

— *A Greater Grace* —

**T**he Christian life comes to us as a supplied life. It is based exclusively on the supply of grace proceeding out of the fullness of Christ. John describes this supply as “grace in exchange for grace” (John 1:16). We start with grace and we go on with grace. When we are at our best, it is all grace (Eph. 2:8-9). When we are at our worst, God gives a greater grace. James 4:6 says, “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (NASV). Peter says the same thing: “Grace to you...*be multiplied*” (1 Pet. 1:2). In other words, at every juncture of our Christian life, fresh supplies of grace are ready and available. So a greater grace is always waiting for us in whatever situation we find ourselves (2 Cor. 9:8). And this greater grace has the goal of supplying to us an abundant entrance into the kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11).

By spending time in the book of James, we can perceive his spirit, and we can see that he and Paul were the same in their realization of God’s economy of grace. Just as Paul in his Epistles handles each individual and church problem with grace, so also James handles the saints’ problems by leading them to grace — “a greater grace.”

*Our intrinsic problem with lust*

James chapter 4 is virtually a duplicate of Romans chapter 7. Beginning in verse 1 James says, “Where do

wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that *war* in your members?” Then in Romans 7 Paul says that the law of sin is in our members, and specifically that this sin is *warring* in our members (v. 23). So Paul and James are saying the same thing — something is warring in our members. Even the Greek words they use are identical, coming from the root word *strateuo*. The only difference is that Paul uses the word “sin” while James uses “pleasures.”

Paul is more general, using the word *sin* warring in our members, whereas James says that the form of the sin warring is *pleasures* — self-seeking. The Greek word here is *hedone*, from which we get the word hedonism, the pursuit of pleasure for the self. James says, “Where are your problems coming from? Why are there wars and fightings among you — not only your reactions toward one another, but all the inner turmoil you are coping with? Where does it come from? It comes from the pleasures that war in your members.” So the problem here in James 4 is just like the problem of inner turmoil in Romans 7.

Both Paul and James tell us that the problem is intrinsic. It is in our members. Sin is warring in our members. Pleasures are warring in our members. This indicates that we are just sin. Left to ourselves, we are just reactions and wars and rebellion. These things are rising up within our very members. After James identifies this problem in verse 1, he says in verse 2,

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“You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war.” This shows us that there were many problems there. Then he adds, “Yet you do not have because you do not ask.” And in verse 3 he goes deeper, into their motives: “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” The warring in their members is so extensive that it has even penetrated their prayer life. Asking the Lord for things has become self-centered — to spend it upon their own pleasures. This all reveals an intrinsic condition of lust.

### *Our outward complications with the world*

Then James says in chapter 4, verse 4, “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” So in verses 1-3 the lusts and pleasures are on *the inside*. Then in verse 4, we see the problem of the world on *the outside*. The world on the outside is designed by the enemy to stir up the wrong thing on the inside. To be a friend of the world arouses an inward enmity with God. It is not merely an outward enmity of being at variance with God. What the world does by our being friends with it is that it stirs up the wrong thing in us, producing an inward feeling of enmity with God. To be friendly with anything that stirs up the wrong thing in you is not safe. The enemy’s ploy is to have a world that matches the flesh of man so that man will be in bondage to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

### *The jealousy of the Spirit within*

Lust and the world are bad enough, but on top of all this, God is inside of us. The Spirit is dwelling in us and reacting to the flesh and the world. James says in verse 5, “Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?” The Spirit indwelling me yearns jealously over my mind, emotion, and will, and over my body — my eyes, my ears, my hands, and my feet. The Spirit who dwells in me yearns jealously over my whole being because I am God’s property, redeemed by His blood. I belong to Him. So if I take any part of my being, any member, and make it friendly with the world, then I feel turmoil within me. I feel ambivalent within. I feel sad, I feel grieved, because I am not compatible with Christ living in me. That is why we can never be a happy believer, we can

never be a released, joyful believer, if we are friends of the world, because friendship with the world is enmity with God.

