

God's Grace & Commandment-Keeping II

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

Now let's continue on with grace and keeping God's commandments. ***Grace is the state of your relationship with God!*** We need to understand that *justification* is only through Jesus Christ. *Justification* occurs through the forgiveness of sin to pardon, erase or eliminate the record of those sins. That puts you in right standing with God, which means ***you are justified***. Paul writes of it as *righteousness*.

We will see the conclusion of the matter in Rom. 3:30. I want to continue with the teaching that in keeping the laws and commandments of God in the New Covenant, we are keeping them *by, through and with* the grace of God, because we have the Holy Spirit in our mind. God is writing His commandments and laws in our mind and in our heart, and we are keeping them in the spirit. That's exactly where Jesus started out in Matt. 5.

He said, 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I didn't come to abolish, but to fulfill. And unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees'—that's another reason we did the book, *Judaism—A Revelation of Moses or the Religion of Men?* If you go through the series, *Scripturalism vs Judaism*, you're going to find they were not keeping the Law of Moses. They had their own righteousness, which is human righteousness. They had their phylacteries and merit badges, and all of this sort of thing. Kind of like these generals that have been everywhere, done everything, come to the congressional hearings and they've got stars here and stars there, medals here, and all sorts of things. They're all decked out with all their merit badges. That's the way the Pharisees were, they had all their 'merit badges' for doing things.

Our righteousness has to be greater than that! Their righteousness, even if they kept the laws of God, were only in the letter of the Law. Their righteousness was man-made righteousness with their laws, with their commandments, and so forth.

They thought that by doing these works, they were justified before God. Part of the aim of Judaism after the destruction of the temple was kind of a perversion of what the New Testament teaches: 'Since we no longer have a temple to go worship, no longer have a temple to offer the sacrifices, therefore we need to expand the laws of works that we have so that a man can be just before God.' They had all these extra laws to make a man just before God.

However, ***no law can justify***—period! Now, don't be shocked at this: *not even the commandments of God*. Why? You need to understand this. ***Through the Law is the knowledge of sin!*** The Law was never meant to justify, because ***the Law cannot forgive***. You got that? ***The Law cannot forgive, only God, through Christ, can forgive***. That's the only way that justification comes.

So if a Baptist says, 'Well, you're keeping the Sabbath; you're trying to justify yourself by works.' You can say, 'No, I'm not.'

Romans 3:30: "Since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision... [or the Jew] ...by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith." ***Justification is an act of God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ***. That's why no law can do it, but that doesn't mean you don't keep law. We have a higher standard to keep law, which is keeping law through the grace of God.

I hope you will understand this as we go through, because when I first read this—and in the *King James*, as I mentioned, they do a royal disservice to understanding the phrase 'works of law.' Mark this down for all of your hard-shell, soft-shell, and intermediate-shell and all the moonshine-nipping little widows who are again drinking when they go to church:

Romans 2:13: "Because the hearers of the Law *are* not just before God..."

- What does that mean? ***The hearers of the Law cannot be justified by God! They are not just!***
- Do the Baptist hear the law? ***Yeah!***
- What do they do? ***They reject it! They hear it, but they reject it!***

Like one new man who started attending, and he still attends his Sunday-keeping church once in a while and he took the *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* book and gave it to his pastor. He came back in two weeks and said, and he gave him the booklet, *Which Day is the True Christian Sabbath?*, and he came back in two weeks and he said, 'What day do you think that the Bible teaches we ought to keep?' He said, ***Obviously, it's the Sabbath, but I can't teach that***.

He's a hearer of the Law. Yet, he thinks he is justified before God by rejecting the Law. If you reject the Law, you're a transgressor of the Law, ***because a hearer is not a doer, and a hearer is a sinner!*** Just like your children when you tell them to do something and they don't do it, and you find out

about it and first thing you say, 'Didn't you hear me?' *Well, yeah!*

Verse 13: "Because the hearers of the Law *are* not just before God... [How is anyone going to get around this?]: ...**but the doers of the Law shall be justified.**" What does that mean? What is the full meaning of that phrase when you bring to bear other verses in the Scripture?

"...the **doers** of the Law shall be justified." If you're doing the Law, that means you are keeping it. You could also put there *the practicers*, or those who practice, if you want to put it in a participial form. Those who practice the Law shall be justified. What does this tell you then? If all are sinners and have come short of the glory of God, what does this tell you if they are doers, or practicers, of the Law? *That means they've repented! They've repented of their sins!* They've repented of transgressing the Law, which is sin, and they are now keeping the Law, so they are **doers** of the Law—correct? *Yes!* 'Shall be justified.' What does this tell us?

