

HOW TO LIVE OUT THE GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE IN A MANNER OF GRACE

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SUMPHUTOS

Romans 6:5

I. INTRODUCTION:

This morning I would like to proclaim a message that will hopefully be as meaningful to you as it has been to me. This sermon may actually be summarized in one word. It is not a word I made up or a word that you often hear. It was a word I discovered. When I discovered this one word it was like the throne room of God itself opened up before me. Like the experience the Apostle John had when exiled at the end of his life, it was a Patmos moment for me.

It happened approximately ten-twelve years ago or so. We were living in East Dallas at the time. I was attending Dallas Seminary. I was sitting at the dining room table one afternoon diagramming in Greek the Book of Romans; it was another typical day of studying. It was there, when I was studying the first fourteen verses of Romans 6 that this unbelievable moment occurred.

I came across a N.T. word that I've never seen before in the Greek text. Mystified by what it actually meant I opened up my Greek dictionary and lo and behold, it was like heaven unfolded I found myself overwhelmed. After doing further research to confirm what I read and understood, I found myself on my knees in utter thankfulness and joy.

In fact I am still convinced to this day that there has never been a word uttered which is so far reaching in its implication, or which is fraught with greater meaning to believers than this one word. It is a word with such a usual emphasis that its truth should arrest you, change your life, and your outlook. In fact, any discontentment, any dissatisfaction with your person, and any lack of peace, should evaporate if you will take ownership of this mysterious truth. What is this word you ask? The word is "*sumphutos*." Yes, "*sumphutos*." In fact, the title of this sermon is "*sumphutos*."

II. EXPOSITION:

A. It is found and found only in Romans 6:5: Let's open our Bibles to Romans 6:5 and let me read the verse 5-6 and I will show the specific word to you:

"For if [assumed true for sake of argument] we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing that our old man has crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."

B. The word "*sumphutos*" in my New King James is translated as "*united together*." Depending upon the Bible version you are using "*sumphutos*" may be translated as...

1. we have been grafted into
2. we have been planted together
3. we have become united with
4. we have grown into union with him

5. we have become one with Him
 6. we have become assimilated
- C. It is a word that only occurs here in the New Testament.
- D. What does “*sumphutos*” mean? It means to “*grow in union*” or “*to plant in union.*”
1. Some N.T. scholars (like Murray) stress a horticultural application of this word and compare this word to Jesus’ teaching about the vine and the branches. If that is the case, then this is what *sumphutos* describes:
 - a. *Sumphutos* “*describes two plants that have been planted together and are growing together.*” Not only have they been planted together, but have growing together to such an extent that they are not only intertwined, but united.
 - c. My *Nelson Study Bible* puts this way:

The context speaks of union, our union with Christ in His death (Romans 6:4) and resurrection (6:5). Our union with Christ in death is like being planted with Him. Like a seed, our sinful natures must die with Christ so that we might grow in Christ and bear spiritual fruit (John 12:24). Our union with Christ is now a loving union, in which we are growing with Him “in the likeness of His resurrection.”
 - d. Regardless if the word has a horticultural application or not, like N.T. scholar Douglas Moo states, the word simply means “**joined**” or “*united.*”¹ Charles Hodge states it is “the idea of an intimate union.”²
- E. This idea that I’m united together with Jesus Christ leads me to consider the following questions. Now these questions and the answers I give are only applicable to believers. But this does not mean that you can’t experience this union. Jesus Christ extends an invitation to you as well. If you will place your trust in Jesus Christ, believing that He is God, and who died on the cross for your sins and rose bodily from the dead, then what I present will be true for you as well—once you receive the free gift of eternal life in the open arms of faith.
- So, what are the questions I seek to answer?
1. To whom have you been united?
 2. How was that union made possible and when did this take place?
 3. To what extent are you united?
 4. What are the implications of that union
- F. But before I answer these four questions and conclude with a final thought, let me tell you where I will be going. The title of this 4-message series is:

¹ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 368.

² Charles Hodge, *Epistle to the Romans*, 196.

How to live out the gift of grace in a manner of grace?

