

IT TAKES GRACE TO DIE

Sunday Morning: July 25, 2004

Text: Colossians 3:1-4 "If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek** those things which are **above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2. Set your **affection** on things **above, not on** things on the **earth**. 3. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4. When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

I thought it would be profitable for us to continue thinking about dying to self. I was stalking to a Navy buddy of mine down in Texas, down on the Rio Grande River, he's down in Mercedes, Texas and he's got Parkinson's disease. He fell off his porch backwards and broke his hip and he is really struggling and he's been in the nursing home for a month and he'll be probably be there for another month trying to just get his strength before he can go home. He wants to go home and he's probably lost about seventy to eighty pounds. He can't eat that food in that hospital, he doesn't like that food and he says, "I weigh now, what I weighed when I was in High School!" But I was telling him - I was talking on dying to self and he said it's easy to talk about dying to self, it's another thing doing it! And I think the Lord knows that for us. This is something we all struggle with because our emotions, our fears, our imaginations, they are constantly jumping up to bite us and to cause us to struggle! And I thank God that we can't do it on our own. We know that the Lord says, you know, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." And we have to deal with the flesh. And dying to self has to do with subduing the desires of the flesh. When we think about dying, a person who has passed away, we know that they are influenced by the things that are around them and that's the way it should be for us. We should not allow somebody's comment to us to offend us or to cause us to change our lifestyle or our behavior in honoring the Lord or walking with the Lord. And so we need strength to do that and I want to talk about that a little bit this morning. It takes grace to die! It takes the power of Christ for us to die to self, if you please. And I want to read again Colossians chapter three verses one through four.

Being risen with Christ, we're seeking things that are above. Being risen with Christ, we're setting our affections on things above and this is all made possible because we have died. And one of the things that I didn't cover last week and I thought it would be to our benefit today is to reflect on the fact that we need to be content. Contentment, satisfaction – we're often not satisfied with what we have. Somebody asks, "what do you need?" and it's always "well just a little bit more." We all have that bend, we always want just a little bit more and yet Paul tells Timothy that godliness with contentment is great gain. We kind of reverse that around! Great gain will provide contentment and godliness! Well, that's just not the way it is, having more than you need, because that's really what the Lord says as he continues the thoughts on this

BE CONTENT

1 Timothy 6:6-9 "But **godliness** with **contentment** is great gain. 7. For we brought nothing into *this world*, and *it is* certain we can carry nothing out. 8. And having food and raiment let us be therewith **content**. 9. But they that will be **rich** (the rich are not content) fall into **temptation** and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful **lusts** (discontent), which drown men in destruction and perdition."

Contentment with essentials; riches drown people! They overwhelm people but people don't know that and they want to be rich. When we think about contentment, riches does not provide contentment. I knew a fellow that worked in a bank, many years ago when the tellers wore little caps and little bands around their sleeve, you know, and stood behind a cage. And the person

in the bank told him, "Now when you're counting that money, you look at those quarters and half dollars as washers, you don't look at them as money, they're washers! But the bank President finally got a million dollars, he became a millionaire and so he asked him, "What is your desire now, that you've got a million?" He said, "I've got a stronger desire than ever before to have another million!" Just being satisfied with a million dollars is not enough. You have a million; you're going to want another million even more than the first one! So riches do not provide contentment. Riches cause us to fall into temptations and a snare. Riches cause us to do things - but things we shouldn't have and we shouldn't do! And many foolish things! And it also genders lust, desire, discontentment and when you're lying in bed you're worrying about who's going to get my money! You win the lottery and all of a sudden, you've got relatives, you've never heard of in your life calling, needing a little extra! Anyway – discontentment, destruction, perdition! Hebrews thirteen five tells us

BE CONTENT

Hebrews 13:5 *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

In other words, the conversation here has to do with your way of life. We have needs, we need a place to stay, food to eat, we need a car sometimes to get where we need to go, there are buses of course, we need to be without covetousness. Desiring things that we don't need, or desiring what someone else has! Have you ever just thought about that? Just the presence of the Lord can provide contentment and satisfaction because there's fellowship there and we need to realize the fact that He will never leave us nor forsake us and so therefore we can live a life knowing that He will provide what we need. You know, my wife knows what I need and I know what my wife needs. Now, I don't know what my daughter and her husband need because I'm not with them, but Jean and I are together and I know when she needs someone to help her wash dishes and so I wash, you know, four or five pieces of silverware and leave the rest to her! No! Anyway, when the Lord is with us, He knows what we need and He can minister to our needs and so therefore we need to appreciate the fact that, "I'll never leave you, and I won't forsake you, I'll be there and I'll know what you need." Philippians chapter four verse eleven, Paul says

