

Connecting the Dots ... Post Resurrection Issues

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[0 : 00] So there are some other things going on that need a little bit of emphasis, and one has to do with the Tuesday men's class we've been meeting for forever.

Well, we started, this class started in 1965 when Paul Ponas was teaching it, and I was one of those who attended it.

And we met at the old YMCA downtown across the street from the post office that's no longer there. It's been demolished, and we've moved to several places. And the class for the last several years has been meeting at Studebaker's, former Collier's restaurant.

And we meet at 7 o'clock because these people are gracious enough to open their restaurant an hour early just for us. And we appreciate their accommodating us.

And then we dismiss by 8.30, and if you would like to join us, we would love to have you. Also, I want you to note, if you would please, that the April 26th, I'm sorry, April, well, where is it?

[1 : 08] Monthly Bible study, yeah. The 28th, that's this next Thursday, we meet right here in the rear with a sumptuous breakfast that is served at 9 o'clock, and the study gets underway.

At 9.30, you are welcome to attend. Reservations are not required. Just show up. If you can make it for the breakfast, be here at 9. If you can't be here at 9, come at 9.30 for the study, and it will be a profitable and enjoyable time for all.

I want to make a couple of explanations, give a couple of explanations about the messages that we are bringing that we started this morning at the 9 o'clock hour, because it's going to be somewhat different from anything that we have ever done.

And in the first place, for some of you who are grace people, this will be ho-hum stuff. You've heard it before. But repetition is the mother of learning, so it will be good for you, as the Apostle Peter said.

I write these things to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, even though you already know them. So they will be emphasized again, and they have to do with the peculiarities that are typical of the day and age in which we live.

[2 : 26] That is called the dispensation of the grace of God. And someone is thinking, what is that? What we're talking about is connecting dots.

You've all seen a layout of something that just has dots all over it, and the dots are numbered from one to whatever, and it doesn't make any sense at all.

But when you take a pencil and you start with dot number one, and you draw a line to dot number two and number three, and by the time you get finished, you've got a picture.

Now you can tell what you're looking at, and all you did was connect the dots. Let me assure you, dear friends, when it comes to understanding the Word of God so that you can not only appreciate it but learn to love it on a new level, it comes only when you're able to connect the dots, and that's what we are trying to do.

But it is a different format. Session number one was in the rear at the 9 o'clock hour. It was recorded, so anyone who didn't get it, who wasn't there, can get it if they want it next week.

[3 : 45] But what is going to be different about it is that I'm going to continue on this theme of connecting the dots here from the pulpit Sunday morning for the months of May and June.

Then, during that time, Nathan Rambeck, who is away this weekend visiting relatives, will be teaching the 9 o'clock hour in the rear, and for July and August, Nathan will be taking the pulpit, and I will be teaching back there, but the content I will be bringing will be in continuity, and it will be the same thing that is what we're talking about this morning in connecting the dots.

So many people have a great love and respect for the Bible, but in many cases, it's almost like a closed book to them, and they have never discovered the joy or the necessity of understanding

what progressive revelation is all about.

And once you do, when you get it, the light comes on. Wow. This is really something. It is really something.

And my prayer is for everybody at Grace to be able to appreciate it and look at it that way, because when you do, everything changes, and it is just absolutely amazing.

[5 : 19] So that's what we are going to be doing. And Nathan and I, and Nathan is a very possible replacement for yours truly when the time comes for me to retire, and I don't know exactly when that will be, but it is getting closer.

We're closer now than we've ever been. So Nathan needs and will appreciate the experience, and you will appreciate him as well as you already have from the messages that he will be bringing. So keep that in mind if you would, please, and all of the sessions will be recorded so that it won't be necessary for anybody to miss anything if you really want to get the content. As we go to prayer this morning, we want to remember, as we have in the past, Ukraine, there has not been this kind of devastation since World War II.

Now, that's really saying something. I mean, we've had conflicts in Korea and in Vietnam and Afghanistan and Iraq, but not on this level.

And this is something, it is just unconscionable that civilians, civilians are deliberately targeted by Russia.

[6 : 51] I would not have thought they would even be capable of that. I would not have thought they would be willing to do that. Atheism, atheism can produce some very weird rationales, and that surely must be one of them.

That is just mind-boggling. I received an article from Franklin Graham and Samaritan's Purse just a couple of days ago, and I thought, if you don't get this in the mail, I want you to have it.

