



GLOBAL GRACE NETWORK

A QUESTION to Meditate On

A question has been ringing in my ears for the last few weeks. We recently returned from Kenya, after some great days with Friendship Festival and Gospel Revolution leadership seminars. In the seminars one of the speakers raised the question to which the answer carries the potential of totally changing the way we view many areas of life. As we bring this question into one area after another, we will discover that it brings a tremendous change in our life and ministry. What is this question? It is as simple as this: "Did the cross of Jesus make a difference?"

Did the cross make a difference in the way we view God, the way we view ourselves and the way we view others – believers and nonbelievers? Did the cross of Jesus really make a difference in the way we pray, the reason we worship and the message we preach? T.L. Osborn once said it took him two years to change his prayer-life after he discovered the finished work of Jesus.

Keep the question in mind as you read the articles in this newsletter. The article "Surprise, surprise – God is not angry!" talks about how we view God and how God views us. Did the cross really make a difference? And how great difference?

We will also get acquainted with a teacher whose testimony many may identify with. Let's help people get to phase three so they get the order right. The truth is –

the cross of Jesus did really make a difference!

Mary Felde
Editor



GGN is a fellowship of ministers and churches that advocate the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ – Jesus alone, grace alone, faith alone. Our purpose is twofold: to help the church rediscover Jesus and to take this message to the world.

APRIL 2009

Peace in Perilous Times

Rumors come to bring us into fear, but Jesus has already given us His peace!

By Pastor Mike Walker

It seems like no matter where we look today and no matter where we turn, there is more bad news coming in. The question may come to your mind: "What is going on?"

I have good news for you today and that news is the Gospel of Jesus Christ - the Gospel of grace. At the cross Jesus paid the full price for our peace, so I am writing this to encourage you in these perilous times that we live in!

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."
(2 Tim. 3:1)

We know that we are in the last

days because the Bible records the words of the apostle Peter in Acts 2:17 where he declared: *"This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, that in the last days I will pour out of my spirit on all flesh."* So by this statement we understand that we have been living in the last days for about 2000 years. By all the news reports that we witness on television or read about in the press, we know that we are living in perilous times.

The word **perilous** means: dangerous, hard to bear, hazardous or risky. I think that is an accurate description of what we see in our world today. Yes, we so much believe in the covenant of grace that

Jesus empowered by the shedding of His blood at the cross. We believe the news that is too good to be true, but that is true. But the truth is that everyday we are bombarded with the sound of fear. So, in this article I am endeavoring to disarm the power of fear and empower your life with the peace and love of God!

The Bible tells us in the New Covenant scripture found in Rom 15:4: *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*

When the word talks about these "things," it is talking about the things in the Old Covenant and how they are only a shadow of the real thing - which is Jesus himself! Much of what we see in the Old Covenant is what we call "types and shadows" of things we are to see in our lives today. We can learn from them and gain understanding, and we can learn how to live in the power of the New Covenant today! Remember they are only a shadow... **Jesus is the reality and when you see Jesus, then the shadow will make sense.**

So we want to take the lesson of the shadow and pass it through the cross and what Jesus said

Rumors come for one purpose and that is to make us afraid and to discourage us as the children of God.

about it. Then we'll see how it pertains to us in our daily life. This is one way that we can gain power from the Word of God and understand that God didn't put anything in his Word by mistake. It is there for a reason so that we can live the life that Jesus came to give.

THE PURPOSE OF RUMORS

In the Old Covenant, the prophet, Jeremiah, reveals a powerful truth to us concerning our life now, and to me it is very encouraging. *"And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land; a rumour shall both come one year, and after that in another year shall come a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler."* (Jer. 51:46)

Notice that the Lord is revealing to us that there is a rumor waiting for us every year - new year, new rumor, year after year. It has always been that way and will always be that way, and the Lord gives us insight here and lets us know so that we don't live in fear. Rumors come for one purpose and

that is to make us afraid and to discourage us as the children of God.

For if the enemy can get us as God's people to live in fear and to lose heart, then how dark is darkness going to get? If we are afraid, then how afraid are other people going to get? God is letting us know that rumors will come every year to discourage the covenant children of God. These rumors come through the media and through other sources and they are meant to keep us in fear and to move us away from the Word of God.

Jesus said to us in John 14:27: *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

From Jesus' mouth to your heart: "**LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED, NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID!**" Jesus has already given to you and to me His peace; we just need to keep trouble out of our heart. The peace is already there; it is inside of you that believe - just keep the trouble out!

