***Peace and Sanctification

Colossians 1:1-2

COL-018***

Our subject is "The Salutation," segment number 18 in Colossians 1:1-2.

**Grace**

The apostle Paul, in his greeting to the Colossian Christians, bids them the blessings of God's grace. The grace of God is the great feature of the human experience. And amazingly, it is probably the most neglected feature in human experience in peoples' relationship to God. The average Christian does not understand what the grace of God is. The average Christian never thrills to the depths of his soul with the power of God that flows from the grace of God. As Paul says: "I am what I am by the grace of God." And without that grace, we're absolutely nothing. What a pity that there are thousands of Christians who sit in churches this very moment all over this city who, instead of being treated in grace, and being introduced to the magnificence of grace, are having their sin natures tickled and satisfied, and instead they are being denied that which is their heritage.

So, here's a human being made in the image of God that can only act like a bum; that can only act like a dog; that can only act like just another person of the world system; and, that can only act like somebody who is religious, but is absolutely a zero when it comes to being a human being. It is no wonder that we have a nation which has gone astray, such that we have young people who cannot have the manhood and the womanhood that is their inherent right as those who have been made in the image of God, and especially those who are Christians.

So, Paul is not doing something very small here – something of little significance, when he says to them, "I greet you, and I bid upon you the magnificence of the grace of God. Without the grace of God, we have nothing. And without being a grace-oriented Christian, we are nothing. It is the grace of God that is the basis of all of His dealings with mankind. Grace is the basis for personal salvation from an eternity in the lake of fire. And grace is the basis for living the Christian life as a saved person. It is the grace of God, when fully functioning in the life of a human being that keeps him from doing what is wrong. And when people fall into evil, including Christians, it is because they've become detached from the power of the grace of God in their lives, because grace transforms us. Grace makes us magnificent people.

Grace is God's favor extended to sinners, who not only do not deserve that favor, but, in fact, they deserve the opposite treatment. And those who do not understand the magnificent nature and the transforming power of God's grace cannot grasp the biblical doctrine of free grace salvation, and of eternal security in that salvation. They do not understand the protective custody of grace. And most people in the Christian community know very little about the grace of God. And they have very little experience with it.

**Arrogance**

So, we have these vast pools of people (church people) who are always worried about whether the next minute they're going to lose their salvation and be on their way into the lake of fire. It is God's grace that enables you to understand that it is a system of protection that God Himself places upon us. And nothing can undo what He has done. God's works of grace cannot be contaminated nor frustrated by sinful man. It is human pride, with the arrogance of its human viewpoint, that rejects the grace of God in various ways. And you should not be intimidated when you find people who reject the grace of God. You should not be appalled at it, because you are a rare breed here who have been introduced and thoroughly schooled in the grace of God. And those of you who have open hearts know what it is to be walking in that grace, especially when the tough times come. That's when you learn what it is to be under the grace of God and to be carried on eagle's wings.

There is the arrogance, for example, of the one who thinks he can lose his salvation because God's grace cannot cover some area of his sins. He must maintain his salvation, he thinks, through proving his personal worthiness rather than depending upon the worthiness of Jesus Christ. What a relief to realize that grace is interested in how worthy Christ is, and it doesn't care one wit how worthy you and I are.

There is the arrogance of the one who cuts out of Christian service because of adversities or the pressures of life which he thinks is greater than God's grace can carry him through. It is very sad to find a soldier of Jesus Christ become a spiritual casualty because he cannot rise to the nobility of living in the grace of God.

There is the one with a false sense of spirituality, which is created by his old in nature, rather than by the filling of the Holy Spirit. So, this person lives under the bondage of legalism rather than the freedom of grace. He's always trying to make it with God by what he does; by what he observes; and, by his religious rituals, rather than leaning back and enjoying the free ride of salvation.

Then there is the arrogance of the one who thinks that his sin-nature, human good is more valuable to God than the divine good works of the grace of God through the Holy Spirit. So, we have, from pulpit down the congregation, people being manipulated – power structures to get people to do things on the basis of their old sin nature because people don't know what it is to be grace oriented. People don't know what it is to lean back, and find themselves in the hand of God, being carried along, and being moved into the great life that God has planned for them.

