

Connecting the Dots ... Post Resurrection Issues

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[0 : 00] Would you open the scriptures, please, to Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2. We had a fascinating session this morning at the 9 o'clock hour dealing with the various translations and versions of the Bible.

It's very enlightening and very helpful, especially for newer folks to the faith who are not all that familiar with it. But it was remarkable content that we really appreciated, and it's going to continue at 9 o'clock each morning, so avail yourself of it.

I would heartily recommend it. Let's stand as we give reference to the reading of the scriptures, and you follow along in whatever translation you have. And as we learned this morning at the 9 o'clock hour, there are multiple translations represented right here at Grace Bible Church, and many of you have the New American Standard, and many have the King James and the New King James, and we talked a little bit about all of those, and it was a really enlightening morning.

So I'm reading from the New American Standard, and if you will follow along with whatever translation you have as I read. And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Among them, we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

[1 : 48] But God, being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. And raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Therefore, remember that formerly, you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who were called uncircumcision, by the so-called circumcision, which is performed in the flesh by human hands, remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

But now, in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall by abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, that in himself he might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross by having put to death the enmity.

[3 : 56] And he came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have our access in one spirit to the Father.

So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Father, we are truly thankful for this gathering and for what you've provided for us right here in the Word as has just been read. We look to you for direction and wisdom and the understanding and appropriating of its truths.

And we pause even now to give you great thanks for an obvious extension of life, for appreciation of life that has been demonstrated over the last 48, 72 hours.

We do not know what all of the outcome of this is going to be, but we do know that there is every reason to believe there will be a multitude of precious lives come to birth and be able to live and function in the world you've created because of the action that was taken by the Supreme Court.

[5 : 40] We know that there are all kinds of positions and feelings and convictions about this pro and con, and we know how deeply it has divided the nation. And we simply pray that as a result of what has taken place in our Supreme Court that you will find a way that we cannot imagine that might reassemble this great nation into what it could be and into what it should be.

There's no way that we can do it or make it come to pass. We put ourselves at your mercy, your discretion, and your wisdom, but we do thank you for what has been realized. Ask your blessing upon our session this morning together for clarity and expression and understanding of the truth.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Be seated, please. I cannot help but try to examine as best I can with my finite mind the implications of what has been taking place and the implications of the legal position that was imposed by the Supreme Court in 1973 and trying to look beyond the whole thing and analyze it as best I can and I know that I've got so many fragments out there hanging around that I can't connect and don't understand but I am absolutely satisfied that that behind this whole demand that some seem to feel they have a right to to abort the life of the unborn in many respects it is little more than a contempt and a rejection of the divine plan for human reproduction as much as anything that's exactly what it boils down to and do you know that really ought not to surprise us and I say that because we need to understand that because of our fallenness as a human race we are naturally predisposed to rebellion against authority that's one of the immediate consequences of our fallenness

I don't want anybody telling me what to do including God if there is one and that's generally the attitude of most of us and we would tend to deny it because it's not nice to think that way but it's true that is our fallenness and we are essentially self-centered beings we are not God-centered we are self-centered and it is only through the miracle of the divine provision that enables us to be regenerated by the grace of God that we are even able to move from a self-centered position to a God-centered position and that being the case we need to be careful what our attitude is to those who are without and remind ourselves that we were there once ourselves and remind ourselves that they are not the enemy they are captives of the enemy and so were you before you came to faith in

Jesus Christ so those people who will be demonstrating and lighting up and destroying property and all kinds of things the next few days in a national temper tantrum because they are not getting their way it's hard not to give them our contempt but we need to give them our mercy because even as the Lord Jesus said from the cross they know not what they do they don't have a clue and many of them a great many of them are simply what Karl Marx branded as useful idiots they are being used by the master user Satan himself and they don't have a clue and if you even suggested as much they would laugh at you with scorn that's where they're coming from and that's all they can do because that's all they are so like I said they need our pity and they need our mercy most of all they need our gospel because that can change everything and that's what we're going to look at this morning how that gospel changes everything so to insist on what the right they call a right to abortion to insist on that is in reality insisting that one has the that one should be able to maintain sexual activity without taking responsibility to prevent conception which is abundantly available now but some are too irresponsible even to use it and they submit to the passion of the moment the hormones are raging and he and she have sex just like my mom and dad did before they were married and I was conceived but back then abortion was very rare and certainly was considered illegal and I often thought how grateful