### *Every condition is for a greater grace*

So we have all of this — lust within, the world without, and the jealousy of the Spirit yearning over our being — and we are caught in the middle. Now we know why James says, “But He gives a greater grace.” It indicates that here we are in such a condition, yet this condition is not a reason for us to run from the Lord. It is a condition for us to draw a greater grace from Him. Then James says in chapter 4, verse 6, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” So the force of the war inside is intended to humble us.

We have sin struggling in us, the pleasures wanting to take us over, and our own self-seeking — all of that is rumbling within our being. Then at the same time we are feeling our identity with the world. When we touch the world, it matches the flesh in us. There is something in us that likes the world out there. So we feel all the more weakened. And then we are also feeling the strength of the Spirit’s inward tugging — “Don’t! Don’t!” We are feeling the yearning, the jealousy, of the Spirit in us. All of this serves to do one thing — to humble us. Let your problems humble you. Let your weaknesses humble you. God intends to do a larger work over us, that is, to break our pride. He is doing something over our proud, independent self that thinks it can make it on its own. So James says, “God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.” But you say, “I am not humble.” Just consider your weaknesses a little bit and you will be humble right away.

### *God’s intention with our problems*

In James chapter 4 there are inward problems that come from the pleasures warring in your members. This is the same as Paul’s word — “sin in your members.” Also, in James, the Spirit yearns jealously over your whole being. And this is exactly what Paul says in Galatians 5:17 — the Spirit opposes the flesh and the flesh opposes the Spirit, and “these are contrary to one another so that you do not do the things that you want.” Thus, when you look into the inner-life experiences of Paul and James, they are in the same thought. When they talk about problems, they both show that the problems are intended to humble us. James says, “God

resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble,” and Paul says, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom. 7:24).

Yet many times we are focused on the problem. We are trying to “get the monkey off our back.” We are trying to solve the problem. We are trying to gain the victory in a certain area. We only see that much. And all the time we keep feeling the failure, the sense of weakness, and it is still plaguing us. So we have to come back and see what James says: God gives a greater grace. He gives grace to the humble, but He resists the proud. This indicates that God’s thought is to let all these problems prostrate you and open you to receive the supply of grace. This is what James shows us — that despite our intrinsic problems, which make up our intrinsic condition, God’s intention is that we would be humbled by it all and that we would be persons receiving a greater grace.

Then James says in verse 7 of chapter 4, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” This indicates that the devil is cloaked in our pride. Whenever we are independent, self-sufficient, in ourselves, making it on our own, we really provide a habitat for the enemy. But the moment we submit to God — the moment we open and humble and let our weaknesses humble us to dependency, to being a child that says, “Lord, apart from You I can do nothing” — the moment we touch the Lord in this way, the devil flees. And God gives a greater grace.

Brothers and sisters, we have various kinds of problems. But the problem in the first part of James chapter 4 is an intrinsic problem. That means it *belongs* to you and me. This is our flesh. It is intrinsic to us, and it is something in us that will never change. The Lord did not repair the flesh. He crucified it! He terminated it, and He gave us another source. And the new source He gave us is our spirit joined to Him, so that we could draw all our supplies from Him as branches in the Vine (John 15:4). The Lord intends that we would live in the realm of the Spirit *while* we are in the presence of this potential time bomb within us — our flesh with all its intrinsic problems (cf. Psa. 23:5).

#### *The law of the Spirit with Paul and drawing near to God with James*

This is why in Romans 8:4-6 Paul tells us not to be according to flesh, but to be according to spirit. If you are according to flesh, you are only going to get one

kind of response out of that realm — death. But if you are according to spirit, you will get the supply — life and peace. Paul points out in verse 2 that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed him from the law of sin and death. So he defines the nature of the Lord’s indwelling as *a law*. This means that when you touch the realm of the Spirit, when you touch the divine Spirit in your spirit, there is a law of the Spirit operating in you. So at anytime, in any place, in the presence of an intrinsic flesh — a flesh wanting to take you over, a flesh competing with God, in rivalry with the Lord, soldiering, warring in your members — in the presence of all that, there is another law. It is the law of the Spirit of life. And that law has set us free from the law of sin and death. So in Paul’s writings, he keeps us in the source of the Spirit.

