***Frustrating the Grace of God, No. 5

Reconciliation and Sanctification - CSP005***

We continue in our study of the special subject of frustrating the grace of God. This is increment number 5. In a previous session, I told you about my discussion at Northlake College pool with the pool manager and the 90-year-old Church of Christ sailor. Last Tuesday, Mrs. Danish and I walked into the pool area. The manager was coming across the bridge that was across the pool, and he called out to me. He came up and he said, "I didn't realize before that you are the pastor of Berean Memorial Church." He said, "I listen to your Bible tapes all the time. I'm in "The Techniques of the Christian Life" right now.

So I told him that in our discussion the previous week, that I had sensed that he knew something about the Bible. He had obviously had some knowledge about the principles of doctrine. He said, "Well, that's because I listen to your tapes. Then," he said, "of course, there's Bob Evans." Bob Evans swims at the pool, and he is our in-house traveling gospel witness. He is the one who directed the manager to our tapes. So I gave him the Berean evangelism brochure that I had promised to him, and he offered to take the one for the sailor to give to him the next time he came to the pool.

I then asked the manager what church he attended. He indicated that he attended a Baptist church here in Irving. In fact, he said that he was visiting another one. In the process, I found out something about this man that I have seen over a year; in and out; running around; checking the pool water; and, keeping things in order at the pool. I found out that he is a performing soloist. He goes around putting on sacred and light operatic music concerts. He's a basso profundo, like Tennessee Ernie Ford was, and Larry Hooper on "The Lawrence Welk Show." He has a really deep voice, and he gave me a little demonstration with "Some Enchanted Evening." That guy has a really nice voice. I was very impressed. I made a note of that, and he later came back by and gave me a picture himself on a card. I said, "How often do this?"

He said, "I do it three or four times a month. I go around the groups giving local concert performances." He sings a lot of Rodgers and Hammerstein, and I found from my experience that some of our good singers find that that is not easy stuff to sing. It takes a little ability and practice to do that. So I was impressed that he was able to handle that kind of thing.

**God's Word Will not Return Void**

Later, as I was thinking about this, I couldn't help thinking of Isaiah 55:11 where Isaiah, quoting God, says, "So shall My word be, which goes forth from my mouth. It shall not return to Me empty without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it." And I say that this experience should encourage us all here at Berean church. Only in heaven will we learn the effect of Berean Memorial church with its faithfulness to the biblical duty of expository preaching of the Word of God to the people of God, so that they can have the mind of God. So, indeed, as Isaiah says, "That word planted is not going to come back without results."

And here, of all places, to find it at the poolside with the manager who is feeding upon the Word of God that goes out from this ministry. So God bless the people of Berean Memorial Church. God bless the people who run our tape ministry. God bless those who take the time to distribute evangelism brochures, and direct people to the study through our tape ministry of the Word of God.

**The Power of Prayer**

Well, Lenora and I came home from the swim session; we sat down to lunch; I looked at my wrist to see the time; and, my watch was not there. My watch was gone. I thought, "That's odd. I always put that back on." I wear my suit to the pool, and before I slip out of my trousers at the end of the lane, I put the watch in my pocket. So I looked in the dive bag. It wasn't there. It wasn't in my pocket. I couldn't find it anywhere. I decided I needed to go back to the pool. I did, and as I drove, I asked God to close the distance between my eyesight and the watch until I could spot it. That's it. Just close the distance between my eyesight and wherever that watch is, and lead me to it. So at the pool, I checked into the office first thing, to see if a watch had been turned in. It was a really nice watch. One was, but it was not mine.

So I checked in the locker room, in case I had dropped it in there, but it wasn't there? Then I decided to go back to the end of the pool lane where I slip out of my trousers and get into the pool. I went to the very spot, and a girl was there putting away kick boards, and she asked if I was looking for something. I said, "Yes," and I told her that I had lost the watch earlier while I'd been there at the pool. And I looked down, and a few inches from her foot, lay my watch on the deck.

