

I. Introduction

- A. The of our Lord 2020 went out with a lot of kicking and screaming, and the year of our Lord 2021 has come to life with even more kicking and screaming. We live in perilous times.
 - 1. I believe that 2020 was a wake up call from God.
 - 2. I believe that the events of these last few weeks are proof that nobody is paying attention.
- B. On a global scale, we are witnessing what happens when humankind throws off the authority of God.
- C. A powerful organization called the World Economic Forum has called for an intentional transformation of society. They call it the *Great Reset*. They are calling for powerful global stakeholders to reshape the whole world. They say, "To improve the state of the world, the World Economic Forum is starting The Great Reset initiative."
- D. I always want to remind you that what is happening in the heavenly realm is greater and far more impactful than what is happening in this earthly realm.
- E. We do not ignore this great sweep of history in which we find ourselves. But we must set it in a greater and far more consequential context.
 - 1. Because the only way to fix this world is the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ in splendor and might to destroy evil, and to usher in his glorious millennial kingdom of earth.
 - 2. And the second best only ways to fix this world is a large-scale return of both the church and the world to a reverence for God and all of us getting ourselves Back to the Gospel and Back to the Bible. We need the Lord like never before.
- F. And because we need the Lord like never before, I would like to propose something different today.
- G. Because as well intentioned as a Great Reset might be, it is still going to be nothing but secular humanism on parade, infected by post-modernism, and devoid of anything close to biblical morality.
- H. So have a different proposal... a different idea of what the crying need of our royally messed up culture. Today and next weekend, I would like to speak to you on the topic...

II. The Grace Reset

- A. Human solutions can only shuffle the chairs on the deck of the Titanic.
- B. But God's solutions can transform lives for time and eternity.
- C. Grace is the one word that sums up the truths that matter most.
 - 1. Grace describes the heart of God. Grace defines the policy of God. Grace determines the gospel of God. Grace dictates life with God for a Christian.
- D. The exact meaning of the word grace ought to be crystal clear to every child of God. But it is not.
- E. The precise meaning of the word grace ought to be crystal clear to every church, and every church leader, and every pastor, and every small group leader, and every youth leader across this land and across the world.
 - 1. What grace is. What grace isn't. What grace implies. What grace denies.
- F. We should know these things well. It is the crying need of the church, and it is the crying need of the world.
- G. So welcome to The Grace Reset. I will speak on this today and next weekend. After that, we will return to verse by verse look at a book in the Bible called Second Peter.
- H. Today, I want us to talk about grace as a theological concept. And next time, how that concept becomes the operating system within the human soul.
- I. Let's talk about eight building blocks of grace. If you pull out even one building block, you don't have grace.
 - 1. If you pull out even one building block, the whole interlocking theology of grace collapses in a messy heap.

III. Eight Building Blocks of Grace for a Grace Reset

A. HOLINESS

Grace assumes the unapproachable holiness of God.

- 1. All grace is set against the backdrop of the blistering holiness of an immense and dangerous God.
- 2. The church today has lost sight of the holiness of God.
- 3. All the love songs to an impossibly wimpy God have basically killed any healthy fear and respect we might have for his holiness.
 - a) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Romans 1:18)
 - b) For our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:29)
 - c) Jesus said, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28)
 - d) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:31)
- 4. There is a greatness, a grandeur, and a loftiness in God that fried the circuits of ordinary mortals who encountered him.
 - a) The barest glimpse of God's glory made Daniel pass out and get sick for days (Daniel 8:27).
 - b) Isaiah, seeing God on his throne, fell to his face crying, "Woe is me!" (Isaiah 6:5).
 - c) When John saw a vision of the conquering Savior, he "fell at His feet as dead" (Revelation 1:17).
- 5. There is simply no way to read Scripture without coming away with the idea that God is exceedingly, abundantly, immeasurably exalted above fallen mortals like us.
- 6. The God we serve is a big, dangerous God. He is a consuming fire, never to be quenched. He plays by nobody's rules but his own. Any concept of grace that doesn't start here isn't biblical grace.

