



GGN is a teaching resource for ministers and churches all over the world. We 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.

## GLOBAL GRACE NEWS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2015

### TEACHING GRACE IN A BALANCED WAY

Most people like the word balance – it indicates a sound doctrine. When the word radical is mentioned some may be more cautious and on the alert.

What I have discovered after many years of teaching the Gospel of Grace in leadership seminars is that it is not only about the subject itself but also about how the subject is presented.

If the focus on grace is only about forgiveness of sins, then people might fear many will interpret this as a license to sin. However, the Bible speaks about the multifaceted grace of God, telling, amongst other things, that the same grace by which we have forgiveness of sins also teaches us to deny ungodliness and live a righteous lifestyle. This is where the balance in the teaching comes in. The wonderful (and radical) gospel of the grace of God is then being taught in a balanced way.

In this newsletter we bring two articles that we pray will be of help for many. And remember, we always love to hear testimonies from you as you read the articles from Global Grace News.

Mary Felde, Editor



## *"Balanced grace"* - what is meant with this?

By: Mary Felde

We sometimes hear people request for more balance in the teachings of grace. But what are we to balance grace with? The Law? Or is there another way to bring in this balance?

On several occasions I have heard people mention that they fear the teaching about God's Grace. When travelling around to preach, I have experienced people coming up to me before the meeting with worried comments about the so-called "grace-teaching". But after the meeting, those same people are reassured, because they understand that it is a balanced teaching about grace. I will explain further what I mean by that expression, but let me first refer to a small conversation I had with some European Bible school students visiting Africa. We were discussing their concerns about the teaching on grace, and I said the following: **"The same grace that forgives us, will also help us to say NO to sin."** One of them immediately exclaimed

that he had never heard such a statement before! And I believe this is where the problem lies. Many have only heard parts of the teaching about God's grace, so I can understand that people can get worried.

In this teaching article, I will share some words about what God's grace is and what it is NOT, so that we can see how dependent we are on it—in all areas of our lives. Personally, I want to hear more teachings on the Grace of God—not just for knowledge, but for living and experiencing God's grace at work in all areas of my life and ministry.

### What God's grace is NOT.

First, a short definition on what God's grace is NOT, so that it is easier to

avoid misunderstandings.

1. Grace is not “a license to sin” (Jude 4).

Gal 5:13

*For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

Rom 6:1-2

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*

It means that grace doesn't make us free to sin, but rather sets us free from the strength of sin. Therefore, it is important to have a lot of teaching about the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

Rom 6:14

*For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

Tit 2:11-12

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.*

2. Grace is not “a license to laziness”.

Paul is the apostle with the most revelation about God's grace. Have a look at what he writes:

1 Cor 15:10

*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not*

*I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

As we can see, he worked A LOT, but he could still rest, being confident that it was God's grace that worked through him. I once heard a preacher say that when he discovered Christ in himself, he could do four times as much as he did before. How? Maybe it was because he previously would spend four days preparing a single sermon, however now, the sermons would easily flow out of him, one after another.

We can still be very active under God's grace, but it *works in another way*. Grace never threatens us with demands (or puts heavy burdens on us), but it works in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Phil 2:13).

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# STUDY CORNER

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3. Grace is not “an encouragement to settle down under bad circumstances”

Some may say, “Well, we can be content in this run-down house, because we have God’s grace.” Yes, God’s grace will help and strengthen us in all circumstances! But God will also help us so that our circumstances improve! Nothing is impossible for Him.

### What God’s grace IS.

1. Grace is what comes from a God FULL of grace (Psalms 145:8, 17; Luke 12:32).

Jesus was FULL of grace and truth (John 1:14, 17; Luke 2:40; Luke 4:22). What you are full of will come out. If you squeeze an orange, out comes orange juice. I often think of when Jesus was pressured the most, while hanging on the cross; His merciful nature was revealed: “*God, forgive them, because they know not what they are doing.*”

2. Grace is God’s undeserved favor and goodwill for us (Eph 2:6-8 Ampl; Rom 4:4; Matt 20:1-15).

**We cannot do anything to deserve or earn salvation or any other blessing from God.** God’s blessings come to us because of God’s goodness and not because of our own goodness. Therefore, we are continually overwhelmed by how good God is! The Bible says, “The goodness of God leads us to repentance.”

3. Grace is that God Himself works for us, in us, and through us, although we have not deserved or earned it.

This is exactly what I yearn to experience more of; that Christ in me is greatly manifested, and that I increasingly more will learn to put all my trust in Him who performs miracles, transforms lives and situations, and opens doors no one can shut.

