

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

Christian Liberty

Galatians 5:1-6

Dr. Bruce Bickel

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Bruce: Good morning, men!

Men: Good morning!

Bruce: Good to be with you again. Don, do you want to set the stage for us, brother? Let's go before the Lord. Rejoice in His presence and remember this. This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it, for His love never ends. *(Music.)*

Gracious and merciful Lord, we thank You that You are all that we are not. We thank You that You are loving while we are demanding. We thank You that You are gracious while we are selfish. We thank You that You are strong and we are weak. We thank You that You are loving and that we are legalistic. Father, open our eyes that we might behold You more clearly. And free us from those things that hinder us from worshipping You more clearly and more purely and more wholly. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Continuing our study of the examination of Paul's letter to the church at Galatia, let's turn to chapter five. Again we'll be looking at the first six verses. I will be reading from the English Standard Version. Galatians chapter 5, verses 1-6.

“For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Look! I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law. You have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: Amen and Amen. Last week we had an introduction to this passage. And Paul's logic is basically this. There are two kinds of religions. One is known as the religion of human achievement, which is legalism. And the other one is the religion of divine grace. And Paul jumps into chapter five and takes those two issues head on, and describes some contrasts.

His logic is this. If you recall, the issue of circumcision was something that the Judaizers were saying that the people of Galatia had to add on to the Person and work of Christ because it was part of their Jewish tradition. And Paul's logic in these six verses is this. If someone says that they cannot save themselves, and they put their faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ for salvation, and then they add something on top of that faith in the Person and work of Christ, you're basically saying that you can save yourself.

Participant: Yes.

Bruce: So Paul is saying that you realize that either you cannot save yourself, or you think you can save yourself. Paul says those two things do not mix. Keeping the law as a

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

means of salvation and divine grace do not mix. They cannot be connected together. And Paul’s logic is this. It has got to be one or the other.

And then he goes into several dangers. In this portion he is going to deal with the dangers of legalism as a means of salvation.

Now when he talks about the law and circumcision, we’re talking about law keeping as a means of earning your salvation, of gaining God’s merit. That’s what we’re talking about. We’re not talking about keeping the law as a redeemed citizen. We’ll get into that later. But he’s talking about keeping the law, these Jewish traditions, as a means of earning your salvation.

And so he says that there are several dangers to that. And the first one that we looked at last week was this. You’re not profited by Christ. In other words, when you add something onto the salvation which has been accomplished for you by the Person and the work of Christ, when you add something on to that, you no longer receive the benefit of what Christ did. You are not profited by Christ anymore, because you’re now basically saying, “Christ did not fulfill what He came to do and I can save myself by adding something.” In this case it was circumcision.

Now there are other things that we in our culture today could add on to that. We say, “Yes. I believe that I cannot save myself. But I’m going to do this.” It’s the same thing that Paul is teaching in the church of Galatia. So the first thing that he says is this. The danger of legalism is that when you add something on to the Person and work of Christ for your salvation, you lose the profit of what Christ accomplished at the cross. It doesn’t profit you anymore, because you are basically saying, “I can save myself. Christ did not accomplish what He needed to do for my salvation and I need to save myself, and I’m going to add this on top of it.”

And so his point is this. The first danger of legalism is this. Christ no longer profits you in your salvation. Yes, please?

Participant: Would baptism be considered as something like that?

Bruce: Yes. There is such a thing known as baptismal regeneration. There is a strain of historical baptism that says this, that if you’re not baptized, you’re not saved. That could be one of the same things like that.

Another thing could be Sabbath keeping. We keep the Sabbath. Why? Not to earn merit. We don’t keep the Sabbath to earn our salvation. We do it out of our love for Christ and love for His church. So some people would say, “I’m a Sabbath keeper and that helps me earn my salvation.” It would be the same thing as circumcision and some of those traditions. You’ve got to be careful of those things.

Remember this. The issue is, can you save yourself? Do I think I can save myself by adding something on to the Person and work of Christ? This first danger, again, is this. You’re no longer profited by the cross of Christ when you add something on to His salvation which He accomplished.

The second thing we talked about was that you must keep all of the law, as Paul teaches us in that passage. You’re required to keep the whole law. You don’t get to pick and choose which law you want to keep, because if you’re going to be legalistic you’ve got to keep the whole law.