God's grace is a never-ending fountain of blessing, and it flows forever, and constantly to the believer in temporal fellowship. And it is no honor to any of us when we fall from grace. It is a great tragedy when we fall from grace, and we start living under the principles of our sin nature. We fall from grace, and suddenly, we are not living in the temporal realm, and our lives are never invested in the things of God. We fall from grace, and our eyes are only on this world, and we forget that we're just one breath away from the next. God's grace is a never-ending fountain of blessing, flowing forever, but only to the Christian who is in temporal fellowship.

God's grace treatment toward us depends entirely on the character of God. God's grace ignores all of our human good, and all of our human merit, and it seeks no payment in return for blessing. God's grace alone enables a person to be saved, and to live a godly life. Grace enables us to be free of enslavement to the old sin nature. Grace enables us to learn doctrine by the grace system of perception, which bypasses the limitations of our human IQ; our human abilities; our education; and, our culture. What a God! None of us is restricted from rising to the highest echelons of the knowledge of God, and of the mind of Christ functioning in us. There is no limitation. Grace is being treated kindly by God apart from what we deserve. God's grace is waiting to pour out blessings on his children, and that, folks, is the really good life.

**Discipline**

The truly good life that people seek is the life to be found in the grace of God. It is the flow of grace blessing that is interrupted by carnality, which is the great tragedy of the Christian life. When we're in carnality, we're are out of temporal fellowship, and grace no longer flows. If confession and repentance is not made, then God must discipline the believer instead of blessing him. We can understand this on a human level. How much rather we would bless our children; how much rather we would do good things for them; and, how much rather we would take great satisfaction and pride in them instead of having to discipline and punish, and be disappointed in them. But if confession is not made, and the right thing is not done, then God has no option. His justice demands it. But that simple confession (1 John 1:9) restores to temporal fellowship, and it turns on the grace of God in full power.

The grace-oriented Christian has a mental attitude of grace toward others. That's one of the great signs that you have grown in grace orientation – the attitude of grace toward others. It is the greatest thing to be able to treat other people with the kindness with which God has treated us, especially when the bums don't deserve it.

And how often have you and I been faced with the bums within the Christian community who don't deserve our grace, and yet, because we are a grace-oriented people, we treat them the way God has treated us in our deficiencies. We forgive, therefore, offenses against us immediately, without demanding some confession or some apology. Nothing is so degrading to a Christian as to say: "You have injured me, and I demand an apology from you." You are the lowest of the lowest if that is your attitude. The grace-oriented Christian is like Christ, Who took the abuse of men – Who took the worst, and yet extended the hand of blessing to those who would receive it. You and I, who are grace-oriented people, do not have any illusions about our frailties or about the frailties of other believers. Therefore, we cut them the slack that we need them to cut to us so that we can get straightened out when we need to.

The greatest hazard of the Christian life, then, is disorientation to the grace of God. So, it is no small thing that, at the end of Colossians 1:2, Paul says, "Grace to you." What a magnificent thing to wish for somebody, and to, in fact, intercede for these people. 2 Corinthians 6:1 says, "And working together with him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain." How many Christians, because of their ignorance, and their lack of instruction, receive the grace of God in vain – people who've been born again, and then don't know how to go on from there in the grace of God.

**Fallen from Grace**

Galatians 5:4, "You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by Law. You have fallen from grace." Here are the people of Galatia listening to the legalizers, who are telling them: "You must keep holy days. You must perform mosaic rituals. You must do all these things in order for you to please God, and to receive and remain secure in your salvation." Paul says, "You have fallen from the grace of God." What a pity!

Then there is Hebrews 12:15, where the writer says, "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God, that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled." The grace of God will protect you from the hazard of personal bitterness. More Christians go down the tube because they get bitter over something, and because they get their noses out of joint over something, and they will cast everything overboard that the grace of God has given them, and the potential of what God's grace will do for them. The writer to the Hebrews says: "Don't fail to stay in grace." If you are a grace-oriented person, you will never be bitter toward somebody who has done you an ill. You will recognize they have a problem, and you will hope that God will enable them to straighten it out. It is a terrible thing to fall from the grace of God.

Then you are out of temporal fellowship, guided by the sin nature, so that your life is spewing out one sin after another, and human good works. And you sit there licking your chops, pleased with yourself, when, in fact, you should be humiliated. We become negative to doctrine, so we draw in human viewpoint. False doctrine takes over our souls. And the spiritual maturity structure then goes into revisionism, and spiritual insanity sets in. It is no honor to fall from the grace of God. It is an enormous disgrace. It should be an enormous humiliation between God and man when a Christian does this.