My eyesight and the distance to the watch had been brought together. My prayer was answered. Prayer is the grace way of life for tapping into the dynamic power system that is ours as a church age. A Jew never had such a power system. He longed for it, and never had it. The Christians have it. Most of them are ignorant of it because they have no pastor-teacher telling them about it. Others are too oriented to the world to want to live in the power system of prayer. More and more, I become aware of this principle of praying without ceasing. That is a key doctrine, and we take it too lightly. The power system that Christ left behind for us, only in this age of grace, is the Spirit of God indwelling us permanently, and doctrine giving us the full mind and thinking of God to guide us in our lives.

So it is that Hebrews 4:12 gives us this advice: "For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. That is the promise of the Word of God – that it will work, and it will bring us what we need. For that reason, the writer of Hebrews elsewhere also says, "Let us approach the throne of grace, and receive the things that we need." What a magnificent promise! That is what prayer meeting is all about every week – approaching that throne of grace to enjoy and to receive those things that God has for us.

The basis of the grace way of life is completely ignored by most Christians, and so they frustrate the grace of God. That's why we're talking about this subject. The average church member lives a life just frustrating the potential of God working in his life. The sadness of eternity will be to see what might have been. It's like that line out of Nicholas Nickleby, the novel that has a statement at one point that observes philosophically to the effect, "There is no sadness so great as the sadness of what might have been." Charles Dickens was right on target with that – "the sadness of what might have been." That is what frustrating the grace of God brings us. That is a Christian not filled with the Spirit – a Christian who has floppy, erratic, or spotty knowledge of doctrine; and worse, very poor positive volition toward it.

**Grace as a Way of Life**

The basis of the grace way of life, we have pointed out, is found in Hebrews 12:14-15: "Pursue peace with all men." The church age believer is placed permanently into Christ at the point of salvation by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). For the believer in Christ, the old condition of being spiritually dead because of the sin nature in him is abruptly and permanently ended (2 Corinthians 5:17). The believer in Christ can never again be lost. He is now a new spiritual creation by God the Holy Spirit. So 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "New things have come." The Christian is thus declared to be a new species of humanity, completely different from the Old Testament saints with unheard of blessings and power to do good works, and great potential for divine rewards in heaven. He is born again spiritually.

Grace, functioning in the life of a church age believer, enables him to fulfill his life mission – what the Lord has for us to do, and to experience then, joy unspeakable and full of glory while here on earth. No one can make himself a new creation. Only the grace of God can, and no one can help God do that. You all are well aware of the fact that Ephesians 2:8:9 says it's all a work of God's grace: "It's not of works, lest anyone should boast." In Titus 3:4-7, we also read, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior."

Why are you in the grace of God? Because God loved you; moved you to accept Christ as Savior; and, brought you into His family. Now you are under the canopy of the grace of God, and you can live the grace life, or you can frustrate all the potential of the grace life. The younger you are here today, the more advantageous it is for you to know that principle, because you have a long life ahead of you for some eternal, worthy blessing, and for reward. You are to make every relationship in life a relationship that is focused upon serving the Lord God better.

Many years ago, I attended the first session of the Gotthard Youth Seminars on applying principles of life to the Christian life in order to be able to function on the dynamic power system of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the power of the principles of doctrine (though he didn't call it this). So he would have these vast seminars where he was simply telling people what they should have learned in church about the doctrinal principles. I remember one of them, the association principle, which is one of the reasons that people frustrate the grace of God. He was dealing with marriage. He himself was single at the time. Gotthard said, "Never get married until it is very clear to you from God that you cannot continue to fulfill your mission for Him as effectively as a single person as you would if you're married to this person."

I didn't at first realize how perceptive that insight was. But it was right on target, and it applies to all kinds of associations in life. We look around us as Christians and we see people who once would stand up here and make a testimony at the Lord's Supper meeting, and sometimes move us to tears over the grace of God working in their lives. Then they get into associations on the human level, and the grace of God begins to get frustrated in their lives. Pretty soon, they're not standing up giving testimonies. Pretty soon, they're not out there telling us what the Lord is doing. Pretty soon, they're not even sitting here among us. They've drifted off into the world system of religion – saved, but with such a wasted life. Just because they made an association someplace along the line on a human level, all of a sudden, instead of doing the service for God better than what they had been doing before, it evaporates. You've got the sign that we've got trouble.