CONTENTMENT IS LEARNED

Philippians 4:11 *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."*

Did you know that contentment, you have to go to school to learn that! Paul says, I have LEARNED how to be content. And you know, learning to be content has to do with memory work; you know what I mean? You go to school and you have to remember a few things and you have to remember that I can't have a better car so therefore this car, which goes and can take me, I have to remember that I can be content with this. In other words, that's just a very simple thing, but you know we have to learn and convince ourselves that we don't need something that we can't afford to have. That's the thing! I'm not saying it's not wrong to have a car or two, you know, what I'm saying, it's not that. It's just simply; we need to learn how to be content with what we do have. I just think about the Roman soldiers who came to John the Baptist to be baptized, remember? And he asked them, "What do we need to do to qualify to rule and reign in the coming Kingdom? Because they were coming to be baptized with John and he said, you be fair and you be content with your wages. Obviously, the Roman soldiers didn't like what they got paid! You know it's what they could steal or rob, I guess, that's where

their bonuses came from! But anyway, John said, be content with what you have. In Second Corinthians chapter nine, it says

POSSIBLE BY GRACE

2 Corinthians 9:8 "And God *is* able to make all **grace abound** toward you; that ye, always having **all sufficiency** in all *things*, may abound to every good work:"

You know what? It's the grace of God that provides sufficiency. It's the grace of God that provides the enough that we need to be content and to be satisfied. What does grace provide? It provides peace! It provides strength. I want to read and we'll get to that in just a moment, but in Galatians chapter two verses nineteen through twenty-one, it speaks of the grace of God. We looked at this last Sunday but I want to read it again today. It says

THE GRACE OF GOD

Galatians 2:19-21 "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. *20.* I am **crucified with Christ**: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith** of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. *21.* I **do not frustrate the grace of God**: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Verse nineteen is a verse that says, that I through the law am dead to the law. In other words, what verse nineteen is saying is, I'm just. If I have knowledge of the law and I'm obedient to the law, the law does not affect me at all. I don't have to do anything different because I know that I'm obeying the law. If I'm driving under the speed limit, I don't have to slow down when I see a policeman because I'm not affected by the law of the street – the speed limit.

JUST

Galatians 2:19 "For I **through** the **law** am **dead** to the **law**, that I might live unto God."

So verse nineteen. Paul says, I'm just, just because I am dead to the law, because I'm being obedient. Now, this is not the Mosaic Law, I don't want you to get mixed up on that, this is the moral law, this is the ten commandments, less the Sabbath day to keep it holy. The Sabbath day to keep it holy was a law to the nation of Israel.

LIVE BY FAITH

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and **the life** which I now **live** in the **flesh** I live **by the faith** of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Now, in Galatians two, twenty, Paul says, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God. This verse is talking about living by faith. You can't live by faith unless you're just. You can't please God and live in sin. So if you're not living in sin, the law does not affect you. So therefore, the just live by faith. And so Paul is talking about this, he lived by faith. In Ephesians two eight, it says

GRACE TO ENDURE

Ephesians 2:8 "For by **grace** are ye [ye endure] [having been] **saved** [perfect tense] **through faith**; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:"

And this is just reading it as it is in the King James. This is not a very happy translation of that verse. "For by grace, ye endure," is a better translation of the words, "are ye," because of the context of this verse. The word, 'saved' is in the perfect tense and when you translate the word,

'saved' in the perfect tense, you translate it, 'having been saved.' This verse has you already in the family, the child of God. and how does the grace of God affect you as one of His children? That's what this verse is teaching us. Because it goes on to say, for by grace ye endure having been saved. Now, how do we get the grace to endure? You get the grace to endure by faith. And you see that in Romans five two

GRACE BY FAITH

Romans 5:2 "By whom also we have **access by faith** into this **grace** wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

What is the significance of faith? It allows us to have grace. What does the grace of God allow us to do? It allows us to endure. Endure what? Endure not having everything we think we need. It takes the grace of God to be content and to be satisfied and to have enough and be satisfied with what we have. And so therefore we access this grace by faith. So when we read in Galatians two, twenty-one, Paul says

BY GRACE

Galatians 2:21 "I do not frustrate [reject, do away with] **the grace of God**: for if righteousness (approval, justification) *come* by the **law**, then **Christ** (our high priest) is **dead** (not the cross) in **vain** [for nothing]."