So I duplicated this, and it's in the literature rack. Before you leave, if you exit the back door or the front, whichever, make it a point, if you would, to stop by the literature rack.

There are a whole host of articles there, and this is the one in the top left-hand corner. Please make sure that you get one of these and take it home and read it.

Samaritan's Purse is having a tremendous ministry there, and the need is staggering. We just cannot imagine the devastation that is being left in the wake.

[8 : 14] So far, there have been over 3 million Ukrainians dispossessed, have actually left the country, and the only ones remaining, for the most part, are men of physical ability and of combat age, and they are staying to help fight against the Russian invasion.

So women and children have, for all practical purposes, been evacuated, many to Poland and other surrounding countries, and it has just been absolutely indescribable. So get a copy of this, if you would, please, and read it over and make it a matter of prayer because these people certainly, certainly do, certainly do need it.

And speaking of that, let's pray right now. Our Father, none of us here in this nation can begin to identify with what these folks are going through, have already gone through with more to come in Ukraine.

The butchery, the disregard for innocent human life is just overwhelming, and it just reminds us once again of how brutal a godless viewpoint can be.

And our prayer is for these dear people to understand that this is the dark side of humanity, but there is another side.

[9 : 58] And we are so grateful for the reality of that other side. And our prayer is that through all of this devastation and deprivation that these folks are enduring, that they may be willing and able to look over and beyond that which they are experiencing and recognize that this is not all there is.

You have provided something else, something not nearly as obvious, but far more important and far more beautiful than the devastation they're looking at. We don't know how real, honest good can come out of these great losses, but from what we've heard, some already have, and we're grateful. Our prayer is for those involved in any level who are truly believers that they may seize the opportunities to offer something to these dear people that the world has not to offer.

And that is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that changes everything in this world and in the world to come. More than anything else, that's what we pray for them. And we ask that our administration, that our president, and those who are in charge may have the wisdom and the insight and the understanding to know what the best course of action is by way of what to provide

and how to undertake it.

We look to you for wisdom that completely escapes us in our humanity. And we thank you that you are the ever-available God on duty 24-7. We appeal to you on behalf of the Ukrainian people even now, in Christ's name.

[11 : 45] Amen. There may be other items that are not in the bulletin that need to be voiced or noised abroad.

Do you have one of them? Any other announcements or anything that should be made? Anybody? Anybody? All right.

We're going to continue now. This will be session number two in what we are loosely addressing as issues that are following the crucifixion of our Lord and the resurrection in that first century.

So let me begin with making a couple of statements. Then we'll go to the scriptures and reveal some things that I think you will find enlightening. And let me begin by saying, there are two things that occurred in the first century.

That is, from the time Jesus was born, for the next 70 or so years, bringing us up to the end of the first century, which would be 100 A.D., almost 2,000 years ago.

[13 : 05] And those two things that occurred in that first century that changed absolutely everything with the changes still in place today.

First, the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ not only resulted in the religion of Judaism becoming defunct or passé, but it also became the centerpiece of the universe of all time. Because the very Creator Himself was made flesh as one of us and took the sins of the world upon Himself.

I have to check myself when making a statement like that. It is such an expansive statement. Do you realize what we're saying?

Do you realize what the scriptures are telling us? That God, the supreme being, maker and creator of the universe, who dwells in a sphere, an area with which we are completely unfamiliar, that this being, who is described as omnipotent, which means he possesses all power, omniscient, which means he possesses all knowledge, and omnipresent, which means he's everywhere.

[14 : 49] There is nowhere that God is not. Jesus told the woman at the well in Samaria in John chapter 4 that God is spirit.

They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. What in the world does that mean? God is spirit. This is what enables His omnipresence.

This is what enables this being, the scriptures call God, the Eternal One, the Jehovah, the Adonai, to be here and in China and in Ukraine and in Texas and in Canada and everywhere.

There is nowhere that He isn't. What kind of a being is that? It's one totally removed from anything we can identify with.

This is the essence of spirit. Spirit is immaterial. Spirit is not made of stuff. Spirit is essence, not substance.

[16 : 08] I have real difficulty trying to get my brain wrapped around that and I suspect you do too. And this immaterial being took it upon himself to become as one of the creatures that He brought into existence.

He is also referred to as Emmanuel, which literally means God with us. We've scarcely gotten underway and I'm already in over my head.

This being is incomparable and this being was pleased to create to create other beings in His likeness and in His image.

