

God's Grace & Commandment-Keeping III

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{Transcriber's note: the beginning of this message is a short explanation of a different subject than of this series}

Let's see the prophecy of what Jesus was going to do concerning the Law. He distinctly said in Matt. 5—and we'll review Matt. 5, 6 & 7 and we will see through the prism of understanding—that ***we keep the laws of God because of the grace of God!*** We have the laws of God written in our heart and in our mind. Is that not the opposite of a carnal mind? Since the children of Israel did not have the Spirit of God, did not have the heart to keep the commandments of God—even though a person can do them in the letter of the Law if they are taught—they were never converted; they never had the Spirit of God.

We're going to cover Scriptures that we've covered in the past, but now we're going to look at them considerably differently than we have before.

Isaiah 42:21 "The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness sake.." That's a prophecy of Christ. Of course, Jesus never sinned—right? So, God would be well pleased. Did He not say, 'This is My Son in whom I am well pleased. This is My Son in whom I delight. Listen to Him'?

"...**He will magnify the Law and make it glorious**" (v 21). The *King James* says 'honorable.' How do you make it glorious? He already gave the Law to them and said, 'They are well intended, but they don't have the heart to keep it.' So He magnified the Law and made it glorious. Now we receive the Spirit of God and that enables us to keep the commandments of God. Not the Spirit of God so we are selfishly locked onto salvation and there's nothing that can take us away from salvation. Otherwise, there wouldn't be the unpardonable sin, as it talks about later in the New Testament.

With repentance, belief, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, are not all of those the acts of grace? *Yes, because it's the graciousness of God that leads us to repentance!* It's the graciousness of God, which shows us right from wrong. Now then, with the Spirit of God something else happens. We've already seen how that ***Christ said that the Father and the Son would both be dwelling within us.*** Is that not an *act of grace*? ***We are to become a temple of God*** (1-Cor. 3). Is that not an *act of grace*? *Yes, it is!*

Here is And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said, "This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days," says *the* Lord, "**I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in**

their minds" (vs 15-16). That has to be ***an act of grace***, as well as ***the workmanship of God***, so that we can think like God with His laws, that we can have the love, the faith, the hope, the character of God, and ***all of those are by the grace of God*** and are New Testament requirements. Is that not true? *Yes, indeed!*

Why have the laws written in our heart and in our mind if we are not supposed to keep them? Now we will cover some of those difficult Scriptures of the Apostle Paul here a little later. But what we need to understand is that in the New Covenant ***keeping the commandments of God is by the grace of God!*** Can you keep them in the letter? *Yes!* How is that done? *That is done by your effort!* To keep them in the spirit with the Spirit of God, who supplies the power to do that but God? *Yes, indeed!*

I'm not going to go through the details about the covenant, but what Paul is saying is that in order to end the covenant with Israel, Christ died. In the covenant—the agreement between two parties—if the covenant is terminated, then someone has to die to end that covenant. So, rather than all Israel dying, because the Lord was married to Israel and the covenant was a marriage arrangement, *Christ* died.

Paul is explaining this. This is one that the Protestants do not understand, because they don't understand covenant law. That is really a very basic thing that people need to understand. Because how can you be in covenant with God if you don't understand covenant law, and you don't understand the requirements of the covenant. Everyone wants the benefits of the covenant, but they don't want the commitment to God in the way that it should be. Christ gave His life willingly, laid it down for us. That's *His* part.

- He is Lord!
- He is Master!
- He has opened the way to God the Father!

Our part is to ***repent and come to God!*** After we have received the Holy Spirit He tells us how we are to behave, how we are to live.

Romans 7:6: "But now we have been released from the law..." Protestants read that and say, 'See, we don't have to keep the Law.' This is not talking about *the Law*, this is talking about the covenant called 'the law,' referring to the *law of marriage*. So, if a husband dies or a wife dies, you're released from the law of marriage. That's what it's talking about here.