What he is saying is, I am just, I am living by faith and I'm not going to throw away the grace of God that I can get by faith. That's what this is telling us – I do not frustrate the grace of God, I don't reject the grace of God. I don't do away with the grace of God. I have to have it! And of course the latter part of this verse is not very easy to understand because what it's talking about – righteousness, or approval, or if justification comes by the law, then Christ, who is our High Priest is dead in vain or for nothing. And I don't look at this death as the death of the cross, this is the death in the garden, I believe, this is not talking about the death on the cross because it has nothing to do with me. That's the finished work but His death in the garden, having to do with His High Priestly office has something to do with me, in other words, whether I use His High Priestly office or not. Now, I can throw away the grace of God, I can frustrate the grace of God by not appropriating it by faith. And Paul is doing that, and that's what I believe that these verses are teaching us - that Paul appropriated the grace of God, he did not frustrate it and we don't need to be frustrating it in our lives as well. Now, when we think about Christ as our High priest, we think about Him being where? He is at the right hand of the Father. Colossians three one tells us

CHRIST AT HIS RIGHT HAND

Colossians 3:1 "If ye then be **risen with Christ**, seek those things which are above, where **Christ** (our high priest) sitteth on the **right hand of God**."

"Seek those things which are above," who's there? Where CHRIST sitteth on the right hand of God. Christ is our High Priest, He is at the right hand of the Father, He is interceding on our behalf. He is providing us with grace as we need it. Philippians three ten says

KNOW THE POWER

Philippians 3:10 "That-4- I may **know him**, and the **power** of his **resurrection**, and the **fellowship** of his sufferings, being made **conformable** unto his death;"

Well, what does His High Priestly office mean? It means to know the power. We need to know the power of that resurrection. In Romans chapter six verse four

A NEW LIFE MADE POSSIBLE

Romans 6:4 "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into [the] **death**: that like as

Christ was **raised** up from the dead by the glory of the Father (to his right hand as our high priest), **even so we also** should walk in **newness of life**."

And I'm emphasizing "as Christ," because obviously we have not been raised from the dead physically like Christ has been raised, so it's "as Christ was raised from the dead." And when He was raised from the dead, He didn't go into retirement. He didn't draw His heavenly social security; you understand what I'm saying! When Christ was raised from the dead, He started a new job! And that new job was our High Priest. And let me just continue on in this verse. Jesus Christ had a new way of life while He was at the right hand of the Father compared to what He had while He was here on the earth and when we have been raised from the dead, we should live a different lifestyle! That's what He is saying in this verse. We cannot live a heavenly lifestyle like Christ is today, but we can live a different lifestyle and that difference is we don't frustrate the grace of God, we don't throw away the grace of God, we don't throw away the power of God in our life. We can frivolate it away - we can do that. Paul says I'm not going to do that. We can do that! In Acts chapter thirteen it talks about His resurrection. And what I'm doing in the next few verses is I'm just showing you that His resurrection has to do with His High priestly office. Oftentimes we just think of His being raised from the dead and that is the end of the significance of that but in Acts chapter thirteen, thirty-three

HIS RESURRECTION

Acts 13:33 "God hath fulfilled the same (promise) unto us their children, in that he hath **raised up Jesus again**; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

When you read in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," this is a reference to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Not only that in Hebrews chapter five verse five

TO BECOME OUR HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 5:5 "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an **high priest**; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, **to day have I begotten thee**."

Not only is it a resurrection from the dead but it is also a reference to His High Priestly office after the order of Melchisedec. Now, what is He doing? Well, we look in Hebrews chapter four verses fifteen through sixteen

FOR MERCY AND GRACE

Hebrews 4:15-16 "For we have not an **high priest** which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. 16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the **throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy, and **find grace** to help in time of need."