On this point James is identical to Paul in his thought, but he does not use the terminology “the law of the Spirit.” He expresses “the law” by saying, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (4:8). This is the law of the Spirit. By saying, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you,” James is telling you that you have a jealous Spirit within you. Can’t you feel how the Spirit yearns over your scattered thought-life, your emotions, and your whole being? Don’t you sense the Spirit? Okay, draw near — draw near to God in your spirit and He will draw near to you. This means it is a guarantee. It is a law. It works every time. This is the law of the Spirit in the book of James. So a closer look at Paul and James reveals that they are not different in their speaking. They are talking about (1) the same thing warring in our members, (2) the same Spirit longing for our being, and (3) the same answer — the law of the Spirit and drawing near to God.

#### *Dealing with God after drawing near to God*

Once we draw near to God and He draws near to us, we see what our need is: we see that our hands are dirty and our heart is double (James 4:8). This means we see under God’s light that we do not have a single eye, but we have evil vision. There is something else in our heart other than God. So here we are in this light, naked before the eyes of Him to whom we have to give an account. We are exposed, yet we cannot change ourselves. But what we do is draw near to God.

Of course, the natural reaction in us when our hands are dirty or when we are beginning to see ulterior

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## Christ as the Lamb and the Lion

*And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?" And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the scroll, or to look into it. And I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the scroll, or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the scroll and its seven seals." And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.*

— Revelation 5:1-6

It is a remarkable thing that Jesus Christ is revealed in these verses as both a Lamb and a Lion. In this vision, the apostle John was told to look at the Lion of the tribe of Judah. But when John looked, he beheld a Lamb — a Lamb as having been slain. This indicates that the Lion and the Lamb are the same. They both represent the same Person — Christ. Normally, we would never expect to see such a sight. Could any two animals be so totally different? The lion is the king of the animal kingdom. He rules over all other animals. He is fearless and powerful, assertive and dominating. He is the hunter and never the hunted. The lamb is the complete opposite. The lamb is meek, gentle, and helpless. He does not dominate others but is often hunted, chased, and killed. Is it not quite striking that Christ is depicted as both? And not only as both, but as both in the same spiritual vision? What a view of Christ!

What is the Spirit showing us by such a vision? That Christ is all-inclusive. By depicting Christ as two animals of such diverse natures, we can see that Christ is the treasure-house of all the many and divergent riches of God. This is what makes Christ unique. In the natural realm, an animal is either a lion or a lamb. It can never be both. But Christ is different. He can be both a lion and a lamb simultaneously. Why? Because He is all-inclusive.

### *Do not weep*

John wept greatly when no one was found worthy to open the scroll and break its seals. It appeared to be a hopeless situation. The scroll, which represents the execution of God's purpose and administration over the earth, could not be opened. The mystery of God's will for the

universe could not be revealed or brought to its consummation because no one in heaven or on earth was worthy to execute it. All mankind was fallen and lost, and God's purpose over man appeared to be helplessly suspended. Thus, John wept profusely.

But the elder stopped John in the middle of his weeping and pointed him to Someone who was worthy to open the scroll. It was Christ! Jesus Christ is worthy to carry out God's purpose and administration over the heavens and the earth. When John saw Christ, he stopped weeping. Isn't this the case with all of us? Perhaps everything in our life seems hopeless. It seems we have no direction and there appears to be no way to proceed. All is lost and there is no one to help. The only thing to do is weep. But then somehow our gaze gets directed to Christ. We see the One who is able to solve every problem and finish His work in us (Phil. 1:6). And when we see Him, we stop weeping. Not only do we stop weeping, but we also begin worshipping and singing, "Worthy is the Lamb!" (Rev. 5:9-14).

Now, the fact that Christ is revealed as both a Lamb and a Lion discloses to us our great problems before God. And at the same time it shows us in what manner Christ has come to save us. The two great problems that have frustrated God's purpose over man and that have plunged men into ruin and despair are *sin* and *Satan*. We all have sinned. And we all are sinners. This is the Bible's assessment of our condition and it is our plain experience. We are neither righteous nor holy before God, but are sinful and guilty. As a result, we have been separated and alienated from God, and are even His enemies. Thus sin is a great problem that frustrates God's purpose over man. The other great problem is Satan, God's archenemy. The Bible reveals that Satan hates God and opposes everything related to God's purpose. And because God's purpose centers in man — to have man in His image and with His dominion — Satan hates man. Hence, Satan is called "the destroyer," the one who comes to kill and destroy man (Rev. 9:11; John 10:10).