This business of frustrating the grace of God is something that most Christians are oblivious to. They don't even understand what the grace of God is, and they're not sensitive to the tragedy which is involved that God cannot do with you what is the potential for your life, so that when you get to heaven, it will be a magnificent experience enriched beyond mere salvation.

**Grace and Works are Mutually Exclusive**

There's one other point in Romans 11:6. Paul says, "But if it is of grace (this relationship with God), if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, grace is no longer grace." If it is grace, it is not by works. So what do most Christians do? They're hustlers. God is more interested in your becoming something spiritually in Christ, that He can pour out His grace upon, than He is in your doing something for Him. But in the average church, what are you told? You're told that the way to make progress with God is to get out there; get in some ministry; do this; and, do that. But the Christian himself is a hollow, empty vessel. He's got nothing to him. Then the devil comes up and dangles a little something in front of him and says, "How do you like this?" He's like a fish going for the worm, and he bites on the hook. We say, "How could that happen?" It's because there is no substance within the Christian that is the product of the Holy Spirit. That's the grace way of life.

So what did the apostle Paul say? "I am what I am by the grace of God." That's it. And what you are not by the grace of God, you are not at all. That's it. What you are of any substance is what the grace of God has made you. If you're that kind of a person, I guarantee you that you will walk tall and straight; you'll be an inspiration to yourself, your family, and to other Christians about you; they will look to you; they will depend upon you; and, they will have trust in you.

Sometimes I look around at Christians, and I think to myself, "What if I were in the position in which we were all put one time in Officer Candidate School in the Marine Corps? We had to look at 175 men who were in that training class with us – that 51st OCS class. They said, "Pick one man to go on a mission with you of great hazard and of great importance on which you would want to ensure success. Whom would you pick?" And boy, I could look over that list and see all kinds of people I wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole in a situation where my life was at stake. Finding one person out of 175 men wasn't an easy thing.

But that's what we do with Christians. Suppose the Lord said, "Here's this mission. It's life and death. All this is riding upon it – the lives of many people, and their eternal well-being. You need one helper. Who are you going to take on that mission with you?" That's the question you're answering when you get married. That's the question you answer when you get into a church assembly where you go to church. That's the question you answer when you pick your pastor-teacher. All of these things that on the other side are going to be important. These are the things that are going to count – not all the religious trivia that the devil is shooting toward us constantly. It's making us feel isolated, yes. If you are going to walk the grace-oriented life, you're going to be on your own. People are not going to be rallying to you. You're not going to be out there being famous. But you will be very big with your Father in heaven. The angels in heaven will be cheering you right on for what you do. That's what's going to count when you stand at that judgment seat.

Yet, we are frustrating the grace of God. So here God has baptized us into the body of Christ. He has joined us forever to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are a new creation because we are now different from the Old Testament. We have the power of the Spirit of God and the mind of God and doctrine. Grace functioning in the life of a church age believer enables us to do the work that God has for us.

Remember the verse after Ephesians 2:8-9. We usually stop at verse 9, but we need to go on to finish the picture by reading verse 10. It says, "For we are His workmanship (we who have been saved by the grace of God), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." That's where we get the concept of a life mission. It is the mission of works that God has prepared for your life. So here you are, a splendid Christian, and you take into your life, in a close association like marriage, somebody who is a dog. How are you going to fulfill your mission? That's what Gotthard meant. If that woman or that man cannot help you to keep serving the Lord more effectively in what you're doing, instead of being a dropout, that's bad business. Then it's not the will of God. All of this is so simple. It's just doctrinal principles that you need to be alerted to, and then you need to obey.

The believer is never again lost once he's in Christ. He's a new creation. All things are new; that is, they are now spiritually oriented with power. The Christian is declared a new species, and he has the power to do good works. Grace functioning in the life of a Christian believer enables him to do his mission. No one can do this for himself. The grace way of life lives in the power of the Holy Spirit under the filling of the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of doctrine to the mind of God; that is, to be yielded to the will of the Spirit of God, and to be obeying doctrine.