Same thing Acts 2:38 did: "...Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit is only given upon repentance and justification. Now do you understand justifying *vs* commandment-keeping? **Commandment-keeping does not justify you, but unless you repent and start keeping the Law, you do not qualify for justification.** Is that clear?

The phrase 'works of law'—Appendix R "What is Meant by "the Works of the Law" (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*)—has to do with rituals at the temple and *Jewish* works of law. There are **the works of the law**, which Paul commends the Gentiles for doing, but those are different than 'works of law.' That's kind of a fine distinction, but it is true. In this book we have quotes from a former Orthodox rabbi, who understands that very principle.

In researching this out through the years—and this becomes critical when we get to the book of Galatians—Rom. 2:14 is the only place in the entire New Testament that has this exact phrase in the Greek.

Romans 2:14: "For when *the* Gentiles, which do not have *the* Law, practice by nature the things contained in the Law, these who do not have *the* Law are a law unto themselves; who show the work of the Law written in their own hearts... [he's commending them for that] ...their consciences bearing witness, and their reasonings also as they accuse or defend one another)" (vs 14-15).

Every place else in the New Testament

where in the *King James* it says 'the works of the law' does not mean what it says here in v 14. In the Greek everywhere else it is 'ergon'(plural)—works; 'nomo'—law. 'Works of law,' not meaning the laws of God.

I got into detail a little more than I intended to, but sometimes you don't want to leave something hanging, so we won't leave it hanging. Remember:

- law-keeping is separate from justification
- no law can forgive
- forgiveness is an act of God through the blood of Jesus Christ

When you are forgiven, you are justified. If you have *KJV*, you will find that it doesn't read like this, because it's incorrect.

Romans 3:20: "Therefore, by **works of law** there shall no flesh be justified before Him; for through *the* Law is *the* knowledge of sin.... [That's what law does. **Where there is no law, there is no sin.**] ...But now, *the* righteousness..." (vs 20-21).

This righteousness is the righteousness from justification. So, as we read here, what I'm going to do to make it have more sense for you, is to read it, "...now, **the righteousness [justification] of God...**" because he's talking in v 20 about being justified or justification, and in v 30 he's talking about *justify* or *justification*. So let's read the rest of this now, and where it says *righteousness* we will read it as *justification*.

Verse 22 "Even **the righteousness [justification]** of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **but are being justified** freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus" (vs 22-24).

If you can grasp that, you understand one of the most difficult parts of Paul's writing as translated in the *King James*. So that's how you're justified. That's why *you can never be justified by law-keeping, but you must be keeping the law before you can be justified*—two different operations.

Verse 24: "**But are being justified** freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; *yes*, to publicly declare His righteousness in the present time, that He might be just, and the One Who justifies the one who *is* of *the* faith of Jesus" (vs 24-26).

Now let's see where he's leading with this. Once you have your sins forgiven through the blood

of Jesus Christ, once you've been justified to God, once that you have that right standing with God, the question then becomes: What do we do?

Verse 27: "Therefore, where *is* boasting? It is excluded. Through what law? *The law* of works? By no means! Rather, *it is* through a law of faith." And what is that law of faith?

- repent
- be baptized
- receive the Holy Spirit
- by believing in Jesus Christ

—that is the law of faith. In Rom. 8 it's called *the law of the Spirit*. You would think that would be a contradictory term, but it's not.

Verse 28: "Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified by faith, separate from works of law.... [two different things] ... *Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also *the God* of the Gentiles? YES! *He is* also God of *the* Gentiles since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. **Are we, then, abolishing the Law through faith?....** [now we're getting to where we need to go] ...MAY IT NEVER BE!...." (vs 28-31). The *King James* says, 'God forbid.' But that isn't what the Greek reads. The Greek is 'me ginoito'—which means *this thought should never exist*.

So, I translated it: "...MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing *the Law*" (v 31).

- How?
- Why?
- How are you establishing it?
- Why are you establishing it?

We found out that it's through *the grace of God* we have our sins forgiven. Now then we establish "...*the Law*."

- What happens after you repent and receive the Holy Spirit of God?
- Where do the laws go? *Into your heart and into your mind!*

So, you establish it *within!* That's why law-keeping in the New Testament, according to the New Covenant, is *by grace*, because this undoes completely Deut. 5, 'Oh, that there were a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep My commandments always.'

Now through forgiveness/justification—through repentance and baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit—you establish the Law, and *by the grace of God you receive the heart and desire to keep the laws and commandments of God!* That's why New Testament commandment-keeping is by grace, because it's by the Spirit from *within*.

Romans 5 talks about *justification* and so forth, carrying with the same thing we had in Rom. 3.

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?... ['me ginoito']: ...MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin... [How do you die to sin? *Through baptism!*] ...how shall we live any longer therein?" (vs 1-2).

- we establish law by faith, which then has to be through grace
- we do not continue in sin so that grace may abound

Now let me read you what Martin Luther wrote, because he is the one who said that 'you are saved by faith and grace and faith alone; you don't have to keep the commandments of God.' Well, he was a false prophet. Luther claimed that a person who had been saved through the grace of God could not lose salvation. Have you ever heard of eternal security? *Once you're saved, always saved!*

- What do you do with the Scriptures that talk about the unpardonable sin?
- What do you do with Rev. 20 that the wicked whose names are not written in the Book of Life are cast into the Lake of Fire?
- What do you do with Heb. 6 that if they sin the unpardonable sin, it's impossible to renew them unto repentance?

Here's what Martin Luther said:

Be a sinner and let your sins be strong, but let your faith in Christ be stronger.

I wonder what Luther's going to do at the resurrection? He's going to say, 'Lord, Lord, look what I did.' Christ is going to say, 'Depart from me you who work iniquity or lawlessness, because here's what you taught':

Be a sinner and let your sins be strong, but let your faith in Christ be stronger and rejoice in Christ Who is the Victor over sin, death and the world. We will commit sins, while we are here, for this life is not a place where righteousness can exist. No sin can separate us from Him.

Let's go back and read Isa. 59; let's look at '*No sin can separate you from God.*' Well, if you sin and don't repent, you're already separated from God! Luther was also one of the first ones to say that you don't have to pay attention to the Old Testament. But Paul wrote that the '*Holy Writings are able to make you wise through faith in Christ Jesus*'—right? Didn't he write that? *Yes, indeed!*

Isaiah 59:1: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor is His ear heavy that it cannot hear. But your iniquities... [which are sin] ...have come between you and your God, and your sins have hid *His* face from you, that He will not hear... [that's just the opposite of what Luther wrote] ...for your hands are defiled with blood... [talks about murder] ...and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perverseness" (vs 1-3). I just read what Luther wrote:

No sin can separate us from Him, even if we were to kill or commit adultery a thousand times each day.

I remember talking to a woman and she was bragging what a good Baptist she was and that she was 'born again,' and once saved, always saved. I said, 'Well, that's interesting.' She told me how she believed in the 'rapture' and so forth; I let her go on. Then I asked her, when she was done, 'Now, what if you were right in the middle of an act of committing adultery and the 'rapture' occurred. Would you be raptured to meet Jesus?' 'Oh, yes!' I said, 'Lady, you are certainly deceived.' That shows you what disrespect they have toward keeping the commandments of God.

So we establish Law through faith and in grace we don't use that as a license to sin, because that is *lawlessness*. This shows us with the laws and commandments in our heart and in our mind that when we keep the commandments of God in the Spirit of God, by the Spirit of God, in the Spirit of the Law, we are keeping it through grace.

Now let's see how that works. We will see that John is talking about keeping the commandments of God based upon grace.

1-John 2:1: "My little children... [I suppose at 95 you could write to everyone and say that] ... I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous."

We are to repent everyday. Isn't that in the daily prayer? '*Our Father who art in heaven; Hallowed be Your name; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us*'—debts or sins, it's all interchangeable there.

That's another thing that's important, brethren. As you heard me say recently—and I need to mention it more and more—*we do not understand the healing affect, mentally and spiritually and physically, that forgiveness has in our lives and in our thinking!* We've got to also

understand that it's very, very important: *We cannot expect God to forgive us all our sins if we don't forgive others all their sins!* It says, 'forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.'

A lot of the sickness and difficulties that we have in the Church are because of the lack of forgiveness by retaining hatred, bitterness, resentment, jealousy, self will, *as opposed to yielding to the will of God*. So, all of those need to be forgiven. You need to go to God and ask Him to give you the help to cleanse your mind. I know that there are women who have had abuse and incest problems with their husbands, brothers and cousins, that they still bear this scar. You need to repent and you need to forgive them, and likewise the boys or men who perpetrated it at that time, too. Now what if they're already dead? You still forgive them before God, so that you're not carrying that load in your mind. Because what you are doing is *you are carrying sin in your mind*.