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

I went through this last week. Look at our passage which we looked at last week, which is Matthew 22:37. *“And He said to them, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’”* And that word *all* means without any deviation, without inconsistency. It literally means this—every second of your life. Now can you do that? Can I do that?

Participant: No.

Bruce: Can anybody do that? That’s what’s required—to keep the whole law. The only Person who has ever done that is in the Person and work of Christ. You get credit for keeping the whole law because of what Christ has accomplished for you. And to think that you can go save yourself by keeping the law is fallacious, because Paul says that if you’re going to have that mentality, you’ve got to keep it all the time, every second.

We get credit for fulfilling the law because of what Christ did when He fulfilled all the law. And our faith in Him gives us credit for keeping all the law. We keep the law, but through the Person and work of Christ through the Holy Spirit. It’s not something we can do ourselves

The second danger of legalism is this. If you’re going to say that you’re going to earn your salvation by law keeping, you’ve got to keep it all--all the time, without any inconsistency, without deviation, every second. That’s an impossibility. Those are your two choices.

The third thing we want to look at today is this. *“You have fallen from grace.”* The third danger is that you’ve fallen from grace when you trust law keeping as a means of salvation.

Now this passage causes a lot of problems for some people, thinking that they can lose their salvation. Paul is not talking about losing your salvation. He’s talking about the contrast between law keeping and divine grace. Nine times in this passage he refers to the Galatian people as *brothers*. Now he wouldn’t do that if he were thinking that they could lose their salvation.

And look at Galatians chapter 4, verse 6. He never would have said that statement if they could have lost their salvation. *“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”* He would not have said those things if he were talking about losing your salvation.

Look at John chapter ten. What does Jesus say? *“No one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”*

Basically, He’s saying this. He’s saying that when God calls you to saving faith through His divine election and writes your name in the Lamb’s book of life before the foundation of the world, and in love predestined us to adoption as sons according to the counsel of His own will, when He does that you cannot be removed from His hand. No one can snatch them out of His hand.

Paul is not talking about losing your salvation. So what does he mean when he says that you’ve fallen from grace? The best translation of this is that it really means fallen out of the sphere of God’s grace. You are fallen out of the sphere of God’s grace.

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

Peter says “grow in grace. 2 Peter 3:18, which implies that it does not happen automatically. We need to do something. We need to work at growing in grace. Now we work, yes. But we don’t work to earn our salvation. We work to grow in grace.

What are some of the things that you must do to work to grow in grace? Peter also says this in 2 Peter chapter 1. “*Make every effort to add to your faith.*” You see, growing in grace requires some activity on our part. This just doesn’t happen automatically. What are some of the things we need to do to put ourselves in a position of growing and absorbing grace?

Participant: Well, study the Word.

Bruce: Study the Word. What else?

Participant: Fellowship.

Bruce: Fellowship, yes. What about worship?

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Church worship. Get involved in the local church. Where are you going to absorb grace? You see, what we need to do is that we need to grow in grace. And that means that I need to work and do those things that are going to put me in a position so that I can grow in grace.

Now here’s where we get confused with the definition of church growth. Modern day church growth says this. How many people do you have? That’s church expansion. Expansion is numbers. Growth is in grace, going in depth into your relationship with Christ.

That’s what Peter is saying when he says “grow in grace.” That’s what he says when he says, “make every effort to add to your faith.” That’s the same thing Paul is saying right here when he says that when you add something onto what Christ has accomplished for you, you’ve fallen from the sphere of grace. You lose that gracious influence. You don’t lose your salvation. But you’re losing the sphere of living in God’s grace.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Please.

Participant: Being severed from Christ—could that also refer to anyone who is inclined to go the way of trying to keep the law themselves to earn their way?

Bruce: Yes, right.

Participant: So that’s not a matter of losing salvation. That may be an issue of never . . . ?

Bruce: They never had salvation.

Participant: And any of you who are inclined to go in this way, you’re severed from Christ.

Bruce: That’s correct. That’s very possible. It could mean that they don’t have a saving relationship at all. But in the context of whom he’s writing to, he’s writing to believers. He’s writing to believers because he calls them brothers. And so he calls them *sons*. We need to understand the context of what he’s writing.