I think those are distinctive things that are not synonymous, although most most scholars put them together and consider them synonymous, but I think that being created in God's image and likeness means that that in our physicality, in the bodies that we have, with the one head and two eyes and two arms and two legs, et cetera, that constitutes our image.

That's what we look like physically. But the likeness has to do with the internal part of our being that nobody has ever seen that is immaterial and it is referred to as spirit.

[18 : 02] And as I pointed out in the past, when you come to faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and you receive Him and His forgiveness it is His spirit that bears witness with your spirit that you are a child of God.

Now, understand that this spirit business has nothing necessarily to do with what we call religion or even Christianity. I mean, it is connected but it isn't the same.

And by that, I mean every human being has a human spirit. Even if he is an atheist who screams from the housetops that there is no God, he still has a human spirit.

That's part of what makes you a human being. And that part of your being is that which is in the likeness of God, the immaterial part.

But we are created in His image so we have a physical part and when the time comes that God is ready to take you from this earth, your immaterial spirit exits your material body and you go to be with the Lord and the body is cremated or buried or put to rest at sea or whatever.

[19 : 26] But there is that distinction. and this absolutely incomparable being I can only say developed a love relationship because really God is love.

There are a whole lot of things that characterize Him but this seems to be is numero uno. God is love and He deigned to have a relationship with these humans that He created in His likeness and in His image and that of course was Adam and Eve and this love relationship that He developed with them extended to their progeny and to all of the millions who have come after them so we can honestly say that God has a thing for human beings.

There are times when we all wonder why. Why would He? But He does. That's just Calvary love. That's just God's nature. God can't I guess would say God cannot help Himself but to love and He loves those He's created in His own image.

And this God this Spirit being who is omnipotent omnipresent omniscient took it upon Himself to become one of us and do something for us that would enable us to be squared with Him even though humanity had turned their back on Him and had told God to get lost.

God's love for man never diminished. In fact that love became so strong and so powerful that it was actually willing to sacrifice some portion and I don't understand this I don't God cannot die alright?

[21 : 43] deity cannot die but humanity can and Jesus was God in the flesh the word became flesh the word is the essence and communication of God the word became flesh and dwelt among us John the writer of that in his gospel is speaking from experience because he was one among whom the word became flesh and dwelt among and in that fleshly body his love was so intense and so extensive that he deemed it his purpose to take that body and allow it to be crucified to undergo the most painful excruciating kind of death that any human being could be subjected to and the reason he did it was because love was written all over it and in doing that in doing that he was able to settle the score to balance the scales of humanity and to take that lopsided scale which righteousness would be here and sin and evil would be here and it greatly outweighed the righteousness so that the whole world was steeped in sin and rejection and rebellion against God and when

Jesus Christ said it is finished to the last die a great transaction was over so that he who knew no sin had become sin for us and the only way that one person as a human being could do that and satisfy the demands for the sins and infractions of all humanity billions of people was all linked to his identity who he was now we've already stated that God cannot die God is eternal but Jesus died and Jesus was the God man and I don't understand how the human part of Jesus died and the God part didn't I don't understand that but I'll leave that to the almighty I'm sure he's got it all figured out I don't understand it but all I know is that he who knew no sin was made to be sin for us so that so that to the end purpose that we might be made the righteousness of God in him you talk about a transaction when Jesus said it is finished boy he said a mouthful nothing has changed since and you know I've told you before the apostle Paul the apostle Paul was a fiddler he had a fiddle just had one string on it and it was the cross the cross of Christ and our Easter message was of first importance Paul said I delivered unto you that which

I received of first importance which means hey folks listen get this because this transcends everything nothing tops this Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures that's the whole ball game you get that and you get everything and you miss that and you miss everything that's what this thing called Christianity is all about and it led Paul to say I determined to know nothing I made up my mind to know nothing among you other than Jesus Christ and him crucified because that's what it's all about that's everything that is that first century event that the world has never recovered from and I hope it never does that changed absolutely everything first sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ not only resulted in the religion of Judaism becoming defunct or passé but it also became the centerpiece of the universe of all time because the very creator himself was made flesh as one of us and took the sins of the world upon himself that's the first item and the second and you'll excuse me if I read these because

I had to write this out because I was afraid I would leave out something important secondly the kingdom of heaven that is the rule and reign of heaven being brought to earth was preached by John the Baptist and continued by Jesus and the twelve apostles it operated under the atmosphere and anticipation of that worldwide kingdom being established with Jesus the Messiah as king over all the earth that was the message that John the Baptist was preaching that was the same message that Jesus and the apostles were preaching but they were preaching it exclusively to the Jewish people which meant they were addressing a very very tiny minority of the world's population at that time it was not that God did not care for the

