

21. Law And Grace

We want to continue our study in trying to see the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant; between law and grace. This is so important, because if we don't know the difference, we will live at the low level that many Old Testament people lived in. God wants to lift us higher.

Let us look at a verse from Romans 6, which, I think puts it in a nutshell, in a very brief sentence, the essential difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant: "Sin shall not be master over you when you are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). The word 'Law' there symbolizes the Old Covenant, God's agreement with Israel, and all the terms and conditions of that Covenant are all included in that one word, 'Law'. And grace, in one word, sums up God's new agreement through the Lord Jesus Christ, and all the terms and conditions of that new agreement.

And here, it says, you can be either under law or under grace. And the proof is this: when you are not under law but under grace, sin cannot be master over you. We could put it another way that, if you are not under grace but under law, then sin will have the mastery over you.

So, ultimately, the way we discover whether we are under the law or under grace is not by testing whether we are legalistic in relation to a lot of rules and regulations, but on the other hand, by a far more deeper test: does sin have the mastery over you? Or, do you have the mastery over sin?

This is a very, very important question, because a lot of people do not understand the difference between what Jesus has come to give and what

21. 律法與恩典

下面我們想繼續學習舊約與新約的不同,就是律法與恩典之間的不同。瞭解這不同是如此的重要,因為如若不然,我們會生活得如同舊約時代的人一樣在低水準上。然而神想要拉我們到更高的水準。

請看羅馬書第 6 章,我覺得這一章可以概括為,舊約與新約的區別,核心在於:「不該讓罪來作你們的主,因為你們不在律法之下,乃在恩典之下」(羅馬書 6 章 14 節)。「律法」,是舊約的標誌,是神與以色列人所立的約,它的全部條款都包括在「律法」這一個詞裡面。而「恩典」這一個詞,總結了神通過主耶穌基督與人類所立的新約的全部條款。

這裡也指出,你要麼活在律法之下,要麼活在在恩典之下。證據是這個:你若不是在律法之下,而是在恩典之下,那麼罪是無法奴役你的。你也可以換個角度來看,假若你不在恩典之下,而是活在律法之下,那麼罪仍然會作你的主。

因此基本上,想知道自己到底是活在律法之下還是在恩典之下,只需要觀察我們是否被一大堆戒律和規定所捆綁。另一方面,還可以進一步觀察,自己是否仍然被罪奴役。抑或是,你已將罪征服?

這是非常非常重要的問題,因為很多人都沒有真正的理解,主耶穌來世上給我們的,和舊約時代摩西給人的,究竟有何區別。如果我問你一個簡單的問題,摩西和我

Moses came to give under the Old Covenant. Now if I were to ask you a simple question: who is greater - Moses or our Lord Jesus Christ? That is clear, Moses is a servant and the Lord Jesus is the Master. It is so clear that Jesus is far greater than Moses. Now let me tell you, since you understand that clearly, that the covenant or agreement that God mediated with Israel, through Moses, is as inferior to the New Covenant that God mediated through Jesus, as Moses is inferior to Jesus. The implication is that, if Moses and the law could bring people in the Old Testament to a certain standard of life, Jesus and the New Covenant should be able to bring them to what - to a higher standard or an equal standard? Of course, you will say it has to be a higher standard.

It would be something comparable to walking and flying or to a bicycle and an aeroplane. I mean, there is a lot of difference between the bicycle and the aeroplane, with the speed and the ability to move from place to place. If you can compare a bicycle with an aeroplane, there you see the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The Old Covenant can take you from one place to another, like a bicycle can. And the New Covenant also can take you from one place to another, like an aeroplane can. There is a world of difference between the two. The Old Covenant could bring a man to a certain point of fellowship with God, but not beyond that.

In the Old Testament tabernacle, God illustrated this by putting a thick curtain between the Holy place and the Most Holy place, called the veil, and told the Israelites, "Nobody can come into this Most Holy place, this veil blocks you. You can come so far, but no further." You know, beyond that veil, God Himself lived in that temple - Old Testament temple. Nobody could go there. Even the High Priest could go only

們的主耶穌,哪個更偉大?答案很清楚,摩西是僕人,而主耶穌是我們的主。主耶穌要比摩西偉大的多得多。那麼既然你清楚這一點,就該明白,神通過摩西與以色列人建立的舊約,與神通過主耶穌建立的新約相比,也是天差地別,如同摩西與主耶穌的天差地別一樣。那麼既然如此,若神借著摩西和律法使人的道德生活達到一定水準,那麼借著主耶穌與新約,人應該實現遠遠更高水準的生活。