B. HELPLESSNESS

Grace assumes the absolute helplessness of humankind.

- 1. God is immeasurably high, and we humans are immeasurably low.
- 2. We are morally broken. You have broken God's laws, I have broken God's laws, we have all broken God's laws.
- 3. As clean and polished and put together as you may look today, when God sets you inside his moral x-ray machine, you are broken and depraved.
 - a) This is your nature.

(1) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)

(2) For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin. (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

b) Ever since the fall, all humans have been born corrupted and depraved by sin.

4. This is why the Great Reset can never come close to a Grace Reset. No amount of human effort can ever cleanse the heart! That also means that no human merit is factored into the equation of salvation at all.

a) You don't earn it. You don't deserve it. You don't work for it. You earn no merit badges to get it. You don't behave for it.

b) Grace wipes out human merit because grace assumes there is no such thing as human merit inside a sinful soul.

5. The consequence of sin is catastrophic:

a) Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, (Colossians 3:6)

b) For the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

6. To be misaligned to the justice of God is the greatest calamity that can happen to anyone.

C. ADJUSTMENT

Grace cannot bless where there is no adjustment to the justice of God.

1. God cannot bless sin. God can't tolerate it, overlook it, by pass it, minimize it, or pretend it didn't happen.

a) But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)

2. God cannot make war in his own character in order to make peace with you.

3. As a sinner, you remain under condemnation from the justice of God. It's way more serious than most people realize. It's a condemnation that puts you at odds with God.

4. There is an inescapable hostility between someone in their sins and God. The Bible calls this enmity (hostility), and until this is repaired, no one can experience the grace of God.

5. And the great unavoidable problem is that in a million lifetimes, we could never possess the power to adjust ourselves to the holiness of God. And we can never put ourselves in a position to benefit from the grace of God.

a) What are we doing? We are constructing the biblical concept of grace, brick by brick, on a foundation that cannot be shaken.

D. SOURCE

Grace emerges always and forever from the finished work of Calvary's Cross.

1. When Jesus died on the cross, two equal and [seemingly to us] opposite forces were welded together that can never be split apart:

a) The holiness of God. And the love of God.

2. God's holiness was satisfied by pouring out his wrath for sin. As Jesus hung on the Cross, God transferred to him all the sin of all the world. He became our sin bearer.

a) And not only did he bear our sins, he bore the punishment for our sins too. God poured out his wrath for sin on Jesus. He poured it out with horrible agonies. He poured out his wrath to the very last drop.

b) God punished him. God executed him. God judged him.

c) Whatever the justice of God required for sin, Jesus Christ endured in three dark hours on the Cross. He endured the condemnation for all the sin of the world, once for all.

d) So now, this great enemy is dealt with... by the substitutionary day of Jesus Christ.

(1) Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29).

e) God's holiness was satisfied...

3. And his love was satisfied too.

a) God can now bless you without compromising his character. He can now love you without violating his nature. He can pour out grace upon you without throwing his pearls before swine.

4. Infinite divine justice and infinite divine love met at the Cross of Christ, and in that moment of death, they were welded together forever into the miracle we call grace.

5. The heart of Scripture is Scripture is Christ.

a) That means that all the Bible teaches him.

6. The heart of Christ is Grace.

a) That means that until you understand this concept of grace, you really don't understand Christ.

7. The heart of Grace is the Cross.

a) That means there is no such thing as a Cross-less Grace or a Christ-less Grace, yet that weak substitution is what is being proclaimed in pulpits across the land over and over again.

b) We need a grace reset, because grace is found always and only in the the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

E. EXCLUSIVITY

Grace cannot be reconciled with any other system.

1. Grace excludes every other system, every other philosophy, and every religion. Grace cannot coexists with secularism, humanism, and materialism.

2. Grace has irreconcilable differences with every conceivable claim that isn't grace.

a) There can be no fellowship between light and darkness.