THE MEANING OF PEACE

Jesus said, "I give you My peace," so you don't have to pray for peace - peace is already in you that believe! As a child of God, peace belongs to you. Peace defined means absence of confusion! Let's not be confused and forget who we are and who our God is! Let's not forget how much our Father loves us and that His son, Jesus, paid the full price - we have a covenant of grace!

Peace

Jesus has already given to you and to me His peace; we just need to keep trouble out of our heart.

Jesus is still building the church today and we are the church. Jesus said, "I give you My peace." Peace also means health, welfare, prosperity and every kind of good! Yes, there are a lot of rumors today and a lot of bad reports coming in. There is a lot of evil in this world, but there is also a lot of good! The apostle Paul encourages us in Rom 12:21: "*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*" Good will overcome evil, light always overcomes the darkness; believe in the good news of Jesus Christ. He said to us, "peace I leave with you." That also means to go forward; it means all the blessings which accompany and flow from our reconciliation with God!

Jesus said, "peace I leave with you"... all these things I leave with you - all the blessings that come when you are reconciled with God. Jesus paid the full price for our sin; He reconciled us with God so we have peace with God. Jesus who was rich in heaven became poor so that we would have provision. At the cross He took all of our sickness so that we could live in health. He was abandoned by all of His friends so that we could have friendship. He took all of our confusion so that we could walk in wisdom. Jesus totally conquered all the powers of darkness so that we could live victorious lives.

The apostle Paul gives us powerful insight into this truth

in 2 Cor 5:17-21: "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*"

God is not mad at you; He is not looking for a way to hurt you. He doesn't want to punish you; He is not upset with you - there is peace with you and God! You have been reconciled by the amazing grace of God. Jesus took our sin and our punishment that He did not deserve and gave us His righteousness that we did not deserve! We are reconciled!

DON'T BE AFRAID OF ANYTHING

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (Joh. 14:27)

Yes, there are rumors waiting for us yet this year. They are sent for one purpose and that is to get us to lose heart or to become fearful. There may be rumors coming, but there are also blessings! There may be a rumor next week, but there is also a blessing next week. Jesus said, I am leaving you my peace; I am leaving all the blessings that come when you are reconciled with God. So let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!

Peace I leave with you so don't be afraid of anything.

The literal text in the Greek is **don't be afraid of anything.** Jesus, your redeemer, is speaking to your heart: "*peace I leave with you so don't be afraid of anything.*" Jesus said, "I have given you my absence of confusion, my health, my wealth, my good things; my present blessings and my future blessings I have given to you so don't be afraid of anything." The abundant grace of God gives us the reality of peace in perilous times!



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SURPRISE, SURPRISE

—God is Not Angry!

By Pastor David Sterling

It may surprise you to discover that even today in some Christian circles, people are still imagining that God is intent on pouring out His wrath in order to vindicate Himself.

It's been going on for thousands of years. All over the world, confused and misguided people have offered up sacrifices trying to appease one "angry god" or another.

Throughout the history of mankind in many pagan religions, it has been normal practice to try to earn protection from the disasters that come upon our world. Mankind, throughout the ages, has a built-in religious need to try to soothe the anger of an imagined, violent God. According to the Bible, even some of God's people used to sacrifice their own children in the hope of avoiding the wrath of the demonic god, Molech. *It may surprise you to discover that even today in some Christian circles, people are still imagining that God is intent on pouring out His wrath in order to vindicate Himself.*

There is gross deception in our

midst with regard to the character of God. Many terrible deeds are attributed without reason to God. He is being constantly blamed for the works of the evil one in our world. The truth of the matter is that the once-and-for-all substitute sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, has completely satisfied the holy demands of a just God. Through the intervention of Jesus Christ mankind has been reconciled back to God himself – peace has been made through the precious blood of the cross. **Surprise, surprise - God is not angry at anybody!**

GOD'S GOODNESS DRAWS PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE

Too often Christians talk as if the God we serve is angry and vengeful. They speak as if God is their problem; almost as if there is no longer a devil in existence causing trouble on planet earth. We can hear it all the time. For too long the religious world has been presenting a picture that God is the one making people sick to teach them some deep spiritual lesson. Others believe that perhaps God is the one causing problems to purify His people by sending earthquakes, floods and tornadoes to show and

display His anger. If anything bad happens to them, they're sure God is thumping them on the head because they got out of line; or that He is bringing heartache into their lives "to keep them humble." Some believers are addicted to the superstitious, irrational, fatalistic belief that everything that comes their way in life has some mysterious meaning. All sorts of disastrous events and attacks of sickness are attributed to the obscure will of God. However, it is not really difficult to see that this mindset is in direct contradiction to the Word of God.