Thus, to be saved, man needs a complete deliverance from both of these problems. He needs to be rescued from both sin and Satan. This is why Jesus is revealed as the Lamb and the Lion. As the Lamb of God, Christ has dealt with the problem of sin; and as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Christ has dealt with the problem of Satan. Without these two problems resolved, we are truly in a most bleak situation. We are separated from God and are without any hope (Eph. 2:12). We are under the strong and cruel tyranny of Satan (Heb. 2:14-15). God's original purpose for man cannot move forward to its proper consummation. The kingdom of God cannot come. The New Jerusalem cannot descend out of heaven. Man cannot be conformed to the image of God's Son. In such a state, all we can do is weep. But thanks be to

God! Through Christ as our Lamb and our Lion, we have been fully delivered. Let us now consider in more depth how Christ can be our Lamb and Lion.

### *Christ as the Lamb to take away our sins*

The reference to Christ as the Lamb of God in the book of Revelation is not a newly revealed aspect of Christ. Indeed, when Jesus began His ministry, His forerunner, John the Baptist, publicly declared, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). We know that such an identification was very significant to the Jews who heard John’s declaration. They knew that John was referring to the sacrificial lamb of the Old Testament — to the Passover lamb of the exodus from Egypt, and to the lamb sacrificed each year on the Day of Atonement. These lambs, offered up to God for the sins of the people, vicariously bore God’s judgment for their sins. By so doing, these lambs took their sins away.

Now John the Baptist is declaring that Christ is the Lamb sent by God to take away the sin of the whole world. For this purpose Jesus did not need to be a Lion. He needed to be a Lamb. He needed to be meek, humble, condescending, and compliant. He needed to be willing to be led to the slaughter without any resistance. And that is what He was. He was the Lamb of God who willingly and meekly offered Himself for the sins of the people. He could have resisted. In fact, He could have called more than twelve legions of angels to His aid (Matt. 26:53). But instead He allowed Himself to be weak and to be “led to the slaughter” of the cross for our sake (Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32).

At the cross Jesus bore *all* the judgment for our sins. He bore all the penalty, all the curse, all the punishment, all the condemnation. All of it! Not only so — He took our sins away. Away from whom? Away from God and away from us. The Bible declares, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Psa. 103:12). In fact, our sins have been taken so far away that God has completely forgotten them. He says, “Their sins I shall by no means remember anymore” (Heb. 8:12). This means that when we believe in Christ, God washes us in the blood of the Lamb, and we are made completely righteous and holy before God — not by our religious efforts, but by the precious blood of Christ. Our God is propitiated by the blood! He is appeased and happy with us! Let your spirit of faith dwell on this glorious fact. The Lamb of God has completely solved the problem of sin before God!

### *Practical results of the blood of the Lamb*

What are the practical results of being washed in the

blood of the Lamb? First, we are no longer separated from God, but we are now in wonderful fellowship with Him. As John writes in his first Epistle, “Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). What an awesome thought — we have fellowship with God! This means we have access to Him (Eph. 2:18). He is no longer remote or distant, but fully accessible. We can come to Him at any time, in any condition, and in any circumstance. We can talk to Him, pray to Him, confide in Him, make our requests known to Him, and cast all our burdens upon Him. In turn, He speaks to us, comforts us, leads us, strengthens us, and supplies us with all that we need. This is fellowship.

How is such a fellowship with God possible? Again, it is only by the blood of Christ. It is by the blood alone that we can approach God. Every other basis of approach is unacceptable to God. But our approach through the blood of Christ is fully acceptable to Him. Indeed, the blood of Christ is so efficacious before God that our approach should never be in fear or timidity. Rather our approach to God should be in boldness and with confidence (Heb. 4:16; 10:19). This means that the atmosphere of our relationship with Him is one of ease and comfort. We are not “walking on eggshells” with God, but we are bold to approach Him, love Him, and enjoy Him. As Paul says, we have not received a spirit of slavery but we have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry “Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15).

