

Good News

From Getwell

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The Truth in Love
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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

Congrats go out to Huston Prater Jr. who recently retired. Huston is the husband of our church secretary, Annette. I hope he is getting breakfast in bed every morning. Karen told me I could have breakfast in bed only if I moved my bed into the kitchen. Thanks goes out to Huston who recently remedied a plumbing problem here at the building. Congrats go out to Michael Martin, Huston and Annette's grandson who was baptized this weekend.

Thanks goes out to Teresa Searcy, our "IT" person who has resurrected our church website and is in the process of updating the site.

Be sure and grab a Spiritual Sword lectureship brochure to have and give to friends.

Psalm of the Week

Psalms 1

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

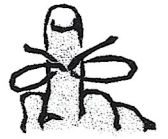
The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Ron Wallace

RON'S REMINDERS



Abounding Grace

The hungry prodigal knew his rich father would not go to bed without supper that night. He *would*. The more he thought about it, it dawned on him that nobody on his father's farm would fall asleep with a growling stomach. He *would*. Even his father's servants had "bread enough and to spare" (Luke 15:17). He *did not*.

Since the father in the parable represents the Father in Heaven, we can draw some interesting conclusions from the phrase, "bread enough and to spare."

God has never been stingy with His blessings. He "gives to all liberally and without reproach" (James 1:5; cf. 1:17).

Take bread, for instance. When Israel's children needed some in the wilderness, they had all the manna they needed: "Let every man take for those who are in his tent" (Exodus 16:16). When a widow shared what she thought was her last meal with Elijah, God refilled her meal barrel and—no matter how much she dipped out—it stayed full until the famine ended (1 Kings 17:15–16). When Jesus fed the 5,000, the famished people ate all they wanted and still had twelve baskets of leftovers (Matthew 14:20). When He opened His buffet to 4,000 another day, they too ate their fill and had seven baskets extra (Matthew 15:37).¹

When we think of man and see the magnitude of his sin, we can hardly understand how a single sinner can be saved; but when we think of God, and see the magnitude of His love, we can hardly see how a single one could be lost.

Have you considered how much God loved sinners? He "did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Romans 8:32). He withholds no good thing from those who walk uprightly (Psalm 84:11).

What can we count on when we return to the Father from the far country? After all these years, is there still bread enough on God's table of grace?

Isaiah issued this invitation twenty-seven centuries ago: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7).

God offers abundant grace (2 Corinthians 4:15) and abundant mercy (1 Peter 1:3; Titus 3:5–6), yea, exceedingly abundant (1 Timothy 1:14). He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to Him (Hebrews 7:25). Peter said, "An entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom" (2 Peter 1:11). Paul concluded, "Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more"² (Romans 5:20).

Let us put this abundant grace to the test in a real world of really bad sinners. Did God live up to His promises?

The publicans and sinners were acknowledged as notorious transgressors of God's Law. Yet when they came to Jesus, they always found grace enough and to spare (Luke 15:1–2). More than any other group, they satiated themselves with the Bread of Life (John 8:12; cf. Matthew 9:10–11; 11:19; Mark 2:15–16; Luke 5:30; 7:34).

Take the cases of the **sinful woman** whose reputation (quite literally) followed her (Luke 7:36–50) and the **woman who got caught in bed** with someone not her husband (John 8:1–11). Would grace cover such scandal? Yes! Both found that Jesus had grace enough to cover their fleshly— but forsaken— sins.

What about a **disappointment**—one of the inner circle who forsook the Lord with his eyes open, even after he had been warned? (Matthew 26:34). Peter was all these—he denied his Master three times the night the Friend of Sinners most needed a friend. He cursed and swore that he did not even know the Man (Matthew 26:72). Could grace cover such a highhanded misdemeanor? Yes, Jesus forgave Peter. But surely, he was on probation—counted second-rate, damaged goods. No, less than two months later, Jesus tapped him to be the keynote speaker at the greatest revival of all time (Acts 2). He featured him as the key character of the first half of Acts of the Apostles, used him to write two books, and placed him as an elder in a congregation (1 Peter 5:1–2).

Those on whose **hands God saw crimson stains** that matched His Son's blood type were told, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). About three thousand washed their hands in the fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins³ that day (2:41; Zechariah 13:1). Many others took Him up on His offer in coming weeks (Acts 2:47). It would be hard to imagine a case today that would equal that of the Pentecost sinners who had crucified the Son of God.

What about **moral delinquents**? Perverts, swindlers, and drunks are unwelcome at the Father's banquet, right? Again, we find they are welcome—provided they are penitent. Paul wrote of some who had been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners (1 Corinthians 6:9–10). By God's grace, they had been washed, sanctified, and justified (6:11).

No one has ever left God's table still needing a snack of grace. Is your case a difficult one? Have your sins been shocking and frequent? Consider the One who made the earth, stretched out the heavens like a tent, has no bound to His strength, nor limit to His might.⁴ In six thousand years of history, He has never failed at anything—will His first failure be saving you? Will you prove too strong for omnipotence, boggle the mind of omniscience, or be unlovable for omni-benevolence? If He made you (Genesis 1:27), He can remake you (2 Corinthians 5:17). If He claims you (2 Corinthians 6:18), He can cleanse you (Acts 22:16). "His hand is not shortened, that it cannot save" (Isaiah 59:1).

Endnotes:

1 Since Jesus knew all things, could He not have prepared just enough? Perhaps these nineteen baskets are in the Bible just to show us that God always gives extra.

2 There is a beautiful play on words that is not seen in the translation. The first word "abound" (pleonazo) means "be more, increase." The second "abound" is a different word (huperperisseuo). It is a compound word made up of huper, "over, above, beyond," and perisseuo, "to superabound, be in excess." Thus this word is an intensified hyperbole carrying the meaning, "to be beyond excess."

3 William Cowper (1772). The Hymns of Cowper. The Gospel Magazine, and Theological Review. New Series. 2 (18): 312. June 1, 1867.

4 Charles H. Spurgeon, Miracles and Parables of Our Lord