**Peace**

The basis of this grace is found in Hebrews 12:14: "Pursue Peace." Verse 14 tells us to, "Pursue peace with all men." He tells us to do two things. One is to pursue peace. We Christians are to pursue the peace which comes from reconciliation at the point of salvation. How can I have peace with God? Because I am reconciled to His absolute standard of righteousness. I am in Christ. So I share to my credit His absolute righteousness.

A man recently said, "Years ago, I came to Berean Church, and was very interested in attending, and Dr. Danish said that you have to be as good as Jesus Christ to go to heaven. I said, 'Whoa!' That set a concern up in my mind" Then he said, "But he followed right up and said that what you need to do to be as good as Jesus Christ is to be reconciled to His standard of absolute righteousness, and you do that by letting Him pay for your sins, and God will, in exchange, give you (impute to your credit) the absolute righteousness of God. So when He looks at you, you are as perfect as His Son." This man said, "When I heard that," he said, "that is absolutely the way it is. If you're not as good as Jesus Christ, you'll never go to heaven. Only God can make you that good. Only his grace can do that." So pursue the peace that comes from the fact that you're at ease with God because you've been adjusted to His absolute righteous standard permanently.

**Sanctification**

The second thing it says is, "Pursue sanctification." Sanctification is the result of our union with Jesus Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is the believer being set apart to eternal life and thus to godly living. This is positional sanctification that we express then in our experience.

So here it is. The grace way of life is based upon two important doctrinal realities. One is that we have been reconciled to the absolute standard of God's righteousness. We are at peace with Him. Secondly, we have been set apart to eternity in heaven with Him. We are set apart. We are absolutely holy. Therefore we are qualified to go to heaven. That is position in Christ.

You pursue that peace and its expression with other people. You pursue the life of godliness, or holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. People who do not have absolute righteousness are not holy. They do not go to heaven, and they never see the Lord. We are to pursue these two things because of the grace of God – peace with God in grace salvation; and, being set apart to heaven in positional sanctification as a basis of functioning under the grace of God. No sin can stand in God's holy presence. So He imputes to the believer absolute righteousness that qualifies us for heaven. That righteousness reconciles us with God's standard. That absolute righteousness sanctifies us (sets us apart) to a life with Him.

1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." Here is a human being, the Lord Jesus Christ, absolutely sinless. When we see Him (when we meet Him in the air at the rapture), we in our human bodies will be absolutely righteous as well. Now that is our position. Then it will be our experience.

So the Christian is to live his life in the light of this future transformation to sinless purity, as is reflected by the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. That is what we are called to do. Please note 1 John 3:3: "Everyone who has this hope (that is of being like Christ in perfect sinlessness) fixed on Him purifies himself just as He is pure." I don't live a sinful life now. I live the kind of life I am destined to live with Him.

In Galatians 6:14, Paul says. "But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Now there's the first important clue. If I'm going to live in this world the kind of a life that is going to be the sinless perfection of Jesus Christ (that will be true of me in heaven), I have to tiptoe through the tulips of this world very carefully. I'm here to be a witness. I am here to be a light. I'm not here to be part of the world system. So my ministry is one thing, but my association is another.

Also, notice Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered Himself up for me." As the song goes, "Christ liveth in me." That's exactly it. If I am in Him, and He has a mission to perform through me, Christ is in me. He lives through me. That is the light. That is the life of grace. You're not hustling and doing it. You're taking your orders, and finding that when your vision has to be brought to a material object, He closes the gap. Prayer makes it possible.

Then there is Galatians 5:24: "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh (the old sin nature with its passions) and its desires." So we find ourselves in the application of this marvelous position in the grace of God because of the reconciliation to God's absolute standard of righteousness, and our sanctification, consequently, of being set aside to eternal life in heaven.