3. Grace cannot be reconciled with any other approach to God.

a) Not works. Not religion. Not human effort. Not sacraments. Not philosophy. Not anything.

b) There's no "grace-plus." Because under grace, God does everything.

(1) Under any other system, human effort is included too.

4. If you think that other religions have grace too, you don't understand grace. None of them has the Cross of Christ, so none of them has grace.

5. If you think that Grace goes out to people who do not have Christ, then you don't understand grace. They are not adjusted to the justice of God, so there is no grace for them... nothing but "but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries." (Hebrews 10:27)
6. Grace is the sole and singular way to God, and it will never place nice with any other kids on the playground. It can't because to do so would be to diminish the holiness of God, disrespect the sacrifice of Christ, and falsely inflate the capability of depraved sinners like us.

F. CLEMENCY

Grace is never clemency or kindness toward a sinner.

1. Please write this down in your Bible or somewhere.
 - a) A holy God can never forgive a single sin that is not yet paid for.
2. Grace does not mean God is nice. Grace does not mean God offers clemency.
3. The only mercy that can flow to a sinner is a blood-bought mercy courtesy the Cross of Christ.
 - a) Anything else is a perversion of grace.
4. This is the most common error about grace that I see.
5. People talk about God's forgiveness, and God's mercy, and God's kindness who do not have the slightest interest in Christ's Cross.
6. They have not believed the gospel. They have not put their faith in Jesus Christ. They are not saved.
 - a) Their sins are not forgiven. Jesus said, "the wrath of God abides on them" (John 3:36)
 - b) Their grace is not grace because they do not honor God's holiness, and grace is the solution to the holiness of God.
7. Most people hear the word grace and they think it means nice. Please, give them this sermon.
8. You know the hymn Amazing Grace?
 - a) If God is nice, there is nothing amazing about grace.
 - b) How can anyone look at the suffering Lamb of God upon the Cross and think that God is nice.
 - c) He is holy and he is good, but he is not nice.
 - d) Biblical grace contains not one molecule of kindness, leniency, niceness, or clemency toward sin.

G. RESPONSE

Grace requires the non-meritorious response of faith.

1. Grace is a priceless gift that only an empty hand can receive.
2. Let's just be logical for a minute. Let's make a list of all the possible ways that a human can respond in a positive way to something God says.
 - a) We can obey.
 - b) We can perform.
 - c) We can comply.
 - d) We can do something.
 - e) We can take action.
 - f) We can understand.
 - g) We can improve.
 - h) We can do good works.
 - i) We can perform sacraments and rituals.
3. I'm sure you can come up with more. But the problem with each and every one of them is that it requires some sort of human excellence. And that means some kind of merit.
4. But as soon as you allow human merit into the equation, Grace is no longer grace.
5. So God selected the one activity a human can do that isn't its own activity, doesn't have its own merit, and doesn't involve human excellence.
6. God selected *faith*.
 - a) Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace... (Romans 4:16)
 - (1) Faith is not a good work... it accepts the good work Jesus Christ on the Cross.
 - (2) Faith is not a virtue... anyone can have faith in something any day of the week. Faith rests upon the virtue of a Crucified Savior and the gift he brings.
 - (3) Faith is not an act of moral excellence... faith is morally neutral. Faith points to the moral excellence of another.
7. Faith is the one thing a human can do without doing anything. It is the one thing a human can do that points to what was done by Another — by our Savior Jesus Christ.
 - a) Faith is an unwork...
 - (1) Faith is an unwork because you are resting in the work of another.
 - (2) Faith is an unwork because you acknowledge your inability to work.
 - (3) Faith is an unwork because you are trusting in the perfect work of Christ.
8. Salvation is by grace through faith. This is because the only piece of the human puzzle that meshes perfectly with grace is faith.
9. Faith alone in Christ alone.
 - a) The simple act believing in the Savior who has done all the work for us.

H. ENTITLEMENT

Grace can never be an entitlement.

1. The fastest way to murder grace is to convince yourself you're entitled to it.
 - a) God doesn't owe you. God is never in your debt.
 - b) When you get mad at God, remember this.
 - (1) The only thing we are entitled to from God is condemnation.
2. Anything better than eternal condemnation that is a grace for which we should be eternally grateful.

- a) A story... Once upon a time Sally was reading a book in her living room when, through the window, she saw a stranger come walking down the street.
- b) He walked up to Sally's house, turned up the sidewalk, walked to the front door, and rang the bell.
- c) Sally got here German Shepherd beside her as she answered the door.
- d) "May I help you?"
- e) The man said, "I have something to give you." He held out a \$100 bill.
- f) Sally looked suspicious. "What's going on?" She looked around. She didn't know what to do.
- g) The man said, "Here. It's for you. Take it. Enjoy it."
- h) Sally hesitantly took it. The man went away. Sally went on with her day.
- i) The next day, Sally's still reading her book. The same man comes walking down the street. Turns up the sidewalk. Rings the door bell. Another hundred dollars.
- j) Same thing happens again the next day. She is so thankful.
- k) By day four, Sally is waiting on the porch. Same thing. Another hundred dollars. Sally is thankful. Sally is grateful.
- l) Day five, six, seven... day twenty, twenty one... Every single day, the stranger came and gave Sally a one hundred dollar bill just because. Sally is grateful day after day. Thankful. So humbled.
- m) Who is she that someone should be blessing her so well?
- n) A full month goes by, and every day a freely given, unearned \$100 bill.
- o) Day 32... Sally's waiting on the porch. She sees the man. She waves at him. She smiles. He's walking down the block. But this today does something different.
- p) Today, he reaches Sally's sidewalk, but doesn't turn up it. He just keeps walking.
- q) Sally's jaw drops as she watches the man walk to her neighbor's house and turn up her neighbor's sidewalk. He rings her neighbor's doorbell and starts to hand her neighbor a hundred dollar bill.
- r) Sally can't take it. She runs across her lawn, runs to the man, shakes his fist in her face, and shouts,
 - (1) "You crook! Where's my hundred dollars?"
3. The fastest way to murder grace is to convince yourself you're entitled to it.
 - a) God's been good to you. Better than you deserve. That's what grace is. Day after day after day after day. Year after year. God has carried you through. Good days. Bad days. He's a faithful God.
 - b) But then those days come that are hard. You don't see his presence, though it is there. You don't perceive his provision, even though it's there.
 - c) And you want to run to him and shout, "You crook! Where's my blessing??" As if he owes it to you.
 - (1) Does God owe you? No. God is no one's debtor. Ever.
 - (a) So the next time you or someone you know throws a hissy fit, or...
 - (b) The next time you or anybody stamps their foot and whines to God and complains, "That's not fair..."
 - (2) Just remind yourself... You'd have to be crazy to actually want what's fair from God.
 - (a) But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2:10)
 - d) And just move on.
4. Because this world is not as it should be...
5. And your life is not as it should be...
6. And politics is not as it should be...
7. And nothing will ever be as it should be...
 - a) until we meet Jesus face to face.
 - b) So until then,
 - (1) Be mature.
 - (2) Be content.
 - (3) Repent of the mindset that you are entitled to your blessings.
 - (4) And be thankful for what you have.

IV. Conclusion

- A. The world will do what the world will do.
- B. The devil will rage. He will spread his poison. He will spread his demonic version of humanistic, legalistic, cross-less, Christ-less grace.
- C. Evil will darken the horizon.
- D. The oligarchs of earth will flex their muscle. They will do their Great Reset. They will defy the God of heaven, and call themselves the gods of earth.
- E. They will pay no heed to the Lord Jesus Christ. They will ignore his sovereign throne.
- F. But we know he reigns on high.
 1. We know he is assembling his mighty army.
 2. And we know that one day soon, he will ride down from heaven and all his saints with him.
 3. A sharp sword will proceed from his mouth... with it he will slay the adversaries and consign them to the judgment they have asked for.
 4. The King will come.
 5. And his throne is a throne of grace.
 6. And that day will be a wake up call that no one can ignore.