這兩者的區別可以用走路與飛翔,或自行車與飛機的區別來形容。自行車與飛機,無論在速度還是在能觸及的區域,都有著巨大的區別。舊約與新約的區別也是類似。舊約可以像自行車般,帶你從一個地方到另一個地方。而新約也可以帶你從一個地方到另一個地方,但是卻如同飛機。兩者有著天壤之別。舊約帶給人一定程度與神的親近,然而卻無法再超越了。

舊約的會幕,神用聖所與至聖所之間的厚簾子,被稱作幔子的,來為以色列人闡明,「沒有人可以到至聖所,因為這幔子阻隔著你。你可以來到我的近前,但卻不能繼續靠近了。」你知道嗎?在那幔子的另一邊,神親自住在聖殿裡——舊約的聖殿。沒有人可以到那裡。即使是大祭司,也只可以象徵性的每年近前一次。人們不可以說進去就進去。

once a year, and that was only as a token. But nobody could go there whenever they liked.

But when Jesus died on Calvary, that veil was rent, torn from top to bottom, showing that the way into God's presence was open now. So, let me ask you, now that the veil is torn and the way into the most holy place, into God's presence, is open, should our standard of life be higher or lower than people in the Old Testament? The answer is clear. If without personal fellowship with God, with just the law, people could come to a certain standard of life, how much higher our standard of life should be, once we come into fellowship with God Himself, inside that torn veil? And yet, many, many Christians don't seem to have understood this.

For example, why do we find or hear of sometimes Christians falling into some terrible sins? Can you imagine Elijah or John the Baptist running after women or running after money? No, and yet they did not have grace; they did not have that open access into the Most Holy place like we have; and without it, they came to such a life. How much more we can come to it if only we would have faith and rise up to our privileges under the New Covenant?

That is what Paul is saying here: "Sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace." Jesus once said that John the Baptist was the greatest human being born until that day (Mt. 11:11). Of course apart from himself; He was not born of a human father, so Jesus Himself is excluded. But among all others, John the Baptist was the greatest. Then Jesus went on to say, 'But, the one who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven - in God's kingdom - is greater even than John the Baptist.' What He was trying to say was that the highest that the law could take a man was still inferior or less than where grace could take the

然而當主耶穌死在十字架上以後,那幔子被從上而下撕開了,表明了神的同在向世人敞開了。那麼我想問你,現在通往至聖所,進入神的同在之路已經敞開了,我們生命的標準應該比舊約時代的人更高還是更低?答案再清楚不過了。若沒有與神親身建立的關係,僅僅依靠律法,人的生命已經可以達到一定的水準,那麼進入已經撕開了幔子的至聖所裡面,與神親身相交,會將我們的生命帶到多麼高的程度啊?然而仍然有很多很多的基督徒,似乎並不明白這一點。

比如,為什麼有些基督徒會陷在極可怕的罪惡裡?你能想像以利亞或是施洗約翰,追逐金錢和美女嗎?我們沒法想像。而那時的他們還沒有恩典臨到呢,他們還不像我們現在,擁有完全敞開的至聖所,可以隨時進入裡面。然而在那樣的情況下,他們的人生是讓我們如此嘆服。那麼如果我們肯存信心,去擁抱這新約下的特權,我們將會實現怎樣豐富的人生啊!

這就是保羅所說的,「不該讓罪來作你們的主,因為你們不在律法之下,乃在恩典之下。」耶穌曾經說過,在那之前,沒有人比施洗約翰更偉大(馬太福音 11 章 11 節)。當然祂說的並不包括祂自己的,因為祂不是由人類父親使母親受孕而成的。而在世人中,再沒有比施洗約翰更偉大的了。爾後耶穌繼續說,「然而天國裡最小的,比施洗約翰還大。」主耶穌在這裡說的意思是,律法所能成就的極限,仍比不過恩典在哪怕是神最軟弱的孩子身上所能成就的。

weakest of God's children.

So it is not going to be just an occasional believer who raises to a higher standard of life than John the Baptist. God's will is that every single one of His children, who come under grace, should raise to a higher level than John the Baptist. But whether they will actually live that life is quite another thing. But the possibility is there, if they understand and receive grace as God offers it to us, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, when we compare the word 'mercy', as we read, for example, in Hebrews 4:16, we are told there that, "We are to come with confidence to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." As I mentioned in a previous study, there is a difference between 'mercy' and 'grace'. Mercy is essentially an Old Testament word. It is a word which you find very frequently in the Old Testament - the Lord whose mercy endures forever. David often speaks about it.

As a result of that mercy people in the Old Testament had their sins covered and forgiven. They could not be cleansed. David could only say, "Blessed is the man whose sins are covered." Nobody's sins could be cleansed until Jesus died on Calvary's cross. But they could be covered until Christ came. They were forgiven. In the well-known psalm, Psalm 103, David said, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your iniquity." That was mercy, and all of us need it too; we need mercy; we need our sins to be forgiven.