So, there's always the necessity, because this does, happen to know how important it is to return to grace, and to return to grace blessings. Let's look at Hebrews 12:12. Here, in poetic language, is the description of a believer who has fallen from the grace of God. He is out of fellowship: "Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble." "Therefore" means in view of a principle which has been set forth in the context. What is that principle? Notice Hebrew 12:6, "For those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives." The context tells us that to be out of temporal fellowship, which is to fall from grace, means that you come under the discipline of God. And God the Father is not going to tolerate that: "For those whom the Lord loves (and He does love you), He's going to discipline you. He is going to scourge you until you wake up."

The context indicates that the discipline, however, will turn to blessing upon confession of sins. Hebrews 12:11 says, "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful. Yet to those who have been trained by it, and have learned their lesson, and admit and confess, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

Now, the discipline that God places upon us, when we have fallen from grace, will cease when we return to the grace basis, or the consequences of that discipline may continue. But even if the discipline continues, it is now a blessing. You can do some things in life that are such a stepping out of the grace of God, and such an enormity of violation of the moral code of God, that the results cannot evaporate.

If you bring into your life an illegitimate child because you have violated the moral code of God, you will come under the discipline of God. But when that confession is made, and you return to the grace basis, the consequences of that act is a form of discipline that will continue. But now grace has taken over, and that discipline will become blessing.

So, this is no little thing – to fall from the grace of God. The acts that we may perform when we are out of the grace of God can be horrendous in their consequences. And the writer here is pointing that out – that it may cease altogether, but it may also continue, but as blessing. The place of fellowship is always the place of blessing. So, it is wise to make your confession. And that's what Hebrews 12:12, that follows then, says: "Strengthen the hands that are weak, and the knees that are feeble. This is describing a Christian who is out of the grace of God. He is weak. And it is describing his hands that are weak, and knees that are feeble. And you have no strength.

What do you need? You need strength. You need restoration. And those of you who have sometimes been incapacitated physically, where you have found that you perhaps have a broken bone, you find that to use that limb is very hard. It needs strengthening. It is incapacitated because it has fallen into an abnormal condition. And it is not a lot of fun to be trying to restore what has lost its strength. And yet, that's what it says here: "Strengthen." And this word "strengthen" looks like this in the Greek Bible. We get a lot of English words from it. The Greek word is "anorthoo" (an-orth-o'-o), and this word means to strengthen. It is from this word that we have terms like "orthodontist," who straightens out teeth; "orthopedic" that straightens out bones; and, "orthodox" that straightens out doctrine. And we get these from this Greek word "anorthoo."

So, what he is talking about is to strengthen something. In fact, this little preposition "an" at the beginning of this word means "again." It says, "Make it straight again." If you break a bone, you make it straight again to rebuild the structure. And the idea here is to restore to full spiritual strength or vigor – to restore the believer in fellowship with God in time. Therefore, strengthen those hands that are now spiritually weak. Strengthen those knees that are so feeble that you cannot do the Lord's work. And that's the point. When your hands are out of fellowship, you can't serve God, and you don't. And when you're out of fellowship, your knees are weak, and you can't move about in the Lord's work. Strengthen the hands that are weak.

This is a picture of a person who has lost his vigor and his drive. He can't work anymore to be productive. And what this refers to here, of course, is to spiritual incapacity. This is the Christian who's out temporal fellowship. He's not able to provide any divine good in God's plan. And in the grammar here, this word for "hands that are weak," is in the perfect tense, which means that it's a condition of something you did in the past. It is unconfessed sin. And the thing keeps going along, and nothing is ever going to get better.

This whole phrase is dealing with the technique of restoration of fellowship through the 1 John 1:9 principle of confessing sin. This principle of strengthening the spiritually weak hands and feet is described in other ways in the Bible. For example, it is, of course, in 1 John 1:9 as "Confess your sins." In 1 Corinthians 11:31, it says, "Judge yourselves (if we have judged ourselves)." And Romans 12:1 has the same idea. It is: "Presenting ourselves." And in Hebrews 12:1, it also means "present." In Hebrews 12:13, it is "strengthen," meaning straighten out. Hebrews 12:1: "Say aside every encumbrance (the spiritual weight). And in Hebrews 12:9 is: "Be subject to the Father of spirits." All of these are words or expressions for getting back in sync with God. And it is getting back under the blessings of the grace of God.

