***Frustrating the Grace of God, No. 10

Frustrating your Mission - CSP010***

We look today at our subject once more of frustrating the grace of God, segment number ten. One of the disappointments which an enormous number of Christians will experience at the Judgment Seat of Christ in heaven is the way they had frustrated the grace of God in their lives on earth. This is an enormously great tragedy. For most Christians, they're not even alerted to the fact of this great danger of having a life that has a divine mission, and one which God takes seriously, and Whose grace will enable us to perform that mission. If we do not perform it, our loss will be eternal – saved, but poor. It is the grace of God which calls and provides one who is chosen by God with salvation as a gift. This is a gift which is forever secure because it was received on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, apart from any human works.

Following the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Church called the Council of Trent. For something like 14 years, this council kept meeting and debating their theology, so that they could define Catholic theology in contrast to what Luther; Calvin; Zwingli; and, the reformers had taught based upon the literal interpretation of Scripture. The result was that the Catholic Church very definitively identified salvation as associated with the death of Christ on the cross, and to get that death, you had to deserve it. In other words, to get the grace of God, you had to do works. That's a contradiction. You had to become qualified to receive the grace of Christ on the cross.

Therefore, there was the whole system of confession to the priest, forgiveness, and penance. If this was not completely done to satisfy the justice of God, this would continue on into eternity, into a place called purgatory. If you read the quotes from the conclusions of the doctrine of Trent, you will see that the Word of God gives us the total contradiction to it. It says, "For by grace are you saved through faith without any works added to it." So the grace of God is primarily frustrated today by people who try to get to heaven on the basis of something that they do, or something that they add to what Christ has done. When you stop and think about how many denominations do that, how many do you know who wouldn't dream of trying to think about going to heaven without the ritual of water baptism?

I came across a bulletin from the funeral service of one of my relatives in Chicago. In that bulletin, it said, "So-and-so was born on this day, and on this day (usually 8 days later, because they're trying to tie in with circumcision of the Old Testament), he was baptized, and became an heir of the grace of God." I said, "What? Because you perform a holy ritual, the grace of God comes through? That sounds to me like you earn the grace of God by doing something." Grace means you don't do anything to gain God's favor. Then it made it even worse. It was not only that you merited the grace of God, but you became a Christian.

That's Roman Catholicism to the heart. That is at the core of it. Now you have removed "original sin" (they call it that). That baptism wipes away Adam's guilt that has been imputed to all of us. But now you've got your own guilt, and they say that you have to suffer for that.

This is no small thing to talk about frustrating the grace of God. That's why hell is going to be filled with most of the human race for one reason, and one reason alone: that these people insisted on frustrating what God's grace wanted to do for them. This is particularly sad when you realize that the great rallying cry of the Reformation was justification (imputation of absolute righteousness) by faith. They called it "Sola fide." What was it based on? "Sola scriptura," the Latin said. It was based on Scripture alone. Yet, these very denominations, who came out of the reformation and broke off from the Catholic Church, have not grasped the fullness of the grace of God, and they're still baptizing infants in order to secure their access to grace and to enable them to become Christians.

**Spiritual Gifts**

It is the grace of God also, which gives a believer the spiritual gifts (spiritual abilities) – nine of them, that are now currently operational in the church. There were more in the earlier church, but they were temporary: speaking in tongues; healing; and, so on. Now we have these spiritual gifts (nine of them) with which we may serve God. At the point of a believer's salvation, he is given at least one spiritual gift. Others are given more than one. These are given as abilities to perform spiritual service to God. Your natural abilities cannot perform service to God. Whatever you're good at, naturally, is not a vehicle for serving God, unless you also are given the gift of ministering.

I'm inclined (my own opinion) to think that every believer, whatever other spiritual gift he has, does have the gift of ministering, so that his natural abilities (whatever they are) are sanctified under the gift of ministering. For example, God takes your great ability to sing. That's not a spiritual gift. It's a natural gift. He uses it under the gift of ministry to achieve spiritual results. Whatever it is that you're good at, just on the human level, the gift of ministering covers it.

But it's the grace of God that gives you these spiritual gifts. For what purpose? So you may fulfill your divinely appointed mission of service, and thus you may qualify for rewards in heaven. We are beginning to make inroads on the minds of people who, all of a sudden, are beginning to catch on, "Now I know what I'm here for." Previously, they had said, "I thought I was here to enjoy the good life. I thought I was here to have fame and fortune. I thought I was here to work at all those things. I thought I was here to get all I can and can all I get." No, you're here to fulfill the great commission. Did you ever hear of that? We went over it in detail last week. That's what you're here for – to get the gospel to people, and then to get, not the gospel alone, but the full counsel of the Word of God – to give them the full doctrines of the church age, so that they know the spiritual assets that are theirs only because they belong to the royal family of the church. Nobody else has ever had this in ages past.

