

# The Servant



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*The purpose of this newsletter is to pass along information and ideas to help the Lord's servants as they minister to others. Feel free to use any of it in your ministry*

The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The Law in and of itself is a beautiful, lofty and required standard of behavior. No man other than the Son of God ever met or kept that standard. Even Moses himself failed again and again. The law condemns us all. *"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* The religious "legalist" lives between two great dangers. If he pretends to "keep" what is impossible to keep he is in danger of being a hypocrite. If he forever sees himself a failure in doing what he knows he must do, he is in danger of "throwing up his hands" and falling into despair. Either way the law kills the lawless and the legalist alike.

While Moses gave the law, with Jesus Christ came both grace and truth. Sinners have as much trouble understanding these two, as they have in understanding the law. Truth by itself can be a very hard pill to swallow. Jesus Christ came to show man what man was. His gentle, pure and perfect life graphically exposes man as being so much less than man was intended to be. Truth does not grade on a curve. If Jesus, by his life and example, is indeed the "Teacher, come from God," (as Nicodemus called him), then all must get an "F" which is beneath the passing grade of life. Most reject this idea and insist that God take into account man's weakness and imperfection and "cut him some slack" as they say, and make accommodations. Most look at God and think He is "too hard," as they look alone at truth.

On the other hand, sinners fail to understand God's grace. Some think grace is God throwing out or "bending" the rules. Some mistake grace for "tolerance" or giving man a license to sin (within certain limits). Some see grace as a "knowing wink" from a doting God who excuses mankind's little peccadillos. These people see grace as "too soft." God is neither "too hard," nor "too soft." The only place where truth and grace are perfectly balanced is in Jesus Christ at Calvary. There on the cross Jesus Christ fulfills the law of God and becomes both the Just and the Justifier. There at the cross man is

seen at his worst. There was never a greater sin ever committed than that of murdering the Son of God (Acts 3:15). The worst that man has ever seen stands in juxtaposition to the best. God's Grace proves greater than all our sin. Who holds such a balance? Where can we find such a scale? The answer is in Jesus upon the cross of Christ. Only at the cross do mercy and truth meet. Only at the cross has righteousness and peace kissed each other (Ps. 85:10).

We lose our balance when we step away from the cross. We are often "too hard," legalistic, and self-righteous, or we are "too soft," careless, accommodating, and carnal. Our idea of Truth climbs back to the top of Sinai and looks down on others. Or our idea of Grace dances around some golden calf. When we either join the religious right, or the religious left, we always become the religious wrong. Paul said, *"I am*

## Regular

**On the wall there hung a clock  
But from it you would never know  
The time of day by tick or tock  
T'was fast sometimes, and sometimes  
slow**

**At times it was so tightly wound  
It would hurry through it's day  
And at other times found sleeping  
sound  
As the minutes passed away**

**If it would just be regular  
And move at a steady pace  
Not try to be spectacular  
But do its job with truth and grace**

**Lost sinners in particular  
May be warned it's growing late  
And to sacred turn from secular,  
to Christ before judgment's date**

id

*crucified with Christ, never-the-less I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal.2:20).* Those who walk on wires often carry a long pole to help them keep their balance. The only way to keep from falling in this world is to cling to the cross of Christ. 🍷

## Grace:

### Talking Points & Walking Points

(2Cor. 12)

1. His Grace is omniscient; 2. His Grace is efficient; 3. His Grace is sufficient.

*“When I am weak then I am Strong.”*

This appears to be a paradox, but actually it is a paradigm. It is the way God works and it is the way Grace works. Paul stumbled upon a gold mine when He discovered the truth: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.”* If ever a man had anything to boast about it was Paul. If ever there was a man of great importance, prestige, prominence, it was he. From his famous conversion, to his elevation to the highest ranks of church influence and authority, Paul should have been on the cover of TIME magazine. In one place, he calls himself the least of the apostles, here in Corinthians he calls himself “nothing.” V. 11.

Brothers and Sisters, look at what God can do with nothing. When he made the world and the universe He started with nothing. Before He made the stars, He made light out of nothing. God made the first atom, the first electron, the first minute and second, He made time and space out of nothing. It’s OK to be “nothing.” As a matter of fact, its best to be nothing.

Paul said *“If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing he deceiveth himself” (Gal. 6:3).* Paul understood, that when God is everything to us, it does not

matter if we are nothing. Watch what God can do with nothing. This humble admission, opens the treasure house of Grace.

*“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2Cor. 12:9).*

God Knows- There are things we don’t know. Our experience and vision is limited. Now we see in a glass darkly. Paul was caught up and given a glimpse of Glory larger than his vocabulary could express. He heard “unspeakable words,” and words that are not lawful to be uttered.

The stock and trade of a preacher is not in brick and mortar, but in sentences and in syllables. The preacher needs to be careful with his words. There is a time to be silent and a time to speak. There is a time when Peter *“knew not what he said” (Lk. 9:33).* And there were times when he *“must speak the things [he] had seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).* By grace there are some things we know, and then there are things by grace that we must leave unsaid.

Like Zachariah, sometimes we come away from the altar of incense, speechless. This is nothing less than God’s grace. Preaching requires grace. A refusal to “glory” in or about what you have seen is grace at work as well. Paul knew something about Grace. It is enough for grace to know that God knows. In grace, Paul refused to glory in his own story. *“Of such a one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory.” (v. 5).* In another place he would say *“I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able.”*

God knows about our successes, our strengths, and our victories. God also knows about our weaknesses. Wearing our battle ribbons may make us stick out our chests too much with pride. Wearing the purple heart may call too much attention to ourselves. The praise of men might puff us up while at the same time rob us of the

“power” of Christ. Paul knew this more than most.

The lack of praise and recognition, on the other hand, may be just as dangerous if used by the devil. The “evil genius” (as the Amplified New Testament calls him) is often first to point out the “oversight” and failure of some Corinthians to appreciate our suffering and our sacrifice. *“I should have been commended of you,”* said Paul. Then he puts it all in perspective remembering “though I be nothing” (v.11). In this world there are still thorns on roses. God does not always remove those sharp and painful things. If our Master wore a crown full of thorns, then a thorn or two that breaks our skin or impales our flesh is simply a call for more of God’s good Grace. God says that His grace is sufficient. Grace is God at work in me. What could be better than that? Am I weak? Am I given some infirmity of the flesh. Must I squint my eyes and read God’s Word and then not without difficulty? It is a chance for God to shine. Shine Jesus, Shine.

Do we feel weak? Would Satan remind us that we are nothing? Grace knows all about it. This is Omniscient. Grace is all we need. Grace is efficient. Grace is all we want. Grace is sufficient. James and Paul would agree. *God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).* Paul was well aware of what God and Grace can do with “nothing.” 🍷

**What if we had to raise the sun  
or light each morn the flame  
that lit the world and there be  
none  
but our undiscipline to blame?**



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