### There is grace for every area of our life.

I was a missionary in Asia for seven years. Those were good years, but the **first** year was quite challenging. There were several reasons for this, and one was that I didn’t know that I was completely righteous in God’s eyes. It was in this period that God began to reveal what His grace was in my life, and this revelation became forever planted deeply in my heart. So when people have concerns about the Gospel of God’s grace, I believe some might not have heard all that grace will do in people’s lives. **For God’s grace is so much more than only the forgiveness of our sins!** A practical way to explain God’s grace can be done by dividing it into three areas:

1. Saving grace
2. Standing grace
3. Serving grace

I will explain these three areas in more detail in part two of this teaching

series.

### Balanced grace

In the introduction, I mentioned something about balanced grace. So what is this? What can we balance grace with? If we think that we can balance grace with the law, we run into problems. Because we would then mix the new covenant with the old covenant, and we would dilute the gospel and hinder its power. So this would be a completely wrong way to balance the teaching about grace! So what are we to do then? We continue to strongly and clearly teach that Jesus took all our sins upon the cross and that we have forgiveness for all our sins, because this is the truth and the core of the gospel. However, we then balance this teaching by saying that the same **God who forgives all our sins, will also change our lives so that we say no to sin.** It is fantastic to discover that the gospel of God’s grace in Jesus Christ is God’s power unto salvation, to living a transformed life, and to seeing God’s power working through us to meet other people’s needs!

May the grace of God be with you *in abundance!*



Mary Felde



# God cleansed us more than 2000 years ago

By: Lars Kraggerud

Here on earth we have a physical life with our old flesh and body. We all sin in our earthly life and we may easily be occupied with our sins and mistakes.

Wrong focus prevents many Christians from bearing the fruit of the Spirit. They focus on their sins instead of focusing on who they are in Christ and that Christ lives inside of them. When I focus on myself, the sanctification stops. *When I move my sight from myself to what Jesus has done for me and who I am in Christ, the sanctification starts again.*

2 Pet. 1:9 says that we have forgotten that we are cleansed from old sins. Which cleansing? The cleansing at the cross! Jesus cleansed the whole world at the cross. The whole world was forgiven and cleansed and everyone who calls upon the name of Jesus will have his or her sins washed away. When people call upon the name of Jesus they will experience this. They are cleansed the very moment they are born again.

*"...wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16)

When you call upon Jesus to be saved and are born again, you will experience that your past, present and future sins are being washed away. You are cleansed, holy and clean once and for all.

The devil wants us to be occupied with the faults and lacks in our earthly life. We all sin in our earthly life. And when we don't understand that we are saved from sin, we become an easy target for Satan's deception. This cleansing happened at the cross more than 2000 years ago. There on the cross, we were cleansed from sin, cleansed from the fall, cleansed in the blood of Jesus. For us, this happened when Jesus died long before we were born. We can only say, "Thank you Jesus for what you did for me on the cross," then continue believing this and keep it as a truth as long as we live on this earth. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8)

## YOUR PHYSICAL EARTHLY LIFE IS YOUR OLD LIFE

When you understand that your physical earthly life is your old life, then it is easier to understand that your old sins belong to your earthly life. And these old sins ARE forgiven. It HAS happened, you WERE forgiven at the cross. God doesn't hold anything against you anymore. *You are saved, rescued, set free, cleansed, holy, and made*

*perfect in Christ once and for all* (1 Cor 6:11, Heb 10:10 and 10:14).

You will live "two lives" here on earth, your physical life in addition to your new life in Christ.

When you die physically, you then are rescued from the old flesh and body and finally saved from your old life. Then you will receive a heavenly body for your soul and spirit. Your soul joined with your spirit and thus became the new creation. Your soul was saved and delivered from the flesh, totally delivered from the law of sin and death in your members and was joined with your spirit the day you called upon the name of Jesus. Adam became a living soul. All human beings are living souls, but when the soul is joined with the spirit, it becomes a new creation.

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."* (2 Cor 5:17).

Don't focus on the old life that is in the past, but focus on the NEW life which IS Christ in you. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus moved into my

spirit the very moment I called upon the name of Jesus and in the same moment my soul was joined with my spirit and my soul was set free from the law of sin and death in my members.

(Rom 7:23 and Rom 8:2)

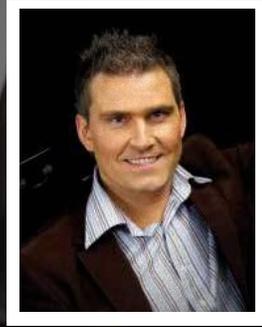
*Focusing on who we are in Christ will set us free from sin and from defeat.* This focus will help the soul and mind not to stumble and not to fall back to the old life with the fleshly habits. Peter says: *"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;"* (2 Pet 1:10).

