

LIBERATING GRACE

Galatians 3:3

February 10, 2008 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. We have been discovering what the Bible says about Grace.
 - 1. Its defined as...
 - a. God's love in action.
 - b. God giving us what we need, not what we deserve.
 - 2. God's Grace can be seen working several ways in our lives...
 - a. There's "Saving Grace".
 - b. There's "Grace" to overcome our guilt.
 - c. There's "Sustaining Grace" in times of difficulty.
 - d. There's "Healing Grace" for our hidden wounds.
 - 3. Today lets consider God's "Liberating Grace".
 - a. Liberating us from what?
 - b. The need or compulsion to be perfect.
- B. Perfectionism can be defined as trying to prove our worth by being perfect.
 - 1. It's harmful to our spiritual lives in several ways.
 - a. First, it defeats our initiative by causing us to wait to act until the conditions or circumstances are just right.
Ecc. 11:4. *Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.*
 - b. Second, it damages our relationships because who likes to be around someone who is always correcting us?
Proverbs 17:9 *Overlook an offense and bond a friendship; fasten on to a slight and—good-bye, friend! (The Message).*
 - c. Third, it destroys our happiness because we're always stressed out.
Ecc.7:16. *So don't knock yourself out being good, and don't go overboard being wise. Believe me, you won't get anything out of it. (The Message).*
 - 2. How can we relax in God's Grace and free ourselves from perfectionism? Let's use the word "relax" as an acrostic to find our answer.

I. FIRST, **REALIZE THAT NOBODY'S PERFECT.**

- A. This includes us.
Ecc.7:20 *There's not one totally good person on earth, Not one who is truly pure and sinless. (The Message).*
- B. Several years ago a book came out titled, "**I'm Okay and You're Okay**".
 - 1. That's a bunch of boloney!
 - 2. Why? Because you're not okay and I'm sure not okay!
 - 3. I'm imperfect and so are you, but because of God's Grace that's okay. We don't have to be perfect.
 - 4. This doesn't mean we should be jerks all our lives. Of course, we should try to become better people.
 - 5. But God isn't waiting until we change to love us. He loves us right now, even if we're still jerks.

II. SECOND, ENJOY GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.

A. Isn't it amazing that God loves us?

I John 3:1 *What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it— we're called children of God! That's who we really are.....(The Message).*

B. Notice we are called "God's Children".

1. This means we don't have to earn God's love.
2. This means He loves us because we are part of His family.
3. Those of us who are parents know that our kids aren't perfect but we love them anyway. God loves us even though we aren't perfect.
4. Now on the other hand, my grandchildren are perfect!

III. THIRD, LET GOD HANDLE THINGS.

A. That's important to remember because the root of perfectionism is the desire to control things around us.

1. We think if I can just control my husband, wife , kids, coworkers, the weather!, etc. then we will be happy.
2. Many things, however, maybe even most things, are out of our control.

B. The answer to our need to control things is to let God do it.

I Peter 5:7 *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

1. To overcome perfectionism we must let go. This is what the word "cast" means.
2. We must stop playing God.
3. We must understand that we don't have to be in control to be happy.

IV. FOURTH, ACT IN FAITH, NOT FEAR.

A. This is what Paul says we must do.

Colossians 2:6. *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him,*

1. How did we receive Jesus? By faith.
2. How then do we continue to live? By faith.
3. We didn't have to be perfect before became Christians and we don't have to be perfect now either. We live by faith not the fear of losing God's love.

B. One of the symptoms of perfectionism is fatigue.

1. It's tiring business being the general manager of the universe.
2. We can relax, though, because of God's grace means we don't have to keep working for His love.

V. FIFTH, EXCHANGE PERFECTIONISM FOR GOD'S PEACE.

A. Perfectionism destroys peace because we can never let up, never relax, we're always performing.

B. Jesus offers us a way out. He offers us something we desperately need-peace.

Matthew 11:28 *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

CONCLUSION

A. Is the need to be perfect destroying your life? Or those around you?

B. Relax, you don't have to be perfect.

1. What about **Matthew 5:48** *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect ?*
2. God knew that no one could live up to this demand. That's why He gave us His Grace.
3. We need God's Liberating Grace today.