

EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, MORRIS, MANITOBA

DEVOTIONAL FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 10, 2020

Marvellous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt, Yonder, on Calvary's mount outpoured, there where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Refrain: Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin. (Public Domain)

It may have been years since you sang the words to this older hymn. I was reminded about it this past Sunday when flipping channels looking for a worship service to watch. I do not remember who it was who was speaking. I do not even remember the name of the church or program. Something was said, in the few moments I watched that reminded me of this hymn. The words have been going through my mind over and over again for the last day and a half. I am writing this on Monday evening.

In one of my messages, one that now seems to have been shared so long ago, I contrasted the law as given by Moses and the freedom as given by Christ. The pastor speaking made a comment about the difficulty of the law and the ease of grace. He made a geographic comparison.

Moses had to climb Mount Sinai, a rugged peak in the Sinai Desert. I know it to be so. I climbed it on one of my journeys into Bible lands. It was a gruelling, three-and-a-half-hour camel ride part way up in the dark. (We wanted to be on top of the mountain for sunrise.) After the camel ride we only had fifteen hundred steps left. Fifteen hundred steps are enough when they are consistent and regular. These steps were of varying size from six inches to two feet. I am sure you can imagine the burn in the legs and the lungs as we reached the peak at 10,800 feet. This was on a path cut into the rock. When Moses climbed the Mount, there was no such path. For Moses to receive the Ten Commandments, he had to make a dangerous climb up a rugged, dangerous mountain. It was very hard work. Man had to do the work.

In contrast, the work of grace is done by Christ. For man, it only requires belief. No climbing a mountain. No rituals or mantras. No necessary behaviours except to trust in what Christ has done for salvation. The work has been done and is complete. The Apostle Paul tells us that when Christ died, it was once for all. All mankind and for all time. This brings us to the second contrast.

To keep the law is hard. It also brings with it a feeling of threat. Just the words such as, "Thou shalt not kill," carry an implication of something bad happening if you break the rule. One of the reasons they imply this is because they are stated negatively, "Thou shalt not." Another reason it is hard is because the rules change according to who is interpreting them and who is expanding on them to make a point or control any possible followers.

On the other hand, grace implies freedom. Paul tells us that it is a gift. A gift does not imply a threat, but a time of joy and happiness. Just think of kids at Christmas. Both law and grace can produce tears but the tears of law are because of fear while the tears of grace are tears of relief. That relief comes when we accept God's grace. This is the grace that is greater than all our sin.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for doing the work so I can walk in the grace you have given. I am just learning the depth and width of such a wonderful gift. Amen

Pastor Barry