

Gospel Therefore

Gospel – Is there More?

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, February 5, 2012

‘Justification’ describes the finished work of Christ that...

- found us in our sin...
- made us objects of His mercy...
- moved us out of darkness into His glorious light...
- out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of His dear Son...
- and out of bondage to our sins... into freedom to say ‘No’ to sin now

‘Sanctification’ describes the ongoing process of becoming more and more like Christ by obeying the Gospel imperatives...

- to pursue holiness...
- and to put off and put on...
- and to put to death sin in your lives...

Three Gospel Grips to keep you balanced in your Christian life.

I. Don’t Ever Get Over Where You Started – But Continue to Elevate and Celebrate the Gospel Indicatives in Your Life

‘Indicatives’ simply means what God has done for us that we could never do for ourselves – we’ve been forgiven... and been redeemed... and been set free... and been adopted. In all these verbs God is the one moving... and we’re on the receiving end.

I Corinthians 15:1-8

I Corinthians 15:3 ESV “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures”

II. Don’t Ever Confuse Elevating and Celebrating the Gospel Indicatives with Making Excuses for being Spiritually Lazy – and Ignoring Biblical Imperatives

The Apostle Paul that reveled in the glories of the Gospel... and what God has DONE for us... is the same man that tells us to get going in the Christian life... and to live out the truth of what God has put in us through His Son Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 15:9-10 “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy 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 toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

ESV “On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”

Philippians 2:12-13 “... work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

New Living “Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

The Message “Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God’s energy, an energy deep within you...”

God didn’t design the Christian life to be easy. It’s going to take effort... discipline... and sacrifice to follow Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:13 “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

1 Corinthians 9:26–27 “Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

Ephesians 4:22–24 “²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

1 Timothy 6:12 “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses”

Hebrews 12:1–4 “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.”

2 Peter 1:2–10 NIV “² Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 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. ⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall.”

Notice the word ‘Effort’ in v. 5. Effort is not a bad word in the Christian life... and putting forth effort doesn’t mean you’ve lost sight of the Gospel. You put forth effort in light of the Gospel!

“Peter exhorted his readers to a godly life (vv. 5–7) because Christ has given them everything they need for a godly life, and they possess magnificent promises of future perfection. It would be a serious mistake, therefore, to dismiss the call to virtue as legalism or moralism. The exhortation to holiness is grounded in God’s work of salvation as it has been accomplished in Jesus Christ. As is typical in the New Testament, grace precedes demand. The priority of grace, however, does not cancel out strenuous moral effort. Believers are to ‘make every effort’ or apply ‘all diligence’ (NASB) in carrying out Peter’s commands. A godly character does not emerge from passivity or lassitude.” Schreiner, T. R. (2007). Vol. 37: 1, 2 Peter, Jude (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (298). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

If you want to please God... and grow to be more like Christ... it’s going to take focused effort. It’s not just going to happen automatically because you’re being exposed to the glories of the Gospel.

There’s a danger of unhealthy reductionism that reduces the entire Christian life down to the Gospel and ignores so many of Christ’s commands.

III. Concentrate on Holding to the Center of Biblical Tension Between These Two Great Truths of Gospel Imperatives and Gospel Indicatives

Real spiritual maturity is when you learn to love and live with biblical tension between these two. It’s not either/or... it’s both/and. And really... you don’t even start to grow up in Christ until you learn to love and live out both of these great truths... but it’s tough to stay in the middle... and to hold onto both.

"Balance is that elusive point we pass through on our way to another extreme." - Warren Wiersbe

The Christian life needs to be tuned to just the right tension of biblical indicatives and biblical imperatives. If you just focus solely on indicatives you’re life is going to sag eventually... but if you hammer on the imperatives non-stop... turning up the tension... you’re going to snap.

If you want your life to sing and soar as a doxology of praise to God then you better get in tune with both the indicatives and the imperatives.

I Corinthians 15:10 “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”