

The Glorious Gospel

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it” (Galatians 1:13). As a “Pharisee of the Pharisees” before his conversion, Saul’s full-time job for Satan was to persecute the Church. Five other times in the epistles the apostle Paul mentioned his part in killing Christians (Acts 22:4, Acts 26:11, 1 Corinthians 15:9, Galatians 1:23, Philippians 3:6).

People who persecute the Church are persecuting Jesus Christ, who is the Head (Luke 10:16). They may have well-thought-out religious motivation. Yet, according to the Bible, Saul was a murderer. And when God spoke to him on the road to Damascus, He said, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute *Me*?”

In one moment, God revealed Himself to Saul, flooding him with a glorious light that removed every natural barrier to believing. Saul

became Paul, totally broken and humble after he was converted. He became immovable in his faith and commitment to preserve the Gospel, which changes many lives (1 Timothy 1).

Likewise, when we go forth with the Gospel message, we never know who will be behind the next door we knock on. We don't know what extraordinary plan God may have for the lives we touch. This booklet came from a class taught at Maryland Bible College and Seminary in Applied Bible Doctrine, covering the book of 1 Timothy. From this message, we understand that the Gospel is not merely a story to tell, but it presents a personal God of love who sets the captives free.

Chapter One
CALLED, COMMITTED,
AND COMMENDED

Paul was not a handsome man. He was short, his speech was contemptible (2 Corinthians 10:10), and historical records indicate that he probably had serious problems with his eyes. He was also a scholar who was very aware of the temptations of ministers of the Gospel to get off in doctrine and the letter of the law (1 Timothy 1:3-7). Writing to Timothy, Paul admonished him to avoid doubtful disputations and to uphold sound doctrine “according to the *glorious Gospel* of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust” (1 Timothy 1:11).

When I study the Word of God, I stop and ask the Holy Spirit to minister eternal life to me through the words on the page. Then, alone with God, I can hear what He is saying. While I was studying this chapter early one morning, it hit me: *The “glorious Gospel” is the Finished Work!*

That is why Jesus could say, “Father, the glory You gave to Me, I have given to them” (see John 17:22), reflecting the nature of positional truth through the impartation of His grace.

“According to the glorious Gospel....” Satan tries to blind the minds of people so they cannot hear the glorious Gospel, lest they see the light of it (2 Corinthians 4:4). The Greek word for Gospel here and in 1 Timothy 1:11 is *euangelion*, “a good message, having a content of good news.” Then we read, “...of the blessed God....” Paul is speaking of Him who is worthy of all praise: the blessed and only King of kings and Lord of lords—Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 6:15).

God’s Standard for Measuring Mercy

The glorious Gospel is the standard of God’s mercy and grace toward the entire world. There isn’t another thing like it! This glorious Gospel refers to the manifestation of the love, kindness, and mercy that finished the work of redemption on Calvary. It is the good news that anyone can be saved by grace through faith. What a marvelous, magnificent provision.

Then it says, “...which was committed to my trust.” And this is what breaks me. The word used here is the aorist passive indicative form of

pisteuo, which means to be entrusted with the care of something. Paul received the action dogmatically in the assertion of reality of God committing the glorious Gospel to his trust.

For example, in Romans 3:2 Israel, His client nation, was entrusted with the oracles of God to present the Gospel to the world, yet they rejected the plan. Paul, on the other hand, received and presented the Gospel with a fervent yet broken heart.

Why Me?

“But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is *committed unto me* according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Titus 1:3). Paul was saying, “God has committed His Word to me through preaching.” We have been given a gift to share: it is the glorious Gospel!

God did not predetermine anyone to be lost. Indeed, Jesus Christ died for the sins of the *whole* world in the unlimited atonement, and it is according to free volition that every individual either accepts or rejects the gift of grace. Yet, each believer has said in his heart, “Why *me?*” Every preacher has said that. Every evangelist. Every believer-priest. “Why have you entrusted all of

this to me?” After being touched by this love of God, do you think a man would turn his back on it and go another way? No, he wouldn’t.

Millions of years ago, in eternity past, God spoke about you. He knew you would receive or reject the Gospel through your volition. He talked about a plan for your life that was based upon your choices and yet was always derived through His love and grace.

When something is committed to you, it becomes a part of you. It motivates and gives purpose. The glorious Gospel has been committed to you, and me, and every Christian. Many go to serve and share the Gospel in difficult places. They go because something was committed to them.

We keep going out knocking on doors and reaching the lost in many ways *because* of that commitment. In eternity past, it was committed. We didn’t earn it, and we did not deserve it. If it were based on human merit, we wouldn’t be here. But we have been given the glorious Gospel, and it was committed unto us by God’s grace.

A Holy Calling

God saved us and called us with *an holy call-*

ing, according to 2 Timothy 1:9, “not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” In eternity past, before the foundation of the world, every believer on the face of the earth received the action of grace that called us to live in God.

To be holy means to be separated unto spirituality in categories. Because God is holy, and because He called us, we are to be holy in all manner of conversation (1 Peter 1:15-16). We have been called and separated to preach the Gospel because of that action of grace. We must appropriate it in time: *We are to share the glorious Gospel.*

No wonder 2 Peter 1:10 says to “give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” Election is the result of a choice, of selecting a person to fill an office or position. Peter is referring to a divine choice, something God does through grace. The Lord designates the plan for each believer’s life through our election in foreknowledge.

To make our calling and election sure, every day that we get up, we make a choice to walk in the Spirit of God. We are taught in the Spirit, we think and we listen in the Word, and we com-

municate in the Word. Every time we make those choices, we are making our calling sure. We don't have to do anything to be called, but we are making our calling sure as we keep right on going in the process of our election that was determined before the foundation of the world.

Picture the apostle Paul in a cold dungeon in Rome, inspired through the Holy Spirit to write boldly to his people and thinking, "I know that You chose me because of grace, but *why me*, God?" Imagine the hours and hours he spent in jail. According to Acts 20:31, before he left the people at Ephesus, he warned them every night and day with tears. Paul knew the words that he gave them were inspired by God, though they were written by the hand of a person who, before he was convicted, had his part in taking the lives of many Christians.

God's Thoughts Are Higher

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Timothy 1:12) Though he was in prison, Paul was able to thank God from the depth of his soul, because the thing that God had committed to him affected every part of his life.

“...Who hath enabled me....” Paul was “enabled” by God, *endunamoo* in the Greek, which means God caused him to have ability, strength, and power. We are enabled by faith (Romans 4:20). He makes us able (2 Corinthians 3:6). We are “strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power” (Colossians 1:11).

“...And counted me faithful....” In 1 Timothy 1:12, “counted” is the aorist middle indicative of *hegeomai*, which means to think something through to a specific point. In other words, God thought it over and He said of Paul, “This man will respond when he hears the Gospel; and because he will respond when he hears, I will call him.” God’s thoughts were to call and to appoint Paul for this amazing ministry long before he was saved. And Paul understood that he was called to be a servant.

Paul was put into the ministry, *diakonia*, “a position of serving.” The aorist middle participle *tithemi* reveals that the apostle was placed in a particular location on a specific assignment in a specific place for a specific function with a specific call for a specific ministry of serving God. He realized that he was in prison, enduring unusual hardships, because God counted him faithful to be put into a position of serving!

Chapter Two

THE PANORAMA OF GRACE

“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: *but I obtained mercy*, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Timothy 1:13). God gave Paul mercy because not a single thing but mercy would work for him—and not a single thing but mercy works for anyone!

“And the grace of our Lord *was exceeding abundant* with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 1:14). The abundance referred to here is an aorist active indicative of *hyperpleonazo*. The grace that Paul sensed was so great, it could not be measured. It was so abundant, there was nothing to compare it with.

Then, “...with faith and love which is *in* Christ Jesus...” (1 Timothy 1:14). This defines a special position *within*. In Ephesians 6:23, faith and love are *from* Christ. Philemon 5 says that we have love and faith *toward* the Lord Jesus. But here and in 2 Timothy 1:13, faith and love

are *in* Christ.

Determined by Grace, Not Circumstance

The only way the apostle could fulfill his ministry was through the panorama of grace. Like the word used in 1 Peter 4:10, *poikilos*, the manifold grace of God means we have grace in every direction, on every side, in each detail of life. That is the panorama of grace. And when grace is allowed to penetrate and permeate the life of a believer, the authority of that grace determines that changes will occur. This principle is called *grace determinism*.