1. Tonight will be the second installment where I will talk about **abusing God's grace by showing no grace**. The legalist attempts to usurp the authority of God's gift of grace by saying it was insufficient.
2. Then next Sunday morning I will explore the **Predictive Promise of the Person of Grace: Isaiah 52:13-53:12**. His gift of grace us reminds us how costly it was.
3. Then next Sunday night I will conclude the series by looking at another abuse of God's grace. That lesson is **titled, Abusing God's grace by twisting grace**. In that lesson I will explore licentiousness; Licentiousness makes a rebellious mockery of his gift of grace and expresses a lack of gratitude.

Whereas the legalist shouts, the licentious whisper.

G. First question: To whom have you been united?

1. If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, believing that He is God and died on the cross for your sins and rose bodily from the dead, then you have been grafted into, planted together, united with, grown into union, have become one with no other than that 2nd Person of the one and only Triune God: Jesus Christ.
2. **Who is He?**
 - a. He is Undiminished Deity, Perfect Humanity!
 - b. Consider His Perfections: He is the One whose attributes may be described as infinite perfections. Every perfection that describes the Father and the Holy Spirit also describes the Son:
 1. He is all-powerful
 2. He is all-loving
 3. He is everywhere present
 4. He is infinite love
 5. He is immutable
 6. He is infinitely and perfectly holy
 7. He is personal.
 - c. Consider the names and titles of Jesus Christ. Did you know the Bible records 108 names and titles for him? In his work, *Immanuel*, John Witmer writes: "The fact that so many names and titles exist to describe the Lord Jesus underscores the fullness and complexity of His person...just as the multitude of facets in a diamond increases its brilliance, so the many names and title of Christ reveal Him as "the radiance of God's glory" (Heb. 1:3). To who are you joined? You are united to...

The Lord our Righteousness
The Anointed One
The Root of Jesse

The Son of the Most High God
The Son of the Living God
Prince of Peace
Ruler of the kings of the Earth
The Savior of the world
The Image of the Invisible God
The Firstborn of all Creation
The Firstborn from the dead
The Good Shepherd
Immanuel
Lamb of God
Word of Life
Faithful and True
The Overseer
The Author and Perfector of our Faith
The Lion of the Tribe of Judah
The Head of the Church

You are united to no other than the King of kings and Lord of lords. Well, this leads us to the second set of questions.

H. **Second set of questions: How was the union even made possible and when did this take place?**

This union was made possible by the Holy Spirit. At that moment you placed your faith in Jesus Christ you were baptized into one body by the One Holy Spirit, who baptizes every member of the elect, upon salvation, into Christ's death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and glorification. This is clear in view of other passages such as Galatians 3:27: "*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*" [The baptism is not a reference to water baptism in this context but baptism by the Holy Spirit].

What does it mean to be baptized into His body? The Geek word, *bapto*, from which we get the word baptize, literally means "*to dip*," "*to plunge*," or "*to immerse*." It is the word that was used by the fuller or the dyer who prepared cloth. The dyer took the cloth and put into the dye vat; and when that cloth was taken out of the dye vat, its entire appearance was changed. The dyer or fuller was said to have "*baptized*" the cloth.

This word had both a literal and a symbolic usage. When it was used literally, it had to do with dipping, plunging, or putting something into something else. But in its symbolic usage, it meant "*to change identity*"; that is, to change the outward appearance....Clearly, Paul was not saying that we have been dipped into dye. Rather, his point was that we have changed our identity by forming a new union with Jesus Christ....

When 1 Corinthians 12:13 refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and teaches that all believers were baptized into one Spirit, this passage is saying that we have been identified with Jesus Christ; we are united with Him in all He experienced.³

³ Pentecost, *Designed to be Like Him*, 111-12.

When did this take place? The timing of this union is two-fold in that it is the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit which joins the believer via *conversion* to the historical event that took place approximately 2,000 years ago with the death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Jesus Christ.⁴ Therefore, upon salvation, the reality of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ that took place historically is applied to the believer.⁵ This is evident in Romans 6:3-5, Colossians 2:11-14, and by association, 1 Cor. 12:13.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit joins the believer to Christ, separating him from the old life and associating him with the new. He is no longer ‘in Adam’ but is ‘in Christ.’⁶

Chafer Writes: “There is no other work of God for the individual which seems to accomplish so much as the baptism with the Spirit; for by it the living union with Christ is established forever, and by virtue of that union the believer has entered the sphere of all heavenly *positions* and all eternal *possessions* which in grace are provided for him in Christ. To the Christians, Christ has become, in the divine reckoning, the sphere of his being, and this reckoning contemplates all that the Christian is and that he *does*.⁷”

I. Third question: To what extent are you united?

I’m going to answer this question in two ways. First, I’m going to show you how the union is a reality that transcends time. Then secondly, I will show the extent of this identification in view of Christ’s history becoming your history. What I’m about to say to you is mysterious but I want you to carefully listen. These are truths we have to simply believe, to reckon to be true.

1. In order to show how powerful this concept is I first want to contrast this biblical idea with word pictures that are used with reference to your future afterlife.
2. In the New Testament there are six images or word pictures of the afterlife for you who are believers.

⁴ J. Dwight Pentecost, *Designed to Be Like Him* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 111.

⁵ As Douglas Moo states:

Since, then, the text does not allow us to focus on the cross or our own experience as the ‘time’ of our being buried with Christ, we are forced to the conclusion that we are dealing with a category that transcends it. Our dying, being buried, and being resurrected with Christ are experiences that transfer us from the old age to the new. But the transition from old age to new, while applied to individuals at their conversion, has been accomplished through the redemptive work of Christ on Good Friday and Easter. Paul’s *syn* refers to a ‘redemptive-historical’ ‘withness’ [his term, not a misspelling] whose locus is *both* the cross and resurrection *and* Christ-where the ‘shift’ in ages took place historically-and the conversion of every believer-when this ‘shift’ in ages becomes applicable to the individual [*The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 365].

⁶ Charles C. Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible: Expanded Edition* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986, 1995), 1798.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 307.

- a. Future image of triumph, usually pictured by the image of a crown (1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Tim. 2:5; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 3:11; 6:2), reigning (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21) and judging with Christ (1 Cor. 6:2-3).
 - c. Future image is of the afterlife is that of a reward for endurance in the faith in the present life—a state that Jesus calls the “joy of your master” in Matthew 25:21-23 and that is elsewhere simply called a “reward” (1 Cor. 3:14; Rev. 22:12) or “prize” (Col. 2:18).
 - c. A third image of the afterlife is the “glory” that believers receive; it will be permanent, unfading (1 Cor. 9:25; 15:42-57; 1 Pet. 1:4; 5:4).
 - d. A fourth image is the dwelling place that Jesus has gone to prepare (John 14:1-3) and a state that is “reserved” for believers (1 Pet. 1:4).
 - e. A fifth image of the afterlife is found in 1 Corinthians 15 and Revelation 2:17, which states that each saint in heaven will be given a new name known only to that person and Christ.
 - f. And sixth we have the future image of the ongoing activity and experience of worship (Rev. 4; 19:1-9).
3. So, after you die there will be triumph, rewards, permanent glory, a place reserved for you in heaven, a new name, and heavenly worship will be your experience.
- a. Two things I want you to know:
 - 1. First, these word pictures that all point to the future.
 - 2. They are certainties.
 - 3. Thus, these images all point to future certainties.
4. But there is another image Paul uses to present a picture of the afterlife. But this time he does not simply use a picture that simply points to a future certainty. Rather, he uses image of future reality that breaks into our present world. Here’s the contrast:
- a. The reality of our resurrection to a new life is so certain that the apostle Paul speak of that resurrection in past tense. Listen to Colossians 3:1-4

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁸
 - b. In Romans 6:5 Paul’s point is that when one becomes united with Christ that union has immediate implications. Since Christ has been raised from the dead, so also have those who are united to him. It is not that your

⁸The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Col 3:1-4.

resurrection (if you are a believer) is solely a past event, but you, by virtue of your union with Christ, participate now in that future reality.

- c. Then in Ephesians 2:6 you are so united to Christ that ‘God has raised you up with Christ and seated you with him in the heavenly realms. In other words, your union with Christ is so intimate, so dynamic, that you, in some mysterious sense, you already raised from the dead and sitting with Christ in heaven.

Listen to Ephesians 2:5-6:

Ephesians 2:5-6: “*Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive⁹ together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and⁶ raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...*”

- d. So, what is the upshot? Because you are united with Christ your future is a present reality. Your union with Christ transcends time.
- e. But not only is your future a present reality. But Christ’s history has also become your history.

Consider the extent to which you are identified with Jesus Christ not just in time, but in history.