A second practical result of the blood’s cleansing is peace with ourselves. Sin causes guilt. This is because we have a God-given conscience that is pained with guilt each time we sin. The more we sin, the more guilt we carry around. And we all know by experience how awful that feeling of guilt can be. Instead of inward peace and tranquility, we experience torment and regret. So what do we do with our guilt? How do we handle our failures and sins? Do we live, even as a Christian, lugging a dreadful weight of guilt around wherever we go?

Let us see that there is no need to live with a guilty conscience. The blood of the Lamb has the power to “purge our conscience” (Heb. 9:14). What an awesome thing it is to have a purged conscience — a conscience cleansed from every stain of sin, a conscience absolutely void of offense, a conscience at peace with God and with ourselves, a conscience unloaded from the burden of sin and freed from the tormenting pangs of guilt. This is what the blood of Jesus has the power to do! The Lamb of God has come not only to appease God, but also to purge our conscience, to take our burdens away, and to set us free to boldly enjoy Him. Now instead of coping with torment and regret, we can enjoy peace and tranquility. How? By the blood of the Lamb!

*(To be continued)*

— Kirk Eland

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motives in our heart is that we run away from God. But, brothers and sisters, that is the time to draw near to God, because we cannot clean our hands and we cannot do anything with our heart. Jeremiah 17:10 says, “I, the LORD, search the heart.” But you and I *can* draw near. That means we can call on the name of Jesus, and we can’t get nearer to God than that! When we say “Jesus,” we are in His person, we are in the near One. He is near. So we can draw near to God and He draws near to us, and then we find ourselves dealing with God. We enjoy the cleansing of the blood and the purifying of our heart.

If we ourselves were writing about drawing near to God, according to our religious concept we would say, “Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Then you will be qualified to draw near to God.” But James does not say it that way. He shows us that our salvation is in God Himself: Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Then when you see the dirt on your hands, you can say, “Thank You, Lord, for the precious blood. And thank You that You are the only One who can make this heart single toward You.” This is all the greater grace.

He gives a greater grace. Let your weaknesses, let your lusts, let your troublings, let your anxieties, let all the things in you competing with God do only one thing — let them stop you and humble you. Let all the problems prostrate you and cause you to realize that in yourself dwells no good thing and you need His grace right now. Let every weakness do that. Your weakness is not intended to discourage you or drive you from God. It is only intended to deal with your pride and to humble you. That is why you fall again and again. That is why you are always stumbling. It is because you are so proud. All the weaknesses are intended to do a work over us to break this proud, independent self and to make us like little babies — “I need You, Lord. I need You every moment.”

### ***“O wretched man!” and “Be wretched!”***

Now let us look at James 4:9. The first part of the verse says, “Lament and mourn and weep!” The Greek word here for “lament” is the same word Paul uses in Romans 7:24 when he says, “O *wretched* man that I am!” So James’s word could be translated, “Be wretched!” This again shows us that James and Paul ministered the same thing. What James is saying, like Paul, is that when you get into the Lord’s light, you find there is nothing good dwelling in you. And just as Paul cried out, “O wretched man that I am,” James says, “Be

wretched and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.” This all has to do with what you see in yourself and with realizing the bankruptcy of your whole being.

The Lord Jesus spoke the same thing in Matthew 5:3 — “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Then in the next verse He said, “Blessed are those who mourn.” Why are you mourning? You are mourning over your own emptiness and your own bankruptcy. This indicates that there is a part of our life in the Spirit which is in the realm of feeling the weakness, the inabilities, the incapacity, of our being. And feeling this weakness serves to humble us. Yet the humbling is not merely an attitude that we have, but it is a direct call to submit to that greater grace, to receive a greater grace.

Then James 4:10 says, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” How will He lift you up? By the law of the Spirit of life. He will lift you up by that other law, by the law of the Spirit that frees us from the law of sin. So we can see in James that he is talking about a greater grace, a greater participation in that grace. And in all our dealings with the Lord, whether it is our doings, our deeds, or whether it is our being — what we are, how we react — everything is for us to participate in a greater grace.

