

Good News

From Getwell

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SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY ACTIVITY

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:20 a.m.
Worship.....5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

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ON THE HOME FRONT

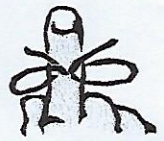
Currently we are witnessing the unwarranted takeover and conquest of the Ukraine by the tyrant Putin, dictator of Russia. This is done under the guise that Ukraine poses a threat to Russia. There are two reasons I bring this up. First, I am impressed as we should all be by the courage exhibited by the Ukrainian people to defend their homeland. They are outnumbered and outgunned by the Russian army. We as Americans and more importantly we as the Lord's people ought to be inspired by the courage and tenacity shown by the Ukrainians. The second reason I write about this aggression is to encourage you to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Ukraine. It is encouraging to report that the missionary Mark Posey is heading toward has made it to safety in Poland. Please keep him and his family in your prayers. Let me end this portion that some of you will point out that Putin's official title is not dictator but he has all the traits of a dictator and so when it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck it must be a duck.

Please pardon me as Stanley and I brag on our mother, Frances Wallace, long time member here at Getwell was selected "Sweetheart Queen" at the Village at Primacy Parkway Place. Of course she has always been a queen to Stanley and me. The question I pose does that make Stanley and me princes? Of course, Karen calls me Prince Charming or does she?

Again this past Lord's Day we had three excellent lessons presented by Michael Wyatt. The Bible class continued our study of Joshua. Brother Wyatt covered the conquering of the promise land and the conquest of the promise land. Brother Wyatt also was quick to point out that God totally honored the land promise made to the Jews contrary to what the denominational world teaches. It was a conditional promise made to the Jews and they failed to hold up their end of the promise. I say this except for Caleb who at age 85 purged all the Canaanites and their corruption from his land allotment. He chased the giants from the land. Sunday night we heard a very encouraging lesson on zeal.

Ron Wallace

RON'S REMINDERS



Paul's Favorite Word

The New Testament contains 50,190 words from Paul.¹

What was Paul's favorite word? A case could be made for faith, since Paul emphasized its importance (used 171 times in his epistles), or love (99 times),² since he wrote the Bible's "Love Chapter" (1 Corinthians 13), but a stronger case can be made for grace. Paul wrote more New Testament books than any other writer; he also wrote more about grace than any other inspired writer. If he wrote Hebrews, then he used the word 99 of the 131 times it is found in the New Testament (if not, 91 times).³ He began and ended each of his signed epistles with references to grace.

PAUL TAUGHT FOUR GREAT TRUTHS ABOUT GRACE

There is abundant grace for flagrant sinners. More than twenty fouls are committed in an average basketball game. Once in a while, referees deem a foul sufficiently violent or dangerous to be called "flagrant." It may result in a player being ejected from the game.

Many sins are committed every day, but a few sins are deemed "flagrant" by society. Drug addicts, thieves/robbers, wife/child abusers, murderers, alcoholics, gamblers, adulterers, prostitutes, and ex-cons definitely need the gospel. But is it available to such dyed-in-the-wool sinners?

There was no Las Vegas or San Francisco in the Roman Empire, but there was a Corinth. Its citizens were widely known for immorality and ungodliness. Evangelizing in that place struck fear into the seasoned heart of the veteran apostle Paul (Acts 18:9-10; 1 Corinthians 2:3). Surely, he must have thought, I'm wasting my time here. But the Lord knew what Paul did not. Those whose names were written on police records would soon be written in heaven (cf. Luke 10:20); those who were used to being featured in gossip columns would soon be listed in church bulletins. Paul later wrote the following about them: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor

homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Paul called himself the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:14-15) who was saved by God's abundant grace. If there was sufficient grace to save an immoral city and a murderer of Christians (Acts 7:58), then there is sufficient grace to save any sinner today.