Hands that are too tired and too weak to produce divine good are going to be reinvigorated when confession is made, and the Spirit of God can once more fill us.

"Feeble knees:" that has to do with running. Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." That is the norm for the Christian life – not to have feeble knees, but to have knees that are capable of carrying your weight and running at maximum capacity. It is the confession that brings us back into the grace position so that we are running again. This Christian has spiritually feeble knees. Do you know what it means to have feeble knees? You can't carry yourself. People who have broken legs come to the point where, before they can sustain themselves, they have to use a thing called a walker. And they walk around with this little support in front of them. And the first time you do it, you'll find that is extremely excruciating, because it takes such an enormous amount of upper body muscle. But it is a great training program for push-ups.

If you've ever had to use a walker for any time, you will discover that you can put do push-ups with a snap of your finger, and maybe even with one hand. Of course, that has a hazard of a broken nose, so it's not a good thing to do that. But this is a whole picture here: "My knees are so feeble, and my legs are so weak that I can't walk. I have to have something to lean on." And the thing that we need to lean on for spiritual restoration is the grace of God. That's the whole point of this. Why are you muddling around out there under the capacities of the sin nature when you could be at the top of the mountain with the grace of God? That is what we are called to do. That is our lifestyle.

Hebrews 12:13: "And make straight paths for your feet so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed." This word "make straight paths for your feet" refers to making straight wheel tracks. It means to follow in the wheel tracks of doctrine. It means to use the discipline of God to get you back into the track in which you should be rolling. And the purpose here is so that: "That which is lame (believers out of fellowship) can be healed." Get yourself into the path of the Word of God. Get yourself into the path of the will of God. And this is viewed as two ruts going down the road in your wagon wheels: get into the two ruts so that you stay on track.

If you choose to remain spiritually lame, it will cause you trouble in your life in every conceivable way, and certainly in God's plan for you. You have to get back into that inner circle of temporal fellowship. That is the way to get back into the track, and then to be on track once more. Negative volition takes us out of the plan. Positive volition admitting where we are brings us back in.

"Make straight wheel tracks for your feet, so that the limb which is lame will not be put out of joint, but rather it would be healed." Here it means that it's not going to swerve and twist. The joint here that you don't want to get out of is the plan of God for your life. “To be healed” means that you'll be restored to fellowship with God your Heavenly Father. That is coming back into the inner circle. Literally it will be restored. This happens at the point of confession. You receive this fellowship. It is the potential of 1 John 1:9.

Hebrews 12:14 tells us the basis of God's grace: "Pursue peace with all men and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

**Peace**

There are two results of salvation. Pursue – the idea here is to move toward a goal. A Christian should orient himself to something. And what that is, is the product of the grace of God, here described as "peace." You have to understand two doctrines to function in the grace of God. First of all, the doctrine of peace. We have this explained to us in Ephesians 2:4-10, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love, with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace who have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

So, this is who you are. By God's grace (His unmerited favor), you have been raised from sin, and you've been transformed into a child of God. Your destiny has been changed from hell to heaven. And you have actually now positionally been seated with Christ in heavenly places. That sixth verse is something we wish all of our children would learn, and learn well: "I have been raised with Him, and I'm seated in heavenly places."

Just think of how we would act when we realize that we're acting in the context of being seated with Christ in heavenly places: "In order that, in the ages to come, He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that salvation is not of yourself. It is the gift of God, not as the result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should live in them. Therefore, remember that formerly, you, the Gentiles in the flesh are called uncircumcision by the so-called circumcision which is performed in flesh by human hands. Remember that you were, at that time, separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you, who formerly were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, Who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God, through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to those who were far away, and peace to those who were near."

What a great thing that God has done for us here by bringing to us peace! And what has He done through peace? That means that He has reconciled us to God.

**Sanctification**

Now, the other thing that we must remember, as has been pointed out in Ephesians 2, is the sanctification. This is the doctrine of positional sanctification in our union with Jesus Christ. Because of the grace of God, we have, first of all, peace with God; and, secondly, we have been set apart (sanctified) in heavenly places to be seated with Christ Jesus.