What do you do when things come along and there are great spiritual tests because of great spiritual sins? You still have to stay close to God and don't you get wrapped up in sinning by your response against their sins. Put them in God's hands, because God can do something about what they're doing, and all of your mental fighting, anguish and torment that comes, analyzing what's going on, doesn't change a thing. Only God can! In the meantime, with ObamaCare coming down, you better take care of your health, because he 'ain't a-gonna.' He wants all of us old fogies to die off, so he'll have a one-party system and he can become dictator.

This is not the first time that nations have had to face evil because of the lack of repentance of the people. You saw what happened to the Church. The faithful ones left and we were accused of being the evil ones. It's the same thing here. We have to go to Christ, and we have to have those sins forgiven. We must forgive! Another thing, too, along those lines: do not lay awake at night and fret, stew and worry about your children, regardless of their age, or about problems of other people. Pray for them, put it into God's hands, what you can do to help them—that's it. What happens when you're laying there in bed at night tossing and turning and not sleeping and wondering why God allowed this? The answer is simple: *sin, stupid!*

- Let God handle it!
- God alone can do it!

I don't know about you, but in my lifetime I've had to do it many times. God has handled the problem in a way that took care of it, but in a way that I didn't think would happen. You probably heard me say a time or two that I was laying there in

bed at night, one of the lowest valleys of the 'walking through the valley of the shadow of death' that I went through when the problems were in the Church, and I sat up in bed at two o'clock in the morning and said, 'They can't do this!' But they already did. So, I had to learn the lesson. That's why, if you've got something heavy on your mind, you pray before you go to bed. You leave it all with Christ. You put it there at the altar of God. That's why it says 'don't let the sun go down on your wrath.' Resolve it first.

Now back to keeping the commandments of God by the grace of God, by establishing law through faith, and grace through faith.

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Since the question came up, we'll expand it a little bit further: What do you do when you see tyranny operating within your government? It's not the first time in history it's happened; every empire falls when it reaches its height. The generation caught in the fall suffers a great deal. So what we need to do is:

- ask God to give us wisdom
- pray the prayer of Psalms 91
- be 'wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove'
- stand for the Truth.
- 'pray for those who despitefully use you' — isn't that what Jesus said?

And if certain ones make you angry, turn off the television. Dolores flips to another channel. I have a blue channel on the television that I watch. So if there's some things that I don't like, either in an advertisement or what's going on, I hit for the blue channel and I have peace and serenity with nothing but blue. All of that is part of **guarding the door of your mind**—that's also important.

1-John 2:1: "...so that you may not sin. And yet, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous." This also shows repentance every day and when we pray to God.

The longer you live the more that you understand that any righteousness that you have comes from God; any good that really takes place comes from God. Because we have the Spirit of God within—His laws and commandments written in our heart and mind—that's what this does for us. It does something that only happens in this particular way to converted people with the Spirit of God. **You recognize the sin as it begins in your mind before you carry it out!** You're able to do that.

That is discernment of the Holy Spirit to lead you to repentance. That's what that is. A lot of people confuse that and say, 'Well, if I've repented, why do I have this in my mind?' *God wants you to*

repent of it and get it out of your mind! Therefore, through the Holy Spirit it is revealed to you that you may repent. Think about that! That's all *part of grace*, exposing the sin that's within. Everything that we've ever said, done, thought, saw, heard, smell is recorded somewhere in that gray-matter. The only thing that can erase it is the Spirit of God. That's why it says we're to be cleansed of the flesh and cleansed of the spirit. The Holy Spirit will do that for us.

Verse 2: "And He is *the* propitiation... [*continual atonement throne or seat for our sins*] ...for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world." We know that that has to come in time. God has not yet forgiven the sins of the whole world, because the whole world has not yet repented. They will have a chance during the Millennium and the second resurrection. That's when their time comes, our time is now.

Now I want to talk to you a little bit about the theory of translation as we get to v 3. The New Testament is written in what is called the *ellipsis form*. In other words, some things are said in a way that you fill in the other part of it.

Verse 3 shows this: "And by this *standard*..."—from the Greek 'en toutoo'—meaning *in this* or *by this*. He has it all the way through the book of 1-John. The one who is reading is to fill in the missing 'by this' what. 'By this means'; 'by this standard'; 'by this' whatever.]

Verse 3: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him..." The only way you know God is how? Through:

- repentance
- baptism
- the Holy Spirit of God
- the Word of God

So, this is a *spiritual* thing!