Now just because a person refuses the grace of sanctification through the work of the Holy Spirit does not mean that he has lost the grace of justification. There is the grace of sanctification and the grace of justification. A person may choose to remove himself for a

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

period of time by adding something on to the Person and work of Christ and lose the influence of the sphere of grace in his sanctification. But that does not necessarily mean that he has lost the grace of justification. It means something like this. Because a person loses his grip on grace as a way of life, it does not mean that God has lost His grip on him in terms of saving faith.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Do you understand the difference? We may for a moment lose our grip on the grace of sanctification. But that does not mean that he has lost the grace of justification. And Paul is writing to believers. He’s saying, “Look! Don’t add on to the Person and work of Christ, because you lose the profit of Christ at the cross.” You have to keep the whole law. And now he says that you remove yourself from the sphere of grace. You’re severed from grace. We’re not talking about losing your salvation.

Thomas Watson, the great Puritan, said this. “A person can fall from degrees of grace, but cannot fall from the state of grace.” He can fall from degrees of grace—losing the sphere of the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit—but not fall from the state of grace. “The sphere of sanctification is retarded by our flesh and decision, which cuts us off from receiving the blessings of God. We are the ones who remove ourselves from God’s sphere of gracious influenced.”

Look at it logically again. If every time you sinned you lost justifying grace, how would you keep it except by working for it? If you add works to grace as a means of salvation, you’re essentially destroying grace. It’s very serious, men, when we understand what it means to us personally.

That’s why the real issue is WHJD. What has Jesus done? That’s what we constantly need to remind ourselves. What has Jesus done? Because our whole faith is based upon what Jesus has done and not what we add to it.

To live by grace means to depend on God’s abundant supply of every need. That’s what it means to operate in the sphere of divine grace. He provides everything that we need. To live by law as a means of keeping your salvation means to depend upon my own strength, my own resources, the flesh. And you’ll be left out from getting God’s supply.

Look at 2 Corinthians 9:8. “*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.*” Now notice. The sphere of grace means this: all sufficiency at all times. Living legalistically as a means of earning your salvation and adding something on to the Person and work of Christ means that you void the sphere of grace. You now have the resources of your own life and you have yourself to take care of all your strength. All sufficiency in all things because of divine grace.

Paul teaches us that you cannot mix grace and law. If you decide to live in the sphere of law, then you cannot live in the sphere of grace. And when you add something on top of the Person and work of Christ, you’ve fallen from grace—fallen from the sphere of God’s gracious influence as part of your sanctification through the Holy Spirit. Yes, please?

Participant: Sometimes I think we’re tempted to ask ourselves, “What can I do to get Christ to love me more?”

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

Bruce: Amen. That’s exactly one of the things that we have to watch out for.

Now go to Revelation 12:10. One of the things that we have to be careful of, men, is this: that when we are being introspective and evaluating ourselves, looking at the log in our own eye before we take out the speck in somebody else’s eye, and the reason that we self-examine is so that we can serve each other more correctly. One of the things that Satan is going to do is to deceive and accuse us. He’s the deceiver and the accuser of the brethren. He’ll deceive you about your value and accuse you about your worth. “How can God use you because of what you did thirteen years ago?” And your tendency. Then, is this. Okay. In my own strength I’m going to do something to get God to love me more.

Do you know what one of the greatest deceptions is? Being involved in ministry, because it’s a great cover-up. Look! I’m doing all these things to get God’s approval. But you’re not dealing with your own personal log in your eye. That’s Matthew chapter seven, the Sermon On the Mount. And the reason Jesus says this, the reason you take care of the log in your own eye before you deal with the speck in your brother’s eye, is so that you can serve him more clearly. That’s the reason you evaluate yourself. Paul says, “Test yourself to see whether or not you’re in the faith.” The reason we do that, the reason we self-examine, is so that we can serve more effectively. That’s Jesus’ point in the Sermon On the Mount in Matthew chapter seven.

So I would offer for your consideration, when those moments come and you think that you have to earn your way back into salvation or get God to love you more, I’d have you go back to look at Lamentations 3:22-23. Would somebody read that? I want you to know where it is. *(Laughter.)* So you have to look for it.

Participant: It’s after Jeremiah.