So, God is free to treat us in grace because of the work of reconciliation on one hand, and the work of sanctification on the other hand. He has made peace between us and God. We're reconciled. And He has set us apart for eternal life. No one could come to God apart from the realities represented by these two doctrines.

Now in Hebrews 12:15, here are the application of these two results: "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God." In the human spirit of the believer are stored the doctrines of reconciliation and sanctification. This comes up into his mind (the mentality of the soul), and it gives him a frame of reference about the grace of God, so that he knows how to walk as a Christian under the grace of God. He has been reconciled to God. He has peace with God. He has been destined for eternal life. He has been set apart by divine sanctification. Reconciliation speaks of the grace of God. Peace has been produced by that reconciliation. The wall of separation has been removed. God the Father planned it. The Son did it. The Holy Spirit reveals it. Sanctification speaks of the grace of God. Holiness is the result of being in Christ, so we satisfy the justice and the righteous demands of God. We do not earn or deserve this position in Christ.

Now, the carnal (as well as the spiritual) believer, are all in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2 and 1 Corinthians 1:30). That's the amazing thing. You can be a dog as a Christian, but you are still in Christ. And you are still reconciled to God, and you are still sanctified. That is the product of God's grace.

So, with this understanding, you can now apply God's point of view to your personal situation. You can understand the basis for restoration of fellowship. Yes, you did do something that was against the moral code. You did do something against the will of God, but you are already reconciled. And you can never be unreconciled. You are already sanctified (set apart for heaven). And you can never be sanctified. Therefore, you understand that the issue is your temporal fellowship with God. Your eternal fellowship cannot be touched. What you are in is a spiritual stall, when we sin, and we have to make the recovery and respond accordingly.

If we don't do it, Hebrews 12:15 says, there will be a root of bitterness that arises up within you. Be careful to avoid a root of bitterness. Here we're told that the believer priest is responsible for dealing with his own sin so that bitterness does not crop up in his soul. This is a terrible thing in the life of a Christian – when he becomes bitter, so that he falls from the grace of God. And if you don't remember that you are reconciled to God; that is, that you’re back in sync with him – if you don't remember that you are sanctified for eternal life in heaven, and you have the greatest thing that you need, then you'll fall to bitterness. Someone has done something to you, and you're bitter. Some circumstance in life comes upon you, and you're bitter. Some physical ailment comes upon you, and it burdens you, and you're bitter. In fact, you can even be bitter over the fact that you could have acted so stupidly as to do something terrible when you knew better.

But the point of it all is that the grace of God is always there to bring you back. And you should never permit bitterness to rise up: "See to it." Do you know what that means? "See to it." When someone tells you to see to something, they're telling you that it's your responsibility. It's your responsibility to take care of your own spiritual life. This requires neutralizing sin in your life by confessing it (1 John 1:9). You name the thing. But it also implies forgetting the sin and moving on. It is just as important to forget your sin as it is to confess it. And it is equally important for you to forget the sins of other people, particularly as they've impinged upon you. Otherwise, you yourself fall out of fellowship.

Colossians 3:13-14 put it this way: "Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other. Whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity." How often, within the Christian community, do you have some Christian who will not bear with the frailties and even the injuries of another Christian, real or imagined, and who will not have a spirit of forgiveness, and who will not set aside even a genuine complaint because that's how God treated us. Grace is something that we don't deserve. But it's even more. It's something such that we deserved the very opposite. And a grace-oriented Christian acts in this manner as God has acted toward him. Beyond all these things, the great motivation is love. That's the perfect bond of unity. And the word "love" here means that your mind is not filled with resentments; bitterness; and mental attitude sins.

**Forgiven and Forgotten**

Now this divine principle is based on grace: forgiven sin is forgotten sin. It is so important to realize (to understand) that when a sin is forgiven, it must be forgotten. You do not eat your heart out over it. And those of you who like to sock it to people by reminding them of their sins, particularly your husband or wife, have lit a sin of your own that's equally horrendous. Jeremiah 31:34 says, "'And they shall not teach again each man his neighbor, and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord.' For they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity and their sin. I will remember no more.'" How dare you ever to bring up an injury from another Christian when God says: "Your sin I will remember no more."

