

Grace Q&A 11

with

Ken Legg

1) How to live and to serve in a church, that has a heart for reaching the lost but doesn't fully understand the grace message?

What are the key differences between a grace based church and a legalistic church? No Church will say, that they are legalistic but they think they are under grace. They dont recognize it.

And how can I lead the people more into the gospel of grace?

A legalistic church will teach:

- ✓ **We are saved by grace, but to stay saved there are works we have to do**
- ✓ **Grace needs to be balanced**
- ✓ **To get God to do something we must do something – e.g. tithe, give, fast, sacrifice, etc.**
- ✓ **Eternal security is a heresy**
- ✓ **God is angry with us when we sin, fail, etc.**
- ✓ **We have to confess each sin individually to be forgiven**
- ✓ **Grace is a license to sin**
- ✓ **Grace makes people lazy**
- ✓ **An unbalanced emphasis on money**

- ✓ **Man-initiated works instead of abiding in Christ**
- ✓ **Co-dependency upon the church and its leaders**
- ✓ **Not Christ-centred in its preaching**
- ✓ **An old covenant mentality regarding the presence of God, etc.**
- ✓ **The believer is deficient instead of being complete in Christ**
- ✓ **Little or no teaching on positional truths**
- ✓ **Many rules, keys, secrets, steps etc to get life to work**
- ✓ **Continuous self-examination leading to condemnation**
- ✓ **Focus on outward appearance**
- ✓ **Intimidation, manipulation and control**

- ✓ **How can a pastor in a legalistic church lead the people more into the gospel of grace?**
- ✓ **The best way is through expositional teaching from the primary NT epistles, e.g. Galatians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians**
- ✓ **Preaching that is Christ-centred and focused on the finished work of the cross, and all that flows out of that**
- ✓ **Dispel the myths about grace. E.g. explain what grace preachers really believe about sin, works, giving, etc.**

2) Are We Still To Observe Water Baptism And The Lord's Supper?

**Some Teach That These Are Just
Shadows And We No Longer Need Them
Because We Have Christ**

- ✓ **Some teach that these are just shadows and we no longer need them because we have Christ**
- ✓ **A 'shadow' is a person or object in the OT which represents some aspect of the life and ministry of Jesus, not something Christ Himself instituted for the benefit of the church**
- ✓ **Jesus instituted both water baptism and communion for the church: 1) Baptism: *'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'* (Matt.28:19); 2) Communion: *'...do this in remembrance of me...'* (Luke 22:19)**
- ✓ **Remember the two tests for false teachings: 1) Did the apostles practice it in the book of Acts? 2) Did they teach it in their epistles?**

1) Did the apostles practice baptism? Yes. *'Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38).* *'But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized' (Acts 8:12).* *'Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him' (Acts 8:36-38).* **See also Acts 9:17-19; 10:47-48; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; 19:1-5.**

2) Did the apostles endorse baptism in the epistles?

Yes. *'I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other'* **(1 Cor.1:14-16)**

The reason there is little instruction in the epistles concerning baptism is because the NT letters were addressed to people who were already baptized. But there is plenty of teaching regarding what it represents in the life of the believer. E.g. 'Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life' **(Rom.6.3-4). See also Gal.3.26, Col.2.12**

1) Did the apostles partake of communion in Acts? Yes. *'So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart' (Acts 2:46).* *'Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...'* **(Acts 20:7)**

2) Did they teach it in the epistles? Yes. *'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread'*

(1 Cor.10:16-17). *'For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes (1 Cor.11:23-27)*

3) Should Communion Be A Bread & Cup Ritual Or A Communal Meal?

My Personal Experience Is That The Conversation At The Meal Is Much More Meaningful Than The 'Ceremony of Taking the Bread and Cup'

Also, the 'ceremony' may easily tend to become a 'religious event'

In 1 Cor. 11:29-31 why were these Christians sick and dying?