"...because we have died *to that* in which we were held so that we might serve in newness of *the* spirit, and not in *the* oldness of *the* letter." That's

how we're to serve God. Is that not by grace? *Yes, indeed!*

Someone's going to come along, as a lot have done—especially those who have hated the Jews—they have said, especially the Catholics, that God gave *the* Law as a curse to the Jews. In other words, they're declaring that *the* Law is sin, because if something is a curse, it's got to be a sin. So, this is what we need to do to get our thinking all squared around from all the assumptions and wrong understanding that we find in evangelicalism, etc.

Verse 7: "What then shall we say? *Is the Law sin? MAY IT NEVER BE!....*" The *King James* says, 'God forbid.' The Greek does not have it 'God forbid.' The Greek there is 'me ginoito,' meaning *never let this exist, or never let this thought occur.* So I translated it, 'MAY IT NEVER BE.' One of the reviewers said that's the best translation of it.

"...But I had not known sin, except through the Law. Furthermore, I would not have been conscious of lust, except *that* the Law said, 'You shall not covet'" (v 7).

What does the Spirit of God do to us mentally? *It makes us conscious of sin taking place in the mind!* Why? *So we can repent of it and get rid of it!* All sin starts in the mind.

With that in mind, let's reread these basic Scriptures in Matt. 5. You've probably gone over them hundreds of times if you've been in the Church a long time. What He's doing is showing the spiritual requirement of the Law as it is to be kept through grace. We've never quite put it together that way, but that's what we are talking about. When you read this, what is the conclusion of someone that does not have the Spirit of God? *'Then no one can keep the Law, so why keep it?'* That's the carnal-minded approach, because the 'carnal mind is enmity against the Law of God.' The carnal mind is a mind *without the Spirit of God.*

We're going to look at this through the lens of *grace*, through the lens of *magnifying the Law.* I think we're going to really understand even more. Rather than fight and battle back and forth with the evangelicals, law vs grace, let's see what the Bible really tells us.

Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill**"—*to make it full, bring to completion!* This tells us what the requirement's going to be for the New Covenant.

- What is necessary to make the Law complete? *To magnify it, make it glorious!*
- How do you make it glorious? *You show the spiritual intent and meaning that the Law requires!*

That's going to clear up a lot of difficulties in people's minds.

Verse 18: "For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled."

Has the plan of God been finished? *No!* Have there been spiritual improvements to the Law of God that He gave to the children of Israel? *Yes!* Physical circumcision now becomes *circumcision of the heart and mind!* That's a higher standard—isn't that true? *Yes!* A little old statute that God made concerning putting blue fringes on your garments to remind you of the commandments of God—that has been superseded by *putting them in your heart and in your mind!* Is that not greater than the fringe? *or* on your right hand? *or* as the Jews have with the phylactery in your forehead? *Yes!*

Verse 19: "Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven." That doesn't sound like doing away with anything—does it? *No!* We can also look at it say:

- heaven and earth are here
- commandments of God are here

As a matter of fact, there are more Bibles in the world than at any time in the history of mankind. Everyone of them has *the laws and commandments of God written in them!* We're going to view this entirely differently. Here is the point that most people absolutely do not understand and that's why we have the book, *Judaism—Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men*

Verse 20: "For I say to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

They made all kinds of traditional laws to guarantee that they wouldn't break the Ten Commandments, and they ended up with so many laws that it became total oppression, or totalitarian oppression of daily life. Since the Protestants don't understand it, and when the *King James Version* was translated they hardly knew anything about Judaism. The Jews took advantage of that and said, 'Well, everything we do is Judaism, beginning with Genesis through Malachi.' But that's not true either.

With the Spirit of God and the Word of God, let's clean out all of those problems in the closet. Now here's what He does. If you don't have the Spirit of God, this is hard to do. But if you have the Spirit of God, through the grace of God, then you're

able to keep it through the Spirit of God, *because of His grace*. You also have, as we find in the rest of the New Testament, as John said, that if we confess our sins—and we're to do that every day—He'll forgive us our sins. So we *can* overcome these things. The mind *can be changed* through the power of the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God, the laws and commandments of God.

Verse 21: “You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, ‘You shall not commit murder... [that’s straight out of the Ten Commandments] ...but whoever commits murder shall be subject to judgment.”

