DON'T INSULT GRACE

We must never insult the grace of God by spurning the gifts it has given to us.

KEY POINTS

- Every New Testament epistle highlights the wonder of God's amazing grace toward humanity.
- Through one man, Jesus Christ, one sacrifice for sin was made to sanctify (make holy) all of us for all of time and eternity (Hebrews 10:12, 14)!
- And when we receive this gift, God goes a step further. He washes the memory of our past from His own mind.
- Here is the first incredible gift of God's grace: through Jesus Christ our sins are totally paid for, remitted, forgiven and forgotten. Amazing grace!
- The Holy of Holies was a place where, previously, only the high priest could go, once per year. This sacred place was hidden from public view by a thick, impenetrable veil (Hebrews 9:3, 7).
- But when Jesus died the veil ripped from top to bottom, as if the finger of God sliced through it (Matthew 27:51).
- This is the second phenomenal gift of grace: having sanctified us, our Lord Jesus gives us direct, full and free access into the very presence of Almighty God.
- We receive these gifts by faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Yet the writer of Hebrews felt constrained to give us a dire warning in Chapter 10, verses 26-29:

  For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, [27]but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. [28]Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. [29]Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and **insulted the Spirit of grace**?
- None of us likes to be insulted, much less God!
- Many have been grieved by this passage, thinking all is lost if they commit one willful act of sin after receiving salvation. But let's look at this scripture more closely.
- First of all, we all agree that we should not sin. This is obvious. And remember, one of the gifts of grace is that it teaches us how to be holy and live righteous lives.
- Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, [12]teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age…."
- Let's note a couple of points in the passage in Hebrews:
  - The willful sin the writer speaks of (v. 26) causes us to be listed as adversaries of God (v. 27).
  - The willful sin is further described as 'trampling the Son of God underfoot, counting the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulting the Spirit of grace' (v. 29).

KEY SCRIPTURES: Hebrews 10:11-39; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Titus 2:11-14; Romans 5:1-2 (NASB); Hebrews 2:2-4

- A common description of these behaviors is "apostasy" – denying the reality and validity of Christ's work on the cross and the salvation experience.
- This is not the same situation as a God-fearing Christian who has committed a deliberate sin.
- Here's how you can tell the difference: a Christian who commits a willful sin is soon sorry and wishes they could undo their sinful act. It may have felt good in the moment, but remorse follows. They acknowledge that they violated God's righteous commandments.
- An apostate Christian feels no remorse about his or her sin. In fact, they boast in their sin and celebrate wrongdoing. They say that their former belief in Christ was an unreal and foolish delusion. They insult the grace of God.
- If you have willfully sinned, but the statements above do not describe you, God is reaching out to you right now. Don't insult grace. Come running back to grace!
- At the same time, there are less dramatic ways in which we can insult the grace of God.
- Hebrews 2:2-4 speaks to us about the insult of neglect. If we hear about the grace of God that offers salvation to humanity, but ignore it, considering it unworthy of our immediate attention, we insult the grace of God.
- Then there is the insult of self-condemnation. Paul laments his sin in Romans 7:24, but verses 7:25 and 8:1 teach us that God's grace keeps working in us throughout our Christian lives!
- Don't insult grace through apostasy, neglect, or self-condemnation.
- Thank God for grace!

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. How are you usually tempted to "insult" the grace of God (neglect, self-condemnation …)? If you have never been thus tempted, what has kept you from the temptation?
2. Discuss the issue of apostasy. What is it and do we need to live in fear of it?
3. What do you treasure most about the grace of God? For what are you most grateful? Share.

Prayer Time

God, Your grace has cleansed and keeps cleansing me. When I sin, You give grace for conviction, repentance and forgiveness. Thank You!

L.G. ice-Breaker: When have you felt most insulted, or most strongly insulted someone else? How did you feel afterwards?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2017

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

(Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS