

GRACE BY DESIGN

The Building Blocks of Grace

A Study of Romans 2:17-3:20

WEEK 4: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

Reach Bible Fellowship

Todd Wangsness

Grace By Design: Study Outline

Week 1:	Romans	Overview of Grace and Salvation
Week 2:	Rom 1:1 – 1:17	Introduction to Romans
Week 3:	Rom 1:18 – 2:16	Justification – Ignorance is not an Excuse
Week 4:	**Rom 2:17 – 3:20**	**Justification – Knowledge isn't Good Enough**
Week 5:	Rom. 3:21 – 3:24	Justification – Righteousness of God Revealed 1
Week 6:	Rom. 3:25 – 3:31	Justification – Righteousness of God Revealed 2
Week 7:	Rom. 4:1 – 4:25	Justification – Faith vs the Law
Week 8:	Rom. 5:1 – 5:11	Sanctification – Peace with God 1
Week 9:	Rom. 5:12 – 5:21	Sanctification – Peace with God 2
Week 10:	Rom. 6:1 – 6:14	Sanctification – The Christian's Struggle with Sin 1
Week 11:	Rom. 6:15 – 6:23	Sanctification – The Christian's Struggle with Sin 2
Week 12:	Rom. 7:1 – 7:25	Sanctification – The Law Can't Save (But the Spirit Can!)
Week 13:	Rom. 8:1 – 8:17	Sanctification – Life in the Spirit
Week 14:	Rom. 8:18 – 8:30	Glorification – From Suffering to Glory
Week 15:	Rom. 8:31 – 8:39	Glorification – God's Everlasting Love
Week 16:	Rom. 9:1 – 9:33	Israel's Rejection and God's Purpose
Week 17:	Rom. 10:1 – 10:13	Israel and the Mystery of the Church 1
Week 18:	Rom. 10:14 – 10:21	Israel and the Mystery of the Church 2
Week 19:	Rom. 11:1 – 11:36	The Salvation of the Jewish people
Week 20:	Rom. 12:1 – 12:2	Living the Transformed Life
Week 21:	Rom. 12:3– 12:8	Gifts of the Spirit
Week 22:	Rom. 12:9– 12:21	The Christian Walk
Week 23:	Rom. 13:1 – 13:14	Love Fulfills the Law
Week 24:	Rom. 14:1 – 14:21	Not Judging the Weak in Faith
Week 25:	Rom. 15:1 – 15:25	Bearing One Another's Burdens
Week 26:	Rom. 16:1 – 16:25	Conclusion and closing remarks

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

Romans 2

:17-24 ***Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, 18 and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. 21 You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? 24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.***

- **We can substitute "Christian" wherever we see the word "Jew"**
  - **Paul is directly addressing those that have access to the Word of God**
  - **Think of all the edifices to Christianity throughout the Western world that are amazing architectural wonders, but completely devoid of any movement of the Holy Spirit**
  - **However, Paul is bringing the condemnation down to the individual level, not just failed institutions**

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

- There is a tendency in the church to rest on our laurels, so to speak
  - "I was saved back when I was 17 years old"
  - "I went down to the altar at a crusade"
  - "I was baptized into the church"
  - "I was confirmed when I was a teenager"
  - "See this nifty cross I wear? That's proof that I'm a Christian!"
  - "I have a bible somewhere in the house, give me a few minutes and I'll find it!"
- Not all who go down to an altar call are saved
  - *Mat 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

- **Jesus should be the focus of our lives after we become a Christian**
- **His Will should be our will**
- **His Will is to do the work the Father sent Him to do, which was to reach the lost**
  - ***Joh 4:34-35 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 3 5 Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!***
- **Do our lives manifest an urgency in reaching the lost?**
- **Or do we at times cause the Name of the Lord to be "blasphemed" among our unsaved friends and family by our actions?**

"In every Christian's heart there is a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross; if he refuses the cross, he remains on the throne. Perhaps this is at the bottom of the backsliding and worldliness among gospel believers today. We want to be saved, but we insist that Christ do all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying. We remain king within the little kingdom of Mansoul and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar; but we doom ourselves to shadows and weakness and spiritual sterility." -- A. W. Tozer

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

Romans 2

:25-29 ***For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. 26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? 27 And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law? 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.***