BAPTIZED INTO THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST:

A. Galatians 2:20 : “*I am crucified with Christ.*” This means that when Jesus Christ died, I was so identified and united with Him that I died also. I was crucified with Christ.

B. Romans 6:3: “*Or do you not know that all of us [believers] who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?*” Therefore, believers are buried with him by baptism into death. Just as Christ was raised up from the death by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

C. Romans 6:8: “*Now if [since] we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*”¹⁰

D. Colossians 1:21-22: “*And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, (22) yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach-*“

⁹ The phrase, “*made us alive*” is from the Greek word συζωοποιέω (*syzōpoieō*) and it means to “raise to life with , make alive with.” It is used here and in Colossians 2:13.

As Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost states:

“This then is the first great fact: We were identified with Christ in His death, so that when Christ died, we died. Now this is not something we can prove, this is not something that, experientially, we can put to a test and demonstrate. This is a fact of divine revelation that we are called upon to believe. We were not consciously present. We have no sensory perception of our death with Christ, but it was nonetheless a real death. We were baptized by the Spirit into Christ Jesus, and by that act we were baptized into Christ Jesus, as we also were baptized into His death. Thus the first great work of Christ in which we were identified was His death.”¹¹

Therefore:

1. When an individual, a member of the elect, (who is in Adam) receives the free gift of Salvation by placing his or her trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, he or she is incorporated into, united to Jesus Christ, which includes being united to his death.
2. Being united to Jesus’ Christ’s death means that Jesus’ death becomes our death.
3. Holy Spirit’s ministry of baptism makes this a spiritual reality.

Not only are you baptized into Christ’s death, but you are baptized into Christ’s burial.

BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST’S BURIAL:

- A. Romans 6:4:** *“We are buried with him by baptism into Death.”*
- B. Colossians 2:12:** *“Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the death.”*

As Dr. Pentecost observes:

“Burial removes the deceased one from the sphere in which he was born. We were born once into this world, over which Satan is prince. But by burial we are removed from this sphere. Just as burial is the consequence of death, and Christ’s body was put into the grave because He had died, so we who have died with Christ have been buried with Christ. We were not conscious of our burial, we had no sense of the tomb closing over us; yet this burial is nonetheless real, a fact to be believed, a truth on which we can reckon.”¹²

Therefore:

1. If we are united to Jesus Christ by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then his burial becomes our burial. In other words, burial with Christ is a

¹¹ J. Dwight Pentecost, *Designed to Be Like Him* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 112.

¹² Pentecost, *Designed to Be Like Him*, 112.

description of the believer's participation in Christ's own burial. So, it is not that the Christian is in his own grave, but by means of the Holy Spirit, he or she is set alongside Jesus Christ in his.¹³

Not only were you baptized into Christ's death and burial, but you were also baptized into Christ's resurrection.

BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST'S RESURRECTION:

- A. **Romans 6:5:** *"like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death [and the passage states that we assuredly have], we shall be also in that likeness of his resurrection."*
- B. **Ephesians 1:19-20:** *⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ¹⁴*
- C. **Ephesians 2:1:** Paul affirms that we too have been raised by God's power. How can it be said that we have been raised? Because we were identified with Christ in His resurrection. *"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins..."*
- D. **Ephesians 2:5-6:** *"Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive¹⁵ together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and ⁶ raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus..."*
- E. **Philippians 3:10:** In this passage the apostle Paul expresses the desire of his heart that he might *"know him, and the power of his resurrection."*
- F. **Colossians 2:12:** *"buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."*
- G. **Colossians 3:1:** *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God."¹⁶*

¹⁴The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Eph 1:19-20.

¹⁵ The phrase, "made us alive" is from the Greek word συζωοποιέω (*syzōpoieō*) and it means to "raise to life with , make alive with." It is used here and in Colossians 2:13.

¹⁶ The word used for "raised" in Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 2:12, and here in 3:1 is συνεγείρω [*sunegeiro*] It is used only three times in N.T. This verb may have one of two nuances: **1** to raise together, to cause to raise together. **2** to raise up together from mortal death to a new and blessed life dedicated to God. Interestingly, in the LXX, this same Greek verb is used in Isa. 14:9: *"Hell from beneath is excited about you, to meet you at your coming; It stirs up the dead from you, All the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones All the kings of the nations."*

Therefore:

1. Power brought Jesus Christ to resurrection
2. Power was experienced by the Apostle, a child of God.
3. Power can be experienced by any child of God because believers have been resurrected with Jesus Christ.

