



Aletheia

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

February 20, 2022

“Grace & Truth”

SS at 9:30. Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

NEWS

Memorial for Marian Saturday, February 26 at 2:00

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JOHN 1:14-18

“Glory” is _____ to the incarnation and with His coming “Full of Grace and Truth.” “Grace” is unmerited kindness. Kindness, in this sense, is a _____ of gentle and patiently compassionate mercy. Unmerited means that this kindness is unearned and undeserved.

In Romans 4:3&4, The word “Favor” or “Gift” is χάρις (xä-řēs) - grace. “A favor done without expectation of return; the absolutely _____ expression of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of the Giver.”

The opposite of Grace is not unkindness, it is “_____.” If _____ is done, wages are owed, the payment is an obligation, not a gift.

God has no reason to Save us and yet, He chose to do so, and that is to His eternal Glory.

Romans 4:2. If Abraham had _____, and therefore earned, a portion of his status with God, then he would have had something to boast about. Paul adds, “But not before God.” God has an unusual pay scheme – His work _____ is nontypical.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

This is one of the most monumental failures of Jews and Christians alike – to erroneously _____ that God’s pay scale is our pay scale. God has an all or nothing pay scale. The job He offers stipulates that you _____ perform the work required without fail throughout your entire earthly life and then you will receive your full pay. However, mess up just once, and you are fired and receive no pay at all. Those are His terms as an employer.

The other way is to reject working for God as an employee, and instead, trust Him as His child. That’s faith, and faith is what God _____ as righteousness.

“Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord” (Jer. 9:23, I Cor. 1:31, II Cor. 10:17).

“Truth,” is ἀλήθεια (ä-lā-thā-ä), Truth. Facts are _____ things. Our ability to know facts is hampered by our inability to know everything about anything. Facts are completely _____ for God alone. Even so, facts simply _____ as bits of correct information. Truth, on the other hand, is a living, breathing, being who can impart _____.

Truth is what God _____. Since God is never wrong, what He _____ is Truth.

Verse 16 can only be understood in light of verse 17. Verse 18 gives us the effect of Jesus’ earthly ministry. As the only human to have ever _____ God, He’s the only one who can reveal God.

JOHN 1:19-28

The message John preached and the way he was Baptizing was very _____.

John _____ being Elijah, or the Prophet. This confuses people because Jesus said, “John himself is Elijah who was to come.” (Matthew 11:14, 17:10-13, Mark 9:11-13). Read Luke 1:17 Malachi 3:1&2, 8-12, 4:5.

Remember repentance is the humble admission of _____, surrender to mercy and rededication to the Lord. Those who humbly repented were those who accepted Jesus.

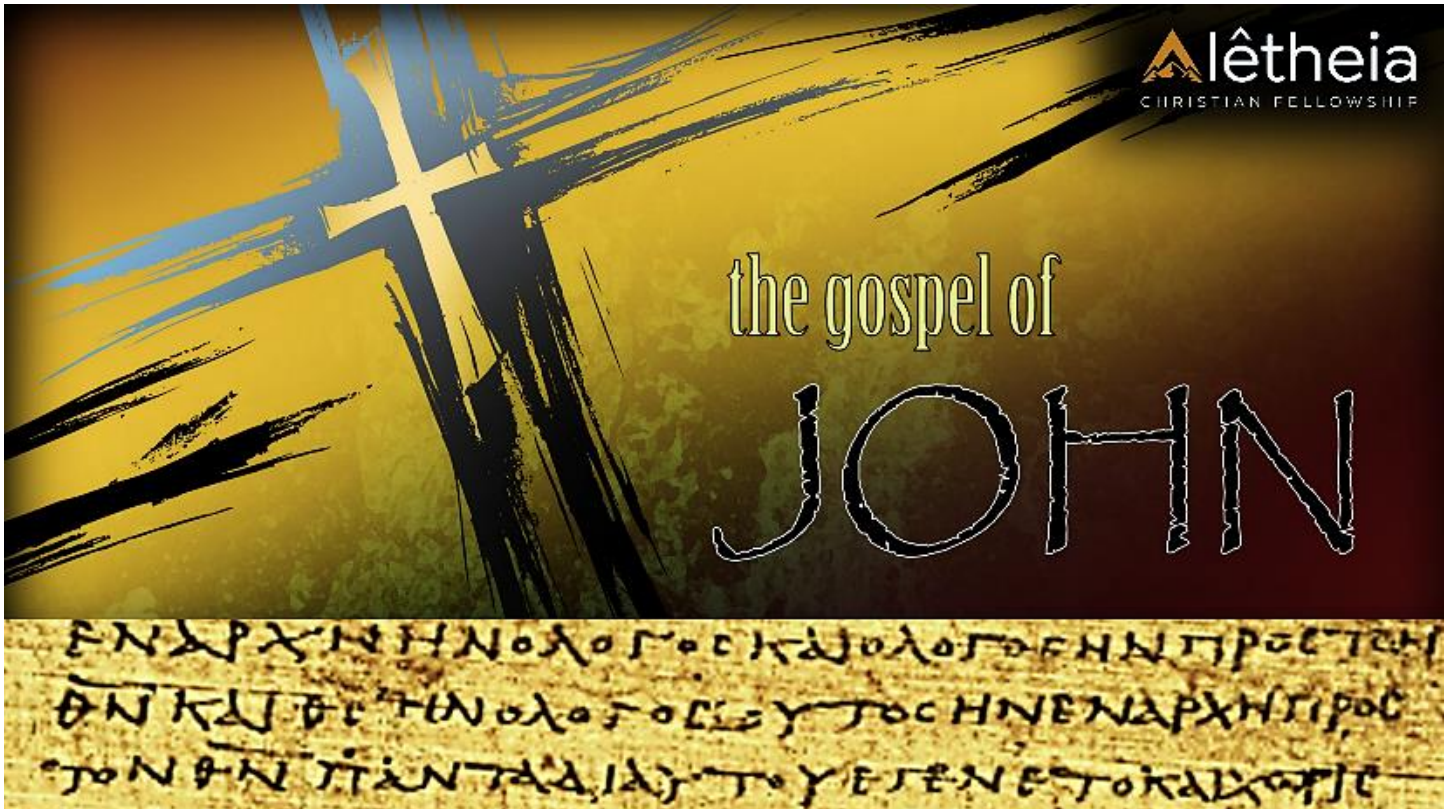
Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