### ***Grace underlies everything***

Our participation in the greater grace by drawing near to God, calling on Him, taking grace in exchange for grace, is preparing us for the kingdom and for the marriage supper of the Lamb. What God desires is a group of people who know from morning to night that underlying everything is the grace of God and learning to draw upon that grace. Grace underlies every little thought in you about God, every rise in you of a desire toward Him. Even every little feeling of disgust over your way of life — you feel like you are getting sick and tired of being sick and tired, and it is causing something to turn in you to live a supplied life — all those thoughts and motions within are the grace of God operating in this intricate heart to incline it toward Himself.

### ***Grace in another form***

When grace abounds or “bulges,” it comes out in the form of good works. Good works are not separate from grace. Good works are just the extension of grace. So as we enjoy the grace, the works are there. The grace is there, that we could abound to every good work. And

these good works are mentioned throughout the New Testament. They are just grace in another form — grace coming out specifically in deeds and acts. The Lord’s desire is to raise up His Body, expressed in churches all over the earth, with saints — in every kind of condition and situation — participating in grace. These saints allow that grace to become their supply and then let it come out in serving practically — expressing the very nature of God in a practical way.

This is the preparation of the Bride for the Lord’s coming. Whoever we are, whatever we are, wherever we are — if we have pleasures in our members, if we are friends with the world, if we are proud persons — all these conditions are the right conditions to be humbled and to receive a greater grace for the kingdom. James is not speaking about receiving grace for initial salvation. He is speaking about participating in grace as a believer to receive the reward of the crown of life in the kingdom (James 1:12; cf. 1 Cor. 3:14).

This is why James has been misunderstood and why he and the apostle Paul have been polarized. It is because there is a wrong understanding of what James was trying to accomplish. He was speaking in terms of the kingdom life and all the saints enjoying a greater grace for the kingdom. So the works coming out are just the direct result of grace. All these works come out of our experiences of the grace of God. When we enjoy God we find the willingness to do the intricate, detailed things — those acts of thoughtfulness and care for the saints and for so many matters. All of this becomes the garment in which the Bride is brought to the King.

### *The fine linen garment of the Bride*

In Revelation 19:7-8 we have the beginning of the kingdom: <sup>7</sup> “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. <sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the *righteous acts* of the saints.” “Righteous acts” can also be translated “righteousnesses,” as Darby does in his *New Translation*. The Greek word is one word and it is in the plural form. It is not “righteousness,” singular. It is “righteousnesses,” plural. Other versions of the Bible translate this as “righteous actions,” “virtuous deeds,” “righteous deeds,” “righteous living,” and more.

So here is His wife. She has made herself ready. And verse 8 says that it was *granted* to her to be arrayed. The word “granted” here is in the perfect tense, meaning she is in a permanent state of having

received something that was wholly given to her. It is a word that tells us that the fine linen she is wearing was altogether grace to her. It was *given* to her. It was grace. It was her participation in grace. It was the enjoyment of grace. And that enjoyment was not a general kind of enjoyment. That grace enjoyed by her eventually became a *fine* linen garment in which she was clothed to be brought to the King.

As believers, the first or initial garment we receive is Christ as our righteousness objectively, given to us the day we are saved (cf. 1 Cor. 1:30). So when Revelation 19:8 says, “for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints,” it signifies a second garment. This second garment, mentioned as the marriage supper of the Lamb begins, is composed of the righteousnesses of the saints. In the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22, the Lord points out that one guest came not having a wedding garment and was disqualified from the wedding feast. This shows us the need for the second garment mentioned in Revelation.

This second garment represents the saints’ participation in a greater grace that issues in a presentation to the Lord of a glorious church. So this second garment is the result of fully enjoying the grace of God. This is also James’s burden and why he says, “Faith without works is dead” (2:17). Again, James is not speaking of initial salvation. He is talking about a genuine faith that draws upon and employs the grace of God, a faith that handles the grace and uses the grace. When you are weak and when you are defeated — in whatever condition — you are a dependent, humbled person calling upon God and getting supplied by Him. Everyone is qualified in this realm! We are all qualified. In this realm it is all grace. And this grace issues in the fine linen, which is the righteousnesses of the saints.