Not only were you baptized into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, but you were baptized into Christ's ascension and glorification.

BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST'S ASCENSION AND GLORIFICATION:

- A. Ephesians 2:6:** God *"has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ."*
- B. Romans 8:29-30:** The apostle reminds us that those who have been predestined and called by God that *"whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified; them he also glorified."*¹⁷

Therefore: Apostle Paul declares of his present position before the Father as one who has been identified with Jesus Christ in His ascension and His glorification.

5. Let me summarize my answer to the question: To what extent have you been identified with Christ? You are identified in His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and glorification whereby you died with Christ (Gal. 2:20), were buried with Christ (Rom. 6:4), rose with Christ (Rom. 6:4-5), ascended with Christ, and glorified with Christ (Rom. 8:30; Eph. 2:6).

J. Last question: What are the implications of the union? They are staggering!

Like Lewis S. Chafer states, *"To be in Christ is to be in the sphere of His own infinite Person, power, and glory. He surrounds, He protects, He separates from all else, and He indwells the one in Him. He also supplies in Himself all that a soul will ever need in time or eternity."*¹⁸

1. The implication is: I am in Christ and Christ is in me.
2. As L.S. Chafer stated:

The believer is in Christ, and Christ is in the believer. The believer is in Christ as to positions, possessions, safe-keeping, and association; and Christ is in the believer giving life, character, and dynamic for conduct.

¹⁷ The term, "glorified" is from δοξάζω (*doxazō*) *to render or esteem glorious*. Interestingly, though glorification is in the future, it is stated here in the past tense. Therefore, everyone, who as foreknown by God in eternity past has such a certain future that the apostle claims their glorification as already accomplished.

¹⁸ Lewis S. Chafer, *Grace: The Glorious Theme* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1922, 1950), 303.

It is very important to note that the phrase, “*in Christ*,” and its equivalents, “*In Christ Jesus*,” “*In Him*,” “*In the Beloved*,” “*Through Him*,” and “*With Him*,” appear in the New Testament no less than 130 times. Consider the interesting fact that there is no hint of a possible position of this magnitude, this union with 2nd Person of the Trinity, in the Mosaic Law, prophecy, kingdom teachings, historical typology, or other teachings of the Old Testament. Nonetheless, this union with Jesus Christ, Undiminished Deity and Perfect Humanity is historical fact in Pauline Scriptures, foreordained by God in eternity past (Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:2-23).¹⁹

Great way to illustrate this relationship of the believer in Christ and Christ is in the believer is this way: The bird is in the air and air is in the bird. The fish is in the water and the water is in the fish; the iron is in the fire and the fire is in the iron. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, Christ is the sphere of the believer’s position. He encompasses, surrounds, encloses, and indwells the believer.

3. Therefore, if I desire to exemplify Jesus Christ, I do not need to...
 - a. rely upon reason;
 - b. rely on pilgrimages, penance, or rituals.
 - c. rely on consecrated water, repetitions of forms of prayer,
 - d. rely on good deeds,
 - e. holy sacraments,
 - f. seclusion from the world,
 - g. praying in particular times, places or in a particular posture,
 - f. beat myself,
 - g. abstain from certain food,
 - h. wait for the Holy Spirit to take my sin nature away at the mourner’s bench.
 - i. wait for the second blessing of the Holy Ghost.
 - j. seek the pastor’s approval.
 - k. go to seminary or attend this one and only particular church
 - l. Or only listen to this pastor.
 - m. Give my money away.

4. In the words of great Princeton theologian Charles Hodge:

“The Scriptures teach us a different doctrine. They teach that believers are so united to Christ that they are not only partakers of the merit of his death, but also of His Holy Spirit, which dwells in them as a principle of life, bringing them more and more into conformity with the image of God, and working in them both to will and to do, according to his own good pleasure.”

5. There is a dynamic union at work, ladies and gentlemen: I call it the doing and undergoing.

¹⁹ Ibid., 303.

- a. As you obey yielded to the Holy Spirit (do), you undergo a transformation. This is a balanced approach. I'm called to obey but all the resultant fruit belongs to God.

