

# Weaving the Word

## *Surpassing Righteousness*

Part 21 - January 18, 2015

Welcome to a place where we count the cost to follow the One who paid the price!

Which sins do you repeatedly exploit God's grace to excuse?

There are sins we hate and the sins we accommodate and downplay and try to hold onto even as we follow Jesus. **Those sins are actually lesser sin than the bigger sin of abusing His grace.**



God's call to holiness didn't change when Jesus came.

If anything, it intensified.

... continue to work out your salvation [that you received by grace through faith] with fear [reverent dedication] and trembling, [distrusting yourself while giving your best] for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. – Philippians 2:12-13 NIV

Grace was never intended to excuse us from working the salvation that's inside of us, out; only from attempting to work it *in*.

Salvation has *always* been about God's grace. Jesus defined it, demonstrated it, and fulfilled it; but, He didn't introduce it. **Animal sacrifices didn't earn God's love or save His Chosen; His choosing them, out of His gracious love, did that.**



Animal sacrifices didn't even *please* Him. They were never meant to. (Heb 10:4-7) **They were a temporary provision that pointed to the One True Sacrifice who would.** It was *always* about grace.

But, the transition from Old Law to New Grace was a bit confusing for those first followers.



Jesus allowed scores of His disciples to pluck grain on the Day of Rest, the Sabbath. (Mat 12:1-8)

He then riled the religious leaders into a murderous rage, by healing a shriveled hand, in a synagogue, on a Sabbath. (Mat 12:9-14) And, He and His followers were likely spat at, slapped, cursed, slandered, and kicked out.



So, He retreated to the Sea of Galilee, gathered His huge group of confused and conflicted disciples on *that* hillside, and appointed twelve as His apprentices. (Luke 6:12-16)

He said they're blessed in their persecution; (Luke 6:20-25) but, woe to the religious respected who had just rejected them! (Luke 6:26)



The religious leaders are in the dark. So, Jesus tells His new recruits it's up to them.

**"You are the light of the world."** – Matthew 5:14 NIV

*Them?* The light of the world? *Is He having a laugh?* **This is a barely manageable train off its tracks!** They can hardly hold back the crush of the *other* followers; (Mark 3:7-10; Luke 6:19; 8:42)

These are the guys who ask Him to call down fire on a town that *rejects* 'em. (Luke 9:51-55) Peter cuts off the ear of the servant of the *High Priest!* (And he wasn't aiming for his ear – that was a *near miss*). (John 18:10) And that's at the *end* of their apprenticeship program!

Think how they would've believed and behaved when He first called 'em!

Between the grace they felt through Jesus, and the rejection they felt through the religious leaders, can you imagine the reckless conclusions His teenage disciples were drawing?

**"Ah! Now we see why you overturned the tables at the Temple! Let's light this place up! You call down fire! Peter's got a sword. Out with the Old, in with the New!"**



**"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. [I was *cleansing*, not obliterating. And, I didn't ignore or violate the *true Sabbath*. And, I may not seem like the One the prophets foretell, but trust Me, I Am; and I Am holy"]** I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." – Matthew 5:17-18 NIV

Old Testament. New Testament. Do you know what the word "testament" means?



Do you have a last will and testament? They're synonymous. **If you've had it updated, you have an old and a new testament.**

For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. – Hebrews 9:16-18 NKJV

**Jesus knew He had to die to bestow an inheritance on us.**

**It was foreshadowed in every rite and ritual and regulation of the Law.**

“Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 5:19 NIV

Boy, do they latch onto that! Jesus later catches ‘em arguing over which’ll be the greatest in His kingdom. (Luke 9:46) To which He’ll declare: **“He who is least among you all – he is the greatest.”**

It flies right over their heads, which He’s referring to.



At the Last supper, they’re *still* at it!

Immediately after He says, **“This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is poured out for you,”** (Luke 22:20)

... a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. **“I’m the least!” “No, I’m the least!”** – Luke 22:24 NIV

This is when Jesus takes off His clothes, wraps a towel around His waist, and washes their feet. (John 13:1-5) *And, He still had to explain it!*

Two years before, back on the hill, He ends this portion of His teaching, and their training, saying:

**“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”** – Matthew 5:20 NIV

Before He could fulfill the commands, He had to practice and teach their true intent and meaning; as He does quite directly when He’s later questioned as to the greatest commandment.

Jesus replied: **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ... [And] ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”** – Matthew 22:37-40 NIV

**The surpassing righteousness He demonstrates and demands isn’t a *religious* affair, it’s a *love* affair.**



If there’s a sin you’re honestly not sorry for, be honest. **Seek that place of sorrow. You must first be sorry for not being sorry.**

**Sincerely and consistently asking for help to find Godly sorrow for a sin is a precious prayer that Jesus loves to answer.**

But, don’t try to downplay it. **That’s like having an illicit affair and periodically apologizing for the kissing.**

**Jesus fulfilled God's grace, not to make us free to sin, but to free us *from* sin** – to free us from its clutches ... if we choose. It's the choosing that can be so tough. But, choose we must.

If serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... – Joshua 24:15a NIV

**Light can have no relationship with darkness.** (2 Cor 6:14)

So, what's the cure if you're already a believer?



*More light!*

The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. ... Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me. – Psalm 119:130, 133 NIV

The unfolding of God's Word will lead you out, through the One who came to fulfill every jot and tittle in it.

**One of the great reasons Jesus *had* to die for our sin, was to express God's love in the greatest way we can comprehend.**

*“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.”* – John 15:13-14 NIV

And, what does He command?

Same thing the Law had always truly commanded.

**Love God as your One and Only, and share that love with others.**

You're the light of the world.

**Don't give yourself an excuse to excuse an affair with darkness.**

**Only the unfolding of His Word can bring light into your heart.**

**Only that light can illuminate His great love.**

**Only His great love can reveal your desperate, dark, need.**

Only that revelation can overrule an illicit affair with sin, by overwhelming you with care and kindness and concern and affection and devotion and tenderness and gentleness and warmth and friendship and encouragement and peace and goodness and forgiveness and cleansing and eternal companionship and glory.

You know, the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.