

3 Big Reasons the Grace Message Needs Balance

Over the past couple years, I have walked through a season of great brokenness.

Upon the first blow, my response was resentment. I grew bitter and judgmental. Pride distorted my vision and to myself I appeared more holy, more righteous and more acceptable to God.

Self-righteousness does that. It distorts your vision until, in your own eyes, you are the only right one.

Then in 2012 God took me on a journey through 1 Corinthians 13, showing me how this passage speaks to the church, about how our relationship with the body of Christ needs to be.

Suddenly the true grace of Jesus Christ became more real to me than ever before.

I had been focused on God's holiness and righteousness to a point that couldn't see His grace and love!

Suddenly I was seeing Jesus in a whole new way!

Now my relationship with Him took on a whole new dimension.

But in the joy of my new discovery of grace, My heart wanted to go to a new extreme.

I fought hard to keep the pendulum from swinging too far in the other direction of hyper-grace, which isn't really grace at all.

This is important, because there is a great tendency in the body of Christ today to label certain actions grace when they are not grace, while labeling the antithesis judgement when it is not judgment.

It is as if grace and judgment are two camps that are mutually exclusive and divided by an abyss.

But as wise believers who walk in the fear of the Lord, we must find a balance where we walk in true grace that is not afraid to call sin what it is, but still extends loving arms to the world and a brother in sin; that sends out a clarion call for holiness in the church while extending grace to a weak member of the body; that refuses to allow society to determine what is right or wrong and yet sees the world around them with the same compassion Jesus had.

Men and women of God who will weep over the lost, broken and fallen with true *agape* love!

3 Reasons Why Grace Must Have Balance

1. Without balance it becomes permissive. When grace is not balanced by the holiness and righteousness of God, it grows permissive. Permissiveness is not the nature of God. Nowhere in the Bible do we see that God permits sin. Ever.

In fact, we see just the opposite. The Bible tells us to be holy as He is holy. It says, "Therefore be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

The requirement for heaven is perfection.

And all of this would be discouraging for us, if not impossible, if it were not for grace,

Grace enables to do what we could not otherwise do!

Through grace, God forgave our sins, when the penalty should have been death. But He didn't stop there; grace is in abundant measure to us each day so that we have the power to reject sin and embrace holy living.

Grace doesn't say, "To err is human. So don't worry about it."

It says, "To err is human, but you have Almighty God dwelling in you, so you can rise above sin and live holy!"

That is grace!

2. Without balance it negates Christ's sacrifice. When grace is not balanced by righteousness and holiness, it permits a measure of sin and insults the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

If God is prepared to look the other way when we sin, why did He reject His Son on the cross?

Furthermore, why did Jesus die at all?

If some sin is permitted under grace, who decides which sin is permitted and which sin isn't, and on what verses do we base this assumption?

And if it's true that some sin is permitted or able to be swept under the rug of grace, then what do we do about heaven? The Bible teaches that perfection is the requirement.

Grace—true grace—enables us to walk in the power that Christ purchased for us when He descended into hell as a victorious warrior and ripped the keys of death, hell and the grave from Satan's slimy talons!

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit that lives in you" (Rom. 8:11).

This is grace! God bestowing upon us the power to live a new life – resurrection life!

3. Without balance it keeps people enslaved to sin. When grace is permissive and assumes that God will let certain sins slide, it keeps believers enslaved to sin!

Instead of teaching them the truth that Jesus died to free them from sin, we bind them with chains of deception!

Grace—true grace—breaks these chains with the truth that we have been given the power to live free from sin!

That is what Romans 6-8 is all about.

Paul gave us the key to unlock the chains of sin and walk in the freedom of Jesus' resurrection power!

Yes, he admitted to his own struggle with sin, but he didn't leave it there! He didn't leave us hopeless!

He reminded us that while we live here on earth in an earthly body that is at odds with a spirit that is born again and set free. By the grace of God, we now have the power to choose to walk in freedom!

That is the message of grace!

Not easy-believism.

Not permissiveness.

Rather, grace is the power and authority to reject sin and live in the freedom Jesus purchased on the cross!

Grace is so much more than undeserved favor; it is more than just forgiveness of sin. This definition without the rest of the truth about grace is like eating the appetizer and leaving out the main dish!

Grace is also the ability to stand in the power and authority given to us by the blood of Jesus Christ against the power of sin. And when we do sin, inadvertently and unintentionally, we know that we already have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ. So we don't have to live under the condemnation of that sin, but have free and full forgiveness right now.

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