I've observed that there are 6 "*ignorances*" regarding what it means to live out the gift of God's grace in a manner of grace.

6 Ignorances observed regarding the spiritual life:

Justified but is unintentionally ignorant on how to grow spiritually mature.

Justified but believes obtaining spiritual maturity is primarily by human effort. Little cooperation with the Holy Spirit is needed if not totally disregarded.

Justified but waits in vain for the promise of holiness perfectionism in this life.

Justified but willfully ignores in rebellion to the command to be spiritually mature (antinomianism).

Justified but believes that it is entirely the Holy Spirit's work to grow one unto spiritual maturity; spiritual maturity is entirely a passive work; little responsibilities are placed upon the believer for spiritual maturity (out of balance).

Justified but unintentionally equates spiritual maturity with the amount of "doctrinal knowledge" the believer knows; the more doctrinal, the more spiritual. This notion neglects the cultivation of personal holiness (living out biblical truth by both inward thoughts and outward conduct).

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- b. Scripture teaches a balance. I'm to be controlled, filled, accurately know and apply the Scripture, and yield to Him. I'm also responsible for confessing sin and mortifying my fleshly appetites and sinful tendencies.
- c. But as I submit myself to the Holy Spirit, I undergo a transformation; the resultant fruit belongs to Him.
- d. We call this balance abiding.²⁰ The word "abide" is used approx. 120 times in the N.T. Other related words are "remain, dwell, continue, tarry, endure (Matt. 10:11; Luke 9:5; Acts 9:43; 27:31; 1 Cor. 13:13; 2 Tim. 2:13)." In fact, our primary information regarding what it means to abide is from John 15 and 1 John 2-4. In fact, if you look at 1 John 2-4 there are 26 references of the word "abide" in these three chapters alone.
1. The word abide clearly indicates as that that which "remains, dwells, continues, tarries, or endures; it is what abides in the position in which it is placed.

²⁰ The following work on "abide" is from reading Lewis S. Chafer's *Systematic Theology*, vol. 8 on doctrinal summarization of "abide", 3-8 and *The Theological Wordbook* by Don Campbell, Wendell Johnston, John Walvoord, and John Witmer, "abide," 1-3.

2. In reference to the spiritual life the word “abide” indicates a “constancy” in relation to Christ. It is also true that Christ referred to His own abiding in the believer (cf. John 15:5), which relationship could never fail since it depends only on His faithfulness.
3. So, the general meaning of “abide” is seen in two ways:
 - a. One is continuing in union with Christ and the other,
 - b. continuing in communion with Christ.
 1. Union in Christ means He is in you and you are in Him.
 2. Communion means obedience whereby complete subjection of the believer to Christ; you are allowing him to live through you.
4. As revealed in John 15:1-17, the believer is enjoined to abide in Christ as a branch abides in the vine. So, as the sap flows from the vine into the branch that remains in contact, so the spiritual vitality flows from Christ to the believer who abides. When a believer abides, the fruit produces will last (John 15:16).
5. The results of abiding both union and communion are both positive and negative. On the negative side Christ said, “Without me [apart from me, or separated from this life-giving communion] you can do nothing (John 15:5).” On the positive side are at least seven effects from which flow from the abiding life:
 - a. Vital prayer life
 - b. Productive spiritual life (John 15:8)
 - c. A change in conduct: 1 John 2:6 states that “Whoever claims to live [abide] in him must walk as Jesus did.”
 - d. Love of other believers
 - e. Enables believers to overcome the evil one (1 John 2:14)
 - f. Guards believers from being deceived by false teachers (1 John 2:26-27)
 - g. Give confidence about the future (1 John 2:28; 4:17)
6. Those who abide are characterized by righteous living (1 John 3:6) and the Holy Spirit assures them that they are abiding in Christ (1 John 4:13).
6. But you might say, pastor, then why aren’t I living free? My first response is, “That is a good question.” My answer is you are not abiding. Why aren’t you abiding?
 - a. Perhaps it is because you fail to realize that the issue is no longer capability, the issue is willingness. In other words, it could be that you

are still thinking you have to have this or do that before you can be all that God has called you to be.

- b. It could be that you serve the Lord out of orthodoxy but not out of a fervent love for Him. You serve him out of orthodoxy, not out of fervent love. Therefore, there is no cultivation of intimacy.
- c. It could be that you are not living free because you are still trying to please others, compare yourself with others, or submit wrongly to the control of others.