Now if you are a grace oriented Christian, that'll be easy. You couldn't care less about getting satisfaction from somebody who has done you some genuine injury. You could not care less. I mean, if you have to, at least say, "Same to you, fella," and then forget it. Put it behind you. It is not worth your pursuing. Isaiah 43:25 puts it this way: "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgression for My own sake. And I will not remember your sins." God says, "'I won't remember what you did, but you remember what somebody did?' You say, 'We want you to apologize to me so that I will be able to forgive you.' How dare you act with that kind of arrogance.'"

Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Now, all of these verses are telling us what a grace-oriented person would be. But when we fall from the grace of God, this grace that Paul has for the Colossian Christians, you can see what he has wished for them. He has wished for them to be magnificent human beings in the finest tradition of a born-again person. Since God forgets, we must do likewise. If we don't, we enter a mental attitude bitterness that sets up a series of new sins. Once we're restored to fellowship, the Christian mind is flooded with "agape" love, and he has a relaxed mental attitude, free of ill will. The result of the filling of the Holy Spirit through confession is full restoration to walking with the power of God. A relaxed mental attitude is what neutralizes sin confessed. If you don't have it, you will perpetuate that evil.

The purpose of this neutralization – "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God, that no root of bitterness." To come short of the grace of God by not confessing and forgetting brings you into the position that you will come into a root of bitterness that will spring up in you. And the greatest danger of falling short of the grace of God is not facing the restoration of confession, and going on in that decrepit condition. You will come short then, it says, of the grace of God, and the result will be that bitterness springs up. The root of a tree has to come from a seed which has first died, 1 Corinthians 15:36-37 points out. "Springing up" means that you planted this bitter seed. Now it sprouts up, and you have a picture of sin sprouting from a seed of unconfessed sin, and bitterness is an example of a terrible mental attitude sin. It springs from sin which has not been confessed. And what does it do? It causes trouble: self-induced misery. Failure to respond to the grace principle, in order to neutralize a sin, creates callouses on your soul. You become insensitive to God.

The result is that not only are you out of touch with God, but you defile people around you. The end of Hebrews 12:15: "Many be defied." The Greek says, "Hoi polloi:" "The many are defiled." The word "defiled" is a very strong word here. When you fall from the grace of God, you not only contaminate yourself, but you contaminate a lot of people around you, starting with your family and out. The Greek word is "miaino" (me-ah'-ee-no), M I A I N O. Do you know what "miaino" means? "Miaino" is the word that was used for sewage in the ancient world – Sewage. And in the ancient world, they didn't have any sewer lines, and they didn't have any sewer grates in the street. So, when they cleared out the night pots and the sewage, they would open the window above, and they would pitch it out in the street. So, up from the second story, you're walking along with your lovey-dovey here on your arm, and all of a sudden, some guy opens the window and pitches out the "miaino" from the night before.

Now, this is a very strong language in the Greek. God is saying, "You Christians who fall from the grace of God, you stink. You probably have wondered why a gentleman, in walking down the street with his lady, walks on the outside by curb, and she walks inside. Well, that's from the ancient times, because when they pitched "miaino," they usually wouldn't hit you right below. They'd get the guy who's on the outside there by the curb. So, gentlemen, you are to walk by the curb. You never know when there's a pot that's going to be emptied overhead as you walked in the street.

What a poetic graphic picture! Because of the root of bitterness, you've fallen from the grace of God. And now, it causes all kinds of troubles within you. And you defile other people with your stupid troubles and your stupid viewpoint, and you stink, and you make them stink. This is what comes from mental attitude sin. It makes everybody have misery.

The Greek language here tells us that this is something that happens at the point when we refuse to confess. It is in the passive voice, which means that it makes other people helpless victims. And the contamination is a great potential, depending on whether we are willing to confess or not.

So, when Paul says, I pray for you that the grace of God may be upon you, and that you may function in that, "Grace to you from God our Father," it's no small thing. This is our life. Without it, we are absolutely nothing. Your children need to can't understand what the grace of God has done for them, and the magnificent position they hold as a prince and a princess in the family of God, They're going to be walking along through life, thinking that they're something, when they're nothing but covered with the sewage that somebody pitched out the window from the night before. And they are a stench in the nostrils of God. And they are stench in the nostrils of people who have a sensitivity to the righteousness of God and to our position in Christ.

May it be true of us that we have such a deep appreciation for the grace of God that has taken us out of the doom of hell, into the glories of heaven, that we will rise to our position in the royal family of God, and we will walk with a dignity that is befitting us who hold that place.

Heavenly Father, we thank You so much for the Word of God.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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