

WHERE IS YOUR PARACHUTE

How many of you have on your bucket list of things to do before you die: to jump out of a perfectly good airplane?

Not many hands are going up

One of the scariest things about jumping out of an airplane is the fear of “what if my parachute doesn’t open.”

It’s so terrifying that most people wouldn’t do it.

50th Birthday - parachuting with 5 other friends

- a. 8 hours of training
 - a. Multiple practices
 - b. Learning my equipment (altimeter, Primary chute and backup chute, harness straps w/ release, , navigation pullies)
 - c. Practice landings
 - d. Emergency protocols
- b. **My chute didn’t open** – But I’m still here
 - a. Either I have superpowers you don’t know about
 - b. Or I landed on a 50 foot high piece of foam rubber
 - c. Or my training kicked in
- c. It’s the same with becoming a Christian
 - a. What if I can’t do this
 - b. Fear of the unknown
 - c. It’s like jumping out of an airplane not knowing if the parachute is going to open

- 1. Grace is our parachute when jumping out of a plane into a sinful world (after conversion)
 - a. Definition: Getting something we don’t deserve – 2 scriptures:

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.”

- i. There is no grace until we become a Christian –
 - 1. Only unmitigated punishment – DEATH
 - 2. though it might be postponed until a later date (but it is inevitable)

2. However, A lot of professing Christian think Grace is **a Golden Parachute** – (big severance package for those forced into retirement)

b. A license to continue living anyway they want – and in the end God will save them

TODAY WE'RE GOING TO TALK ABOUT WHAT REAL GRACE IS:

- a) Based on the Bible teaches
- b) Maybe it's not what you've been taught
- c) Or lead to believe

1. GRACE : A CHANGED LIFE

ILLUSTRATION (from Steve Shepard)

The late Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman used to tell about a Methodist preacher who often spoke on the subject of sin. He minced no words, but defined sin as “that abominable thing that God hates.” A leader in his congregation came to him one time and urged him to stop using that ugly “**SIN**” word. He said: “Dr. Blank, we wish you would not speak so plainly about sin. Our young people will be more likely to indulge in sin. So if you wouldn't mind, call it something else, such as “inhibition,” or “error” or a “mistake,” or even “a twist in our nature.”

“I understand what you mean,” the preacher remarked and going to his desk brought out a little bottle. “This bottle,” he said, “contains strychnine. You will see that the red label here reads “Poison.” Would you suggest that I change the label, and paste one on that reads, “Wintergreen?” Thus, the more harmless the name the more dangerous the poison will be.”

- a) It may be that one of our problems today is that **we don't label “sin” as sin.**
- b) We like to make it sound like **it's not so bad.**
- c) I really think this has happened in our world.
 - a. It's certainly happening in our schools – (sexual orientation, homosexuality, permissible immorality)
 - b. in the movies where sin is socially acceptable – (lying, slander, revenge, corruption [Ocean's 8 –corruption glorified])
 - c. It Has Happened In Our Churches.
 - d. Several years ago, I had an elder confront me when preaching in one of the churches here in Florida telling me to stop preaching on sin

- i. He wanted me to preach straight out of a Christian psychology book entitled, How People Grow.
 - 1. It talked about how addressing sin damaged people's confidence
 - 2. Created insecurity with God amongst the membership.
- ii. I refused and this contributed to having me dismissed from their ministry.
 - 1. That church has since diminished in its congregational size
 - 2. Not because I left, - rather because it ceased to stand for strong, biblical principles
 - 3. The church lost its convictions.
- e. We cannot be afraid or ashamed to call sin by its first name!
 - i. And that's one reason why people don't fear God (*not the only*)
 - ii. Many no longer recognize sin and don't fear what SIN can do to them

Jude 1:4

*"For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, **who change the grace of our God** into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."*

Romans 6:1-4

*"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! **We died to sin**; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live **a new life**."*

EXAMPLE .- A man, reading about an "eat-all-you-want" diet, said to a friend:
"I knew there'd be a catch to it. You have to run seven hundred miles a day!"