But if you are in Christ and Christ is in you, can you not see that your worth, your significance should come from that union? Is God's approval of you not sufficient?

- d. It could be that you lack contentment because you are not focused on Him. Perhaps one of the reasons why you are not content is because you've trained yourself to keep looking. Like wandering eyes, you've trained yourself to keep looking when the best thing you have is right before you.
- e. It could be that you have not forgiven yourself. Somewhere in your mind you just don't think God has forgiven you. Ah, but you don't know what I've done, pastor. I have a sin here for which God can never forgive me.

Now if that is the case, I really don't believe you understand the biblical teaching of God's grace. Grace is God's unmerited favor. Don't you realize that He always knew all the sins you would commit against Him? And yet, He is willing not only to die for you, take your place for the payment of sin, but unite Himself to you at the moment you place your faith in Jesus Christ. That is why His grace is so amazing, so divine!

- 7. Here's what you can do if you struggle with lack of inner willingness, lack of fervent love, pleasing others, lack of significance or contentment, or fearful that God is holding some sin against you? How I'm going to answer these issue by sharing with you the testimony of Donald Grey Barnhouse. Barnhouse writes:

I frequently noticed that I awoke in the morning thinking the same thoughts that had been in my mind at the time I closed my eyes in sleep the night before. Many people know from sad experience that the mind frequently drifts to thoughts that are utterly of self, and its interests and desires in those half-awake moment that end our day and that begin our night. I discovered, therefore, that it was of great importance this half-world of the mind be for our Lord Jesus Christ.... One morning when I awoke trying to solve a chess problem that filled my mind as I had put my head upon my pillow, I became conscious of this law and determined that, henceforth, I would go to sleep thinking of Christ. As the months passed, I discovered that there was much more than a habit involved in this. Here was a proof of the presence of the lord Jesus Christ in my heart and mind, controlling even the subconscious element of my life. Then I learned that must not merely go to sleep thinking about Christ but that must go to sleep in

communion with Him. I began memorizing verses of Scripture at night and reciting them as I fell asleep. Soon He became more real than the inside of my eyelids. I could not see them though they were close to my eyes; Him I learned to know in everything but the touch. And closing one's eyes with Christ takes away all fear of sleepless nights. Let others count sheep jumping over a wall; I shall talk with the Shepherd. He giveth His beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2). 'I laid me down and slept,' says David, 'I awaked; for the Lord sustained me' (Psa. 3:5).

**When sleep her balm denies
My silent spirit sighs,
May Jesus Christ be praised!
The night becomes as day
When from the heart we say
May Jesus Christ be praised!**

Then when I awake to a new day, I wake to hear Him speak to me, and I to Him. David knew this when he said: 'When I awake, I am still with thee' (Psa 139:18).²¹

The bottom line is that you need to be preoccupied with Jesus Christ. How to live out the gift of God's grace in a manner of grace is to learn how to "abide." In other words, since you are in Christ and Christ is in you, learn how to yield, to trust Him in the particular moments of your daily life. In that particular moment, yield to the Holy Spirit and make the decision that will give God the most glory. But be careful, sometimes the choice is not just between good and evil. Sometimes the choice is between what is most glorifying and what is merely good. Also, in the midst of your willing to trust Him, if you are wrestling with some issue that draws your attention away from abiding in Christ, give him your doubts, give Him your dissatisfaction. Give Him your inadequacies. Give Him your lack of contentment. I believe He will give you the enablement and as you walk with Him over time, your confidence in Christ will rise. What you never thought possible will become a life-changing reality for you.

FINAL THOUGHT:

There is no greater enemy to Christianity today than mere profession of God's grace. There is no greater discredit to Christianity than to stand up for it, and yet not live in God's grace. There is no greater hindrance to Christianity than to contend for God's grace and deny it at the same time by abusing God's grace with either legalism or licentiousness. So it is for us to know, to see, to hear, and then to show. Are we doing this? There are people in this post-Christian culture who never open, who never read the Bible. But they are reading us! May they be able to distinctly see that you are not only a recipient of God's grace, but that you are **living out the gift of grace in a manner of grace.**

²¹ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *God's Method for Holy Living*, 85-6.

