself? What were they going to experience? What does the word “death” basically mean? You should learn that the word “death” basically means “separation.” Spiritual death is separation of the spirit and soul from God in time. When you are separated from God then your spirit and your soul- of course if you’re an unsaved person, your spirit is dead. When you are separated from God in time, in this life, that’s spiritual death. That’s one kind of death- spiritual. A second death of course if physical. Physical death is separation of the spirit and soul from the body if you’re a Christian. If you’re not a Christian, it’s a separation of the soul from the body. Then the Bible speaks of a third death which is called “the second death.” This is eternal separation of spirit, soul, and body, from God, in the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11-15 describe that. So Adam was told, “Dying, thou shalt die. If you eat of this fruit, if you go on negative signals in response to my specific commandment, then you will die spiritually. You will be separated from me in your spirit and soul. You will die spiritually.” That’s what happened to them. Their human spirits just died immediately. They were separated in soul from God. At 930 years of age, Adam died physically.

Now if this problem of spiritual death had not been resolved before Adam’s 930th year when he died, then he would have entered the second death— which is eternal separation from God. So the penalty of which we are speaking this block here— the penalty that confronts us is this matter of spiritual death. The minute you’re born in that hospital you take your first breath and make that first cry, you’re stillborn spiritually. There’s upon you spiritual death and you are barred from God. There’s a wall between you and you are separated from Him completely. Now how are you going to resolve this? Well Adam and Eve had no solution. They died spiritually immediately and in time physically. They responded to the test with negative volition, so they were no longer able to have fellowship with God. Their human spirits were now dead and remember that it is your human spirit that is your point of contact with God. Your soul is your point of contact with man. Your body is contact through the senses with the world about you. Your spirit is your contact with God and if your spirit is dead, then you have no contact with God. You can go through all of your ritual. You can go through all of your malarkey and monkeyshines of religion, but you have nothing to offer God. God has no point of contact with you whatsoever and you delude yourself. Now their condition-the condition of Adam and Eve was evident immediately by the fact that they had a sense of guilt. It was real, moral guilt because they had gone on negative volition. This is the problem with unsaved people. They’re not able to grasp the fact that they have a real moral guilt with God. They have an actual real wall between themselves and God. They think they have some mistakes that need correcting and that they can resolve. But Adam and Eve saw themselves guilty so they tried to make fig leaf clothes for themselves to hide whatever it was they were missing. Apparently they had some kind of clothing perhaps in the form of light that surrounded them as God does.

**Guilt**

This guilt is universal. What Adam did in the Garden of Eden is imputed to everyone- Romans 5:12. This is imputed sin. God views Adam as our federal head and when he sins, we sin with him. Now some people might say, “Now that’s unfair! Why should God impute the sin- are you telling me that just because I’m born into the human race I’m already guilty before God?” That’s right friend. If you’d never committed a single sin, you’d be doomed to hell because of what you did in Eden. When you think that’s unfair, just remember that God also says, ”As by the disobedience of one man all became sinners, so by the obedience of one man, the last Adam Jesus Christ, all are made righteous.” Everything that Jesus Christ did covers all the human race too. That’s why sin is completely forgiven for everybody- even those who choose to go to hell. We are all born physically alive, but with dead human spirits, so we’re separated from God. That was the penalty imposed on us and we are helpless.

**Removing the Penalty For Sin**

Now how is the penalty removed? How are we going to get rid of this block separating us from God? Well the unsaved person expects to pay for this some way. He knows that because he’s done wrong, the average unsaved person says that, “I expect to pay something for my sins.” He thinks that he can do it through some penance, some routine penance or good works. But since man is spiritually dead, he hasn’t got anything by which he can pay. There is nothing he can do, he has no assets whatsoever with which to approach the problem. Ephesians 2:1, “and you have he made alive who were dead in your trespasses and sins”- this is what happens when we become Christians. We are made alive spiritually. So as Jesus Christ is the federal head of the new creation. He by His death on the cross, covered the need of our sin. 1 Corinthians 15:22, “He paid what we could not pay. For as in Adam all thy so in Christ shall all be made alive.” So here’s the price, it’s paid, it’s permanent, it’s done for, and there’s no problem between us and God.