Determinism refers to changes, actions, and events determined by causes. In physics, determinism is studied in terms of cause and effect in the physical, cosmic realm. For example, if you add heat to water, which will speed up the movement of molecules, the water will boil and eventually change its form and become steam, which can cause a serious burn if mishandled.

According to the principles of cause and effect, *physical determinism* could be dangerous to any one of us. By being careless, not having proper priorities, and not redeeming the time, decisions that are not thought through properly can lead to devastating effects. For instance, if I

were late for an appointment and decided to speed on the highway, I could get a traffic ticket, possibly lose my license, or get into an accident. In every case, I would most likely miss the meeting, not to mention the other negative consequences that would be added to my life.

Then, in the realm of the world system controlled by Satan, spiritual projections from the demonic world are sent to affect the unconscious mind. If the mind is left unguarded by the Word, the attack can cause changes and certain behaviors in the human soul.

That is why 1 John 2:15-17 says we are not to love the world, nor anything in the world, because the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life are of the world. If any man loves the world, he does not love the Father. "...The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Next we have the principle of *genetic determinism*. In addition to a number of positive characteristics, we have inherited many negative tendencies passed down through the genes. We have, therefore, a tremendous need to be regenerated with the incorruptible Seed of the Word of God. Then we will have a spiritual genetic

structure and new spiritual DNA, which overcomes the effects of damaged genes.*

Environmental determinism speaks of the social, political, and economic environment a person has been exposed to, including the kinds of schools he attended and the kinds of people he had as friends. So many changes, actions, and events are determined by causes in the environment.

But what excites me the most as a believer is grace determinism. It is amazing that the grace of God can take a life as terrible as a murderous self-righteous Pharisee and produce effects that would make him one of the greatest Christians to ever live. Paul was used to write most of the New Testament epistles and to lay the foundations for much of the New Testament Church through preaching and teaching the Gospel (1 Corinthians 3:10). Grace determined that he would be the one to be used in this way. It depended upon God and not Paul.

Less Than the Least

“Whereof [of this glorious Gospel] I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me *by the effectual working of His power*. Unto me, who am *less than the*

least of all the saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:7-8).

That is why Paul said, “I am less than the least” (Ephesians 3:7). He realized that God placed him as a servant in the ministry by the gift of grace, and God did it according to the *effectual power* at work in his soul.

There are several Greek words used for “power.” *Dunamis* speaks of the force of divine ability. *Energeia* is the operating power of grace, which causes the Word of God to be transferred from the purely perceptive lobe of the brain (channel “A”), through the human spirit (channel “B”), where perceptions go through the Cross, and into the heart (channel “C”), which houses the five parts of the soul. At that point, knowledge becomes wisdom that we can apply to every situation.**

Because you listen in meekness and you are Spirit-taught, all the work of the transfer is done by the power of the Holy Spirit. The effect of that transfer is *ischus*, which is the power of a divine, supernatural memory in a new frame of reference, because you are receiving God’s viewpoint.

When Paul said, “I am less than the least,”

he was serious. He was saying, "Nobody could be lower than I have been. Nobody! I am less than the least, even with this gift of grace God has given to me." That power was given so Paul could preach among the Gentiles the *unsearchable* riches of Christ, "and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:8-9).

Paul was saying, "God placed me here with this message. They can confine me in prison, yet I am in the center of God's plan for the world, and I don't deserve it at all! My purpose is to make all men see the *mystery*, which was hid in God, way back in eternity past."

The manifold wisdom of God has been given to the Church. We have the appropriation of doctrine living in the members of the Body of Christ. We want people to see our fellowship, our unity, and our oneness. As a result, by applying the Word of God in their lives, the Church would reveal the mystery of grace to principalities and powers, to the demons in the air. It is all according to God's eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus. (see Ephesians 3:10-11).

An Eternal Purpose

When we get up in the morning, we have an eternal purpose, fulfilling a plan that was made millions of years ago. We didn't earn it and we do not deserve it. But God had an eternal purpose by giving us grace. He places us in the center of the world through a panorama of grace for every step, every detail, and each direction. According to grace determinism, every action and every event in God's plan for our lives is caused by grace. What we do, what we think, where we go, the money that supplies what we need—it is all the result of grace.