In other words, what that is saying is we have a High Priest that CAN be touched. This is just a strong way of presenting a truth by coming in at it in a negative way. He was tempted just like we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace. Where is the throne of grace? It's in the heavenlies! Seek those things which are above. And we're to be seeking the throne of grace that we might obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. One of the things that I was thinking about as I was musing on these verses – the throne of grace tells us that grace is to be in charge. Grace is to reign! Grace is to rule in our hearts and then another thought came to my mind, we need mercy first. We need cleansing and forgiveness. We need to obtain mercy; we need to appropriate the blood on the mercy seat. And then find grace. Have you ever looked for something you've misplaced at home? We do

that at our house, and you know what, sometimes it takes a little while to find it. You know what? Grace is not instant; it takes a little time to get it! And so we need to not be in a hurry. We need to be patient. We need to wait on the Lord for His grace. We need to wait on the Lord for His power; we need to allow God to provide us with peace. We're so used to having instant everything – instant oats, instant grits, you know, instant news, that we don't have time to wait! I was just thinking about the rich, thinking about waiting. You know, the rich don't have to wait, do they? I was reflecting upon being in the airport in the city and it came over the loud speaker, "all those with first class tickets board now." They don't have to wait! Me, I have to wait and wait and wait because I'm hauling the back! But we need to learn to wait, we need to find grace and we need to wait on the Lord to provide that grace. Now, so He is our High Priest and He is the one who provides us with mercy and He is the one who will provide us with grace. Now, in Second Corinthians twelve nine we have the definition, I believe, of grace

GRACE, THE POWER OF CHRIST

2 Corinthians 12:9 "And he said unto me, My **grace** is sufficient for thee: for my **strength** is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that **the power of Christ** may rest upon me."

Jesus Christ told Paul, "my grace is enough, you don't need anything else!" And if you do, you know what? I'll provide it. But my grace is enough! Because my strength is made perfect in whose weakness? Ours! And we're weak, the Lord remembereth our frame that we are dust! You know why He has to remember that our frame is dust? Because we forget that it is! We are just like Samson, remember when He had his hair cut off and he went out like as before and you know what? The power of God had left him. And you know what? There are times when we haul off and go out there on our own and we just go under like Peter. He was out there walking on the water and next thing you know he was sinking. And it's the same thing with us. So we need His power and His strength and power is made perfect when we know we are weak. And Paul says, "therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that **the power of Christ** may rest upon me." The grace of Christ is the power of Christ. The grace of God is the power of Christ. Now, in Acts twenty verse thirty-two

GRACE BUILDS

Acts 20:32 "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to **the word of his grace**, which is able to **build you up**, and to give you an **inheritance** among all them which are sanctified."

You know, the word of His grace has to do with talking about his grace and the word revealing His grace. And the word of His grace is able to build us up. I was thinking about building, you know, a part of building has to do with painting and you know what? We didn't get our kitchen painted as quickly as we thought! And sometimes we don't get the grace. It doesn't build us up as quickly as we think sometimes and so therefore it takes time for grace to build us up. But you know what? Grace will provide an inheritance for us if we will allow it to become effective in our life. In fact Second Peter three eighteen tells us that we need to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

WE GROW IN GRACE

2 Peter 3:18 "But **grow in grace**, and *in* the **knowledge** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. . . ."

So grace is a growth process, grace is a building process and that grace comes through knowledge. It takes studying. When we talk about the word of His grace, it has to do with studying. In Second Peter one, two

THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

2 Peter 1:2 "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the **knowledge** [deeper knowledge] of God, and of Jesus our Lord,"

The word, 'knowledge' here is deeper knowledge, knowledge upon knowledge or butter knowledge. And so therefore it requires doing some digging. And so grace and peace comes through study of the word and in Second Timothy chapter two verse one it says

BE STRONG IN GRACE

2 Timothy 2:1 "Thou therefore, my son, **be strong in** the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

To be strong in grace means we need to be dedicated in learning about His grace. Now, we need to also be encouraged to have grace. But we don't want to fail the grace of God. In Hebrews chapter twelve verse fifteen it says

DON'T BE IN WANT OF GRACE

Hebrews 12:15 "**Looking diligently** [present active] lest any man **fail** [be in want] **of the grace** of God; **lest** any root of **bitterness** springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be **defiled**;"