The Bible does not leave us in any doubt regarding God's character. **It proclaims God's infinite goodness and mercy.** We are specifically told that God has now reconciled in Christ the world unto Himself and He no longer counts men's trespasses against them (2 Cor. 5:19). We are clearly told that Jesus is the propitiation for both our sins and the sins of the whole world (1 Joh. 2:2). God has committed the word of reconciliation to us. It is a message of mercy and forgiveness. He is not angry with mankind. We are now living in the dispensation of God's grace and favor and His goodness is drawing people to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

For too long the religious world has been presenting a picture that God is the one making people sick to teach them some deep spiritual lesson.

According to some “self-appointed prophets,” this is all supposed to be a reminder of God’s holy anger against sin and lawlessness.

Since the latest wave of terrorist attacks and the occurrence of other serious disasters, it is not unusual to hear people say that God is revealing His judgments and sending His fire to warn the nations of the earth. We are being told that this is God’s forewarning and that He is in the process of starting to fulfill His judgments. According to some “self-appointed prophets,” this is all supposed to be a reminder of God’s holy anger against sin and lawlessness. But this is simply deception and misrepresentation of God’s Word and His character. **NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH!**

GOD IS IN THE SAVING BUSINESS!

Whenever there is an event that brings great sorrow and heartache to a nation or group of people, some so-called prophet rises up to proclaim that God is now shaking and warning the world of His displeasure. These types of statements which so blatantly misrepresent God’s character, should be quite simply rejected as false prophecies. God is in the business of saving and healing people – He is not the troublemaker. **Jesus is the Good Shepherd, not the slaughterer.** God is the one who gives and preserves life – He is not the destroyer of life. At present we are not yet in the dispensation of God’s wrath. The Day of the Lord and His vengeance has not yet come upon the face of the earth. Now is the day of salvation – this is the dispensation of God’s grace.

With the outbreak of AIDS disease around the world, there came prophecies that this “angry god” is now punishing homosexuals for their immoral lifestyle. The devastating pain caused by AIDS was supposed to be God’s judgment because of the immoral lifestyle. After the tragic Estonia disaster, where hundreds lost their lives when a large passenger boat sunk in the cold waters off the coast of Finland, we were told by some misguided “prophets” that God is now shaking the Nordic countries because of their liberal politics and sinfulness. The same wave of gloomy prophecies was evident after the nuclear power-station disaster in Chernobyl. Some even tried to find supposed prophetic references to the disaster in the book of Revelations. During the Middle East war when the nation of Iraq and its leader Saddam Hussein were humiliated and driven out of Kuwait, we were told by some self-appointed “prophets” that God was now venting His anger against Islam and the Muslim world. Some sensation seekers even tried to find Bible verses to back up their views.

It is very distressing to see how gullible Christians are being duped by these irresponsible and misguided teachers. God is the one who is seeking for reconciliation. The true prophet of God, Isaiah, states that “He (Jesus) was stricken and smitten by God. He was wounded and punished for our iniquities. The

chastisement needed to obtain peace was upon Him” (Isa. 53:4-5). Jesus’ sacrifice has paid the price for the sin of all mankind. God is not pouring out bursts of anger, neither is He judging the nations yet. That particular “day of wrath” is in the future and He has promised to save His church from that coming day of wrath.

GOD IS LIGHT - IN HIM THERE IS NO DARKNESS!

And now after the horrific events of September 11th in America, we have been once again treated to numerous pessimistic statements that God has, for some reason, removed His hand of protection from the American people. Some have said that God is punishing New York as it has acted as an open door, allowing sin free entry into the country. Others have gone as far as to proclaim that this is the beginning of God’s end-time judgments. However, this type of talk is just plain deception. The father of lies himself, Satan, has succeeded in transferring the blame that belongs to him onto God’s account. He has misleadingly made people put the blame onto God for these

Nowhere do we read of Jesus sending storms and disasters to punish people and fulfill God’s judgments.

horrendous works of darkness. By deceiving God’s people into believing these lies, the devil is able to keep sincere people in bondage. By perverting God’s character, the enemy has appeared as an angel of light and has prevented people from receiving God’s mercy and goodness. No

The Son of Man has not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.

wonder so many sincere believers have trouble receiving blessing from God!

The Bible specifically states that every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of lights. God does not fellowship with darkness. He is not in the habit of using fanatical, fundamental terrorists to further His objectives for mankind. The good Lord is not in the business of spreading deadly diseases in order to promote His purposes. Nowhere do we read of Jesus sending storms and disasters

God's wrath at sin has been fully appeased or satisfied in the blood of Christ.

to punish people and fulfill God's judgments. In fact, on one occasion, when James and John wanted to command fire to come down from heaven and consume a village in Samaria, Jesus severely rebuked them. He said they did not know what sort of spirit they were acting under (Luke 9:54-55 Amplified Bible).