We stumble when we look at ourselves. We stumble when we live under

condemnation. We stumble when we are sin-focused. We stumble when we forget the complete cleansing from all our past, present and future sins.

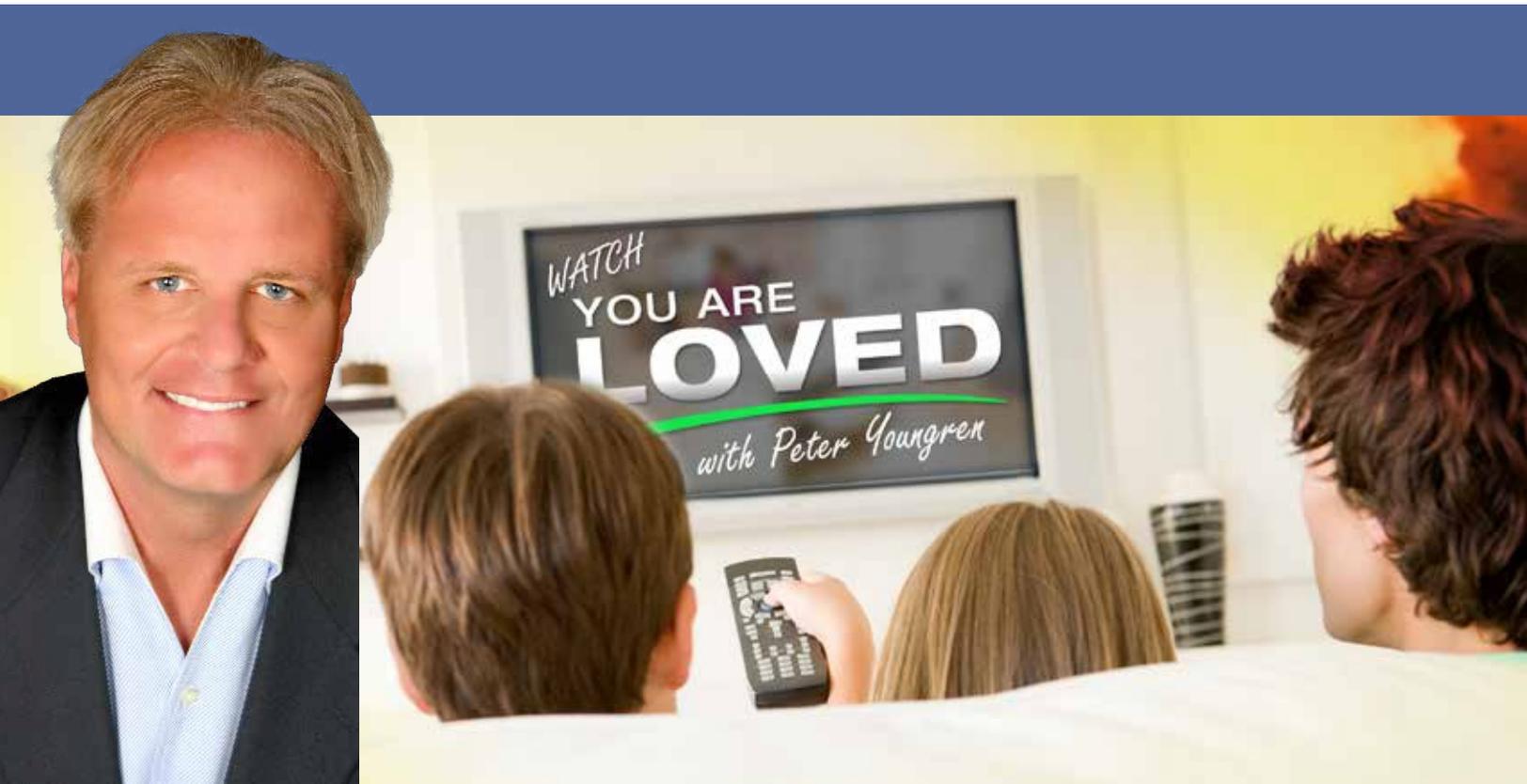
We make our calling and election sure when we look at Jesus and what he has done for us - when we look at who we are in Christ and that Christ lives in us (Col 3:1-4 and Heb 12:1-3). Be passionate about this and you will stop stumbling in your Christian life. When you exercise your mind, focusing on who you are in Christ, that you are called and elected in Christ Jesus, you help your soul to understand that you are joined with the Lord. Your soul is saved from the old life, from the old sins, and has become one unit with the spirit who dwells in Him.

*But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him* (1 Cor 6:17)



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