And that's why it's going to be a very serious time when the rapture takes place, and then we all line up. We're called, and we stand there, and God looks through the books, as the book of Revelation says. He looks on one side of the page and says, "This was the mission" (Ephesians 2:10) – the works that God has ordained for you to do, for which you were given certain spiritual gifts to perform, and you ignored it. The Lord will say, "It doesn't look good, Sam. Your mission wasn't really fulfilled very well. You had all the spiritual gifts; you had all the spiritual abilities; you had all the money; you had all the means; and, you had all the physical well-being. You had everything, but you drifted off into thinking that you're just like all the other people of the world. Did you never read in Hebrews, Sam, that we are strangers and pilgrims on this earth? We are strangers and pilgrims, and not hustlers with the world's society. You're moving as a light to it, not as a part of it."

**The Mind of God**

Then there's another thing that the grace of God does. It enables a Christian to be able to secure the mind of God. Nothing is more wonderful than to be able to think the way that God thinks. Sometimes we make decisions and we make declarations to people on spiritual things, and people say to us, "What do you think? You're God?" If they say that to me, and it's a spiritual principle, I say, "Yes, at the moment I'm thinking just like God. I don't have His abilities, but I have His mind. I'm giving you the straight scoop, because it is His thinking." It is the grace of God that enables us to learn doctrine. The word "doctrine" means "teaching." The mind of God is only found in the teaching principles that are laid out in the Word of God. That's why the Bible says that there's nothing else in life for you but doctrine – to acquire the mind of God, so that you can deal with the issues of life.

I attended a party last night. One man came up and said, "We're looking for a new preacher at our church." In fact, people kept coming up such that I could hardly enjoy the party. I wanted to get out there and jive and do all the other stuff, but these people kept coming up talking about the Bible. This man said, "It's really a problem for me. I don't know what kind of a preacher we want." So I said, "Well, I'll tell you this. God knows, and He has a way. Here's an order of events. The local church is the agency. If this preacher you get is not somebody who stands up and explains the Bible to you, there's no way you're going to have the mind of God. I guarantee it."

If you don't give the mind of God through doctrine, what he's going to give you is his emotional outlook. He's going to play your emotions, and that's going to be heady stuff. Boy, you're going to get so excited, because he'll get the music going. The music will be jumping and jiving. Man alive, it will be really great stuff. They'll turn the volume up and you'll say, "Man, this is where it's at." They will play on all those emotional factors in you. When it's over, and the time of crises comes, that's when you're going to know what a big hole you have, while you are on absolute nothing, as a Christian, for meeting the issues of life. It is only those who have been taught the doctrines of Scripture, and who know how to stay in temple fellowship, so that they sit in a church service and it hits the mind, and the will comes up, and the Holy Spirit kicks that mind and says, "Yes." And you say, "Yes." That information pops down into the human spirit, and it's stored in some appropriate compartment, and you're a human being walking around with the wisdom of God.

And what do you do? Now you come up to some issue of life, and God the Holy Spirit says, "Yeah, we dealt with that. It's in compartment number 32." And He kicks it up to your mind. And you say, "That's right, Lord. I remember that now." After a while you begin to go to the Lord, and you start praying constantly, as the Bible says ("pray without ceasing"), and you say, "Lord, what about this problem? What information do we have on this? What guidance?" He says, "Compartment number 40." The Holy Spirit kicks it open. And you say, "That's right. I remember now." You know what to do. But if compartment 40 is empty because nobody has ever filled it with the appropriate doctrine, you're going to be empty. You're not going to know what to do. You can go in and pray yourself blue in the face, and you're going to get nothing. This is serious business – that grace, and grace alone, enables us to learn the Word of God. If you don't go by grace to learn it, then you're going to fall prey to emotion.

**Temporal Fellowship**

Furthermore, the grace of God enables a believer to maintain temporal fellowship with God the Father on earth, and thus, you can live a godly life in the devil's world. You can beat the devil at his own game. You don't have to be his victim. Also, you're not intimidated about it. You're walking through this world. Very often, you hear on television somebody who's being described as a really clean-cut type of person, who doesn't smoke; doesn't chew; and, doesn't go with girls who do. And a guy says, "Well, what kind of a character is that? What fun do you have in life?" I have the fun of being right. I have the fun of having God put His arm around me and saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant." I have the fun of taking my money and socking it into the bank of heaven where no one else is going to get it. I'm not going to leave it behind for some relatives to sock it to themselves. It is the grace of God that enables us to live the godly life in the devil's world, and not be intimidated by it.