The character and attributes of our blessed heavenly Father do not allow Him to do those horrible things which have been credited to Him. The fact that the Bible presents God as a loving heavenly Father does not permit Him to use sickness, disease, failure, disaster, and catastrophes as a method of training, teaching and purifying.

The full and glorious revelation of the New Testament states that Jesus came to seek and to find that which

is lost. The Son of Man has not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. Jesus stated that He, Himself, is the fulfillment of the "Year of Jubilee." We are now living in this wonderful Jubilee Year of God's favor. *God is not angry with anyone.* He is patient and long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but desiring that all should come to repentance. God's wrath at sin has been fully appeased or satisfied in the blood of Christ. The wrath of God, because of man's sin, fell on Jesus instead of us. Jesus is our "Passover." Praise God, we are at present in this period of time called God's Dispensation of Grace (Col. 1:25).

GOD IS FULLY SATISFIED WITH JESUS' SACRIFICE!

The curse that is present in the world, along with all its distress and tragedies, was brought in as a result of man's disobedience. It came in with the fall. God is not responsible for the disasters and works of darkness that we see. Satan is the troublemaker who is causing the suffering in our world. So far in this present age, the whole world is under the power of the evil one (1 Joh. 5:18). At present the whole creation is moaning in birth pains of labor waiting for deliverance (Rom. 8:22).

The Bible declares that the wrath of God will be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness (Rom 1:18). We are told that the time is coming when God will judge the nations of the earth. There is a time coming when the bowls of God's wrath will be poured out (Rev.15:7). However, we are not yet at that time in history. It is vitally important that as believers we do not wrongly interpret the different dispensations and times of God's dealing with mankind. God's wrath was poured upon Jesus as He suffered on our behalf. *God is totally satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice.* Because of the cross, God's mercy has taken the place of judgment. As a born-again child of God in Christ you have received mercy instead of justice.

Do not be disturbed by what you see happening around you. Lift up your head! Be of good courage! He who has called you is faithful and utterly trustworthy. May your spirit, soul and body be kept untouched and protected unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember above all – **GOD IS A GOOD GOD!**



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My Christian Walk

divide my Christian walk into three phases. The first phase was not that good – the second was better –and the third phase, where I am today, is very good. I will not say the best, because it will be better and better – with ever-increasing glory says the Word of God in 2 Cor. 3:18.

THE FIRST PHASE

This first phase I will call the striving period of my life. Christianity for me was about doing (to do). I had to do this and not do that. I knew I was saved by grace - that in myself I was not good enough, because the Bible says that if you stumble at just one point of the Law, you are guilty of breaking all of it (Jam. 2:10). Jesus says in Mat. 5:27-28 that a sinful thought is just like a sinful deed. So I knew it was impossible to never, ever have one sinful thought. Still, I expected of myself that I should be perfect.

As a good Christian, I should never do anything wrong. I should always be gentle and kind, read a lot in my Bible, pray a lot, and attend a lot of Christian meetings. When I was able to do this well in my own eyes, I felt good, if not, I felt bad. Most of the time I didn't make it because the devil made sure that it never was good ENOUGH. If I prayed for 15 minutes, I should have prayed for 30 minutes and so on. Can you see how wrong this was? Everything was about me - if I could make it or not. I knew what Rom. 8:1 says: "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Still I felt so condemned most of the time, and that robbed me from being bold.

In my childhood I learned that I had to be nice and clever to be loved (conditional love). I think that's why

I tried to perform for God, too. I believed I had to be a good Christian to be loved by him, just as I had to be a good, clever girl to be loved by my parents, relatives and friends. I knew I was saved because of the scripture in Joh. 1:12 that says "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God." I believed God kept his Word, and I had received Jesus as my Savior, so he had to open the heavenly door for me. But I couldn't imagine that he loved me, and was happy about me coming to heaven when I died. I knew in my head this wasn't right, but without being aware of it, I felt this way. How could he love one who so often disappointed him, and so often did wrong things? He could not possibly be pleased with such a Christian. But fortunately, this is not what the Bible says. The truth is that our father in heaven loves us with unconditional love. It has nothing to do with us doing good - being good Christians or not. He does not love us for what we do, but for who we are - his creation, his children.