This is the first half of the sermon given on February 20, 2022, at Alêtheia Christian Fellowship by Pastor Scott Keller.





Last week we spent the entire time discussing John 1:14. We'll reread it to help with context as we move forward.

John 1:14-18, 14And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’” 16For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18No one

has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

“Glory,” that we talked about last week is connected to the incarnation of the Word of God as a human being and with His coming “Full of Grace and Truth.” Two more important concepts that we generally don’t consider as fully as we should.



Grace is unmerited kindness, and you might say, I already knew that. Well, I’m sure you did, but have you considered what unmerited means? While we’re at it what’s kindness?

Kindness, in this sense, is a character of mild mercy and gentle understanding and patient compassion. My favorite analogy for kindness is it is the quality of a person who looks beyond someone's broken garden gate and praises them for the beautiful flowers they've cultivated beyond that gate. It is to have a disposition that desires to bless and to lift and to encourage and to protect, as opposed to the cursing, tearing down, discouraging, snotty negativity that is so prevalent. Kindness is kind, benevolent, blessing.

Unmerited, means that this kindness bestowed upon a recipient has absolutely nothing to do with them meriting the blessing. By definition, they in no way, shape, or form deserve the kindness at all.

Like I said, unmerited means without merit – zero merit. If a person has done anything that is meritorious, or if there is anything of merit within them, then the recognition they receive is not grace, it is their earned, and deserved, and owed, payment.

Last week I brought up Abraham and how it was his faith that was credited to his account as though it were righteousness. As though it were rightness before God.

The Apostle Paul says in Romans 4:3&4, 3For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” 4Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

The word “Favor” there is “Grace.” Some translations use the word “Gift,” while the KJV and others plainly state it as “Grace.” It is χάρις (xä-rēs). Defined in Zodhiates’ Lexicon as, “A favor done without expectation of return; the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor.”

Further, it should be noted, that the opposite of Grace is not, indifference, or unkindness, or miserliness; the opposite of Grace is “Work.” Work is the direct antithesis to Grace. They are mutually exclusive constructs. If work is done, wages are owed, the payment is an obligation, not a gift.

For Grace to be Grace, there cannot be any underlying reason for the gift, favor, or benevolence on the part of the beneficiary. It must be 100% because the

benefactor simply chooses to do so from their own magnanimous and gracious generosity.

It is analogous to forgiveness. The dumbest statement in the world, is the often heard, “Well I’ll forgive him when he’s earned it, or when he deserves it, or when he’s proven that he won’t do it again.” Forgiveness, like Grace, is solely due to the character of the one granting such kindness. If you hold a grudge and the other person earns your forgiveness, you have done nothing except pay the debt due, when you forgive them. If they deserve forgiveness and you forgive, you have merely paid the check. To not forgive at that point makes you the one needing forgiveness. You are actively wronging them by refusing to give them what they earned.

Again, it’s the same with Grace. If someone has any claim on a reward, to withhold the reward is a crime and to grant the reward is simply to acknowledge reality. Grace is the unexpected reward given for no reason at all other than the giver chooses to give.

God has no reason at all to Save us and yet He chose to do so and that is to His eternal Glory.