And you had the laws in Exo. 21 about what happens when there was manslaughter, what happens when there was death of an unborn child because two men were tussling and the wife got in the mix and didn't have enough sense to stay out of the way and the baby was lost. What do you do with that? What is manslaughter? What is pre-meditated murder? That's all contained in Exo. 21 and other places in the Old Testament. So, you would be brought before the judges and they would determine whether this was pre-meditated or whether it was accidental. Therefore, we have today the difference between pre-meditated murder and manslaughter or accidental death, or whatever.

Verse 22: “But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother without cause shall be subject to judgment....” Now, that's a higher standard— isn't it? That's because Christ is magnifying the Law to make it glorious.

The missing ingredient here is that He has not yet taught about the Holy Spirit. That comes later. But this is the standard that you need in order, with the Holy Spirit—*through the grace of God*—to not commit murder, because you now understand what it is *to hate*, and you have the power of God's Spirit to control anger, to get rid of hate, and all of that sort of thing.

“...Now, *you have heard it said*, ‘Whoever shall say to his brother, “Raca,” shall be subject to the judgment of the council.’....” (v 22) In other words, *slander*. Kind of like this famous case that we have now of the so-called Baptists that go around to the funerals where they are burying the soldiers, and so forth, and saying, ‘Thank God for dead soldiers,’ and so forth, and just really disturbing the family at the funeral. They were hauled to court. They lost and had a judgment of several million dollars against them. They appealed it, went to appeals court, and they got one of the liberal judges and he says, ‘No, that's freedom of speech.’ That's an example of *judgment* based upon what you say.

“...But *I say to you*, whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be subject to the fire of Gehenna” (v 22).

Now, that's much more severe; that is threatening eternal death.

Verse 23: “For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your way*; first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (vs 23-24).

That's far different from what we have today. People hold onto hatred, they hold onto anger, they hold onto bitterness. If you're in the Church and you have those things still clinging in your mind, you better get rid of them, through the power and Spirit of God. You have to be reconciled with your brother. We will see in Matt.6 where He talks about prayer. God will forgive you if you forgive others, another very important thing. We'll talk about this a little bit more here.

Now this is a tough one, v 27: “You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’” Everything short of the physical act was in obedience to the letter. Now notice what He says:

Verse 28: “But I say to you, everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.... [you can't do that without the Spirit of God] ...So then, if your right eye shall cause you to offend, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is better for you that one of your members should perish than *that* your whole body be cast into Gehenna. And if your right hand shall cause you to offend, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is better for you that one of your members should perish than *that* your whole body be cast into Gehenna” (vs 28-30).

Does He want people plucking out eyes? You can pluck out both eyes, you can cut off both hands, you can cut off both feet, you can whittle down the arms, you can cut them off at the shoulders, cut off the legs clear up to the torso, and ***you can sit there blind and lust in your mind!*** So the answer is: ***you need the Spirit of God!*** What He's showing here, you aren't going to change the mind by cutting off a hand, by gouging out an eye, ***you need the Spirit of God!***

Then He talks about divorce and remarriage. That's always a problem; v 33: “Again, you have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, ‘You shall not forswear yourself, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, because it is *the* city of the great King. Neither shall you swear by your head, because you do not have the power to make one hair white or black” (vs 33-36). That was before the invention of Revlon and Clairol, but you still can't

change it coming out from within as it grows.

This is also showing another very important thing we need to realize which is this: ***There is no way that you have power to make yourself really any better than the capacity that God put into our hearts, minds and bodies without His Spirit.*** You have no capacity to make yourself eternal. In all of these different religions down through time seeking to 'become at one with the spirit,' so to speak, 'you can have eternal life.' *All nonsense!*

Verse 37: "But let your word be good, your 'Yes' be yes and your 'No' be no..."

Now stop and think for just a minute. What is the whole lesson of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? about human nature? *'The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it.'* God knows the heart. This here is an impossibility for a carnal-minded person, especially lawyers. They'll always find a loophole. I might mention here, *especially Judaism*, because every traditional law that they have, they create a loophole to escape doing it. You cannot do v 37 without the Spirit of God.