Second Participant: And it’s before Matthew. *(Laughter.)*

Bruce: It’s one of the sixty-six books. *(Laughter.)* Lamentations 3:22-23.

Participant: *“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases. His mercies will never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness.”*

Bruce: Now men, sometimes when you have this tendency, to think that I need to do something to make God love me more, go back and read Lamentations 3:22-23. It says this. “The Lord’s mercies are new every morning.” That word *new* means fresh. It means unlike anything else created before. The word *new* means that the mercies that I get today between dawn and noon—that’s the time frame of that passage, between dawn and noon—those mercies are fresh today, this Friday. They will not be the same mercies you get tomorrow, because the mercies you get tomorrow are what?

Participant: New.

Bruce: New! They’re fresh, as if they had never existed. That’s what the Hebrew word means. It’s as if they never existed. Men, sometimes you’ve got to understand this—that the mercies that God gives us are fresh every morning. And you and I live in the sphere of grace because God is merciful.

I mentioned, when I was lying on my back for seven weeks at home—one week in the hospital and six weeks at home—that the great thing God taught me was this. It’s very easy to waste time. I couldn’t read because I couldn’t hold up a book in my bed. It was very, very difficult for me to get anything done. I couldn’t sit at the table and do my study

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

at the computer, whatever I wanted to do. And I began to realize this. As the Scripture says in Ephesians, “Use your time wisely, because the days are evil.” It doesn’t say, “Use your time wisely because you’re lying on your back.” Use your time wisely because the days are evil.

And I thought, “I need to do something! I’ve got to be doing something to help myself to use my time wisely.” And I went back and I remembered Lamentations 3:22-23. His mercies are fresh every morning.

And what I did was that I went back to 1966, my college graduation year. And I just went through that year 1966 and I said, “I’m going to remind myself of all of God’s mercies in the year 1966.”

There was a litany of them. Sometimes they were people. Sometimes they were events. Sometimes it was a message I heard. Sometimes it was a word that the Lord was pleased to remind me of.

And then after that, the next day I went to 1967 and looked at the mercies that God had given me. And I developed a whole litany of the things that happened in 1967, that God was so merciful to me as a sinner, realizing that I thought I had my act together. And yet my life was so tainted with worldliness. And yet he was freeing me of that in 1967.

Participant: You were blessed to be able to remember all that. *(Laughter.)*

Bruce: Well, that’s true. I did have to say, “Lord, help me to remember what I forgot.” *(Laughter.)* But my point is this, men. Sometimes, when there’s nothing else to do, where does your mind go when you have nothing else to think about? That’s what I was getting at. Where does my mind go when I have nothing else to think about? And I decided that I was going to try and think about God’s mercies.

Then I went to 1968, 1969, 1970, all the way to 2016. I’ll tell you what, men. That’s life changing, because I realize just what Christ has done! It’s so complete! It is so complete that it’s incomplete, because the incompleteness is that you’re going to get new mercies tomorrow and Sunday that you don’t have today. You and I don’t live on the mercies for tomorrow that we have today. We live in the mercies today that God gives us.

The time frame of that verse is interesting—dawn till twelve o’clock noon. That doesn’t mean that we don’t have mercies in the afternoon and the evening. That’s not what I’m saying. But all I’m saying is that when you start fresh every day, think of the mercies that God gives you. Operate on those mercies. That’s what it means to operate in the sphere of grace. That’s what it means.

Now when you add something on to the Person and work of Christ, you’re removing yourself from the sphere of grace, and you’re on your own! You have all your own resources.

And I began to realize this. It’s so easy to think about the miseries of life rather than the mercies of Christ.

Participant: Amen!

Bruce: We need to replace those miseries of our lives, replacing them with the mercies of Christ. They’re fresh, men, every morning! That’s why God is faithful. Read verse 22 again, Don.

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

Don: “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases. His mercies never come to an end.”

Bruce: Okay. The phrase is “never come to an end.” Actually, the literal Hebrew translation of that is this. “The loyal love of Yahweh is such that He doesn’t cut you off,” which means that He never severs the relationship with you. We translate it *never ceases*. It literally means this. The loyal love of Yahweh is such that He doesn’t cut you off. Instead of cutting you off, what does He do? He gives you His mercies that are fresh every morning.