[28 : 07] Gentiles he did he died for them too but God had a plan a methodology whereby the spearhead nation for impacting the entire world would be Israel and they were cultivated all the way going back to Abraham when he was called out of Ur the Chaldees and Abraham's descendants and that's what everything was headed toward only precious few if any at all even knew that then after the fact of course we look back on it and it becomes quite obvious so let me continue that kingdom preaching operated under the atmosphere and anticipation of that worldwide kingdom being established with Jesus the Messiah as king over all the earth that did not happen due to the national rejection of Jesus by the nation of Israel and that's of whom John was speaking in chapter one when he says that

Jesus came into his own that means Israel he was related to them by blood he came into his own and his own received him not they rejected him oh the twelve received him and there were thousands who did receive him and there were three thousand more on Pentecost after the resurrection who received him but they constituted a very tiny minority in connection with the whole population of Israel so he was received but only by a very small contingent all that was functioning and was anticipated under the kingdom program was halted because of that an entirely new program never before imagined by anyone nor predicted by any of the prophets came into being it would be operating under a brand new set of rules and principles different from that of the rejected kingdom that had already been set aside and what this looks like very much to us

God's going to plan B it looks like plan A has failed so God's going to plan B that's not the case at all God doesn't have a plan B he never does have because that which he desires to come to pass will come to pass simply because he desires it so what looks like a plan B is not at all a plan B because the rejection of the Messiah was clearly predicted prophesied in the Old Testament they shall look upon him whom they have pierced he was wounded for our transgressions bruised for our iniquities chastisement of our peace was upon him all of these things are prophesied and predicted that is plan A and it is going right on track even the rejection was built into it because God knew full well in advance what

Israel's decision would be before Jesus ever came he was despised smitten afflicted all the rest of it Isaiah 53 spells it out and so does Psalm 19 so all of that was planned for and predicted and that's all right on track with plan A but the thing that was not predicted not even hinted at not imagined not suspected at all was you you are called the church believers like you all over the world are involved in the great plan and program of God not as plan B but as a previously undisclosed thing and we just popped up like Johnny come lately whoa where'd this come from and we're going to see that and all of this is taking place in that volatile book of

Acts how long did it take the book of Acts to play out 30 years 30 years when you read the book those 28 chapters you can read it you can read it in 28 minutes if you're a fast reader but just remind yourself it took 30 years for those things to come to pass and my they just had one cataclysmic upheaval after another let me get back to my notes this entirely new program never before imagined by anyone nor predicted by any of the prophets came into being it would be operating under a brand new set of rules and principles different from that of the rejected kingdom that was set aside it would be called an ecclesia which is the Greek word that means literally church or assembly a church comprised not merely of Jews as was the message of the kingdom but consisted of the unheard of the unimaginable combination of

[33 : 38] Gentiles as well as Jews do you know how the Jews referred to Gentiles they referred to them as dogs the scriptures make it quite clear if you were not a Jew you were a Gentile you were a dog why did they call them dogs if you know anything about dogs there isn't much that they won't eat they eat just about anything and that's typical a Gentile will even eat pork chops imagine that a Gentile will eat bacon to the Jew that was totally off limits so so so these people who come from a pagan background what do they know about Moses and the law zilch nothing they could care less

they had their own stupid statues and idols that they made and they had them all over the place everywhere they had a god of this and a god of that and a goddess of this and a goddess of that and they had a goddess of love and a god of the agriculture and a god of horses and a god of the sea and Neptune and Poseidon and all and on and on it went and it was just ridiculous you mean to tell me that god is going to take those kind of people and meld them together with those whom he has called his special people the Jew yep that's what he's going to do but he's not going to leave them in their paganism he's going to bring them out of their paganism into a personal relationship with Jesus

Christ and he's going to do the same for Jews and bring them into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and these people are going to be meeting together in one body as Jew and Gentile where there's neither bond nor free nor male nor female you are all one in Christ Jesus it's a whole new ball game never thought of never imagined and when it was presented it was roundly rejected especially by the Jew you mean to tell me that we have got the hobnob with these uncircumcised with these dogs and they weren't about to have any part of that and most of them of course did not let me get back to my notes as such the whole methodology and program was pursued under the kingdom earlier in force gave way to a new entity called the church or the spiritual body of Christ composed of both