**Expiation**

Alright, what’s the issue? The solution is summed up in a word that we want you to get acquainted with. What God had to do concerning the penalty of sin was pay it. The word that we use for that is “expiation”. Expiation has to do specifically with paying a price for something, making amends, removing guilt by suffering punishment. When a policeman stops you for speeding and gives you a ticket, you go down and pay a fine which you have performed as an act of expiation. You paid the suffering in the way of a fine or the guilt that you had incurred. Now until the penalty of spiritual death is paid, we cannot pass through this wall separating us from God.

So how can it be done? God decided to treat mankind in grace so God provided the solution and He provided it entirely by Himself. God had to do it entirely by Himself so that it would be of grace. It is very important that you understand as Dr. Lewis Sperry Chaffer at Dallas Seminary used to tell us that, “grace means the work of God plus nothing.” Grace is the work of God plus nothing. Now here is a very hazardous line of thought. You find people today who say, “Well grace means Jesus Christ has removed my penalty, but I need water baptism. Jesus Christ has paid my penalty, but I need to confess my sins. Jesus Christ has paid my penalty, but I need to try to live a real good life. Jesus Christ has paid my penalty, but I need to go to church every Sunday. I need to do this….I need to do this….I need to do this.” All of these things, you see, are the addition of works.

**Grace**

I want to show you something that Romans 4 says. Romans 4:4 “Now to Him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. But to him that works not, but believeth on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Now here is a very sobering statement in the word of God. To him that works not, but believeth on Him that is justified, the ungodly his faith is count for righteous. But in verse 4, the person who works, then he gets his pay as a reward, he deserves. This is not grace, this is debt. So this raises the serious question whether it is possible for a person to say, “I believe in Jesus Christ as savior, but I’m going to have water baptism added to it. I believe in Jesus Christ as savior, but I’m going to add trying to live a good life to it.” This raises the serious question of whether that person is really saved at all. I’m not sure by this verse whether we are not confronted with something that is mutually exclusive. If you don’t come to God and say, “God, I have nothing to offer and I’m not going to even try to offer something. I’m simply going to walk in and accept what You have done and thank You for it.” If you refuse to do that, but you add a work, then, it is no longer grace. You have violated God’s condition of coming to Him because there is no other way to come to Him except on the work of Christ plus nothing.

So you might want to think it through again whether you may have yourself in a very hazardous position if you think that you believe in Christ, but you’ve added something to it in order that you feel that you’ve made sure. Then it is no longer grace. For what God needed was some human being who was spiritually alive and thus able to experience spiritual death as a substitute for mankind. You see, we’ve got the problem of spiritual death. How are we going to get rid of spiritual death? Well that’s our penalty for our sin. If somebody else pays the penalty, we come to life spiritually. So God said, “I need a man. I need a human being who is spiritually alive.” Nobody’s been spiritually alive since Adam’s sin.

**Jesus Christ**

And so along came, in the counsels of God, the decision that God the son would come to this earth, born as a human being, through a special act of God in that He would be given a body that did not have a human father. The birth would be a virgin birth therefore, not having a human father, He would not have transmitted to him the old sin nature, nor would he have Adam’s guilt transmitted to Him. Consequently, Jesus Christ came along. When He was born, He was the first baby born since Adam, since Adam’s creation born spiritually alive. He never sinned in the way of personal sins. He never did anything wrong in thought, word, or deed. Nor was He guilty of the old sin nature. So consequently, He was free of spiritual death and qualified to die for us spiritually. A lot of people don’t understand that the reason that you sit here this morning as a Christian with your sins, the penalty of sins expiated, rubbed out, removed, is because of the fact that Jesus Christ died spiritually. Most everybody recognizes He died physically. They attribute His salvation to His physical death- not so. His salvation- your salvation is the result of the fact that Jesus Christ died twice on the cross. He died first spiritually, and when He was through with that, He then died physically. He followed the same pattern as the last Adam that the first Adam followed. The first Adam died spiritually and then in time, as a result of that spiritual death, he died physically. Jesus Christ did the same thing.