[11 : 53] I am to my mother that she wasn't even available or considered that possibility but it's it's really an ultimate expression of selfishness and self-centeredness because expectant women don't want to be inconvenienced they don't want to be saddled so to speak with the unborn to be brought into this world I can't afford it it upsets my plans and all the rest of it you know how it goes on it's just part of the human condition and we need to understand it as such and what the decision did with the court and by the way there's all kinds of accusations and rumors and a ton of fake news out there regarding this thing Roe v.

Wade being reversed did not did not say women cannot have an abortion don't say that we could almost wish that it did but it doesn't go that far it doesn't say that at all it just says that there is no provision made for it constitutionally whereby one is entitled to abortion because of the constitution it isn't in the constitution and it was surreptitiously inserted by inference by the supreme court and that's how they passed it in 1973 even admitting that there was no clear cut case for it so it became law for the next 50 years and it is one would think that there's no way that the Dred Scott decision by the supreme court in the 1800s that was around civil war time that could possibly be improved upon for or enhanced or increased for its nefarious reasons and that simply that simply was a legal ruling by the supreme court that the african negro they were negroes back then today they're well they change from negroes to blacks to african americans now but they were considered to be of less human benefit and value as whites so the

Dred Scott decision simply said that they are a lesser being and we know what kind of ridiculous fancy that is based upon and an african american is just as much a fully fledged human being as is your most lily white caucasian and there is no distinction but you can see how much we've learned in the last hundred years isn't it amazing well oh my let me get to some announcements shall we we've got an elders meeting scheduled for wednesday the 29th at seven o'clock and we're reminding you to sign up for the picnic if you're planning to be here that will be monday july 4 at 4 p.m now everybody ought to remember that even me with my terrible memory and needing a calendar in front of me almost constantly this is four o'clock on the fourth here at the church indoor picnic and we've talked about the goodies that you can bring families are asked to bring a couple of dishes second dish and a dessert or a salad and those who are singles just bring one dish or no dish and the church will be providing the entree of hamburgers and hot dogs and all the fixings and we will also provide the beverage so all you have to do is come with what we've talked about and bring your appetite and we will have a wonderful time celebrating the 4th of

July I don't think I've forgotten anything but I may very well have is there something that you want to mention oh yes the monthly Bible study scheduled for June 30 at 9 o'clock breakfast is served at 9 study follows at 9 30 so you are all welcome to attend that anything else that needs to be mentioned that I didn't include anybody okay okay then I would invite you to take a look at the insert that is in your bulletin this morning that is this little half page white sheet called the book of acts 35 AD to 68

AD and if you by chance did not get one maybe we can get one to you they're in the bulletin or we're in the bulletin for everybody to have one and what we want to consider this morning is one of the most important concepts that the Christian can appreciate in connection with understanding the plan and program of God and the word of God and it is this and I will be as succinct as I can be but I don't want to omit anything that is importance and that is everybody and I mean virtually everybody recognizes that there is a valid difference between the Old and New Testaments in the Old Testament we simply have a promise of the Messiah coming in the New Testament we have the Messiah who has arrived and that is expressed in the four

[18 : 00] Gospels of Matthew Mark Luke and John no one has any difficulty at all I don't think of separating the Old from the New Testament especially when you consider that in the Old Testament you have the sacrifice of animals and all of that that goes with it and the emphasis upon the Mosaic law and we come to the New Testament and we say that this is the dispensation of grace and partly that is true and partly it is not true because what we are demanding that people understand in order to appreciate the plan and program of God is that you not only recognize the validity between the Old and the New Testament and the differences but that you also understand in an especially valid way that there is a distinction within the content of the

New Testament now what I'm going to say is going to really sound odd to you but I'm satisfied that it's true in many respects the four Gospels more appropriately belong to the Old Testament than they do the New now somebody is wondering Marv I don't think you said that quite right I'm sure that's not what you meant yes it is it is exactly what I meant the four Gospels Matthew Mark Luke and John belong to the dispensation the administration of the plan and program of God through the law of Moses it belongs they belong to the Old Testament not to the New and that fact alone is what causes many people to go astray the reason they do is because when you open the

New Testament what we call the New Testament you immediately find the birth of Christ therefore that's New Testament that's where the birth of Christ occurs and so on you've got to understand when Jesus arrived on the scene spent his 30 years as an Israelite before he was introduced into his public ministry he was born under and lived under and functioned under and taught under the law of Moses the Old Testament he repeatedly quoted it he repeatedly referred to it as his authority the New Testament not only did not even exist then it hadn't even been thought of so you've got to make that very valid distinction from the beginning and I'll tell you this it doesn't help at all that the publishers have printed the New

Testament or what we call Matthew Mark Luke and John printed it in red ink because that attaches some special kind of importance to it and there is a special importance there because it is the word of God and it is where we find the human origin of Jesus the Messiah arriving on the scene and that of course does make it special I wouldn't take that away from it at all but it tends to relegate the rest of the Bible to something that is of less importance because the really important stuff is there in Matthew Mark Luke and John well let me make this very clear no portion of the word of God is more inspired of God than any other portion now there are lots of places in the Bible that are more inspiring to read and to enjoy but that doesn't make them more the word of

God than anything else in the Bible it is all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable just profitable for different things so it is all the word of God and all of scripture originates from the authority of God not just the four gospels that are in red ink but the whole thing Genesis to Revelation and when people focus exclusively on not exclusively but mainly on the red light and do you know who the worst ones of this are preachers preachers preachers are the ones who give people the misleading ideas about the four gospels and so much preaching focuses upon Matthew Mark Luke and John and they don't preach the difficult texts they preach the simple ones over and over and over again and you ask them why do you limit yourself or focus so much on the four gospels and their response is and it sounds so good well because that's where

[23 : 30] Jesus is so Jesus isn't in Ephesians yes he is Jesus isn't in Galatians oh yes he is Jesus isn't in second chronicles oh yes he is he's everywhere he's everywhere but when all of the attention and focus is put on those four books what are those four books emphasizing kingdom kingdom kingdom kingdom kingdom repent the kingdom of heaven is at hand is that the message that is to be preached today it's the message that many are preaching and when you preach the kingdom message you've got to preach kingdom qualifications and when you preach kingdom qualifications do you know what you've got you've got a works involved salvation I said works works involves salvation and when you focus on the gospels you get works works works whose works your works your works the rich young ruler said to Jesus in Matthew

I think it's 19 what must I do to inherit eternal life and he wasn't talking about dying and going to heaven like believers do today that's new testament stuff he was talking from his frame of reference way back then and that's all kingdom stuff and what he was saying to Jesus is what must I do to inherit eternal life which means to have a position to occupy and live in the kingdom what's the kingdom the kingdom is the rule and reign of God in heaven brought to earth so that everything that is wrong with this fallen earth gets fixed we live in a broken world it's a mess death disease corruption everywhere you look that's not the kingdom the kingdom is all of those things are going to be done away with and the earth is going to be as it ought to be and Jesus will be ruling and reigning and this young man is asking what must

I do to have a place in that kingdom and Jesus said well you know the commandments you shall not murder you shall not need went through and the young man says well I've done all those things I've done all those things from the time I was a kid I've done all those things and Jesus said alright then just one thing that you lack sell everything you have and give it to the poor and come follow me and we're told that the young man went away sad because he had many possessions and he wasn't about to part with them now dear friends it doesn't take rocket science to ask yourself why don't we preach that today why don't we tell people liquidate all of your assets and give that money to the poor

I've never yet heard anyone who insists on preaching out of the gospels preach that that's the part they skip because you don't know how to handle that and you can't tell your congregation sell everything you have and by the way bring the assets here bring them here to the church and we will decide who gets what we'll parcel it out well it's going to be pretty hard to maintain a congregation if you're preaching that you know and today's preachers of course know that so you stay away from that stuff you just get on to love your neighbor and love your neighbor as your enemies as your and so that's the commendable stuff and hey there's a lot of good application in the gospels but you've got to keep it in the context in which it was given and it's part of the kingdom message and that's radically different and what we just read to you in the reading that we shared together from

Ephesians reveals the difference between Jews and non-Jews and here's what we're talking about gracious provision was made for the Jewish people and by the way let me clarify this because I should not assume that everybody understands this the entirety of the world's population without exception is made up of two classes of people just two one is a Jew the other is a Gentile if you are not one you are the other and regardless of what is going on in the woke culture today you have to be one of those two you cannot be a nun that is an n-o-n-e you're one of the two the Jewish people make up less than one tenth of one percent of the world's population that means ninety nine and nine tenths percent of the world's population are

[29 : 22] Gentiles so we're Gentiles and not Jews provision was made for the Jewish people way back starting with Moses for them to have a special connection relationship with the God of creation and to have a special provision that was given them through what is called the law of Moses Moses didn't originate it he didn't think it up in fact Moses didn't even volunteer for the job Moses was drafted just like the apostle Paul was drafted and they were both drafted because God is gracious and he wanted to favor and bless humanity even though the fall had occurred in Genesis 3 and made a mess of what he had created originally and pronounced it very good man had made a mess of it and God made a gracious provision whereby man fallen though he was could reconnect with the creator in a way that had not been experienced for who knows how long and by the way there is so much about the

Old Testament that I don't understand and I've been studying this for years and years and years and so much of it and I'll give you an example if you were going to explain to someone back in Old Testament times what you have to do in order to become rightly related to God what would you tell him we know what to say today we just say today believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved but now wait a minute what about before Jesus what about way back in Genesis what about way back in the Old Testament before Jesus ever came on the scene was there any capability or possibility of being related to God I want you to turn to Acts chapter 17 I'm going to share my confusion with you why should I burden all of this confusion myself when I can share it with you so I'm going to do that and for anybody who thinks and there are some people who have ridiculous ideas about preachers some people think that that I have all the answers

Marie can tell you I don't even have all the questions much less the answers and by the way if you ever run into anybody especially a preacher who insists that he has all the answers and you can take what he says 100% true you get as far away from that person as you can because you don't want anything to do with them unless they happen to be Jesus but that's probably not very likely Paul is delivering a sermon on Mars Hill and I want you to keep in mind who the audience is they are Gentiles not Jews Gentiles and they are pagan and they are idolaters and they are polytheistic that is they had many gods and by the way I want to remind you this is in Athens and you know what Athens was noted for intellect intelligence

Athens is the home base for Socrates and Aristotle and Plato and all of those brilliant individuals who were deep deep thinkers and how many times we tried to relate to you that in our fallen humanity we think and we reason with a skewed logic don't you ever forget that our reasoning processes are messed up that causes us to think wrongly and to reach wrong conclusions about a whole lot of things because when Adam and Eve fell morally and spiritually they fell in the totality of their being everything about them fell including their ability to think and use good logic so Paul is delivering this message in the citadel of the deep thinkers there in

Athens this is the home of philosophy and deep thinking and when he delivers his message I want you to look at just verse 30 I've got to just jump in here for time sick this is one of those I wish I had a three hour session but I don't have to tell you to bring a sack lunch I want you to look at verse 29 I'm just going to jump in here Paul is preaching to these pagans they're a bunch of pagans they've got God's statues all over the city of Athens on every street corner they've got the statue of a different god a different deity and they've even got one that doesn't have the name of the god on it because they don't know what his name is but they're scared to death that they have omitted one of the gods who would really be ticked with them so they made this statue and on the base they put to the unknown god oh we're sorry sir if we left you out we don't want you to feel excluded so this is for you and

[35 : 26] Paul says I noticed that you've got a statue even erected to the unknown god so these people were steeped in idolatry superstition and everything that went along with it and we read in in verse 29 I'm just going to jump in as I said being then the offspring of god talking about human beings being the offspring of god the creation of god we ought not to think that the divine nature the real character and nature of god is like gold or silver or stone an image formed by the art and thought of man therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance what were they what's he talking about here what what are the times of ignorance I'll just give you a wise opinion it's the only one that I can come up with I think the times of ignorance probably started with the fall of