Jews and Gentiles under this new dispensation or administration everything would change most dramatic of all was that of the grace of God now available because Christ paid humanity's sin debt now made all of humanity eligible to come to God solely on the basis of Christ having paid their sin debt not only was the access to God different but so was nearly everything else and that included prayer its power and its perplexities so I want you to see that in bold relief and let's go first of all to Matthew's gospel chapter 6 and verse 5 this is in that famous document called the Sermon on the Mount and it is remarkable stuff

Matthew chapter 6 it is remarkable but it is time bound it is time bound and what we are going to demonstrate is that the Sermon on the Mount was right on track for where it was supposed to be when it was supposed to be there and not one jot or tittle is out of place but it is now passe we do not operate on the principles of the Sermon on the Mount nor are we supposed to because the program has changed something has been added that wasn't there before and what that something is is called the administration of the grace of God which grace by the way has always been available but never like it is going to be available now so in

Matthew's gospel chapter 6 beginning with verse 5 Jesus said when you pray you are not to be as the hypocrites for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners in order to be seen by men truly I say to you they have their reward in full but you by way of contrast when you pray go into your inner room and when you have shut your door pray to your father who is in secret and your father who is in secret will repay you and when you are praying do not use meaningless repetitions as the Gentiles do for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words and the name of the game for them and for some today even is you pray a certain prayer you have a stack of prayers and you just pray this same prayer over and over and over and you are building up this stack and finally when you prayed enough and got enough prayers in the stack then you get the answer so the name of the game is just pray pray pray pray and some even develop ingenious little ways of counting their prayers with a little wheel a little prayer wheel or beads or whatever and they keep track of them that way and they may be assigned if they are of the [39 : 51] Roman Catholic persuasion they may be persuaded or assigned by the priest if they go to confession and they confess the sin and the priest may say that they are to say 50 Hail Marys and that is their punishment for the sin that they committed so they repeat over and over again Hail Mary full of grace the Lord and they said it 50 times off the hook got that done and that's that's kind of like what was going on back here so the Roman Catholics do have a kind of precedent for it and it wasn't something completely unknown at the time and Jesus says that they are not to engage in repetition and by the way there is no prayer in all of the world that is more repetitious than this which is referred to as the Lord's prayer and I've corrected you before corrected this before because the Lord's prayer this I'm not saying that this is not a legitimate prayer it certainly is but it was never intended to be repeated incessantly and that's not the way

Jesus meant it at all and he just said in the verse earlier that you don't use repetition let me put it this way all Christians ought to pray but no Christian ought to say prayers do you get that see the difference you can pray with your heart in it and your soul in it and meaning in it you can pray but if

you're just saying prayers just repeating words over and over God is not impressed God wants the prayer of the heart not repetition so in verse 14 we've got an interesting climax for if you forgive men for their transgressions your heavenly father will also forgive you but if you do not forgive men then your father will not forgive your transgressions now that's pretty clear well is this wrong yes and no no it wasn't wrong for then when

Jesus gave it it was right and it was right on because prayer and forgiveness was conditional it was right for then but it is wrong for now because something happened changed everything what was that Jesus died on that cross and that changed everything understand that if you don't allow for that if you go back to portions of scripture and try to make them work that are on the other side of the cross you're going to have all kinds of problems in the first place you're going to be out of date we need to come up it's like it's like trying to fight World War II weapons you're really outclassed and outdated you need to get up with the latest and that's why we say the Bible is a book of transition it is doctrine that is developing that is on the move it isn't static it's growing and maturing and it is changing and if you don't keep up with the changes and note what the changes are and you try to live in what was before you got a real problem and we'll give an example of that and we'll be looking at in just a moment but first let's go to

Matthew chapter 7 and verse 21 Matthew 7 and 21 not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven by the way let me just inject something here because this is really really key and very important when he says will enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven you realize those are two different heavens they are not the same but it is it is logical to assume that they are the same because the word is the same heaven heaven what what's the difference one is one is on earth the other is in heaven literally in heaven the kingdom of heaven that Jesus came to preach and that John the Baptist preached was earthly it was the idea was to bring heaven's rule and reign and righteousness from heaven down to earth and establish it on earth so that the will of God on in heaven would be done on earth just as it is in heaven but that's terribly confusing because the word is the same heaven and you've got to look at the context and see which is involved so many think that the kingdom of heaven is the church no it isn't and nowhere does the Bible say it is it is just gratuitously assumed a fallacious assumption that the kingdom of heaven and the church are one and the same no no no no no no dismiss that idea altogether two entirely different words two different functions where was I all right 7:21 not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven does that sound to you like works oriented where do you see where do you see the grace in this there isn't any grace in this there isn't supposed to be any grace in this this is behavior oriented this is works oriented this is something to do and it is he who does the will of my father who is in heaven many will say to me on that day

[46 : 30] Lord Lord did we not prophesy in your name and I never knew you you who practice lawlessness and while we're in Matthew come over to chapter 10 and verse 5 these twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them saying do not go in the way of the Gentiles who were the Gentiles Gentiles was everyone who was not a Jew if you were not a Jew you were automatically a Gentile didn't make any difference what your skin color was made no difference what country you lived in or what language you spoke if you were not a Jew you were a Gentile those are the only two kinds of people even today that make up the whole world we probably don't have any Jews here

I'm sure we probably have some people here who have Jewish blood in them but probably no Jews here and yet well let's read on do not enter any city of the Samaritans but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and as you go preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand what does that mean it means it's right around the corner it means you could almost reach out and touch it it's at hand it's really close by how could they say that well they could say that because the king was close by Jesus was there the kingdom of heaven was close by heal the sick raise the dead cleanse the lepers cast out demons freely you receive freely give and these things all characterize the kingdom now why isn't that part of our message today because we are functioning under a different administration if people do not recognize that and refuse to recognize it then they will insist on trying to duplicate it which is where you get the healing meetings and the preaching that is supposed to see miracles performed and people raised from the dead and all the rest of it and I do not question their motive although some are probably charlatans but for the most part

I think they are people who mean well and whose heart is in it but they are simply misguided the advantage of understanding that the Bible is a progressive revelation so when you ignore that you're bound to get into that and I've got just a couple of more references but we must consider them quickly and that is in Matthew chapter 19 it's convenient because we're staying here in the same book Matthew 19 a very familiar passage with the rich young ruler and in verse 16 he came to this rich young ruler was not identified by name we just know that he was a wealthy young man and he came to Jesus and said teacher what good thing shall I do now there again what is that he's not looking for grace he's not asking anything about grace what he wants to know is what can I do where do I put my efforts what can I accomplish that will result in God smiling on me and giving me a position in eternal life and by the way when he says eternal life he's thinking of that kingdom that they're preaching and Jesus said unto me why are you asking me about what is good you wish to enter into life keep the commandments what commandments well you could just say 10 for starters they're the most familiar that everybody knows but actually there are 633 commandments given in the law of Moses a whole stack of them 633 things to do and Jesus says keep the commandments hmm what's that sound like to you yeah it sounds like it sounds like something to do to earn to work to deserve divine treatment and blessing hoops to jump through do these things who's saying this

Jesus is saying this but didn't Jesus know better well of course he did why was he saying this because Jesus was saying what was perfectly appropriate for the time and place in which this situation occurred but that's going to change and we have people today bless their heart my heart goes out to them I feel for them and I kid you not because they read that and they say well this is what I have to do and and I will earn this I will deserve this God will reward my efforts if I do these things it's do do do and the law says do and thou shalt live but who in the world ever heard of live and thou shalt do that's just the reverse how do you do that grace grace grace not works grace the law came by

[52 : 36] Moses grace and truth came by Jesus Christ but let me tell you something there will not be one single person ever saved by grace on the other side of the cross it begins with this side of the cross the program has changed and it is dramatic got to give you this before I close and it is in Acts chapter 13 this is spellbinding stuff Acts chapter 13 and let me give you a little brief history by the time you get to Acts chapter 13 it has been about 15 years after the apostle Paul was converted in that

Damascus road experience think of that it is true that Paul began preaching the gospel right after his conversion and that's made quite clear in Acts chapter 9 but he never took his first missionary journey until about 15 years after he was saved and the message that he's got is just absolutely stunning in this 13th chapter they are on their first missionary journey and this is brand new for Paul he's never been on a missionary journey before he's preached the gospel to a lot of different places but he's never been on a missionary journey before and he's got a compatriot with him his name is Barnabas and he is going to deliver a message that is going to set these people on edge and it will be really stunning and he goes into a synagogue and we are told in verse 14 of chapter 13 that they are in