In Hebrews 12:15, the writer goes on to say, "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God." The human spirit of the Christian should be stored with doctrinal truth, including that of reconciliation and sanctification. This information will be cycled up to the mentality of the soul by the Holy Spirit at the appropriate times when you need to remember it. This gives us a frame of reference for the technique of confession of sin to the Father. This gives us the ability to understand how to maintain our temporal fellowship. We know that our reconciliation is complete. We know that our sanctification cannot be revoked. So salvation is not the issue again. When we sin, it's not to be saved again, but to be restored to our fellowship. Reconciliation speaks about the grace of God – peace by the wall being removed between ourselves and God. The Holy Spirit makes this clear to us. Sanctification speaks of the grace of God. Holiness is the result of being in Christ so that we meet all of the demands of God's justice, and the demands of His righteousness against our sin. We don't earn and we don't deserve this position.

You must remember that both the carnal and the spiritual Christian are under the grace of God. Reconciliation and sanctification bring everybody under the grace of God. The churches in Corinth were filled with an enormous number of carnal Christians. They had very bad problems. They had very bad sins going on. But please notice how the apostle begins in 1 Corinthians 1:2: "To the church of God, which is at Corinth (numerous little house churches) to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours." The first thing he does is to say that all those people who are saved, but sinning, are in Christ. They're under the grace blessings of God.

In 1 Corinthians 1:30, he says, "But by His doing, you are in Christ Jesus (not by your doing), who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification (and, consequently, redemption). It is all of God and none of us.

**Confession of Sin**

Now with this information in mind, we can make an application of divine viewpoint concerning our personal sins. We understand how to be restored through confession. We understand how to get out of the stalled pattern that we have fallen into, and get into a recovery from our spiritual stall with 1 John 1:9. So the writer of Hebrews, in verse 15, says. "You see to it that no one come short." This word, "see to it" in Greek is "episkopeo." The Holy Spirit selected this word because it means "to look diligently." Actually, it's made up of two words. The word "epi" means "over," and "skopeo" means "to look." So what it says is "to look over carefully." In the Greek language and Greek culture, this was actually a military term. There was an officer who was appointed to look over the military business of the unit so that he may observe the things that needed to be taken care of – the problem areas. He was an "episkopeo" person. He was looking things over diligently.

The application here is that you and I, as believer priests, are responsible for dealing with our own sins in a way which is compatible with grace. You look over yourself. You don't look over other believers. You leave them to the grace of God to deal with them. But you are very much conscious of being responsible for dealing with your own sin. The believer priest knows that the way to deal with his problem is to cease and desist the sin that the Spirit of God brings to our attention. And He will, unless you are really hard-hearted toward Him. You can get calloused so that you can't even be aware when he's leading you. And when you confess it, the problem is resolved.

This word "episkopeo" is in the present tense, which means it's continual responsibility. So, in effect, it's a command. You don't ever let your guard down about evaluating yourself. And it's active. Only the Christian can inspect himself. But when you get carnal, you don't want to inspect yourself, or you give a false report about yourself. It's a participle, which means it's a life principle for God for living.

So verse 15 says, "You see to it." This is a directive, "that no one come short." You see to it. Take responsibility for your own spiritual life so that you don't come short of the grace of God. No one can carry you in your life situation. Therefore, you have to neutralize sin by confession. Then you have to forget it, and you have to move on (Colossians 3:13-14). The divine principle is based on grace. It is very simple. God says, "I deal with you in grace. I've covered your sin. That is not a problem. Here's what I want you to do. I want you to recognize that your reconciliation to Me cannot be revoked. You are compatible with My absolute righteousness. Because of that, you have been sanctified. You've been set aside to the destiny of heaven, because I've placed you into Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. None of that can be revoked. But boy, can you ever be a dog. I will have to discipline you accordingly. When the correction is necessary to be made, you make it. Then you confess. And then you forget. Don't eat your heart out about it."

**Forgiveness**

Colossians 3:13-14: "Bearing with one another and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone. Just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love, which is a perfect bond of unity." So when Christians injure you and wound you, how should you treat them? The same way the Lord treated you. You didn't deserve it. But you acted with grace. He acted with grace toward you, so you act with grace accordingly. This principle means that you also forget. You don't brood and remember.