**Treasures in Heaven**

Furthermore, it is the grace of God that enables us to store our treasures in heaven by being a good and honest steward of God's money, and trust it to His care and use. Until a Christian understands the great commission that we looked at recently, and until he understands that it is his call to make the Word of God known to people, then the use of his money in God's business doesn't make any sense. But once he realizes, "I've got a very complicated human body, and the breathing system is up in the brain. When that shuts down, that's it." You're not going to breathe again. That breathing system is under the control of God the Holy Spirit, and it's is going to be constantly kept working until one of two things happens:

On the one hand, you have run the course; you have finished your call; and, you've fulfilled your mission. As Paul says, "I'm ready for my departure. I fought the good fight. I've finished my call." On the other hand, you go so far into the world system as a Christian (so far adrift out of the concept of serving God with the great commission), that the Lord says, "There's no use in your staying on earth. You might as well come home to heaven early." And the Lord jerks you out. It is the grace of God that enables us to have the means, the ability, and the motivation to store treasures in heaven with what He is entrusted to our care. You don't store treasures in heaven with what He has entrusted to other people.

**The Great Commission**

Then the grace of God enables a believer to fulfill the great commission as God's witness to all the world. This is our life. Every Christian, for this purpose, has a very specific allotment of time. We all have that particular allotment of days to do the job. The Lord says, "Here's the job I have for you, and it's going to take this many days of life for you to do it." This is what Job 14:5 points out to us: "Since his days are determined." Across every Christian's forehead is a computer. It has lights which are clicking on. This is like people who were putting up signs before the year 2000, to click off the time to the beginning of the new millennium. By that they meant the year 2000. (The new millennium didn't begin, of course, until the year 2001.) But you could stand there, and it was amazing. These things were clicking off second-by-second. That's what it is across every believer's forehead. God looks and says, "Sam's got another year left to finish the job. Boy, does he have a lot to do. Oh, over here, we've got a month to go, and then the time will run out."

**Physical Vitality**

That's what Job says, "His days are determined. The number of his months is with You, and his limits You have set so that he cannot pass." You will not go one day beyond what they clicked into your lifespan at the point of your conception.

However, you can shorten the time. The Scripture says, "Why would you shorten your life by forgetting your calling?" The Lord Jesus Christ, following the rapture of the church, will be there for a time of accounting of our assigned divine mission in life. At the rapture, we all get checked over. The Christian's eyes, therefore, should focus on that event. Unfortunately, many Christians are never alerted to how important that focus is. But Ephesians 2:10 makes this clear: "For we (we Christians) are His God's workmanship (created a new creature in Christ Jesus)." Why? "For good works." Which good works? "Which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

So I'm not making this up. I'm not just trying to get people out there hustling with the idea they have a mission in life. This is doctrine. These are, "The works prepared beforehand" – before you ever born, "That we should walk in them" – not in any other works. That's what the Judgment Seat of Christ is all about. This is what should have been; but, this is what was. This is what could have been. This is how it ends up. The Bible says that focusing one's life on the things of the earth below is wasting your lifespan and its potential for one's enrichment and eternity with rewards for service to God (Luke 9:23-25).

So who does each day's physical vitality belong to? It belongs to God, to be used in your life journey of service. It is either life by grace, or by the old sin nature. That's what it comes down to. If it's life by grace, it's going to be by the spiritual power system that only church age people have. This is by the filling of the Holy Spirit because He indwells us, and filling means that we release Him to work through the confession of our own sins. Then we have the divine wisdom of doctrine in the mind of the soul. Again and again, the Bible makes clear that this divine system is the way that God intends for us to live.

Please notice 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: "Therefore, we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day-by-day." Yes, once you hit 16 years of age, it's downhill in the body. Until about that time, you're going up, and everything's getting better. Then, it's decaying. Our outer man is decaying, but our inner man is being renewed day-by-day. How? There are two ways: the Word of God; and, fulfilling your mission. That's the way to stay young. That's the way to stay physically at the prime of life. The Lord doesn't want to knock anybody off His team; that is, anybody who is in operational condition, and who is determined to be a winner because he's living for the purpose of God with all he is and all he has.