Men., We need to live in the mercies of God. Live in the mercies of God and see how that changes the impact of your life. And Paul is so critical here when he says, that you know, when you don’t live by grace, men, you’re forfeiting the sphere of grace, and the only resources you have are your own. The only strength you have is your own. And you’re going to run out of resources.

No wonder Paul says in this passage that living a legalistic life is a fall. It’s a fall from the sphere of grace, because now you’re subjected to having the resources of your own life. You cannot mix grace and law keeping as a means of salvation. If you decide to live in the sphere of law, you cannot live in the sphere of God’s grace.

The next danger is this. *You are excluded from righteousness*. That’s verse five and six. You are excluded from righteousness.

Now as believers, we possess righteousness because it has been imputed to us when we believe by the Holy Spirit. We have been given credit for God’s righteousness. That’s justification by faith alone. So we do have the imputed righteousness of Christ.

But Paul is teaching us that there is a sense in which we are waiting for a greater fulfillment of that righteousness. Paul uses three words that seal this argument against earning righteousness. You see, you can’t earn righteousness. It has been given to you, imputed to you by the Person and work of Christ at the moment you believed. It’s justification by faith alone. But he said that there’s an element of it that’s still yet to come. It’s not complete. Yes, you’re righteous in God’s eyes. But there’s a greater fulfillment of this righteousness that we’re waiting for, and he uses three words to describe it.

The first word is the word *Spirit*. Those who seek to obtain righteousness through their own law keeping do so from the flesh, not through the Spirit. But the righteousness that believers hope for comes from the Spirit. So the Spirit is the generating force who introduces us into this righteousness that we await.

The second word is the word *wait*. Notice that this passage doesn’t say, “We work for righteousness.” It says, “we wait for righteousness.” When we die and go to be with the Lord, we will be made completely righteous. We do good works, but we do not work for righteousness for merit’s sake. We work because our hearts are filled with the love of Christ. That’s our motivation, men. That’s our motivation to do good deeds. Our service for the kingdom of God is merely a response to WHJD—what has Jesus done? That’s the motivation for good works. You’re not earning righteousness. You’re waiting for it. At the moment of your death, going into the presence of the Lord, at the moment of your glorification, you will receive the completed righteousness that awaits you as His sons.

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

And the third word is *faith*. The first word is *spirit*. The second word is *wait*. The third word is *faith*. Glorification will be ours by faith, not by works.

Now if you want to have a lineage of your pilgrimage in Christ, here are three key words to understand. First of all, *justification*. That’s freedom from the penalty of sin. *Sanctification* is freedom from the power of sin. *Glorification* is freedom from the presence of sin. At the moment we are glorified with our glorified bodies, we are now in the presence of God, and for the first time we will be completely righteous and we wait for that. You can’t wait for that if you’re outside the sphere of God’s grace, because if you’re going to try to get it, you’ve got to earn your righteousness. And Paul says that you don’t earn it. You trust the Spirit. You wait for it at the moment of your death, in your glorification. That’s why we celebrate the death of a believer. For the first time, they’re free from the presence of sin. And they are completely righteous! We don’t earn that. It’s something we wait for.

So those are the dangers that Paul goes through in teaching us about legalism, adding something on to the Person and work of Christ.

Now let me try to wrap this up, because next week we’re going to look at the dangers of false teachers. We saw the dangers of legalism. Next week we’ll take a look at the dangers of false teachers. We’ll take a look at the same thing, the dangers of false teaching, those who teach law keeping as a means of salvation.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: The verse that you’ve always brought up is Colossians 3:12. It says, “*Put on then, as God’s children, as holy and beloved.*” And then right afterwards, it begins to talk about all that we are to be and do. I’ll just read it.

Colossians 3:12-13. “*Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience.*” And then it tells us what to do. “*Bear with one another and serve. If one has a complaint against another, forgive each other. As the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. And above all, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called to one body. And be thankful.*”

Bruce: Amen. That’s the garb of a Christian. That’s what a Christian wears. Notice. What’s his language? “*Put on.*” Notice the number of times that Paul says in his epistles in the New Testament things you put on?

When you got up this morning and put on the clothes that you have, what’s the first thing that you had to do?