### *The embroidered work on the King’s daughter*

Now let us look at Psalm 45, which is a prophecy of Christ and His Bride. Verse 2 says, “You are fairer than the sons of men” — this is our Christ. Then verse 2 continues, “Grace is poured upon Your lips.” So when Jesus speaks, grace comes with it. He is saying, “Whatever I say, whatever I speak, it comes with Me, it comes with supply. My speaking is not detached from Me. When I speak to you, the very thing I am speaking, I will *be* in you and I will *do* in you. So don’t be threatened by My words. Don’t be intimidated by My words. Grace is poured upon My lips.”

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So every word out of the mouth of the Lord is a word of grace. If He says, “Go the second mile,” that is not a demand on your flesh. That is a demand on Him. And now He is in you. And that life in you is “the going-the-second-mile” life. That life will be just that way in you and in me. So He can afford to say anything He wants to say, because grace is poured upon His lips. He is not speaking like Moses spoke, with the law making its outward demands yet detached from you. No! When He speaks, He comes *with* His speaking. He is *in* His speaking. He is the word itself. How marvelous! There is grace poured upon His lips.

Then Psalm 45:3 talks about the Lord as the “Mighty One” and verses 6-7 say, <sup>6</sup> “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your *kingdom*.” <sup>7</sup> You love righteousness and hate wickedness.” In this Psalm you have *grace* in verse 2 and *the kingdom* in verse 6. And then verse 13 says, “The King’s daughter is all glorious within” (NASV). Or other translations say, “The royal daughter is all glorious within.” Then verses 13-14 tell us about her garment: “Her clothing is woven with gold. She shall be brought to the King in embroidered work” (lit.). This speaks of needlework and fine linen.

This fine linen garment is the righteousnesses of the saints. It is the little weaving of the Spirit in our daily experience where we are enjoying grace, where our participation in that grace gets very fine. It is stitch by stitch. It is turning from trying to “overcome” in yourself, it is turning from being intimidated by your flesh, it is turning from your own inclinations and desires — it is turning from all these things to participate in Christ. So as we are enjoying grace, there is a garment being stitched on this earth today. It is a fine linen garment. Our enjoyment of this grace is coming out in practical ways — in righteous acts, in righteous deeds. There is an expression: there are *words* that are being spoken, and there are *deeds* that are being done.

The Bride in the book of Revelation is all glorious *within*, which means she was not just doing outward works, but God was being constituted into her being. The divine nature was in and behind her every action. It was the grace of God. This is how she prepared herself for the marriage supper of the Lamb: “His wife has made herself ready, and to her it was *given* to be clothed in fine linen.” It is not what she did in herself. It is what was given to her by grace, and yet that grace had an issue, an expression.

Here we are — you are turning to the Spirit, and I am turning to the Spirit. And the Lord allows us to be

in environments. Sometimes the environments press us and push us beyond our ability. But every time we call “Jesus” and are humbled once again — “God, I do not have it” — another stitch has gone into that fine linen garment. And one day, brothers and sisters, we are going to be presented. And when we are presented, we are going to look at ourselves knowing that there was not one good thing in us. And we are going to say, “Lord, this has all been You. I have crowns that You have given me — a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory. I have all these crowns, but all these crowns are grace. And now I have all this grace to return back to You.” This is grace in exchange for grace. And all through the ages we are going to keep singing, “It was His grace!” In my daily life when I turned my heart, it was His grace. His grace was underlying my heart’s inclination toward Him. It was all grace.

Oh, what a vision for our experience! We can see that the Lord is now preparing the Bride. She is becoming ready. How do you get ready? Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. And He will give a greater grace. When you are the most rebellious, when you are the most proud, when you are the most hardened, He gives a greater grace. Just let what you are drive you to fall on your face before Him, and then let Him pour out of His lips that grace into your being. This is how God brings in His kingdom.\*

— Bill Freeman

\* This article is taken from chapter seven of the book, *The Kingdom Life*. This book of 227 pages may be ordered for \$9.95 postpaid from **Ministry Publications**, P.O. Box 12222, Scottsdale, AZ 85267 • Phone: (602) 948-4050 • Fax: (602) 922-1338.

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