



GLOBAL GRACE NETWORK

GGN is a fellowship of ministers and churches that advocate the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ – Jesus alone, grace alone, faith alone. Our purpose is twofold: to help the church rediscover Jesus and to take this message to the world.

OCTOBER 2008

## The BETTER has come!

Jesus is the Mediator of a *better* covenant established on better promises. Better than what? Better than the old covenant! The old covenant with the Mosaic Law was a shadow of the good things that should come, but the good things came with Christ. Christ is the reality! The better!

The new covenant is very different in nature than the old covenant. And they are not living side by side, as some may think. The better one has *replaced* the old one. What a change in our lives when we understand what this powerful truth means for our lives and ministries.

This month's newsletter is all about this BETTER that has come: the new covenant. We will look at the difference between the two covenants, and how they should not be mixed. Enjoy the teachings, and let the Holy Spirit bring the light of revelation and great comfort as you read the articles and study this truth.

A teaching outline is also included, as well as some questions and answers on this month's topic. We will also get acquainted with a pastor from Finland and the encouraging words in his testimony.



Mary Felde  
Editor

# THE CROSS DIVIDES the old... from the NEW

by Peter Youngren

*While most Christians recognize that the cross of Jesus is important, many do not recognize the immensity of its significance.*

The cross is the dividing line between the old and new covenants. When Jesus cried out "it is finished," the old had passed away and the new had come!

### AN ENORMOUS CHANGE

The change was so enormous that at first even Jesus' disciples found it difficult to leave the old behind. Simon Peter was corrected several times, both directly by Jesus (Acts 10 and 11) and by Paul (Galatians 2), because he was seduced back to the old covenant in the face of which Jesus had already accomplished at the cross. If the apostle, who preached on the Day of Pentecost, and who saw miracles as his shadow fell on the sick needed correction, it is no surprise that many today have failed to understand Jesus' full work of redemption. Instead of zigzagging back and forth between the old and the new covenants we must let our compass, the Holy Spirit, focus our direction and remind us of all that Jesus has done for us and for the world.

### GOD HAS ALREADY GIVEN EVERYTHING

Before the cross people engaged in spiritual activities in order to obtain something from God, while after the cross we pray, worship and believe because of what God has already provided for us. The Law of Moses was clear that people had to obey and keep the commandments "day and night" in order to receive God's blessing (of course, no one ever succeeded). In the new covenant we receive the blessing because of what Jesus has done; His obedience and sacrifice has been credited to us.

Jabez prayed in order to get God to bless him. That was a good prayer for Jabez, because he lived under the old covenant, but it is not suitable for us. We pray because God has already blessed us in Christ: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3)

Notice God “has blessed” us; it is not a matter of “going to bless us.”

### **GOD HAS ALREADY “MOVED”**

Our new life in Christ is entirely dependent upon and wrapped up in Jesus’ finished work. It’s not “you move

*He doesn't respond to us because of our efforts - God has already responded by providing all we will ever need in Jesus Christ.*

and then God moves,” as I have often heard preachers say. Our message is that God has already been appeased by the sacrifice of Jesus. God has already “moved.” He doesn’t respond to us because of our efforts - God has already responded by providing all we will ever need in Jesus Christ. Our job is simply to believe what Jesus has done. Our faith does not move God; if it did that would mean God is in the wrong place. No, faith is relying on what Jesus has done. Faith does not look forward to what God will do someday (that would be old covenant thinking), but real faith looks at what Jesus has done on the cross. It is sufficient.

### **DISCOVER WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE**

Before the cross we have types, shadows and rituals. After the cross we have reality. Before the cross believers looked forward to the work of Christ; now we look back at what He has done. This is the essence of the Christian life. When we first get saved we don’t know all that Christ has provided for. Still at that moment of “new birth” we receive everything we’ll ever need.

We need not look for “more” of God, since we already have it. Instead our quest is to discover what we have. Just like Adam had to open his eyes and discover all that God had provided in the Garden of Eden, so then the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to discover our inheritance. The Apostle Paul never suggested that the people lacked anything, but that they needed to acknowledge what they had. In his prayer for Philemon, he writes: “that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgement of every good

thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.” (Philemon 6)

If we were to ask many Christians to make two lists, one acknowledging all their deficiencies, failures and problems, and the other to acknowledge what they have, I’m afraid that the first list would be the longest. Our faith doesn’t become effective by pointing out what we don’t have, but what we have. When Paul addressed the Ephesian believers, he wrote: “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.” (Ephesians 1:17-19)

Notice Paul doesn’t pray that God will give the Ephesians anything - he prays their eyes will be opened to see what they have.