Now, another thing that most people don't realize is that on the Day of Atonement the Jews go to the synagogue and they disavow every vow that they're going to make in the coming year. Declare it void *before* they even make it. How's that for having everything that you say be what you decide or annul. That's something!

Here's another one that is difficult to follow, v 43: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' [that's the way the carnal world does] ...But I say to you, love your enemies..." (vs 43-44). The carnal mind says, 'Now how you going to do that? Because I hate them.' Families have been raised on hate.

"...bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (v 44). You can't really do that without the Spirit of God!

So, in order to fulfill the spiritual requirements of the laws of God, you need the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God comes through repentance, forgiveness, baptism and receiving of the Holy Spirit, which is ***the operation of grace.*** So, you keep all of these laws and commandments ***through the grace of God!*** It's not grace *and* law, one opposed to the other. That's the carnal-minded way of looking at it. Jesus is really showing here the standard; this is the glorified standard of the Law.

Now notice what this results in, v 45: "So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven..." Think about that for a minute! How do you become the children of the

Father in heaven above? *By receiving His Spirit as a begettal!* You're not His children until then.

"...for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and on *the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and on *the* unjust."

The truth of the matter is everyone lives—regardless of what they believe and where they are—***because God gave them life, because God gives them breath.*** He has provided the earth for food and everything and they live by His grace, whether they know it or not. Who knows what will happen to an enemy if you treat them right, or if you pray for him, who knows, maybe he'll even become converted. Look what happened with Saul who became the Apostle Paul.

Verse 46: For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?" (vs 46-47). We're going to see quite a spiritual requirement here, which is the whole process of the rest of the New Testament.

Verse 48: Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect."

- How are you going to do that without the Spirit of God? *You can't!*
- How are you going to do that without the grace of God? *You can't!*

Everything that we need is ***based upon the grace of God!*** The commandments, as we keep them in the New Covenant, are ***kept through the grace of God*** according to the high spiritual standard that is glorious, and we become the children of God.

I think that helps us to make more sense out of this. This helps strip away the carnal arguing, and we will look at some of the other things here. This strips away the constant fighting between law and grace. What does it mean under law? If you keep the law, are you under law? Some people say 'yes.' We'll answer that later.

(go to the next track)

What is grace? We'll try and get a definition of grace, and I'll try and define it even further as we go through these things. But let's understand the first part of grace is ***God dealing with you in your life to begin to call you.*** That's the graciousness of God! The graciousness of God ***leads you to repentance.*** Grace is ***the operation, the active operation of God in your life so that you may have a personal relationship with Him!*** In order to do that you have to enter into a covenant with God; that covenant requires:

- belief

- repentance
- baptism
- receiving of the Holy Spirit

All of those things are part of the grace of God. So we can define it this way: ***grace is God working directly in our lives.*** Grace entails:

- mercy
- forgiveness
- commandment-keeping in the spirit
- love
- hope
- faith
- understanding the Word of God
- building the character of God is an operation of grace
- having the mind of Christ is an operation of grace
- having the laws and commandments written in our hearts and in our minds is an operation of grace.

In Rom. 3 Paul talks about *the operation of grace* for the forgiveness of sin through the sacrifice and shed blood of Jesus Christ. This will help you understand where we're coming from, because some people will say, 'Well, if you say you keep the commandments of God by grace, how can that be?' *Because we're doing it spiritually!*

Romans 3:31 "Are we, then, abolishing *the Law* through faith?...." You have

- faith
- your sins forgiven
- a relationship with God

Are we abolishing law?

"...MAY IT NEVER BE!.... ['me ginoito'] ...Rather, we are establishing *the Law*" (v 31). Because the truth of the matter is that ***it requires the grace of God and the Spirit of God*** in order to establish the full intent of the spiritual application of the laws of God, which then is part of conversion.