'For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world'

(1 Cor.11:29-32)

***At Corinth, both of these concepts – communion and the agape meal - were incorporated into one meal. But the agape meal was abused and eventually abandoned**

***In my view it would be a good thing if the two were incorporated again**

***The reason I say this is because the wine and the bread do not represent the same thing , i.e. the death of Jesus. But two distinct and vital realities**

The wine represents the blood of Jesus, shed for the remission of ALL our sins

Sin will never be imputed to us. We will never come into judgment for sin

'Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him' (Rom.5:9)

At communion we proclaim this

Righteousness is accomplished in the spirit

- **The bread is His body i.e. the Church:** *'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread'* **(1 Cor.10:16-17)**
- **Through the bread we remember that we are joined to Him and to one another**
- **The health of the body is our health. We can experience His strength, health, healing and wholeness just by being rightly related in the body**
- **The opposite is true. Disharmony in the body results in sickness. But the Corinthians did not understand this.** *'Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse'* **(1 Cor.11:17)**

**Both spiritual and physical health and healing
are to be experienced in the body**

**Paul was concerned that many did not
experience physical healing, because they did
not discern the Lord's body**

**In fact many were sick and dying. This reflected
upon the way they related to one another**

**Spiritual healing would result in physical
healing also**

'But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world'

(1 Cor.11:28-32)

Summary:

- ✓ **In communion there are two emblems - the bread and wine. We have mistakenly believed that they both refer to the death of Jesus and this has been our focus**
- ✓ **But the bread represents our fellowship in one body and is an opportunity to constantly focus on our relationship to each other and be reminded to love one another as He has loved us**
- ✓ **Maybe lingering longer over a communal meal will help us to do this**

4) Some people say that God has never killed anyone for their sins in the Old Testament, and that it is wrong to say that God kills

Is this true?

Many scriptures clearly teach otherwise

'So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them"' (Gen.6:7)

'For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made"' (Gen.7:4)

'So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive' (Gen.7:23)

'Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground...And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt'

(Gen.19:24,25,29)

***'And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."...Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense'
(Num.16:20,21,31-35)***

'Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive'
(Deut.32:39)

'...and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword...' **(Ex.22:24)**

'But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him' **(Gen.38:7)**

'Then it happened, after about ten days, that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died' **(1 Sam.25:38)**

We must not try to change the Bible to fit into our doctrines, but change our doctrines to fit into the Bible

***Death is not a *consequence* of sin; it is a *judgment* upon sin**

***We will never properly understand the death of Jesus until we understand this. His death was the propitiation for our sins**

***Jesus died as a judgment for the sin of the whole world and it was God who executed the judgment upon Him. *'We esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted...Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him'* (Isa.53:4,10)**

***It is argued that Jesus reflects the true nature of God and Jesus never killed anyone. But Jesus proves that God puts to death on account of sin.**

***But the Cross now changes everything**

***Jesus did not come to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved**

***Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, cyclones, etc. are not the judgment of God**

***God is not judging people for their sin, but is reaching out to save them through the gospel**

***This is now the day of grace and of salvation:
'He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation' (2 Cor.6:1-2)**

5) 1 John 5:16-17 (KJV) states that there is a sin which is not unto death and a sin unto death

Which sin is not unto death?

Which sin is unto death?

Does the grace of God cover the sin which is unto death?

'If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death'

(1 John 5:16-17)

- ✓ **Bible commentators agree this is one of the most difficult passages in the NT to understand**
- ✓ **Is the death physical death or eternal death? Is the sinning person a believer or an unbeliever?**
- ✓ **There are many different interpretations. But each have their problem**
- ✓ **E.g. A common view is that the sin is unbelief in Christ which is the only unforgiveable sin. But this cannot be because, a) the sinning person is called a 'brother'; and b) and if an unbeliever is in mind here why should we not pray for someone who has currently rejected the gospel? God can save atheists, blasphemers, etc.**

- ✓ **My view is that John is referring to a believer and that the death is physical death due to a very serious sin which is persisted in**
- ✓ **The phrase 'leading to death' is only used in one other place in the NT and that was also by John in reference to physical death: *'When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God"'* (Jn.11:4)**
- ✓ **So what is the sin unto death? I believe that it is when a child of God persistently behaves in a manner which does damage to the body of Christ. When this happens the church, especially the leadership, are expected to go to that person in humility and appeal to them to cease their harmful behaviour**