Antioch Pisidian Antioch this is different Antioch from the one from which they left that was in Syria this happens to be two cities with the same name and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down and after the reading of the law and the prophets that was their standard procedure the synagogue officials sent to them that is to Paul and Barnabas because they recognized them right away that they were strangers they never seen these guys before and here they were attending the synagogue services and it was a common courtesy for the leaders of the synagogue to welcome and extend an invitation to visitors and ask them if they have to say hey if you guys got something to say we'd love to hear it and everybody's nodding their head yeah these strangers they come from a different place so and

Paul stood up in verse 16 and motioning with his hand he said men of Israel and you who fear God listen and those who fear God are not Jews they're Gentiles but they have a respect for Judaism particularly from the standpoint that the Jews believed there was just one God and these people had come to that conviction so they are there in the synagogue and they are hearing what this one God has to say but they are not Jews they are called God fearers Cornelius in Acts chapter 10 was a God fearer and that simply means they had sympathy for Judaism and for the one God concept but they had not become Jews because if you are a Gentile and you want to become a Jew officially

you've got to be circumcised uh oh for most men right there that's game over I'm not that serious about this thing and if you if you did if you did submit to circumcision physical circumcision then you were considered a proselyte you were a full fledged Jew you were entitled to all the rights and privileges that anyone was who was born a Jew otherwise you're just a tag along as a God fearer yeah I buy into this I believe that there's just one God and so on and I worship in the synagogue so they stand up and he addresses them you who fear God and men of Israel and he gives this message that I'm sure is a lot longer than what it takes to read it here and when he finishes boy this is this is amazing this is just amazing stuff when he concludes his message he gets down to the person of Christ and he says that in verse 28 though they that is the leaders of Israel they found no cause for putting Christ to death they asked Pilate that he be executed and when they'd carried out all that was written concerning him they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb but God raised him from the dead now these people never heard this before and they are many many miles removed from Jerusalem where this happened and they are giving them this fresh update of this information these people are sitting there

[58 : 19] Jews and God fears and they're looking at each other and saying wow do you hear what he said is this true who is this guy again where is he from what's he saying here and this is just electrifying stuff and he says we preach in verse 32 we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers he's talking about Abraham Isaac and Jacob that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that he raised up Jesus as it is also written in the second psalm thou art my son today I have begotten thee and that was written by David the psalmist who lived a thousand years before Jesus was ever born wow therefore he also says in another psalm thou wilt not allow thy holy one to undergo decay that's psalm 16 what's he talking about he's talking about Jesus will be resurrected from the dead before his body enters putrefaction and decay that's what he's talking about he's going to be buried but he's not going to stay buried and this prophecy was given regarding Jesus Christ a thousand years before he was born

David and then he says but David after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation fell asleep was laid among his fathers and did undergo decay hey David wasn't talking about himself he went to the grave and his body was moldering in the grave disintegrated into dust well if David wasn't talking of himself who was he talking of he was talking of the son of David who by direct bloodline would arrive on the scene a thousand years later but he whom God raised did not undergo decay therefore my conclusion I love that therefore therefore let it be known to you brethren that through him this Jesus forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you and now listen listen carefully and through him everyone everyone yeah

Jew and Gentile everyone everyone is freed from all things from which you could not be freed through the law of Moses are you kidding me what does this do with the law of Moses it simply puts it where it is supposed to be the law of Moses was under what was under the old covenant old covenant what do you think Jesus meant when the night he was betrayed he told his apostles as he held up that one communion cup and said this cup is the new covenant in my blood that's what Paul was talking about a new covenant there's nothing wrong with the old covenant it served its purpose and it is past now there is a new order that has been established and it is called the administration or the dispensation of the grace of

God and the word dispensation is a word with which we are all familiar it simply means the dispensing the doling out and Paul everywhere he went doled out dispensed gave out the grace of God in and through Jesus Christ it was a brand new message that didn't exist before you were justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses and this is called the doctrine of the grace of God and it is a stunning stunning thing to contemplate I want you to take a look at the insert in your bulletin and with this we will close our message it is the grace from calvary april 7 that is in your bulletin I recall with great humor a comment that was made to me a few weeks ago by someone who will remain anonymous but this party was talking about another person's estimation of marv wise and it was said that marv is okay but he's got this quirk you know what a quirk is a quirk q u i r k a quirk is something that that departs from the ordinary it's it's a little unusual twist or turn that somebody puts on something he's got kind of quirk about him and i plead guilty you can call me quirky marv if you want you know what my quirk is my quirk is the grace of god and do you understand that this is a quirk to the whole world that is steeped in and laboring in doing and trying and behaving and praying and all the rest that goes along with it in trying to make oneself acceptable to god and they completely ignore the grace of god that has been made