- **How many people do we know that aren't Christians, but live moral and upright lives better than ourselves?**
- **It's great to know the Word, but do we LIVE it?**
- **Years ago, a young pupil in Russia memorized all four gospel accounts word for word and could quote them without a break in one sitting**
  - **The youngster's name was Nikita Krushchev**
  - **As he rose to power, he turned to the dark side and used his immense knowledge of scripture to attack anyone who espoused faith**
- **Satan knows the Word better than ANY human … and he is the premier enemy of God**

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

Death-bed Confessions

- **VOLTAIRE – Famous anti-Christian atheist: "…I am abandoned by God and man." He said to his physician, Dr. Fochin: "I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months of life." When he was told this was impossible, he said, "Then I shall die and go to hell!" His nurse said: "For all the money in Europe I wouldn't want to see another unbeliever die! All night long he cried for forgiveness."**
- **SIR THOMAS SCOTT—Chancellor of England: "Until this moment I thought there was neither a God nor a hell. Now I know and feel that there are both, and I am doomed to perdition by the just judgment of the Almighty."**
- **SIR FRANCIS NEWPORT—Head of an English Atheist club, to those gathered around his deathbed: "You need not tell me there is no God, for I know there is one, and that I am in his presence! You need not tell me there is no hell. I feel myself already slipping. Wretches, cease your idle talk about there being hope for me! I know I am lost forever! Oh, that fire! Oh, the insufferable pains of hell!"**
- **ANTON LEVEY—Author of the Satanic Bible and high priest of the religion dedicated to the worship of Satan. One of his famous quotes was: "There is a beast in man that needs to be exercised, not exorcised". His dying words were: "Oh my, oh my, what have I done, there is something very wrong. . . there is something very wrong."**
- **DAVID HUME— Atheist philosopher famous for his philosophy of empiricism and skepticism of religion: He cried loud on his death bed "I am in flames!" It is said his desperation was a horrible scene.**

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

Romans 3

:1-4 ***What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. 3 For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? 4 Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judged."***

- **There isn't a question about whether Jews (or Western society) know about God**
- **Does this knowledge solve our spiritual problem?**
- **Does this mean we don't need a Savior?**
- **God says, "Even though you know … you don't believe!"**
- **Quite the contrary, it simply condemns us that much more**

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

Romans 3

:5-8 ***But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) 6 Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? 7 For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8 And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.***

- **We cannot say to God, "But you made me this way! It's not fair for You to judge me!"**
- **Our whole culture has been established on the Reformation**
- **There are bibles in every hotel room or easily available from a myriad of sources**
- **Bible quotes are embedded in our literature and there is a plethora of bible knowledge at our fingertips through the internet**
- **We who have the bible today are under more judgment than the Jews to which Paul was writing due to the proliferation of biblical knowledge and availability**

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

Romans 3

:9 ***What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.***

- **Paul summarizes by saying that it doesn't matter if you're a Gentile, a Jew or a 21st century Western society citizen, we are all under sin and equally under God's judgment and wrath**

:10-18 ***As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways; 17 And the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."***

- **Paul paints a very vivid picture of the human condition.**
- **We are not able to truthfully say that we're not as bad as others.**
- **We are sold under sin…*"there is none who does good, no, not one!"***

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

Romans 3

:19-20 ***Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.***

- **It doesn't matter if we have betrayed our conscience or violated what God has revealed in His Word**
- **By the Law of our conscience or the Law revealed in the bible, we have intentionally and purposefully broken those Laws**

- ***Rom 7:13b "But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good (God's commands), so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."***

- **We are ALL GUILTY and are under God's very real wrath which will be unleashed at His coming!**

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

- *Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.*

- *1 Joh 2:3-4 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

- *Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
  - **Greek: *gennaō anōthen; "born from above – a higher place"***

- *2 Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.*

- **But – back to our theme verse – "THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION"**
- **There is HOPE! Next week we get into the 'rest of the story'!**

Grace By Design: Knowledge isn't Good Enough

Questions to ponder…

- **How do we "know" we are saved?**
- **The New Testament mentions several times "do not be deceived". In what ways can we deceive ourselves?**
- **We are all born with certain proclivities … is God just in placing us under His wrath for these?**
- ***1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.***
  - **Why does God use a definite article when describing "the way of escape"?**
- **Does God tempt us?**
  - **Ref Jam 1:13**
- **Heb 12:1-2 talks about "laying aside the sin that so easily ensnares us". Doesn't that sound a little like pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps?**
  - **Ref Phil 2:12-13**