In the reference to Abraham the verse directly before the two that I read states, (Romans 4:2) “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.” That is saying that if, Abraham had worked, and therefore earned, a portion of his status with God, then he would have had something to boast about. In that case, he could look at other people and say I have done right, I deserve to be rewarded. Paul adds, “But not before God.” What does that mean? No matter how much good work a person does, even if that person is arguably the greatest person of all – the person God chose to be the human father of all His children throughout time, whether physically or spiritually speaking, his efforts earn Him nothing on God’s pay scale.

This is one of the most monumental failures of Jews and Christians alike – to erroneously assume that God’s pay scale is our pay scale. If you want to work for God, He has an all or nothing pay scale. The job He offers works like this. Do right without fail throughout your entire earthly life and you will receive a reward of riches beyond anything that you can think or imagine. However, mess up just once and you are fired and

receive absolutely nothing – no pay at all – an all, or nothing, proposition.

Those are His terms as an employer. You might protest and say that's not fair! Well, don't take the job then. God has the right to set up the pay for the job anyway He wants, you don't have to work for Him – that's your choice. Now, as to fairness... The test of fairness is usually, will the boss do what He's asking of His troops. God can and God did. Perfectly right thinking, right talking, and right action, without fail for a lifetime earning the entire pot of gold.

So, Jews, and Christians alike, have run around for millennia boasting about how good they are, lording it over others, being pompous, arrogant, and despicable in their abuse of those they see as less capable – less productive. What they don't seem to understand is the pay scale God uses. That they've already messed up, that they've already been fired, and that they will receive absolutely nothing at all because that was the job they took - the contract they signed. You can work for God if you want, I don't recommend it.

You might say that there is no hope at all for such people and you'd be correct. No hope at all, except the hope all people have which is a total reliance on another way to be rewarded with riches beyond anything that you can think or imagine.

That other way is to reject working for God as an employee and instead, trust Him as His child. That's faith, and faith is what God credits as righteousness. Faith is what God credits as rightness in His sight, Faith in Him as your Savior.

That's what Abraham knew – He knew that “Salvation belongs to the Lord,” and he trusted that God would not only save him eternally, but that He would save Isaac physically. Now, where is boasting? The only boasting that such a person can do is to boast about the Lord. One of Paul's favorite Scriptures that he quoted twice and alluded to beyond that comes from the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord” (Jerimiah 9:23, I Corinthians 1:31, II Corinthians 10:17).

A photograph of a sunset or sunrise over a forest. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm glow. The trees are silhouetted against the bright sky. A dark rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the text "All truth is God's truth." in white. Below this box, the name "John Calvin" is written in white on a small red rectangular background.

All truth is God's truth.

John Calvin

The Word came full of “Grace” and “Truth.” Well, we talk about it a lot, it’s the name on the door ἀλήθεια (ä-lā-thā-ä), Truth. In the book, “A Stranger in a Strange Land,” the main character doesn’t understand falsehood and a mentor tries to explain by saying that Truth is speaking rightly, as in, I have two hands, rather than speaking wrongly, I have seven hands.

He’s wrong. It’s a common enough mistake; confusing Truth with facts. Speaking rightly is stating what a person believes is factual.

Facts are cold, dead, stark, indifferent things. They can be interesting, even fascinating, but they are colorless and unfeeling. The sun is approximately 8 light minutes away from earth. The light of the sun takes 8 minutes to reach us traveling at 186,000 miles per second. To put it into perspective, light can circle the entire earth 7.5 times in one second, so the distance to the sun is 1 AU, or 93 million miles.

I have rightly said all of that and so those are facts... At least we think that they are facts. Who knows for certain? Not us. It is impossible for any person to know everything about anything and so what we call a fact, may, or may not, be a fact. Nietzsche said, "There are no facts, only interpretations." He was right if, as he also said, "God is dead." Well, God is not dead, Nietzsche is dead.

Facts are truly facts if they are actually facts and while we can never be completely certain, God is. God does know everything about everything and so He can say for certain what is factual.

Facts simply exist as these bits of correct information. Truth, on the other hand, is a living, breathing, being

who can impart life. Why? Because Truth with a capital T is what God declares as Truth. It is His Word to us – His Message given to us – His self-revelation granted to us. Truth is every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God, and it is therefore universal and absolute. That means it applies to everyone, everywhere, throughout time, without exception.

How fascinating that Christianity embodies that philosophical fact. The Word is Life, and the Life is the Light that illuminates the darkness.

Since Truth is what God declares as Truth. It is therefore what God believes. Since God is never wrong, what He believes is Truth. When He shares what that with us it is a revelation for us. The ultimate revelation of what God believes came in the form of Truth taking on flesh 2,000 years ago in our timeline. To the everlasting Glory of God, the Word came “Full of Grace and Truth.”