available through Jesus Christ. Listen, listen, anyone who thinks they can deserve or earn or get to heaven apart from who Jesus Christ is and what he did on the cross is disparaging the cross of Christ, diminishing the cross of Christ, depreciating the value, reducing the efficacy of what Jesus did on that cross. That's why he has to be installed as the savior, not a savior, he's the savior, he's the only savior, one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. I want you to just follow along as we read this. If you want to enjoy a real spiritual feast, take a concordance to the Bible and look up the word grace. First notice how often this word is found in the four gospels, only four times and only once in a doctrinal sense. Are you kidding me out of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the word grace is used four times. What now, listen, I'm not saying it was wrong, I'm not saying it was supposed to be used more times, I'm saying that's what it was and it was right, it was right there, wasn't anything wrong with it. Then notice how often it is used in Paul's epistles, less than half the size of the four gospels, here it is found well over 100 times. What in the world is this about, don't you see something there, don't

you see something brewing? What is this found over 100 times and practically always in a doctrinal sense about the love and mercy of God toward sinners and toward his own? Think of it, only once is grace referred to doctrinally in the four gospels, yet in Paul's epistles, less than half as large in volume, it is used more than 100 times. This is because Paul was God's chosen apostle to make his grace known, his grace to sinners. In Acts 20:24 he speaks of the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel or the good news of the grace of God, but on what basis could God through Paul proclaim salvation by free grace to sinners? Ah, now take your Bible and begin looking up those passages which refer to the cross, the death, the blood of

[67:15] Christ again, noticing that while Paul does not actually relate the story of Christ's death, he has more far more to say about that death and what it accomplished than any other Bible writer. It would thrill the heart of any sincere Christian to go through the epistles of Paul and see how much good news Paul proclaims on the basis of the death of Christ. This is why his message is called the preaching of the cross. This is why Paul said, "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." That's the fiddle I was talking about that just has one string on it and he plays it, but God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of Jesus Christ, by whom I am crucified unto the world and the world unto me. Wow, God's good news about what Calvary has accomplished in Paul's epistles, we learn that through Christ's death for us at

Calvary, believers are justified, accepted by God and pronounced complete in Christ by his death. They are reconciled to God in one body, given a position at God's right hand in the highest heavens and assured the exceeding riches of his grace in the ages to come. This and more riches of grace flowing from Calvary, this is the very essence of the glorious message which Paul was raised up to proclaim. Read his epistles and see, question why wasn't this information given on the other side of the cross, well, it wasn't even available, it's the cross that made it available. That's the whole point, that's everything so determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified, miss that and you miss everything, get that and you've got everything.

Jesus, who he was, what he did, why it matters, it's what everything is all about. It isn't Protestantism, it isn't Catholicism, it isn't Judaism, it isn't any of the isms, it's who Jesus is and what he did. I've never gotten over it and don't expect to. I hope you don't either. Would you pray with me, please, Father, for most of us, this is familiar material, but it has such a ring to it that we never dull of hearing it. We just cannot fathom the incredible quality of love that was willing to do this, how the sinless, innocent son of

God would be willing to subject himself to the ignominy and the shame and the death and the deprivation, untold pain and agony for us. To us, it sure does reveal the kind of love you have for us and what are we doing to show our appreciation for it? It's a question each of us must ask and answer for ourselves, and Father, should there be anyone here today who has never really come to terms with the price that Jesus paid for them, our prayer is that they will have no rest, no sleep, no anything until they've done business with the son of God. For anyone who may be contemplating that our prayer is for you, dear friend, that you may pray the sinner's prayer and the sinner's prayer would go something like this, oh

God, I don't know if this content that this preacher is delivering, I don't know if it's true or not, but I want to know and I want to make myself available to your truth and I want you to help me recognize it when I see it and hear it so that I can respond to it. That is our prayer for anyone who may be here apart from Christ, would you pray that prayer, would you pray it later in the day and if you pray it with

your heart I can promise you God will reveal it to you thank you father for the time to share together
thank you for this absolutely amazing love and amazing truth we just can't get over it hope we never
do look forward to the time when we can thank you personally in Christ's wonderful name amen