Adam and Eve because in their fall they lapsed and slipped into a sphere of skewed logic warped reasoning time of ignorance it began way back then if this is correct I don't know where else it would be God having overlooked the times of ignorance and what does that mean overlooked it you parents when your child does something that you disapprove of and you are prepared to either punish or call them to account or something and you have a second thought about it and you say to yourself oh well kids are kids you know and you overlook it you let it slide you don't make them to be held accountable for it you don't bring it to you don't ball them out you just you just overlook it you kind of say well kids are kids you know and

I remember when I was so you cut them some slack you are kind of lenient with them is that what this is saying it seems to be but I'm not 100% with this but I do know that it sets up a real contrast from a time of relative in accountability to a time of accountability something is changing and the change is really dramatic because he goes on to say having overlooked the times of ignorance that is in the past God is now now now as opposed to what now as opposed to before before what let's let the context tell us God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent why because he has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness now you almost get the impression that that day wasn't fixed before now

I know in the mind and heart of God everything is a done deal and already completed but in the time frame that we're talking about as humans here it seems like he has fixed a day he has appointed a day he has declared a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom he has appointed having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead so now he's saying there is a brand new standard that is on the scene and previously God did a lot of overlooking he did a lot of what shall I God did a lot of looking the other way when did he do that before this thing changed that he's talking about now and this is everything before the cross upon which

Jesus died was looked at with different eyes from God than is everything after the cross because what Jesus did on the cross changed everything everything it added a measure of accountability that man did not have before God cut humanity some slack what was the basis for God receiving people before Jesus died on the cross and paid for our sins what was what was what was the rationale what was the requirement what was it as I've said if you could have given someone the plan if you will call it a plan if you could give someone the plan of salvation back before Jesus died to create that plan what would you tell them well while while we're here in

[41 : 16] Acts come back if you would please to Acts chapter 10 Acts chapter 10 and this too has the deal with Christ having arrived that and this is by the way a two or three day trip up the coast two or three days down the trip and now when

Peter gets there in verse 33 he's explaining to Peter what was happening he says in verse 33 the centurion says so I sent to you immediately and you have been kind enough to come now then we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord and Peter opened his mouth and said I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality now what does that mean hadn't God shown some kind of partiality to Israel hadn't he chosen these people out of all the people of the world and bestowed upon them a special favor and blessing and connection with himself seems to me like it's some kind of partiality and then he goes on to say but in every nation the man who fears him that simply means not the man who is afraid of God that's conveyed by the word fear but it means one who has a proper respect for

God as a creator and sustainer of the universe that's what it means to be a God fearing man he fears him and does what is right is welcome to him what is this saying does what is right he doesn't even say believes what is right he says does what is right is this a doing thing that enabled one to be rightly related to God based on what he did doesn't that sound like a works oriented kind of connection salvation etc and we know that that's verboten but is that what it sounds like and this is coming from Peter I mean Peter was Peter was the chief apostle if anybody ought to know he should what's he saying here the man who fears him and does what is right is welcome to him but if he doesn't even have the law of Moses because he's a

Gentile and most Gentiles didn't even know the law of Moses existed how would he know to do what's right how would he know what right is well the plot thickens while we're in Acts come over to the next book to Romans Romans chapter two Romans chapter two and let us look at verse 11 there is no partiality with God for all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law and the law of course here is talking about the law of Moses that

God gave through Moses to the children of Israel and then he says for not the hearers of the law are just before God but the doers the doers of the law will be justified justified and that word justified means will be declared or counted as righteous that's what the word justification means and it means to be declared or classified as righteous how do you do that well it's by doers of the law doesn't that ring a bell when Jesus told the rich young ruler what must I do to inherit eternal well keep the commandments which well he named them and then he said well

[47 : 15] I've kept all of those things I've done and do you not see very definitely a works demand thing there is there any way you can miss that everything in connection with the preaching of the kingdom not the grace of God but everything in connection with the preaching of the kingdom is do do do that was the emphasis it was all a human works oriented thing and grace is a complete opposite and that really throws people they just can't handle that so let's go in here a little bit in Romans 2 verse 13 not the hearers of the law are just before God but the doers of the law will be justified out out of out of bounds on a certain thing and this has nothing to do with the law of