"Looking diligently" is in the present tense, lest any man fail or be in want of grace. The context of Hebrews twelve is looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. We need to be looking unto the Lord because if we're not looking unto the Lord, His grace will fail; because if we're not looking unto the Lord, we're not going to be approaching the throne of grace to get the grace that we need and to find the grace that we need. And you know, when we don't have grace, bitterness can come and cause us trouble. Let me tell you, a person who's bitter is not dead to self. I've never seen a man in a casket bitter over anything! Everybody on the outside's bitter but he isn't! Anyway, we need to be looking unto the grace of God lest it would fail or be in want of grace and we become bitter. Now, another attitude of those that are dead and have died to self has to do with humility. James four six

GRACE GIVEN TO THE HUMBLE

James 4:6 "But he **giveth more grace**. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the **proud** (those who have not died), but **giveth grace** unto the **humble**." (the dead have been humbled)

The dead have obviously been humbled and so those who have humbled themselves are the ones who will have grace. Another exhortation of grace is the fact that it establishes the heart; the grace of God also establishes the heart. It's out of the heart that come the issues of life. The decisions that we make and the grace of God gives us stability and strength. I wanted to lead into the thought that not only those that have died to self need to learn to wait and we have been reflecting upon that already but in Psalms twenty seven fourteen it says

FIXED HEART

Hebrews 13:9 ". . . For *it is* a good thing that the **heart** be **established** with **grace**; . . ."

STRONG HEART

Psalms 27:14 "**Wait on** the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall **strengthen** thine **heart: wait**, I say, on the LORD."

In other words, grace will establish the heart. Waiting on the Lord will strengthen our heart and the psalmist says, "I say again, wait, I say on the Lord."

IT TAKES TIME TO FIND GRACE

Hebrews 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may **obtain mercy**, and **find grace** to help in time of need."

In Hebrews four sixteen, of course it takes time to find grace, and we have already reflected on that earlier in our thoughts this morning. And then in

THE BLESSED WAIT

Isaiah 30:18 "And therefore will the **LORD wait**, that he may be **gracious unto you**, and therefore will he be **exalted**, that he may **have mercy** upon you: for the **LORD is** a God of judgment: **blessed are** all they that **wait** for him."

Part of dying to self is waiting upon the Lord and if we'll wait upon the Lord, he will be gracious unto us and He'll provide us with grace. And if we allow Him to provide us with grace, He's going to be exalted and as He is exalted then He will have mercy upon us and do you want to be blessed? You need to wait on the Lord! And a person who's died to self, is one who waits upon God, he's not in a hurry. In Isaiah forty thirty one, another verse that's very familiar to all of us

THE DEAD WILL NOT FAINT

Isaiah 40:31 "But they that **wait** upon the **LORD** shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, **and not faint.**"

Notice it's a regression - you slow down. You slow down when you're walking with the Lord, you're not in a hurry, and you know what? You won't faint! Dead men don't faint. But if we are in a hurry, we can faint. So I want to close with Lamentations chapter three verses twenty-five and twenty-six

THE DEAD QUIETLY WAIT

Lamentations 3:25-26 "The **LORD is** good unto them that **wait** for him, to the soul *that seeketh* him. 26. *It is good* that a man should both hope and quietly **wait** for the salvation of the **LORD.**"

I just wanted to share these additional thoughts on dying to self, having to do with contentment. Having to do with the grace of God that provides us with strength and the contentment that we need and also the grace of God to allow us to endure even when we have to wait upon the Lord and if we wait upon Him, we will be blessed. And we have to believe that. May the Lord help us to be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known unto Him and He'll take care of you. He'll take care of your heart, and He'll take care of your needs because He already knows what you have need of before you ask. Father, I just pray that You'd bless the thoughts that we have presented this morning that we might be encouraged to die to self, to be content, to be anxious for nothing, to apply and appropriate your grace in our life by faith. We just pray, Lord, You'd help us not to frustrate your grace but to use it to your honor and glory; or good and profit, that we might endure to the end. We thank You again, that You have promised to never leave us nor forsake us, and so therefore we can be and live a contented life in Thee. Thank you for the word of your grace that builds us up. For it's in Jesus Christ's name that we pray, amen.