That is why Satan is after businesses that support the work of God. The devil wants to attack dedicated, committed Christians who share so freely with people in so many places, and he wants to stop their “*grace causes*.”

A Kingdom that Cannot Be Moved

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:28).

In Hebrews 12:26-27, God declares that He will shake both heaven and earth so those things which can be removed will be, and the things

which cannot be shaken will remain. When situations are happening in your life, regardless of the causes, remember that God is taking away the things that can be shaken. You may not want Him to, but He is going to do it. He may give you grace and go along with you for a while, but sooner or later God will take away those things that can be shaken.

Finally, through the operation and energy of grace, when God is done, the only things remaining will be what cannot be shaken. That is God's eternal purpose and the provision of His plan. *We receive a kingdom which cannot be moved.* Every Christian in the world has received a kingdom, a government, that cannot be moved. We can experience divine stability because we have the Father's plan, the Son's execution of the plan, and the Holy Spirit's revelation and glorification of Christ. We have been given definition from the Word of God on how to live, how to walk and think and feel and confess.

Persecutors, sentimental people, the world, and all the demons of hell can't touch believers in the Kingdom of God because we have received grace. We have received this grace that we might have reverence and fear toward God (Hebrews 12:28b). This is why King David said,

“I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved” (Psalm 16:8). If we set the Lord Jesus Christ before our face, we cannot be moved! According to 1 Corinthians 15:57-58, because we have been given this victory, we can be steadfast and immovable.

In the eternal plan of God, grace was determined by a loving God to work in our behalf. It was based on His knowledge of everything we would and would not do. There are many things I can never give to God because I don't *have* them. But I *can* give Him steadfastness. I can be immovable. And it is all because of grace.

**Read Re-Gened, by Pastor Stevens, Grace Publications, 1996.*

***Read The Hearing Heart, by Pastor Stevens, Grace Publications, 1996.*

Chapter Three

THE WAY OF THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL

“Afterward he brought me again unto the *door* of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from *under the threshold* of the house *eastward*: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came *down from under from the right side* of the house, at the *south side* of the altar” (Ezekiel 47:1).

What a beautiful picture of the glorious Gospel. Christ is the door (John 10:9). The waters that “issued out from under” speak of humility that comes from the cross. “East” speaks of resurrection from the dead, a body coming up out of the grave. East is where the sun comes up, and in Malachi 4:2, “the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.” The waters came down from the *right* side of the house at the *south* side of the altar. Because the work was finished at Calvary, Jesus is

now seated at the Father's right hand, indicating approval by the One whose love flows down—southward—from heaven to the world.

“Then He brought me out of *the way of the gate northward*, and led me about *the way without* unto the utter gate by *the way that looketh eastward...*” (Ezekiel 47:2). Here we see the way of the Word, the way of the Cross, the way of love. It is the way of quickening, of power, and of divine illumination.

Without the Way, there is no going.

Without the Truth, there is no knowing.

Without the Life, there is no living.

Without the Gift, there is no giving.

Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). He has *brought* us, and our conversation is from heaven, which is the gate northward. He has *led* us by the way with categories of doctrine—grace, mercy, and forgiveness—in the Body of Christ. He brings us unto the outer gate so we can share the glorious Gospel with those who have not heard. We are brought by the way that looketh eastward—not looking at our flesh but looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Looking “eastward” is so important. We do not look unto people, circumstances, or how the

job is going, although we are very accountable to those things. We look unto Jesus as our motive for life.

“...And behold, there ran out waters on the right side.” Thank God, the Holy Spirit and the water of the Word come through the Finished Work. Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. In the Old Testament tabernacle, no one could be seated in the holy of holies; but now, Christ is seated, and everything comes through Him. *It is finished!*

Get into the River

“And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles” (Ezekiel 47:3).

The measuring line is the Word of God. It measures who we are—our capacity, our ability, our obedience, our disobedience—while it keeps giving us the measure of grace and the Holy Spirit, which cannot be measured. They are unsearchable and past finding out (Ephesians 3:8*b*).

This line is in Jesus’ hand. He went forth with the Word, and He measured one thousand cubits. “One” always signifies unity; it cannot be

divided, in terms of primacy. It speaks of singleness, sufficiency, omnipotence, power, help, independence. It stands alone, unchangeable, in a state that perpetuates its nature. *It excludes difference.* One is God.