Moses it is an inbred inborn thing that God has placed within humanity as a gift of his grace it's a trophy of grace that you have a conscience by the way don't ever don't don't ever feel that you have too sensitive a conscience that you can't get away with anything if that's the way you're put together be thankful be grateful because it is the pricking of the conscience that produces guilt and it is the sensation of guilt that looks for relief forgiveness erasure of the guilt so that you can be free from the thing this is what the human conscience does it tells you when you are wrong now it's possible that you can ignore what the conscience tells you and say the hell with it

I'm going to do my thing you can do that a lot of people do that and if you persist in doing it what that does is it deadens the conscience Paul talks about that in one of his letters he talks about people who have a conscience that is seared with a hot iron if you ever have an open wound on your body and you're bleeding you can take a hot object like a hot iron or a hot poker or something like that and put it right on that wound and oh it's gonna hurt like you can't believe but what it will do is it will stop the flow of blood and it will seal it and it creates scar tissue over that wound and the scar tissue has no nerve endings in it so you can't feel anything where that scar tissue is and Paul is saying that it is possible that people can so wound their conscience that it becomes covered with scar tissue and we save that person they have no conscience they have no fear no sense of guilt no remorse no sorrow no apology no nothing they're just you know these are these are people who can be cold blooded murderers and they still sleep at night because their conscience is seared inactive not working they no longer have the ability to feel guilt there was a time when they could but they denied that so long and this is what happens to them but read on

I do instinctively the things of the law these not having the law that is them all the law of Moses are a law to themselves what is that and where do they get it that's the conscience they got it from God it's part of our standard operating equipment they are a law to themselves in that they show the work of the law even though they don't have the Mosaic law they show the work of the law written in their hearts God put it there their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them on the day when according to my gospel what is that that is a brand new thing that has come upon the scene that is going to shake the world to its foundations and it still is when according to my gospel God will judge the secrets of men through

Jesus Christ Paul is saying my gospel has nothing to do with relating to God as it existed prior to the cross when God winked at gave a pass to overlooked a lot even though men knew right from wrong and they were pricked by their conscience when they did wrong there was no specific definite way of becoming rightly related to God until until Jesus died on that cross and paid for the sins of humanity and that changed everything and now there is a new opportunity and requirement for relating to God and it is through this man who became Jesus the Savior the Son of God the substitute for human sin

[54 : 42] Savior of the world that changes everything absolutely everything this becomes this becomes the new singular avenue of approach for humanity to come to God and there is none other and rather than find fault with there being this one way like some do we ought to be ever so grateful that God was pleased to even provide this way and he did so at such an enormous cost because what was involved here I do not profess to understand I have I have no idea I have no idea how God became man how this incarnation thing came about but I do know that that's the sum and substance of everything it's that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself and he is making a provision for humanity to come through this new and living way and he has taken great pains and steps to make sure that this information gets spread everywhere and this is exactly what

Paul is doing and as he spreads this good news this gospel it is believed in parts all throughout the Mediterranean world and it grows and grows and grows into what is all the while becoming what is referred to as the spiritual body of Christ that is made up of believers and the most dramatic dynamic thing about this that the world has never gotten over and most of the world has never gotten into is that this provision is free and postpaid humanity has a real problem handling it and there are a couple of basic reasons for why this gospel is such a hard sell to so many people number one too good to be true it's just too good to be true it just can't be that simple it's too good to be true so it is dismissed almost out of hand as some kind of a con job well that can't be that can't be especially when we find things like sell your possessions give to the poor come follow me now you know what that makes a lot more sense think about it from a human standpoint from something you can do that makes a lot more sense and you get the credit for it but what credit do you get for simply believing you don't get any credit at all none you don't deserve any what you do get is you get all the benefits who gets all the credit the one who made the benefits possible

Jesus gets all the credit you don't get any credit you don't deserve any credit you know what you deserve yeah you know what you deserve so do I it's not nice that's what we deserve but grace provides for you what you do not deserve because somebody else picked up your tab that's what Jesus is all about that's what the gift of God is all about there are Christians there are people who profess to be Christians who have never really embraced this because they cannot they cannot escape from the what I have to do thing they just can't let go of that and they do not realize that as long as you are holding on and thinking that there is something