Turn please to Matthew 27. Look at verse 45. Here is Jesus Christ upon the cross. It’s an intense dark hour between noon and three o’clock in the afternoon. The earth is covered in darkness some have suggested so that the agonies of Jesus Christ in this moment of spiritual death would not be viewed by sinful humanity itself. But here is the situation: Christ is on the cross, the earth is covered with darkness, and verse 45 says, “now from sixth hour- which is noon- there is darkness over all the land until the ninth hour (3 PM), and about the ninth hour Jesus with a loud voice saying, ‘Eli Eli lama saba thani’,” that is to say, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Now why would He say, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Because this is exactly what God did and that’s why He said it. In this moment, all of the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus Christ. When He took our sin, our guilt, then in that moment, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit turned from Him. The son, in His humanity, was separated from the other two persons of the God head and found Himself alone in that agonizing hour of having the filth and the degradation of the sins of the world upon Him. How He felt is indicated here by the Greek word that’s used when it says He cried out, this is “boao”. Boao which means “to cry out in anguish”- it is literally a scream of horror. Jesus Christ cried out in agonies and in screams upon that cross. He who had been silent all the while that He had been beaten and bruised and spit upon and knocked to a pulp of a human being- silence. Now, when in this moment He is separated from God, He screams in the horror and the agony of realizing what it is to be separated in His humanity from God. He died spiritually because spiritual death is separation-separation of spirit and soul from God. In a loud voice He cried in agony, in a loud voice amplifies the intensity of the anguish of His being separated from God in His humanity. After the spiritual death of Jesus Christ verse 50 declares that He died physically. Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the spirit. The fact that expiation was completed was indicated by the words, “It is finished!”

God says,” I have to have somebody who will die for you spiritually. That’s the only way that I can remove what My justice and My righteousness demands in penalty against you.” Jesus Christ was qualified to do it and that’s what He did. So, this block has been removed by that act. Psalm 22 was written a thousand years before. It describes this same situation. This identical event on the cross and incidentally this Psalm is one of the most dramatic evidences of the supernatural origin of the Bible. In this Psalm you have the description of something that is to take place a thousand years in the future given in details that could not have been known except by direct revelation from God. Here is one of the most dramatic passages in scripture to anybody who doubts that the Bible is not a book written simply by men. A thousand years before, you have the very words of Jesus Christ on the cross related. Psalm 22:1, “My God, my god” why two “my gods”?

Why “my God, my God”? He was separated from the other two persons of the trinity. The first “my God” is speaking to the Father, the second “my God” is speaking to God the Holy Spirit. “Why hast thou forsaken me?” Again, you have the description of the two persons of the Trinity turning away from the loathsome sight of the son of God covered with the sins of humanity. “Why are thou far from me and from the words of my roaring?” Here again the agonies of Jesus Christ is evidenced because the Hebrew word “roaring” means “groaning”. Groaning over what? Groaning over His God having forsaken Him. Here is something to move you to tears when you realize what it cost Jesus Christ to remove the penalty against our sins. This was a fantastically nightmarish experience for someone who is spiritually alive. Because you and I are born spiritually dead, it is difficult for us to enter into what He experienced who never knew spiritual death until that moment.

**Imputation**

Why did God turn from Him? Verse 3 “but thou are Holy, thou who inhabits the praises of His people.” Because God is holy, He had to turn away from the son. Now in this moment, when God turned from His son, and Jesus Christ cried out in this agony, 2 Corinthians 5:21, that precious verse, was fulfilled. Here’s where it was historically fulfilled when He cried this. 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For He hath made Him, Jesus Christ who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” We shall see that one of the things that happens in the removal of the blocks in the wall. Not only is our sin forgiven us, that block was removed, but we have imputed to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We are made absolutely perfect in God’s sight because we have Christ’s perfection to our account.