“One thousand” is the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are all completely one. Truth is the identity of the Trinity, speaking of supremacy, sovereignty, and headship in connection with the mind. It implies a plan, a counsel, a purpose, and a will because of election. That is what “one thousand” is.

God said, “I am one.” The Three are one, and they do not have differing opinions. People who have oneness are continually building up others in the Body of Christ. They do not criticize or cause division. Instead, their communication and their actions always edify. Of course everyone has moments that are bad, but what are moments? God takes care of our moments (Isaiah 27:3).

He Brought Me

“...He brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.” Watch the progress of grace—the progress of growing, knowing, and going. The next two verses describe how

God brings us into the waters to our knees (representing intense prayer), to our loins (representing the production of our life in Christ), and finally, into a river that we could not pass over. It is so comforting to read that He *brought* us. Each time, He measured one thousand, and that speaks of the purity of the Word of grace through the unity of the Trinity. Paul said, “I commend you to the word of His grace to build you up (Acts 20:32).

Think of it: “...He brought me....” Perhaps you are in the midst of the world with very little fellowship for a season, but you are making wonderful decisions in the place where He brought you. So when somebody comments on how well you are doing, you reply, “He brought me.” You say to a teenager, “You are growing. You have purpose. I notice how well you concentrate; you are taking notes in the service.” Many of our young people could honestly say, “He brought me.”

“He brought me.” And the measure was always one thousand. God plus nothing. Grace plus nothing. The Trinity’s provision plus nothing. The word of grace.

At Rest in the River

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

We have been commended unto God and to the word of His grace. A ministry that does not magnify the Word based on grace is a ministry that is still in the Old Covenant. Except for a few choice words that complement the New Testament, some people have never come out of the old. Yet, God wants to bring us into His river of life where everything is new every moment. The power of God is so great, so beautiful. The power of the river carries us through; we do not swim. The current comes from heaven, flowing in the marriage, in the family, in friendships. Even in indifferences, God takes us over.

“Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were *risen*, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over” (Ezekiel 47:5).

The river is eternal. It cannot be passed over. You can never pass over. *It is eternal*. It is the river of the Spirit of God (John 7:38-39).

“Then he brought me, and *caused me...*”—that is grace determinism—“...to return to the brink of the river.” (Ezekiel 47:6b).

“Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then He said unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed” (Ezekiel 47:7-8).

Do we really understand that the waters shall be healed? With this growth into maturity and stability comes the miracle of healing and the Tree of Life. In Revelation 22:2, there was a tree in the middle and a tree on each side. God has provided a tree for our past, a tree for our present circumstances, and a tree for our future—the Tree of *Life*!

What Past?

God has no plan for the past. The past is gone. There is no need to get into it. It is over, and that is why we should not bring up the past unless it is to deal with something and clear it up once and for all. Still, He has provided a tree—the Cross—to deal with wounds from the past that might linger in the subconscious and

unconscious mind.

But God has a plan for now and for the future. That plan has an eternal purpose, *and it shall come to pass!*

“And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and *there shall be a very great multitude of fish*, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and *every thing shall live* whither the river cometh” (Ezekiel 47:9).

We send out missionaries into all parts of the world to minister Christ to the unbelievers And every time they come back, they say, “Those people are living now. *Those who were dead in their sins are alive!* They are alive forever, and they are in God’s plan.”

They are alive! Oh, to know that is to be blessed beyond measure. We allow God to bring us into the river and He sends us to these people. They receive the glorious Gospel, and now they are alive.

CONCLUSION

“And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many” (Ezekiel 47:10).

Waters that never flow out become stagnant pools, which are breeding grounds for infection. But in Ezekiel 47, because the waters come forth, they shall be healed, and everything in that river will live. Not only that, a great multitude of fish are there. And what does God do? He makes us fishers of men (Matthew 4:19).

In Africa, Europe, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, the Far East, Australia, North America, Central America, and South America—God has promised that we will gather fish everywhere. This is the practical application: They will be from different nations, according to their kind, a great multitude of fish. There shall be healing,

and they shall live.

Dear Lord, never let us be familiar with the river of life, but help us always to recognize the Source. It is the river of Your Holy Spirit that causes us to go into all the world with this glorious Gospel. Please use us so we can glorify You and see many come into Your kingdom. In Jesus precious name, Amen.