There is necessary grace for ordinary sinners (Romans 3:9-12). You would think that crowds would flock to accept God's wonderful grace. Why do not more people respond to God's offer of salvation?

Many do not understand that they need grace. They say, "Bad people need grace, but I'm a good person. Not perfect, but not that bad." Being a good moral person is not the same as being a Christian. In nearly every conversion recorded in Acts, those saved were religious and moral already.

Naturally, it is better to be a moral person, a good neighbor and citizen, and a decent husband and father than to be guilty of many sins, but any sinner is lost. Flagrant sinners are on one end of the spectrum and may believe that they are too bad for grace; ordinary sinners are on the other end and believe they are too good for grace.

James wrote, "Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10; cf. Isaiah 64:6). Paul gave his conclusion regarding man's condition: all the world stands guilty before God (cf. Romans 3:23; 6:23). The heart of his argument speaks to our question: "We have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written, 'There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one'" (Romans 3:9-12).

Since we must all plead guilty to sin, we all need grace. To miss heaven is to be in hell. There is no middle ground.

When compared to God's holiness, none of us fares well (cf. Matthew 18:24). A skyscraper is much taller than a church building. From ground level, there is a great contrast between their heights. But which is closer to the moon? Sure, the top of one is closer to the moon than the other, but does it really matter 240,000 miles from the earth? There is no appreciable difference.

Spiritually speaking, even the best of us is still an infinite distance from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). If we forget this, it is because we overestimate our goodness and underestimate God's holiness.

There is daily grace for sinning Christians. Christians who say they do not sin are lying, according to John (1 John 1:6-10). Sin requires grace. God's children are privileged to have access to an unlimited, lifetime supply: "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

There is amazing grace for obedient sinners. There is no way to make salvation works-centered and man-centered. It is grace-centered and God-centered (Ephesians 2:8-9). The emphasis is on what God does for us, not what we do for God. The little wheels run by faith, and the big wheels by the grace of God.

However, some, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, accused Paul of teaching salvation by grace alone through faith only in passages like Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 4:1-8. They teach a kind of faith which is not required to do, obey, or work. They make grace a cure-all, catchall basket that covers the presence and practice of sins.

Once a young man asked a preacher, "Sir, what can I do to be saved?" The preacher replied, "Son, you're too late." "What!" exclaimed the boy. "Too late to be saved?" "No," said the preacher. "Too late to do anything. You see, son, Jesus already did it all two thousand years ago."

If nothing is required of man, Peter missed a wonderful opportunity to say so when asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). He should have said, "Folks, you are too late. Jesus did it all fifty days ago on the cross. There is nothing for you to do."

Instead, by inspiration, he said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (2:38). And, "with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation'" (2:40). In what sense could they save themselves? Not in meriting God's favor for salvation but in simply meeting God's conditions of salvation.

What did Paul understand that salvation by grace involved in his conversion? When Saul (later, Paul) was on the way to Damascus, the Lord appeared to him. Recognizing his great sin of persecuting Christ, he asked, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6).

Surely Paul should not have used the word "do." Jesus would surely put him straight. Jesus answered, "Go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:6).

Maybe Saul misunderstood Jesus using the word "do." Surely the inspired Ananias would clarify it. Ananias brought this command: "Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Paul understood that faith needed to act, and he "arose and was baptized" (Acts 9:18).

Did Paul later disavow what he did, admitting in shame that he tried to merit salvation? No, he wrote that faith works through love (Galatians 5:6) and linked grace with obedience (Titus 2:11-12). He urged Christians to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

Paul did not contradict himself when he wrote of salvation by grace (Ephesians 2; Romans 4) and obedient faith (Romans 1:5), obeying truth (Romans 2:8; Galatians 3:1), obeying the gospel (Romans 10:16), and obeying Christ (Hebrews 5:8-9). Both are part of God's plan. "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Endnotes:

1. 43,293 if he did not write Hebrews.
2. Including charity.
3. 91 without Hebrews.