Participant: Shower and wash. (*Laughter.*)

Bruce: You had to do the three S’s, yes. (*Laughter.*) After that? Ted, I’ll tell you later. (*Laughter.*) What do you have to do? Make a choice! I chose to wear this orange shirt. I could have worn a blue shirt. But for some reason I chose to put on this particular orange shirt.

That’s what Paul is saying. Make the particular choice to put on the uniform of being in Christ and doing the things. So that’s the uniform that you wear.

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

And when you do that, you understand this, men. We don't forgive somebody because they've earned it. We don't forgive them because they deserve it. You forgive them because Christ has forgiven you so much. How can you not forgive him this time when Christ has forgiven you all the time? How can you not forgive her for that little thing she did when Christ has forgiven you of the big things you've done? Yes, please?

Participant: Would it almost be fair to say that Christ has taken away all our sin. And so essentially, not to forgive a brother who has wronged us, we are also essentially not forgiving Christ?

Bruce: Not forgiving Christ? It's not understanding His forgiveness of you.

Participant: He made the point in the sense that if we are in Christ and Christ lives in us, not to forgive someone else in a sense is not to forgive Christ. Is that what you're saying?

First Participant: Yes, I agree. I'm not saying that Christ has done anything wrong. But I'm saying that Christ has taken up residence in that person. And if someone sins and they've wronged us, we're viewing him as we view Christ, because they're our brothers. Not forgiving them is like holding a grudge.

Bruce: Yes. The real issue is forgive as Christ has forgiven you. That's the key verse. It means that I don't understand how much Christ has forgiven me if I have a tough time forgiving somebody else. That's what it means.

Participant: Well if we don't forgive them, we might in a sense be saying that they're not worthy of Christ.

Bruce: Whatever it is. It works in many different ways. But the issue is this. As Christ has forgiven you. It's the same thing in John 13:33-34. *“A new commandment I give you.”* Love one another based on how they treat you. It doesn't say that! It says, *“love one another”*—a new commandment.

Now this was not a new commandment. It was an old commandment. The Old Testament says *“love one another.”* But the New Testament says, *“Love one another as I have loved you.”* What's the qualifier? *“As I have loved you.”*

Do you understand how much Christ has loved you? That's what you give away to people. That's why you've heard me say over these years that we don't give back to people what they stimulate within us. We give back to them what Christ has given us—WHJD.

So you have a tough time loving somebody? What's it really saying?

Participant: You don't understand how much Christ loved you.

Bruce: You don't understand how much Christ loves you. You go back to the basics, men—WHJD. What has Christ done for me? That's what gives me the freedom not to be legalistic. He gives me the freedom not to have the yoke of slavery anymore. He gives me the freedom to love that person, because that's what Christ has given me. And we give back to them not what they stimulate within us, but what He has given us.

Participant: I'd like to offer a distinction between understanding how Christ loved me and being aware of it in the moment so I can live it.

Bruce: Yes. Good point. Say that again, please.

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

Participant: I’d like to offer this distinction between understanding how much Christ loves me and actually being aware of it in the moment so I can live it.

Bruce: Be aware of it in the moment so you can live it. And what do you need to have that happen? That is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. You can’t concoct that yourself.

We do not generate love. We generate selfishness and hatred. Who generates love within us? The Holy Spirit. If you’re outside the resources of God’s grace, folks, if you’ve fallen from grace outside of His sphere, you don’t have that resource. It’s up to you. It’s up to you to create your own resources of love. And that’s not going to last very long. We have to trust the Holy Spirit for that.

If Paul had not added this last phrase that we’ve just been talking about, someone could say that Christians get saved and then just sit around and do nothing. Certainly we do things. We work. We don’t work *for* our salvation. We work *because* of our salvation.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: But we don’t work to gain righteousness. We work because of God’s love for us. Paul says that instead of working by external rules, we work by the internal motivation of the Spirit of Christ because we love Him. Our works are the result of our righteousness.

Look at Romans 13, verses 8 and 9. *“Owe no man anything, except to love each other. For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment are summed up in this word, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

Notice what Paul says in Galatians 5:14. *“For the whole law is summed up in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”* And men, when you and I live by grace, we depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit. But under law you must depend upon yourself, your own efforts and your own resources.