THE SECOND PHASE

With this discovery, my second phase as a Christian began. I now understood that Christianity was not about **to do**, but about **to be**. God, the Father, loved me as I was. He didn't love me more or less whether I was doing good or bad. No, he just loved me because I was his beloved child. We love our children when they are new-born babies and completely dependant on us. They cannot do anything for us. They are just receiving and receiving all the time. We love them just because they are our children. So much more does our Father in heaven love us. He, who not

only **has love**, but who **is love** (1 Joh. 4:8). He loves us as he loves Jesus (Joh. 17:23). That's incredible! He loves us for who we are, not for what we do or don't do.

The story about Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38-42 shows what's the most important – doing or being. Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." Mary was sitting there in the presence of Jesus. Martha was busy in **doing** things for him. "But, shall we just sit there and do nothing?" you may ask. I will answer with a new question. "Do you think Mary, who was sitting there at the

How could he love one who so often disappointed him?

Lord's feet, would have brought him a glass of water if he had asked her?" I'm quite sure she would have. She had this close fellowship with Jesus. She could hear his voice, and she had experienced his love. She loved him, too. Whatever Jesus would ask her to do, she would do out of her love for him and with great joy.

Martha, however, was striving to please Jesus; maybe by doing things he never even had asked her to do. She had forgotten the most important thing - the close fellowship with her Savior, to **be** in his presence, to hear his voice and be led by him and not by herself. I think it is easy to be

burned out if you are doing things in your own strength, out of your own or other people's expectations, or out of a desire to be loved and accepted. But if you do what he asks you to do, and work in his strength, out of your love for him, you will not be burned out. If Christianity is more about **to be** than about **to do**, you will not have such a striving life.

THE THIRD PHASE

Now, I have written about two phases: "to do" and "to be". The time has come for the **third phase** which is even better than the second. And that is not to do, nor to be, but that **all is done**. That really is fantastic! All is done! By whom? By Jesus. **Jesus has done it all**. He did what I was unable to do concerning my salvation. There's nothing more to do. He did everything. As we sing in a song: "What Jesus Did was Enough."

The scripture in Heb. 10:14 says: "By **one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever** those who are **being made holy**." Who has been made holy? Every person who has accepted Jesus as his or her Savior - He who is the great gift from God to everyone who receives him. This gift makes you holy, clean and perfect. Do you have fear of not being good enough to go to heaven when you die? Then you are looking upon yourself instead of Jesus. Was (is) Jesus good enough? Yes! – And then you are also good enough.

You might say: "But, I'm not able to be like Jesus." No, you are right. None of us can be like Jesus in our own strength. But that's what it is all about. That's the good news - the Gospel. Jesus made it. He did it because we couldn't. He kept the Law. He lived without sin, and he gives his life to us. Then it becomes as if we keep the Law and live without sin. *Completely*

undeserved - you have got his life, his righteousness. *Completely undeserved* - he got your sin, punishment and judgment. 2 Cor. 5:21 says: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." How great is the grace of God!

Be aware, I am not saying we never sin anymore. But by grace, because of Jesus, we have become righteous to God. We do not become sinners again as soon as we make a mistake. Neither does a caterpillar, who has become a butterfly, turn back to be a caterpillar every time it's not flying. But it's important to focus upon the fact that God looks upon us as righteous and not as sinners. The more you focus upon what you have been given - righteousness, peace and joy - the more your life will be righteous, peaceful and filled with joy. What occupies your mind will put its mark on you. I'm so pleased that to be a child of God does not depend on me. It's not about my life, but about the life of Jesus. It depends on him—and **he is perfect**.

GETTING THE ORDER RIGHT

I will close this testimony by showing that even though the first "to do phase" was not good for me, I now understand that all three phases belong to the Christian walk - **but in another way** and in **another order** than it was in my life. Number one has to be **all is done**. This is the most important and the foundation. Then the other two phases will come by themselves.

When you realize that everything is about Jesus and not about you, you don't have to strive anymore. And when you see this enormous grace, you will understand that you are valuable just because you are his

child - that his great love for you is not dependant on what you do. He loves you because you **are** (to be) his beloved child in Jesus. Knowing this, you can rest in his presence the way Mary did.

He loves us for who we are, not for what we do or don't do.

This great unconditional love will make you love him, too. It says in 1 Joh. 4:19: "We love because he first loved us." Then you will be a person that wants to do all he asks of you. It will be a desire in your heart to do good deeds. He will put it there. And you will do, be a doer out of love, not out of fear, or out of a desire to be accepted and loved. You will **do** because you **are** accepted and loved. You see, Christianity contains all three phases, and if they come in the right order, you will have a great life.

1. ALL IS DONE, by Jesus
2. BE - you can be in God's presence as his beloved child
3. DO - you will be a doer out of love for him. 1 Cor. 15:10.



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*Traveling teacher
together with her
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