Verse 6 in Psalm 22 says, “… but I am a worm and no man, a reproach for man and despised by people.” This word for “worm” in the Hebrew is a rather fascinating word. There are several words in Hebrew for “worm”. This word which was used of a unique species of worm which was taken and crushed. They would take these worms, crush them, mash them up, and out of them would ooze a red dye- an intensive deep beautiful red dye which was used for dying of royal garments. This is a fitting picture for Jesus to say, “I am a worm, who in this moment of being crushed under the sins of the world, am producing a red dye which will cover you who believe in me with royal garments. For now you are the kings, the princes and princesses of God. You too are royalty.” So grace found a way through this wall. First He removed sin by redemption. He removed the penalty by expiation. Grace found a way.

Colossians 2:14 says, “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us” took it out of the way- nailing it to His cross. Our debt for sin was spiritual death. This is paid once and for all- forever. The word “blotting out” here in Greek is in the aorist tense. “Blotting out”- that’s aorist. Thereby by that very tense and the grammar we know that this is saying that it was done once and for all because that’s what aorist means. Anytime this tense is used, it’s describing something that was done once and never done again. God never has to blot out your sin again. It is finished. The problem is removed. The handwriting is the record of the debt we owe God and it says that He took it out of the way. I have to tell you something about this too. “He took it”- that’s in the Greek perfect tense. The Greek perfect tense means that something has happened in the past and the results continue forever. So God has forever taken your sin.

 Paul in Romans 8 says, “Who shall separate us from the love of God?” He names a long list of things and the answer is nothing. Because He has taken everything that was written against you, everything that was on your record, He took it and He blotted out all of our sins. It was done permanently. The results will continue forever. So this block— the block having to do with the penalty of sin- our spiritual death has been removed forever from this wall which separates us from God.

Hebrews 10:17 we close, “and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” I don’t know how that makes you feel, but it’s a delight to my heart that God will remember my sins and my iniquities no more. That spiritual death has been removed from me as a penalty. I could never have paid this debt and Jesus Christ came along. He paid it. Because He died spiritually for us, we may live spiritually now.

You may be sitting here with a dead human spirit. Because you are outside the family of God, your human spirit is dead. Jesus Christ says that He’s willing to make it alive in a moment of time by your simple act of your faith and your trust in Him. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved. It’s as simple as that. To question it, to doubt it, is to place yourself in the position of having a debt in eternity which is absolutely impossible to pay. You will find that you will be on this side of the wall and God will be on the other side of the wall. If you go out into eternity on negative volition signals, you will find that you will not only die physically, in eternity you will experience a second death- which is eternal separation from God. If you are a Christian, you need to know this doctrine, having it thoroughly implanted in your mind, in your understanding, so that it colors all of your thinking and all of your acting, so that your relationship to God is grace oriented.

**Works**

If you don’t understand this, you will be tempted to please God by some gimmicks and something you do. You will listen to some well meaning person who will come up to you and say something like, “If you’ll give so much money, if you’ll tithe out of your offering every Sunday, God will really bless your business.” That’s malarkey. Grace does not deal on the basis of anything you do or don’t do. Now maybe God does want you to give ten percent of your income, and if you don’t, He may discipline you. But His blessings are not contingent upon your paying or gaining His favor. You are 100% in His standing. That’s what it means to be grace oriented. Unfortunately, the average Christian sits around totally ignorant of what it is to be under the grace of God.

**Grace**

Here’s why grace works. God has removed all of the obstacles. Now we’ve got three more big blocks to deal with and each one gets more fantastic almost than the one before in what God did to remove it. So what do you have to fear? What do you have to be concerned about? Nothing. Just one thing. Your negative volition. That will hurt you bad. This will hurt you as a Christian. If you think that you don’t have to take in the word of God on a daily basis. If you think you have to sit in a congregation with a pastor-teacher instructing the word as Ephesians chapter 4 lays out, then you’re mistaken. You are going negative and you will pay a grievous price in your spiritual life. Which way will you switch this morning? God has already removed the wall. If you are oriented to grace as a Christian, you will praise and thank Him for it. If you’re not a Christian, you will say, “I accept it. This is for me.”

John E. Danish, 1971