"...if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (vs 3-4). Notice what *keeping* the Word of God is meant to be through the grace of God:

Verse 5: "On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word..." That's the whole sum total of everything that Jesus taught. And for us, that's the whole sum total of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

"...truly in this one the love of God is being perfected..." (v 5). That's spiritual, brethren!

So, we keep the laws and commandments and Word of God by the grace of God. The carnal mind is *'enmity against the Law of God, is not subject to the Law of God, and neither indeed can*

be!' The carnal Christian says, because he's contemptuous of the Law of God, 'Oh, you don't need to keep it.' *or* 'that's been done away.' *or* 'the New Covenant says that Paul abolished the commandments,' because there are some difficult Scriptures to understand that Paul wrote. We'll cover those in the *Bible Answers to the Evangelicals*.

Now notice the next sentence here, 'en toutoo': "...By this *means* we know that we are in Him" (vs 3-5). So, our conversion becomes—through the relationship with God—something that we know, and we *know* that we know! Always remember this, never forget this: ***Truth can be proven over and over and over and over again!*** And ***of the Truth***, as John writes a little later, ***there is no lie***. But men can make the Truth a lie by using part of the Truth.

You know they get into court and they have this ceremony that they go through. Put your hand on the Bible and, 'Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?' *Yes!* That means you're going to get up there and lie through your teeth! The truth is everything, not one side of the story or a version of the truth that makes you feel good—*truth is the truth. We need to have the love of God being perfected in us!*

- Isn't that something?
- Is that not by the grace of God?
- Is that not by the Spirit of God?
- *Yes, indeed!*

What we are covering here is that when we view and keep the commandments of God, through the grace of God, we have greater understanding of the meaning of the Word of God and His grace and everything else with it. Faith is a living, growing thing, because our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is a living, growing thing. We're to grow in grace. We're to grow in knowledge.

This is the heart and key to everything and you'll even hear this mimicked in the carnal Christianity of the world. They say we need a relationship with God. That is true, but what does that mean?

1-John 1:3: "That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship... [that's what it is in the Greek, *the fellowship*] ...indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ." God the Father has called us and that's where we started out. God the Father has led us, He has taught us. We have

- through prayer
- through study
- through living

- through thinking
- through our daily lives

an ongoing constant relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. And that is *by grace*.

God gives us His Spirit to dwell *in* us. Jesus said the Father and He would make Their abode *in us*. That's something! Don't ever think that God doesn't want you or God doesn't love you. ***No!—He wants you and loves you! He needs you; He's called you!***

You look at everything that's going wrong in the world and He's calling you now to be educated so you can learn His way and learn His love, so you and I and all of the true converted Christians are going to help correct every problem in this world when Christ returns. Remember that the next time you see the arrogance of our President spouting off lofty sinful words. He may get away with what he's getting away with, but *his day is coming* and God is going to deal with him. We don't have to deal with him, but here's the main thing we need to do:

"...our fellowship is with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ." That is the key as to how we keep the commandments of God and that is through the grace of God.

Now let's notice how it operates, 1-John 3:10: "By this *standard* are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil..." Satan has his children; his children practice sin. ***The children of God practice righteousness!*** If we sin, we repent.

"...Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, and neither is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from *the* beginning: that we should love one another" (vs 10-11).

As a matter of fact, when you go through the Passover ceremony, you find that Jesus said four times, ***'Love one another as I have loved you! Live in My love!'*** He also said five times that He would ***hear and answer our prayers***, right there in the Passover ceremony. What God has given us is something that is *spiritual, vital and living* that we use every day.

Verse 12: "Not as Cain, *who* was of the wicked *one*, and murdered his own brother. And what was the reason that he murdered him? Because his own works were wicked, but his brother's works were righteous."

That reminds me of an e-mail that I got. I may have mentioned it a time or two, but I just remembered it. I got an e-mail from a nun in a nunnery who saw one of the programs, or she saw the ad concerning the Bible, and she wrote me the

nastiest thing and she said, 'Blinkity blank, and may your soul rot in hell forever.' I know what it was, I said that Catholics are not Christian. So, I e-mailed her back, and I said, 'My, what a very Christian attitude this is. You just proved my point. Because Jesus said we are to pray for our enemies and those who spitefully use us. Why would you condemn me when you don't even know me, and you claim to be a Catholic? Maybe you're not Christian.' Do you think I should take it? *No, I'll answer her back, not in kind, but with the Truth of God!*

Verse 13: "My brethren, do not be amazed if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren. The one who does not love *his* brother is dwelling in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer..." (vs 13-15). Now it's spiritually binding! Hatred becomes murder, because hatred is the first thought which leads to murder.