- ✓ **If, after patiently appealing to the offender, there is no change then that person may experience chastening from the Lord and in extreme cases even to the point of physical death**
- ✓ **This has support in other passages from the NT. Examples in the Corinthian church: 1) Their shameful treatment towards one another, *'For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world'* (1 Cor.11:29-32)**

- ✓ **Jesus gave us only one commandment, that we love one another as He has loved us. It was a commandment, not advice, and He takes it very seriously. E.g. Unforgiveness.**
- ✓ **2) The unrepentant fornicator, 'And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus' (1 Cor.5:2-5)**
- ✓ **3) False teachers in the church, 'If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are' (1 Cor. 3:17)**

✓ **The church at Thyatira**, *'I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works'* **(Rev.2:20-23)**

- ✓ **Probably this is the context of James 5:14-16:**
'Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed'
- ✓ **Note: The 'sin unto death' is an extreme situation and Jesus is very patient with those who are sinning, until their sin becomes a sin unto death**

6) What Did Jesus Do Between His Death And Resurrection?

Some Say He Visited Hell

Others Say Abraham's Bosom

Based on the following passage many believe that between His death and resurrection Jesus entered hades to release the OT saints from Abraham's bosom that they might enter Paradise

'Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)'

(Eph.4:8-10)

Until Jesus died heaven was not open to God's people. But when He died the door to paradise was opened.

'And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us'
(Heb.11:39-40)

Now OT and NT saints are together

'But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect' **(Heb.12:22-24)**

**The belief that Jesus went to Hell is based on
this passage:**

*'For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just
for the unjust, that He might bring us to God,
being put to death in the flesh but made alive by
the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached
to the spirits in prison, who formerly were
disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering
waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was
being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight
souls, were saved through water'*

(1 Pet.3:18-20)

***Did Jesus, after His death and before His resurrection, go to hell to preach His victory there to those who perished in the Flood?**

***What would be the point of that?**

***And why just these?**

***The context is that Peter was encouraging the persecuted saints of that time to be faithful in sharing the gospel, knowing that it is Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, Who is preaching through them**

***This concept was very common to Peter and other writers. E.g. 'Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into' (1 Pet.1:10-12)**

- ✓ *'...no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit' (2 Pet.1:20-21)*
- ✓ **In a similar way it was Jesus, who by the Spirit, preached through Noah to his generation to those who are now imprisoned and awaiting the day of Judgment, 'And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years"' (Gen.6:3). Peter was encouraging persecuted believers to be faithful even though they are in the minority. Noah and his family were just a remnant in his days, so be inspired by his testimony**

7) What Kind of Bodies Did The OT Saints Have Who Were Resurrected After The Graves Were Opened When Jesus Died?

And What Happened To Them?

'Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many'

(Matt.27:51-53)

- ✓ **First, note that the graves were opened at the death of Jesus, but they never came out of the graves until after His resurrection**
- ✓ **Prior to the resurrection of Jesus everyone, in OT and NT, who was raised from the dead eventually died**
- ✓ **We don't really know for sure what happened to them. There are two possibilities:**
 - ✓ **1) Like all others raised from the dead they lived for some time on earth then died. This view is based on, '*...who alone has immortality...*' (1 Tim.6:16)**

- ✓ **2) Like Enoch and Elijah, they were taken up to heaven. If so, when? Certainly not with Jesus because the record of those who witnessed His ascension on spoken of Him ascending, not others**
- ✓ **In conclusion, we really don't know what happened to these bodies. And where the Bible is silent speculation is permitted but must never be dogmatic**

8) I need some clarifications on women's ministry according 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

'Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church'

- ✓ **Here Paul is not prohibiting women's ministry in churches. He was concerned that the women were calling out to their husbands during the meetings because the men sat on one side of the church and the women on the other side**
- ✓ **The whole chapter is concerned about order in the meetings**
- ✓ **In the verse before Paul said, *'For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints'* (1 Cor.14:33)**
- ✓ **And a few verses later he said, *'Let all things be done decently and in order'* (1 Cor.14:40)**
- ✓ **Under the new covenant *'...there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus'* (Gal.3:28)**