

September 9, 2010

...Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

volume 1 • no. 18

## Grace Greater Than Our Sin

Julia Johnston 1849-1919

Marvelous 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 spilled.

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,  
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;  
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,  
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.  
What can avail to wash it away?  
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,  
Brighter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,  
Freely bestowed on all who believe!  
You that are longing to see His face,  
Will you this moment His grace receive?

## Quote of the Week

John Piper, from his book, "Future Grace"

“...**L**oving God, and delighting in God and drawing near to God mean looking to God as beautiful and worthy and precious. Waiting for God and taking refuge in God and hoping in God and crying out to God mean looking to him as a valiant rescuer. Trusting God means counting on his trustworthiness to meet every need. And fearing God means standing in awe at the infinite chasm between his holiness and power on the one hand, and my sin and weakness on the other. Having a heart like this is the inner condition of keeping covenant with God.

“...By nature saving faith loves God and delights in God as the sum of all that could ever satisfy the soul. Saving faith is humble because by nature it despairs of self and looks to God. Saving faith draws near to God ...because the essence of faith is to see and embrace God, and God alone, as the sum of all it will ever need.”

●t&dw

Feature Article:

## A New Contract

*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Matt 5:17-18*

*...he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. Heb 8:6*

*In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete.*

A covenant is a binding contract stipulating the conditions and responsibilities of a particular social or financial relationship between two or more parties. It may be multi-lateral, bilateral or unilateral, depending upon the circumstances. One such contract, with which most of us are familiar, is a loan contract to purchase a vehicle.

Now suppose I seek a loan to purchase a car. Having terrible credit (just hypothetically), I manage to get a loan for five years at 20% interest. I sign the contract, purchase the car, and begin making payments. But I find that I can't possibly keep up, and before long the bank seeks to repossess my car.

It just so happens I have a big brother, Josh, who is a wealthy lawyer known for always winning his cases. He volunteers to visit the bank with me. As we gather with the bankers and lawyers, they recognize him and go on the defensive.

“Don't think for a minute you're going to get your brother off,” they protest. “We have a binding contract and he is legally liable.”

“Not at all,” says Josh. “Do not think that I have come to do away with that contract. In fact, I have not come to do away with it, but to fulfill *all* of it's stipulations on behalf of my brother. In addition, he wishes to take out a new loan contract for a brand new luxury model.

“You must be kidding”, they retort, “He's a terrible credit risk.”

“But,” Josh answers, “I, myself, will be the surety, and will make all the payments on his behalf.”

So he sets me up with a contract *in my name* at 0% interest for 36 months, promising to make the payments on my behalf, thus establishing my name with good credit in the process.

A month or so later, a bank lawyer shows up at my door and informs me that he is there to repossess my car.

“That can’t be,” I respond, “All of the conditions of the new contract are being fulfilled.”

“True,” he says, “but there are conditions of the old contract that still apply.”

He proceeds to lay out both contracts before me. “You see,” he says, “that much of the wording of the old contract is contained in the new contract. Therefore, the old contract is the foundational document, having been established first: all new contracts are built upon it. So your new contract only clarifies, or adds to, the old contract.”

“What does *that* mean?” I ask.

“It means that the 0% interest on your new contract only indicates that there is no *additional* interest added to your old rate - you still owe the 20%. It means that the new monthly payments for 36 months are *in addition* to the old payments: so, for the first 36 months you owe *both* the old and the new payment amounts, after which you will owe just the old amount for the remaining 24 months. *Surely* you can see how many of the stipulations of the new contract clearly point back to the old contract as foundational. Your brother may have gotten you a sweet deal on the new, but you still must meet many of the obligations under the old.”

Well, my brother, Josh, happens to be at my house that day. He comes into the room, and the look on the lawyer’s face is priceless.

“Do you really think,” Josh says, “that you can pull this one off? I totally satisfied the terms of the old contract once and for all- it’s history - gone - finished! Now beat it!”

Friends, if “Joshua” has paid off your old debt, which kept you in fear and bondage, don’t let the *LAW*-yers come knocking at your door. They will show you that nine of the ten commandments are in the New Testament, and insist, therefore, that *all* of the Old Covenant document *engraved on tablets of stone “by the finger of God”* is still binding upon you. They will rob you of the joy and love of your fellowship with your Big Brother by denying the absolute sufficiency of His payment on your behalf. They will tell you if you are really the beneficiary of your Brother’s kindness and grace, then you must “pay up” under the terms of the old contract, and, if genuine, you will find the means to do so.

Tell the *LAW*yers to “beat it!” The New Contract is *new and exclusive*, and our big brother, Joshua, is its *full surety* - its guarantee on our behalf. Enjoy your new “ride” - and leave the *LAW*ers in the dust. ●ejr3

*Walking with Jesus... a devotional minute.*

### A Great Faith

*Now... a centurion came to Him, pleading..., “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.” And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” The centurion answered..., “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed... When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! Matt 8:5-10*

When Jesus commends someone for his great faith, we need to sit up and listen. Obviously, there can be no higher authority on faith than Christ Himself. What is it in the centurion’s actions and words that impress Jesus about his faith?

First, *he looked to Jesus in his great need (vs 5)*. Faith always looks to Jesus first. Be honest - how often have you looked to other sources for assistance *before* going to Jesus. He *may* use some “normal” means to answer your need, but coming to Him first sanctifies those means as instruments in His hands.

Next, the centurion’s great concern was but for a *servant (vs 6)*. He pleads for him as a son. He wasn’t class conscious, or too proud to beg for a servant’s life. Great faith *always* loses sight of distinctions of class, race, wealth, culture, or anything else that artificially divides people. In Christ there are no such distinctions.

Third, he shows great humility in the presence of Jesus (vs 8). Even as Jesus says He will come and heal the servant, the centurion indicates his own unworthiness for Jesus even to enter his house. All of our needs and requests are pleas for *mercy* by unworthy petitioners. How brazen the concept of faith that comes banging on the door insisting that our prayer be answered! This is not the type of boldness, nor the persistence, that we are exhorted to (Lk 11:5-10; Heb 4:16).

Finally, the centurion had complete confidence in Jesus’ authority (vs. 8-9). Knowing that all authority in heaven and earth is His, we may rest in the comfort that He is with us always, even unto the end of the age (*Matt 28:18 & 20*), so that He is able always to keep and provide for His people. ●ejr3

*The Timbrel & Dance Weekly* is published by  
Pastor Ed Ross, Springwood Chapel,  
2360 Springwood Road, York, Pennsylvania 17402.  
Phone: 717-741-3616  
Email: [pastored@springwoodchapel.com](mailto:pastored@springwoodchapel.com)  
Visit us at [SpringwoodChapel.com](http://SpringwoodChapel.com)  
Also available at [ChristMyCovenant.com](http://ChristMyCovenant.com)  
Unaltered non-commercial republication of any content permitted.