Verse 17: "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison." Christian service is not easy. Verse 18: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." When the poor widow gave her two mites, God was looking at what was not seen: her spirit of dedication and devotion; and, her sense of calling to her mission. God was also looking at the things that were not seen in those Pharisees who were being so proud of themselves because they could give so much more than that poor old lady.

2 Corinthians 4:1-15 is a little more extended passage here now: "For we know that if the earthly tent, which is our house (that is, our body) is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Once this body is put in the grave, there is a temporary body that you take in heaven in which your soul and spirit resides. "For indeed, in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven." Indeed, we have a lot of folks around Berean Church who are groaning with this ache; that ache; this distress; and, that distress on the physical level.

Verse 3: "And as much as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked." We will have a house in heaven until our body is resurrected, and our soul and spirit return to it. "For indeed, while we are in this tent (our human bodies), we groan, being burdened because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now He, who prepared us for this very purpose, is God, He who gave us the Spirit as a pledge." We want to be clothed in a body, and we want to be swallowed up by life. What life? The life to which God has called you in your abilities and your service. The one who prepared you is God. He has given us the pledge of the Holy Spirit that we can perform the mission.

"Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. That's how we know that. We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore, also, we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him." That's it. To be pleasing to Him." That's all I want in life. I thought you wanted a Cadillac. No. I want to be pleasing to Him. I thought you wanted one of those extended limousines. No, I want to be pleasing to Him. Well, why do I want to be pleasing to Him? Why can't I just enjoy the good life? Look at all this stuff I have now.

Verse 10: "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." If you frustrate the grace of God and the potential in your life, then you will frustrate what could have been at that Judgment Seat for you.

Drop your eyes down to 2 Corinthians 4:14-15: "For the love of Christ controls, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore, all died. And He died for all that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on his behalf. The Lord Jesus Christ died for us. He died for us all. We died in Him. Why did we die in Him? So that we could be resurrected with Him? Resurrected with Him to do what? To keep living the life that we died to? No: "That we will now live the life of Christ." We like to sing, "Christ liveth in me." He's going to live out the life. If we are honest with ourselves and quit lying, we look at ourselves, and say, "Boy, I don't know how much Christ is living in me, as I look upon myself through my days. And how much is Sam Jones living for himself?"

**Frustrating Your Mission**

So what's the bottom line? Beware of frustrating the grace of God in your life by ignoring your mission in life. Can you do that? You bet. That's what grace is all about. You can dig yourself in a hole and cover yourself over. That's what grace will do for you. Or you can say, as we read in Psalm 119 in a previous session, we can rise to the highest heights and we can rise to the most magnificent brilliance of God's light and provision. Then when we enter the New Jerusalem, life is really going to be rich. Everybody can make the choice.

You can never again say, "I didn't know." All of this has been made very clear. You'll say, "I didn't think it was that important, and I wasn't sure that it was so. That's why I didn't become a fanatic." You don't want to be a fanatic in spiritual things? Why? At the football game today, all those fans are going to be there. What are those "fans?" That's just a short word for "fanatics." All you have to do is drive there and see them trudging in the rain up and down the hill and sloshing in there to sit in the stadium to do what? Well, those fanatics are going to yell at a bunch of guys who are chasing a pigskin full of air; and cheering the guy who can knock the other guys out of the way the best; and, the guy who can run the ball around the best. That's what they're going to do all afternoon. They're going to be cheering. They're fans. We want to be squishy about being fans of the Lord Jesus Christ? Every day of our life, this is what we're going to be.

We created a monster in Jack Smith in Kentucky, when he found our tape in that prison library and became a student of the Word of God. That's all he does now that he's retired. I lose a lot of sleep several days a week because he forgets Eastern Standard Time is not the same as Central Standard Time. And man, he's got his kitchen table covered with his books, and he's rearing to go. Then something comes to his mind, and he hits that phone and wakes me up because he has to talk to me. He'll say, "You know, doctrine is the only way to go. Doctrine is what is our life. I've got my table spread, and I'm ready to go. I talked to this person and that person."

Incidentally, I want to remind you about Colonel Robinson of the Marine Corps. He has a serious case of cancer. He is a friend of Jack Smith's from his time in the Corps. He asked us to pray for him. That's one of the things he called for, because prayer is a doctrinal principle that changes things.