If you have the laws and commandments of God written in your heart and in your mind, do you not think differently? *That's converting the mind!* Once we have our sins forgiven, we have been justified. Let's understand *justified*. That's what he's talking about in Rom. 3. He's not talking about taking someone who is carnal, and just because they want their sins forgiven, to make them just, to make them righteous, and then do away with the Law, but that's what they tell you. Or as it was expressed, 'if you keep the Ten Commandments then all of the rest of the laws of Moses have been done away.' That's another slightly different version of it. We are establishing law. Why? *Because we go to the spiritual meaning of keeping the Law!* We go to the

way that Jesus magnified the Law and made it glorious.

Speaking of Abraham, Romans 4:21: "For he was fully persuaded that what He has promised, He is also able to do.". You have to go back to Gen. 15, 17 and 22, etc., and go through all the promises there.

Verse 22: "As a result, it was also imputed to him for righteousness." Believing God, and believing His Truth and His way and His forgiveness, ***you have righteousness imputed to you.*** That's an *act of the grace of God!*

Verse 23: "But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; rather, *it was also written* for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed—to those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from *the* dead; Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification" (vs 21-25).

So we are in *a state of justification*. Let's look at a spiritual work vs a physical work. In John 6 we have where Jesus fed the 5,000 and these people wanted the *physical* blessing of having the food given to them. They wanted to find Jesus, they wanted to make Him king so He got away from them. When they found Him they said virtually, 'Are You going to do this again so we can eat?'

John 6:25: "And after finding Him *on* the other side of the sea, they said to Him, 'Rabbi, when did You come here?' Jesus answered them and said, 'Truly, truly I say to you, you do not seek Me because you saw *the* miracles, but because you ate the bread and were satisfied.... [carnal minded, looking to the physical] ...Do not labor *for* the food that perishes, but *for* the food that endures unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give to you; for Him has God the Father sealed.' Therefore, they said to Him, 'What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent'" (vs 25-29).

Really believing unto repentance, unto baptism and receiving of the Holy Spirit; the rest of the Bible teaches that. So, when we come to understanding law vs grace, works vs belief, etc. There are good works that we are to walk in. Once we have, through the grace of God, been *led to repentance, baptized and received the Holy Spirit!* All of that's ***the operation of grace.*** We've been *justified* from our sins.

The comment was made that if you believe in Christ as the only work, then it creates problems, if that's the only further you go. But *to have God work in our lives* through His Spirit to develop His character, to give us His laws written in our heart

and in our mind is a tremendous thing. That is grace. That's why no one comes to God, except through Christ. No one comes to the Father, unless the Father draws him. Because *it has to be what God is doing* to initiate it, not what we are doing. True, we are told to '*seek* and we will find, *knock* and it shall be opened, *ask* and we shall receive,' but when God responds to you, then how are you going to respond back to God? Just like those people who were fed came to understand or at least hear that they had to believe in Christ, now what are you going to do with the food?

- What is the *true* food?
- What is *true* life?
- Why did God create us?
- *All of that comes into play!*

Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith..." Faith is the operation of belief in God the Father, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His shed blood.

"...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... [How do we have that peace? *We're no longer an enemy of God!*] ...Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand..." (vs 1-2). Now you have ***access through faith into this grace***, which is the whole operation of God in your life. So, grace is not just the forgiveness of sin. That's a starting first step. ***Grace is the whole operation of God within your life with His Spirit, His plan, His purpose***, etc.

"...in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God.... [we view our whole life in a totally different way] ... And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations..." (vs 2-3). Who gets excited and says, 'Hoorah, I've got a trial!' Not even any of us when we go through it, but we boast in it afterwards. What did Paul write a little later on? '***We know that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.***'

"...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance" (v 3). We have to endure to the end. *Yes, indeed!* You read the parable about the sower and the seed in Mark 4 and Matt. 13. There were two-thirds of them had no endurance, whatever the problems were. We need endurance. I can look back in my life and see that, yes, these things will happen, they will come so that we can develop the character, because that's what it talks about here

Verse 4: "And endurance *brings forth* character..."—character is coming from God:

- to know right from wrong
- to always trust in Him
- to do what is right
- to believe Him under all circumstances

—even in the face of opposition which may appear on the surface to contradict what God has said.

"...and character *brings forth* hope" (v 4)—because you always see that God is working in all of these circumstances, and He will be with us in all things.