"...and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him.... [compare that with what Christ has done—'en toutoo']: ...By this *very* act... [because that's what it's talking about] ... we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us..." (vs 15-16).

Think about what Jesus did. Remember, He was Creator of everything, Creator of all mankind; and only His life could pay for the sins of all humanity—past, present and future—because He's Creator of them. He willingly laid down His life; no one took it from Him. 'He laid it down and He had commandment from the Father to receive it back.' So, when you think that you've stretched yourself out as far as you can go, think about what Christ has done. Not only during the Days of Unleavened Bread are we to get sin out, we are to put righteousness in. Think about what Jesus did.

Verse 17: "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him? My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love* in deed and in Truth" (vs 17-18). The word *deed* comes from the Greek 'ergon'—*a work of love*.

Verse 19: "And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him." That's what we want, brethren. Repentance leads to assurance of heart. You don't have to go around with condemnation and with a guilty conscience or feeling. If you do, repent of it; ask God to take it from you.

Here's why, v 20: "That if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things. Beloved, if our hearts do not

condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God" (vs 20-21).

Isn't it true, when you sin and haven't repented and come to God, you just don't feel the confidence that you do once you've had the slate cleaned and everything wiped away. Let's put it this way: If you got a ticket for speeding and you didn't pay it, and you got notice after notice after notice, and they finally said, 'Well, we're going to suspend your license.' So, you finally paid with all fines and everything and it's relieved, you feel better. But if you would have taken care of it the first time, then you wouldn't have that hanging over you. Likewise, if you have a guilty feeling, don't carry it. If you have self-condemnation or self-fear, don't carry it; *repent of it. Go to God!* That way your heart will not condemn you. Then your prayers will become much more effectual, because you will have confidence toward God. That's what it's telling us here.

Verse 21: "Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God. And whatever we may ask we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight" (vs 21-22). *That has to be by the grace of God!*

Isn't it amazing? All these years, we've been fighting the battle of grace or commandment-keeping, and the answer is that *to keep the commandments of God in the Spirit is through the grace of God!* Can you please God? *That's another thing!* You'll go around with a guilty feeling, 'I'll never please God.' *Yes, you will if you repent! if you do those things that are pleasing in His sight!*

- Is God pleased when you keep the Sabbath? *Yes!*
- Is God pleased when you repent of your sins? *Yes!*
- Is God pleased when you pray for someone else? *Yes!*
- Is God pleased when you love the brethren? *Yes! That's pleasing in His sight!*
- Is God pleased when you forgive? *Yes! God is pleased!*

Stop and think how many people in the world are doing any of that. Couldn't tell you, we don't know! *Only God knows the heart and mind of people and where they are!* We can be rest assured God is working with many more people than we know of. God is greater than our little sphere of things. That's why it's such a terrible thing for any corporate church to stand up and say, 'This is the only Church of God.' They've forgotten what God told Elijah. 'I've seven thousand that didn't bow the knee to Baal.' Elijah never knew about it.

“...practice those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us” (vs 22-23). This tells us that ***commandment-keeping in the New Testament is by the Spirit and grace of God!***

Verse 24: “And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him, and He in him... [conversion] ...and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: **by the Spirit which He has given to us**” (vs 22-24). There it is right there and it's been there all this time.

I preached how many sermons about keeping the commandments of God, and lo and behold, there it is. *By faith we establish law!* Through:

- faith
- repentance
- baptism
- receiving of the Holy Spirit

we have the commandments of God written in our heart and in our mind ,and in keeping those, we keep them through the grace of God.

So, that's another meaning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, putting in that kind of righteousness and ***let that be the way that we think and live and behave.***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 3:30
- 2) Romans 2:13
- 3) Acts 2:38
- 4) Romans 2:14-15
- 5) Romans 3:20-31
- 6) Romans 6:1-2
- 7) Isaiah 59:1-3
- 8) 1-John 2:1-5
- 9) 1-John 1:3
- 10) 1-John 3:10-24

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 5
- Romans 8
- Deuteronomy 5
- Revelation 20
- Hebrews 6
- Psalm 91

Also referenced:

From *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*: Appendix R: What is Meant by “the Works of the Law”

Sermon Series:

- *Scripturalism vs Judaism*
- *Bible Answers to Evangelicals*

Books:

- *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Which Day is the True Christian Sabbath?* by Fred R. Coulter

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