James tells us that faith is not dead. James chapter 2 says that faith works. But the efforts of flesh can never accomplish what faith can accomplish through the work of the Holy Spirit. Faith without works—

Participant: Is dead.

Bruce: Paul teaches us that faith works through love, doesn’t it?—love for God and love for others. Unfortunately, fleshly designed and manufactured love produces selfishness and rivalry. Look at Galatians 5:15.

Transcriber’s Note: Galatians 5:15, NKJV. *“But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”*

Bruce: No wonder Paul says that to remove yourself from the sphere of God’s grace is a fall. When the believer walks by faith, depending upon the Spirit of God, if he lives in the sphere of God’s grace, then all of our needs will be provided. We experience the riches of God’s grace. Yes, Ted?

Ted: Bruce, Don has a question.

Bruce: I’m sorry. I didn’t see you, Don.

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

Don: Sometimes what we do in the flesh and what we hopefully do by the Spirit can look very much the same, or seem very much the same. I think you touched on it a little bit from what you just said. But how do you distinguish between the two?

Bruce: I think it has to do with motive. What’s the motive or the reason for my doing it? Now take a look at Matthew chapter seven. This is one of the most misunderstood verses. *“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”* That’s one of the most misunderstood verses in all of Scripture because it basically says this. That’s my reason for doing something.

That is not your reason for doing anything. Your reason for doing something is because of your love for Christ. This describes our code of conduct.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: It doesn’t describe a reason. You don’t treat somebody good because they treated you good.

Participant: Right.

Bruce: That’s not a reason! You see, the real distinction is the motive or reason behind it. When you treat somebody the way he wants to be treated, that’s your code of conduct, men. Regardless of how they treat us, you’re basically saying this. I’m not going to say or do anything that’s going to harm you or harm myself. I’m not going to say or do anything that’s going to harm somebody else or harm myself. The Golden Rule is not your reason for doing anything. It’s the code of conduct of what we do. But it’s not our reason for doing anything.

Don: A lot of times, though, I have to ask God to purify my motives because my motives aren’t pure.

Bruce: Absolutely. Our motives are tainted, no question about it. Everything we do is tainted. And I have to say, “Lord, check my own motives.”

I mean, even in teaching a class like this, behind all the stuff that I do, when I pray to come here to proclaim truth, that truth might be proclaimed, there’s a sense where I want to make sure that you like it. And the mix is in there. And you have to ask the Lord to purify your motives and the reasons for doing something. I think the real issue is God purifying our motives. Ted?

Ted: We like it, by the way. *(Laughter.)*

Participant: We like *you*.

Ted: But Don and I had this conversation last week. You know, how do you really distinguish between flesh-driven and Spirit-driven? I think that’s a whole talk that we don’t hear very much about. And even if we can say, “Well, what’s my motive?”, well, even my motives are full of self-deception.

Bruce: They’re tainted.

Ted: And even when you say, “Well, I’ll take care of that by spending time with Jesus in prayer,” even that can be self-obsessive. It’s spending time with Jesus, but it’s also spending time with brothers who can give us correct feedback on how we’re coming across.

Bruce: Absolutely.

“Divine Grace vs Human Achievement” Part 2

Ted: This is a big issue. I’m not saying you, but sometimes I think we talk blithely about well, you know, it has to be Spirit-driven rather than flesh-driven. But trying to make that distinction is a real problem.

Bruce: And that’s part of the struggle we’re going to have until we’re in complete righteousness. Yes, Bishop Rodgers?

Bishop Rodgers: I think we also have to trust the Holy Spirit to actually examine our hearts and reveal to us when we’re off course.

Bruce: Oh yes. Absolutely. We just have to trust the Holy Spirit. And the point I want to make today is this. When you add something on to what Christ has done to accomplish your salvation, you’re removing yourself from the sphere of gracious influence. And men, that is a serious, serious change. That’s why Paul says that you fall from grace.

Let’s pray. Father, sometimes we think that we do such a good job of understanding the Scripture when we’ve just touched on the surface. Help us by Your Spirit to wait for that righteousness that will be given to us in our glorification. We must eagerly seek that righteousness that awaits us as the children of God. And may it be so, Father, that we will dress accordingly and love you, and have that be the motivation for all that we do. And may it be done for Jesus’ sake. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen!” Thank you.