I have to do to make myself worthy something that I have to do to earn God's blessing and salvation as long as you think that you need to understand you are negating and depreciating and devaluing the work that Jesus Christ did on that cross and you are saying in effect I appreciate what Jesus did but it wasn't enough how dare you how dare you when he said tetelestai it is finished that meant the whole work of redemption was accomplished and there is nothing left for you to do but rejoice rejoice rejoice rejoice in the

Lord well if that's the case and I am now positioned with God in a way I wasn't before what's to keep me from still doing my own thing and persisting in sin and doing things that I shouldn't do what's to keep me from doing that just one thing and by the way it's the flesh that allows you to continue to do that but it's just one thing that will really prevent you and keep you from that and that is a profound sense of gratitude for who Jesus is and what he did for you and the fact that you are undeserving we need to live a life call it if you will for lack of a better term a Christian life the straight and narrow or whatever not out of a sense of fear because if

[61 : 05] I don't God's going to kick me out but we are to do it out of a profound sense of gratitude and love for what God has done for us after all he's done for me how can I do less and give him my best after all he's done for me and the life we live call it if you will straight arrow or whatever you want to call it but it is a life that is sought to be lived out of the spirit as opposed to out of the flesh the motivating thing that ought to compel us more than anything else is a profound sense of gratitude and thanksgiving to God for what he's done for us and when you put it that way you are not worth living a life for yourself you aren't worth that but Jesus is Jesus is wow this is the only way that as a believer you can have peace with God when Paul writes to the Romans or in chapter 5 he starts a chapter with a therefore which is a terrible way to start a chapter but that's the way the chapter dividers divided therefore therefore being justified by faith that means just on the basis of believing plus nothing nothing just believing we have peace with

God through our Lord Jesus Christ one of the most wonderful things that God wants you to have is his peace his relaxation his security his enjoyment and if you are counting on anything other than what Jesus Christ did on that cross for your salvation you don't have any peace because you're scared to death you might not have done enough you might not have done this enough you might have done that too much you don't know where you stand and you can lose sleep at night over it because you don't have peace but the peace that God gives is the peace that comes from knowing that Jesus didn't pay most of it he paid the whole thing and he left nothing for you to pay but to accept what he did as a gift and that's another word we have a real problem with something within us in our old nature that wants recognition and wants rewards we insist on paying something for it and God says don't you know what a gift is don't you know that a gift means somebody else already paid for it and all you have to do is just accept it and do you know what the objection is to that well anybody can do that that's the whole point anybody can do that anybody can believe wow that's the that's the genius of it and it is that same genius that causes so many people to look at it and say it can't be true it's too good to be true that's why it's called good news good news good news wonderful news wonderful news taste and see that the

Lord is good God wants you to enjoy your salvation because only only when you are enjoying it can you move out and function as a believer ought to function because you're no longer wrapped up within yourself all about yourself you're able to devote something to somebody else wow well I'm not finished but I quit next week next week I'm going to give you the message that I intended to give you this morning I think I said that last time didn't I you know what we're talking about something I hesitate to use these terms because there is a tendency for me to call this this gospel we're talking about tendency for me to call it using our vernacular an entirely inappropriate word call it incredible you know what if something is incredible that means it has no credibility this gospel is saturated with credibility it isn't incredible at all and we don't even want to call it fantastic because if you call it fantastic that means it's associated with fantasy and there isn't anything more real than what

Jesus Christ did for you and why he did it so have to use those words advisedly would you stand we'll be dismissed father there's still so very much about what we've talked about that we don't know and don't understand but we are trying to connect the dots and we recognize that they are extended all the way from Genesis to Revelation in this marvelous book so we ask that as we continue to investigate this situation over the next few weeks that you will provide a kind of clarity that will lead to a deep sense of awe and appreciation compassion and love and gratitude because you certainly do deserve it thank you for this time to share together and for the balance of this day and for the weekend that we can enjoy as believers and citizens of this great country to which we've been born we bless you for it in

Christ's name amen for■ to other people in zaj