Jeremiah 31:34 explains this principal in the Old Testament: "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 sins I will remember no more." Israel had been like a prostitute in their violation of their relationship to God. He said, "When Israel comes back to Me, and confesses, I will forgive them, and I'll never remember what they did to Me. I'll never remember how unloving they were to Me in comparison to what I was doing for them."

That is the pattern for the Christian. If you are a person who has been reconciled to God's standard of righteousness, and you have been sanctified (set apart) to eternal life into the Christian way of life, then grace is always forgiving.

In Isaiah 43, please notice verse 25: "Even I am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins." How dare you or I remember what somebody has done to us? How dare you even think about it, let alone that you dare to mention it – what someone has done to you, and maybe rightly, you have reason to be injured? But God says, "I'm not going to remember it. I'm going to work grace upon you. I will not remember your sins. Once you confess (once you cease and desist), it's gone. That is the grace system. That is where you frustrate the grace of God if you will not live in that way.

Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." The grace of God is made possible by reconciliation to the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ, and has been made possible by sanctification, being put in Christ, so that we are absolutely holy in Him.

Since God forgets, we Christians must do likewise. If we do not, we enter a reaction that sets up a series of new sins. You don't even remember your own sins. Don't ever say something so dumb as, "This is happening now to me because I did this in my youth, or I did this recently." No, God doesn't get even with you. When you have confessed the sin that you're aware of, please remember that 1 John 1:9 also says that He forgives everything else that you may not have remembered in the past. That's why it's so important to deal with what you know, and then it's no longer an issue. So don't insult Him by being preoccupied with what no longer concerns Him, because that is the devil that's doing that to you. That is because if you're preoccupied with your sins, you're not going to be serving. You're not going to be much good in the battle for the Lord. Your mind is distracted. All series sinning (one sin starting from another sin) comes from this mental attitude of remembering.

**Love**

Once we restore to fellowship, the Christian then also has the Spirit of God in charge. When the Christian has God the Holy Spirit in charge, you have mental attitude love functioning. That's how you get love. You don't get it because some preacher pounds away at you to act lovingly. You cannot act lovingly. You have a sin nature. But when you are in the will of God, in fellowship with God the Holy Spirit, then the relaxed mental attitude comes rushing in, and you have mental attitude love once more in possession of your mind. The result of the filling of the Holy Spirit is absolutely then a magnificent life.

Romans 5:5: "And Hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who is given to us." I confess, and what do I get? I get forgiveness, and I get the love of Jesus Christ.

Notice Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law." This is one fruit, but it has segments like parts of an orange. One segment of the fruit of the spirit is love. In the series, very often in the Bible, the first item characterizes it all. This is mental attitude, love. We don't have time here to read 1 Corinthians 13. You might want to read it again just to remind yourself of this love chapter, because this whole chapter is about love. Except that you must understand that the way to read that word love is "filling of the Holy Spirit."

"If I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have the filling of the Holy Spirit, it profits me nothing. That will help you to see the human good. You can do all these things as nothing, but if they're done under the Spirit of God, under His loving motivation, then it is to your eternal blessing. So this mental attitude goodwill of "agape" love, made possible by the fact of the grace of God, neutralizes all other evil in yourself. What you do is to get "agape" love.

Please remember that the core word to describe "agape" love is sacrifice. I put myself out for other people: the attractive, and the unattractive; and, the responsive, and the non-responsive. Paul told Timothy, "Timothy, preach the Word, in season and out of season." This means when people welcome it, and when they do not welcome it. "Preach the Word." Of course, it's needless to say that preaching begins with our own mental attitude toward people, and the attitude of divine goodwill. The spirit of self-sacrifice – that is what we've been called to by the Holy Spirit.

There is a very important reason why all this should be done. I'm amazed how often it is that even Christians who have been around good teaching never get the connection at the end of verse 15. Why should I neutralize sin? Why should I move back under the canopy of the grace of God? Why is this so important? In the next session, we will begin there. Please join us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971

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