But there is something more than that we have in the New Covenant, and that is grace; something more than mercy; something to help us in the future; something to help us overcome the passions in our

因此,這裡說的意思,不是隨隨便便一個所謂的信徒,生命標準都高過施洗約翰。神的本意,是在祂的恩典之下,每個祂的孩子都該活出比施洗約翰更高水準的生命。然而,一個人是否真的活出這樣的生命,就另當別論了。只是這個可能是真的存在的,但是你需要明白,並且通過主耶穌基督去接受神所賜的恩典。

現在我們需要比較一下「憐憫」這個詞。例如在希伯來書 4 章 16 節,我們讀到,「所以我們只管坦然無懼地來到施恩的寶座前,為要得憐恤,並隨時得到恩典的幫助。」我在之前提到過,「憐憫」與「恩典」是有區別的。憐憫,基本上可以說是一個舊約時代的詞。這個詞你在舊約裡隨處可見——主的慈愛憐憫永遠長存。大衛經常提到主的憐憫。

舊約時代,神對人憐憫的結果就是,神把他們的罪遮蓋並寬恕了。然而他們卻並不能得到淨化。大衛只能說,「罪被遮蓋的,是有福的。」在主耶穌死在十字架上以前,是沒有任何人的罪可以得到潔淨的。在基督來臨之前,他們的罪只能被遮蓋。神赦免了他們。在著名的詩篇 103 篇,大衛說,「我的心哪,你要稱頌耶和華,不可忘記他的一切恩惠和你罪惡的赦免。」這是神的憐憫,每個人都需要。我們的確需要神的憐憫,這樣罪才能得赦。

然而在新約裡我們得到了超出于此的,那就是恩典,它勝過憐憫,能在未來一直幫助我們,克服我們天然的欲望。希伯來書 4 章 16 節說,我們在施恩的寶座前得憐恤,在需要時,我們也總在那裡得到恩典的幫助。

nature. It says here in Hebrews 4:16 that we can come to the throne of grace and in the place where we receive mercy, we can find grace to help us in our time of need.

Now what is our time of need? Our time of need is when we are under tremendous pressure from the lusts in our flesh; tremendous pressure from the devil to sin. In that moment, when we are tempted to sin and to fall, God says grace can help me. Grace is help; help for my need, whatever it is. If my need right now is that I need help to overcome a particular sin, it says, grace can help me in my time of need.

It is like, if I were climbing a mountain, and I am about to slip and fall, then if I ask for help, God can lift me up and make me stand so that I don't fall. But if I don't ask for help and I struggle on my own, I slip and fall and break my bones, and then I ask God for help, and an ambulance comes and picks me up. Well, that is help too. But that is mercy; that is after I have fallen, that God picks me up, forgives me, takes me to a hospital, patches me up, and restores me. That is how it is with the experience of many Christians. They fall, and they ask God for help. But isn't there a better way? There is - grace to help me in my time of need.

Now why don't you do this next time when you find the pressure of temptation, so strong that you are about to fall, try this out and see if it doesn't work. You ask God at that moment and say, 'Lord, I am not able to overcome this; I want you to help me. Give me grace to overcome this.' And you will see in that moment, grace coming to carry you through.

那麼什麼時候是「需要時」?我們的「需要時」,就是當肉體面對來自欲望的巨大壓力時,面對來自魔鬼的巨大壓力想要犯罪的時候。在這時,當犯罪與沉淪讓我們覺得非常受誘惑的時候,神說,恩典可以幫助我。恩典是幫助,是對我需求的幫助,無論那需求是什麼。假如此刻我需要的是克服專門的某個罪,恩典就可以在這一時刻幫助我。

這就如同當我在爬一座山,突然將要滑倒,這時我立刻向神求救,神立刻拉住我,使我不會跌倒。但假如這時我不求救,只依賴自己苦苦掙扎,結果就是我會跌倒摔斷骨頭,爾後我若呼求神,神會派救護車把我帶走。當然,這也是很有幫助的。然而這是憐憫,是在我跌倒之後,神將我扶起,原諒了我,送我去醫院,為我包裹,使我恢復。很多基督徒的經歷都是這樣的,他們跌倒,然後再求神幫助。可是就沒有更好的方式了嗎?答案是有的,那就是在我們需要時來幫助我們的「恩典」。

好,現在我要問你,在下次面對誘惑的巨大壓力時,在你馬上就要跌倒時,試著求問神的恩典,看看結果怎樣?在你需要的那一刻說,「我的主,我自己無法戰勝這個誘惑,我要你的幫助。求你賜我恩典,來克服它。」然後就在那一刻,你就會發現,恩典帶著你脫離了那跌倒的危險。