Here is somebody who wakes up in the morning; feeds on the Word; and, then like a lion, he's out there prowling at the 7-Eleven and at the malls. He's watching this spot, as he's got the gift of discernment to tell, "Here's the soul that's seeking." He goes up, says something, and bingo, the signal comes through because the Word of God said, "That's the one. Zero in on her." Sure enough, he finds people who need the Word. He talks to them, and then he says, "I'll come back with a little cassette tape. We'll explain more of what we don't have time do now." He goes home; makes a tape for him; and, brings it back to him. That takes a lot of time. And he's the constable of Wingo, Kentucky. He handles his business like Judge Roy Bean used to do who sat by the Pecos River. He sits in his front yard, and people come to him as he does his constable business. What kind of a guy is this involved in the world? He's a Christian guy who knows his calling.

I like the phrase, "Only one life to live, twill soon be passed, only what's done for Christ will last." So let the grace of God make you forever a magnificent royal person in His family. It's all up to you. If you want to look from one vision to the next, you'll never run out until the end of your life." For God will say, "Now do this. We're going to do this. We're going to accomplish this." The result will be the enrichment that you'll bring to people's lives. So you people won't be coming up to you like they were doing to me last night, and I could see their spiritual poverty, as some of them talk would about "their better days." The good days are now, and you can be the agent of God for that.

For that reason, we have been taking very seriously Hebrews 12:15: "See to it that no one come short of the grace of God" – to frustrate the grace of God. What he is saying is to not live a life which is governed by the old sin nature. That's what frustrates the grace of God. Don't live a life which is governed by the world's society that frustrates the grace of God. Don't live a life where Satan is your motivator, and your ideal maker. That frustrates the grace of God. But be governed by the system of power that belongs to the grace age believer.

Colossians 23:5: "Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry." This is not speaking to unbelievers here. This is speaking to Christians – how to live the Christian life. What are you talking about, Paul? "Consider your physical body dead to immoral actions; your mouth and mind dead to impurity of thought; and, your expression dead to sinful passions and evil desires." Then he caps it all off with greed – to get all I can, and can all I get. Don't be like so many who are never satisfied, but who pile it up and pile it up. They don't go out and use it for the Lord's glory so that He can, as He said, "I'll return it shaken down, full-pressed down hard," and you'll end up with more than you had. The serious thing is that greed amounts to idolatry. It is idolatry because what are you worshiping? You're worshiping material things.

**Your Needs**

Then Philippians 4:19 says, "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." We say, "Oh, no, I can't believe that. You know how old I am, don't you? I know what it is be eating soup every day. I came through the depression. I'm never going to let myself be in a place where I don't have lots of money." That's like Scarlett O'Hara in Gone with the Wind. That's what she said, "I'll never be poor again," after the war was over. Boy, did she ever play the game of Satan? Then when she found herself at the end, that everything she had accumulated was not satisfying, she had nothing. She was left there. Finally, she's desperate, all alone, and lonely. Rhett Butler finally is fed up with her, and he has her number, and he says, "That's it. I'm leaving, Scarlett." All she is is a pile of idolatry of material things: "I'll never be poor again."

The Bible says, "I'll trust in Christ who says, "I'll never leave you nor forsake you." So Rhett Butler walks down that long stair and she says," Please, please." She's pleading with him. Then he turns and looks at her. She says, "But Rhett, what's going to happen to me now?" And then, with a word which was never uttered in the movies before, for the first time, Rhett said, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn." They hardly were able to get that past the censor. Can you believe that, in those days? It was a Bible word at that. And he walks out the door, and there she sits with all her things around her. But the worst was yet ahead, when she had to face God.

So this is what is behind Philippians 4:19. Don't just say, "Yeah, that's is a nice little verse – My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." But some people say, "My God shall supply all your needs according to how hard I work, and keep it, and save it. Don't let it get out of my hand to be invested in the Lord's work. After all, I only have a month to live. I don't want to be poor and not have what I need. "To His riches and glory in Christ Jesus." Well, you either believe that or you don't. "His riches in Christ Jesus according to His glory." That should be good enough. 2 Corinthians 5:10, again, is that judgment seat accountability. That's where it all comes together.

So here's the grace of God. It is everything that is so wonderful; everything that we should be; and, everything that we can be, and we decide whether we're going to rise to it or not. If you don't, then you begin losing your sensitivity and your love for God the Father. Then you begin finding yourself drifting off into the world system, and you find yourself like Scarlett O'Hara. You have everything, and you've lost your life. She was a great example of what the Bible says, "What does it profit a man (a believer Christian person) if he gains the whole world, and loses his life. You tell me.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1999

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