What is our hope? The fulfillment of our hope is what? *The hope of the resurrection!* We've said many times that we have to: ***walk in faith, believe in hope, live in love.*** All of that's through ***the operation of the grace of God!***

Verse 5: "And the hope of *God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us" (v 5). So, there we have it. That tells us more about grace. I hope to define it a little bit more in the future as we go along with this.

Let's see how that Matthew 5, 6 & 7 really begins with the point of where you are in the world, and then how you can have a relationship with God and what God requires spiritually. Because the ultimate purpose of what God is going to do is to ***perfect us***. First, He's going to perfect us in character. Then if we're faithful unto death and we die in the faith and then He's going to perfect us spiritually by giving us a spiritual body and a spiritual mind. We will be transformed from flesh to spirit and have immortality.

Here we have some instructions to begin coming out of the world, Matthew 6:1: "Beware *that* you do not bestow your alms in the sight of men in order to be seen by them..."

We have a perfect example every year at Thanksgiving and Christmas, or someone has a press conference and makes a big endowment for this or that or the other thing. When you do that, that's for *yourself*; that's for *your own* benefit.

So, Jesus says: ...otherwise you have no reward with your Father Who *is* in heaven. Therefore, when you give *your* alms, do not sound the trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues... [which are the scribes and Pharisees] ...and in the streets, so that they may have glory from men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward" (vs 1-2).

I think of this every time I see the pope out there doing all of his little things. Truly you need to understand this. If you're a Catholic, don't be offended, but don't you think you need to find out whether you've been totally deceived or not? Don't you think that that would incumbent upon you to do so, because the truth is *you have been totally deceived!*

I watched the full funeral of John Paul II, everything they did; I watched the Masses,

everything: all of the idolatry, all of the prayers, all the genuflectes and everything like that.

Sidebar: The bishops have a larger wafer that they take than the ordinary people in church when they so-call 'celebrate the Mass' and eat the bread and drink the wine. Since the instructions in the New Testament that we are to *break the bread*, why is the host is given to the Catholic participants and that the bishops and cardinals themselves take is not broken? *They lay it on your tongue whole!*

I saw all the ritual and everything and I thought to myself: Here you've got all the leaders of the world there bowing down before the Roman Catholic Church, all their giving their dues to John Paul II. He was a righteous, righteous man in their view. He did a lot of good things as far as the world is concerned, but were they really of God?

I saw all the show that they did, the ritual and everything, and I could not help but think: *is that not—right before my very eyes—the glory that Satan the devil thinks is important?* God says He's interested in a 'contrite spirit and a humble heart and someone who trembles at the Word of God.' So, when you have the show here like they did with the giving amount of money. If you put in a quarter, you get one toot. If you put in a dollar, you get four toots. If you put in ten thousand, you have a whole orchestra, or whatever.

Verse 3: "But *when* you give your alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing... [in other words, don't do it with deliberation to be seen for your own benefit] ...so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall Himself reward you openly. And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, in order *that* they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly" (vs 3-6).

God is interested in your heart. God is interested in you personally. You don't do this out in the open. That's why we don't have long prayers at church, and so forth, and all of those things that men do.

Verse 7: "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*..." Let's understand something: There are prayers that have to be prayed daily. And as long as there is a need, you keep praying for it. Don't think that's a vain repetition, because it's not:

- you keep praying for the person
- you keep praying for the circumstances

- you keep praying for the change
- you keep praying for whatever the need is until God answers that prayer

Those are not vain repetitions. I've seen down through the years that I've been a minister that ***God answers those prayers!*** He answers them in ***His*** way, in ***His*** time, which is better than our will. We don't have prayers to force our will upon God.

Verse 7: "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*; for they think that by multiplying their words they shall be heard

One of them is the 'hail Mary' as the Catholics have, over and over again; and 'our fathers.' We're going to read here 'Our Father,' the outline prayer, and so forth, not the Lord's prayer. That's an *outline* prayer. If you want to know the Lord's prayer, read John 17. That's the prayer that Jesus prayed before He was arrested.