That's sort of like sin. Eat-all-you-want, do-all-you-want, do anything you want,

BUT THERE'S A CATCH TO IT. You can't outrun sin

Titus 2:11-12

*"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to **say "No"** to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age"*

EXAMPLE - No Compromising with sin – Died to it in baptism

Winter was coming on and a hunter went out into the forest to shoot a bear, out of which he planned to make a warm coat. By and by he saw a big bear coming toward him and raised his gun and took aim.

“Wait,” said the bear, “why do you want to shoot me?” “Because I am cold,” said the hunter, “and I need a coat.” “But I am hungry,” the bear replied, “so maybe if we just talk this over a little, we could come to a compromise.” Let’s sit down for dinner before we discuss the how cold it is.

- i. Even this past week, I addressed several men I knew many years ago.
 - ii. They are on Facebook talking about politics and constantly posting controversial political opinions.
 - iii. They seem to be caught up in the wrong things.
 - iv. PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD ARE NOT BECAUSE OF POLITICS
 - 1. Rather it’s because of SIN
 - 2. I never see in their postings anything about Jesus or the Bible as the solution to the problem –
 - a. Rather always trashing government officials
 - v. Jesus and the authors of the Bible never discoursed on the injustices brought on by the Roman Government.
 - 3. They may have alluded to some of these travesties.
 - 4. But not as a center-piece of their writings**
 - vi. Something is wrong – Sadly, these self-professing Christians are so absorbed by the politics, that they can’t even their misplaced passions.
- a. NEED TO GET OUR PRIORITIES RIGHT

Galatians 1:13-16

“For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man”

- i. We think differently

- ii. We act differently
- iii. Our values are different\
- iv. Our relationships are different
- v. Our friends are different (Jesus brings us together)
 Would never know Meachams, Mattox's, Laings, Lucas', Mulhollans, Fergusons, Rogers, Silipo's, Chappells, Broyles, Velascos, Arizmendi's, Wilsons, Pikes, Larsons, Wests, Schmitts, Landes', Dillons, Bentleys, Princes, Knapps, Bogles, Faulkenbergs, Chases, Meyers, Khirallahs, (not to mention the scores of people I studied the Bible with and baptized into Christ) if not Xian
- vi. Everything about us is different
- vii. GRACE IS INTENDED TO CHANGE OUR LIVES

2. GRACE : HARD WORK:

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

*"For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and **his grace to me** was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."*

a. Acts 11:21-23 – EVIDENCE OF HARD WORK

"The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts."

Example of Nets used on the Golden Gate Bridge

Newspapers called it the "Dance of Danger"—bridge construction on top of swaying catwalks and high towers, sometimes hundreds of feet in the air, blown by ill winds. During initial construction on the Golden Gate Bridge which began in 1932, no safety devices were used and 23 men fell to their deaths. Progress on the construction of the bridge almost came to a stand-still. For the final part of the project, however, a large Circus Net (at the cost of \$130,000) was used as a safety precaution. The Net was draped sixty feet below the roadbed under construction, extending ten feet to either side. At least 10 men fell into it and were saved from certain death. Those men whose lives had been delivered by the net were said to have joined the "Halfway to Hell Club." Even more interesting, however, is the fact that 25% more work was accomplished after the net was installed. Why? Because the men had the assurance of their safety, and they were free to wholeheartedly serve the project.

b. **2 Corinthians 4:7-15 – EVIDENCE OF SACRIFICES**

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God."

3. **GRACE ; EVERYTHING WE NEED**

a. **2 Peter 3:17-18 – Need to Grow**

"Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

2 Peter 1:3

"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

b. **2 Corinthians 12:7-9**

"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

c. **EXAMPLE**

Helen Hayes (famous actress from the 1950's) on a cold Thanksgiving Day told her family, "1st time ever cooking a turkey." Don't want to hear any complaints or criticisms. If it's now good, we'll go out to the restaurant.

When she returned from the kitchen carrying the turkey, her family was sitting at the table with their coats and hats on.

1. *We think the worst*
2. *Live like oppressed*
3. *Not grateful that we have the honor of representing God.*

d. Regardless of the challenges we face.

GRACE IS OUR PARACHUTE – but like anything of great value – it must not be abused.

Treated with honor, respect and dignity