Verse 8: "Now then, do not be like them; for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him." He wants you to ask, so that you know and understand everything comes from God.

Verse 9: "Therefore, you are to pray after this manner..."—here's the outline:

- "...Our Father..." that is the sacred name of God
- "...Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name..." (v 9). You recognize God the Father. No word about Mary being there. No word about saints being there. What is the focus of your life?
- Verse 10: "Your kingdom come..."—and all that that entails.
- "...Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven" (v 10). We can apply that to our lives, our situation, to other people, and so forth.
- Verse 11: "Give us this day our daily bread." We look to God to provide everything for us.
- Verse 12: "And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." It says in Luke 11, 'our sins.'
- Verse 13: "And lead us not into temptation..." God doesn't tempt us. In other words, we're asking God to keep us from severe trial.
- "...but rescue us from the evil one..." (v 13). hat's very interesting, because it's greater than deliverance. You have to be rescued from Satan the devil. That's what it's talking about, not just evil in general.

So, this prayer contains all the basic elements of our Christian living and how we are to pray every day.

We use this as an outline, and we fill in all the details.

- "...For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (v 13).

So we start out with a goal, and we end up with a goal. Now then, the next two verses are very important. They even find this in dealing with people in the world who know very little about God, but everyone who practices this principle and does what vs 14 & 15 say will benefit from it. It will change your heart and your mind and make your life better, because God is no respecter of persons.

Verse 14—to really do this you need the Spirit of God: "For **if** you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.... [*if*, a conditional word] ...But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (vs 14-15). You tie that in with 'Love your enemies, bless those who curse you and those who despitely use you.' You can't go in and pray and ask God, 'Oh, God, bless me, but curse that one over there.'

If you want a perfect example of this, go to the book of Esther. Mordecai was petitioning God. Mordecai would not bow down to Haman the Agagite, the religious pretender there in the kingdom. Haman hated Mordecai, hated the Jews. That's what is called Iran today, so Ahmadinejad better learn a lesson from the book of Esther. Don't try and destroy all the Jews, because you're going to be had.

What happened? Humbling themselves, and with Esther who became queen, petitioned to God and petitioning the king. God worked out all the circumstances and completely reversed the whole decree to exterminate the Jews. You cannot have hatred and bitterness in your heart, and unforgiveness, because God will not forgive you. There it is right there. That includes grudges; that includes all kinds of things.

Now, that doesn't mean you don't have character. That doesn't mean you don't stand for Truth. You do stand for Truth, but you understand how God deals with this. I've also seen through the years how that works. It does work! Jesus said to do it.

Then there are other things that you go through here and you read about, and what needs to be. You're not to be anxious, you're not to be worried, *God will provide!* He says He'll even provide in times of trouble and famine and difficulty. We have to wise as serpents, harmless as doves, as well.

Here again is the whole focus of what we're doing, compare, v 33 with Matthew 5:48: "Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect."

Matthew 6:33: "But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.... [God will take care of you of what you need] ...Therefore, do not be anxious... [worry, fret, stew, become frustrated] ...for tomorrow shall take care of the *things* of itself...." (vs 33-34). That is provided you're praying to God, you're following the way God wants you to do.

"...Sufficient for the day *is* the evil of that *day*" (v 34). That becomes self-explanatory. We have:

- enough to change
- enough to grow
- enough to overcome

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 17:4-6, 25
- 2) Romans 8:14-16
- 3) Isaiah 42:21
- 4) Hebrews 10:15-16
- 5) Romans 7:6-7
- 6) Matthew 5:17-30, 33-37, 43-48
- 7) Romans 3:31
- 8) Romans 4:21-25
- 9) John 6:25-29
- 10) Romans 5:1-5
- 11) Matthew 6:1-15, 33-32
- 12) Matthew 5:48
- 13) Matthew 6:33-34

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1-Corinthians 3
- Exodus 21
- Genesis 15, 17, 22
- Mark 4
- Matthew 13
- John 17
- Luke 11

Also referenced: Book:

Judaism: Revelation of Moses or Religion of Man?
by Philip Neal

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