### **FILTER THE OLD TESTAMENT THROUGH THE CROSS OF JESUS**

The cross changes our view of the Old Testament scriptures, because we now understand that Moses, Psalms and the Prophets are testimonies of Jesus. (Luke 24:27, 44-45). Without this “Christ” revelation the Old Testament is a “veiled” book, read without understanding. “But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.” (2 Corinthians 3:14) Though Paul is addressing the Jewish scribes, the same is true today. Many read the Old Testament without the revelation of Christ’s finished work on the cross, when the only proper understanding of these scriptures is by filtering the Old Testament through the cross of Jesus. When we see Jesus, we recognize He is our double portion, the anointing, our intercessor, our faith, our all in all. We do not walk in the footsteps of Elijah or the other prophets; we follow Jesus Christ. These are not “the days of Elijah” or the “days of Ezekiel” but the days of Jesus Christ and His believers. Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets, vanished from the

Mount of Transfiguration, and only Jesus remained. What a beautiful picture of how the Old Testament order of Law and Prophets has passed away, to be replaced by Jesus Christ, in whom dwells all the fullness of God.

### **THE LAW IS FULFILLED**

Those who argue otherwise have a serious problem. According to Jesus we are liable for every “jot and tittle of the Law,” until “all is fulfilled.” Praise God that all is fulfilled! Otherwise we would be liable for every Mosaic ordinance. Instead we are in a new covenant, because “Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness.” (Romans 10:4)

Before the cross our obedience was on display; now it’s Christ’s obedience. Then it was an outward adherence to religious rituals; now it is the heart’s transformation by the power of the cross. No article can even begin to show the full depth of the cross of Jesus. Once we

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see even a glimpse of its significance, we discover that it forever separates us from the Law. The cross is the place of payment for the world’s sins. Now we approach God simply because of what Jesus has done. Suddenly the entire New Testament makes sense. The Apostle Paul’s writings come alive. We no longer see ourselves as “have-nots,” but we have everything in Christ.

### **A DISCOVERY TOUR**

I encourage you to go on a discovery tour. Read the New Testament as if you were reading it for the first time, and believe that “all things” for every area of our lives are ours through the knowledge of what Jesus did. (2 Peter 1:1-4)



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# The New Covenant

by Åge M. Åleskjær

## *Everything is new, different and better in the new covenant.*

It is important to focus on the fact that we now are living in a new covenant, we are new creations, and we have a new commandment.

The new covenant is established on better promises! We have a better high priest and a perfect tabernacle. "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises." (Heb. 8:6)

The old covenant was filled with many good promises, including promises about healing, health, a long life, financial prosperity, and victory over all the enemies. It had promises concerning God's protection and angels to watch over them, and about prayer and prayer answers. (Examples: Ex. 15:26, Ex. 23:25-26, Deut. 7:14-15, Ps. 91, Deut. 8, and Mal. 3:10.)

All of these promises are now *yes* in Christ Jesus! (2 Cor. 1:19-20)

The huge difference is this: now God has honored the promises – they are *yes* in Him. And now they are more than promises, they are a fact! Everything that was promised is already given in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 1:3) We no longer have to wait – the acceptable time is here. It is now! (2 Cor. 6:2)

Now we do not only have promises about healing, because by His stripes we have already received healing. Now we do not only have promises about getting blessed,

we are already blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, and we have become rich through His poverty. (Eph. 1:3, 2 Cor. 8:9)

We do not only have promises about victory, we are placed with Him in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion. He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world. Our faith is the victory that has overcome the world.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BLOOD**

We have to understand the significance of the blood of Jesus. The reason why the way to the presence of God was not open was that it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. But now He has entered the Most Holy Place with His own blood *once for all!* "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." (Heb. 10:4)

When Jesus said, "For this is My blood of the new covenant" (Matt. 26:28), he talked about the new covenant. The testament could not be in force before Calvary, because the blood had to testify to the death of the testator.

"For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives" (Heb. 9:17). Indeed the blood had to prove His death for the testament to be effective.

*The old covenant  
contained ten outward  
commandments; the  
new covenant is written  
in the heart.*

The blood is the foundation of the new covenant. The resurrection, which is the new birth and marks the beginning of the New Man, came as a result of the acceptance of the blood as the perfect sacrifice. Heb. 13:20 says: "Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus *from the dead*, that great Shepherd of the sheep, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant...*"

Again: the resurrection took place because of the blood! When the blood had been shed, and God's requirement for righteousness had been met, the resurrection could take place. This is why justification was not a fact before the resurrection: "[He] who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." (Rom 4:25) "And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!" (1 Cor. 15:17) But now Christ is risen!

### **EVERYTHING IS NEW AND DIFFERENT**

The entire letter to the Hebrews is about the difference between the old and the new covenants. In chapter 8 the Bible teaches us that the new covenant is different from the old, because it says that it is *not according to* the old. It is better, and it has replaced the old. The old covenant contained ten outward commandments; the new covenant is written in the heart. In the old covenant it was the prophet who knew the Lord; in the new covenant "they all shall know Me."

In the old covenant there was constantly a reminder of sin. In the new covenant the Lord will be merciful, and "their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

Because we are cleansed “once for all,” “we have no more consciousness of sins.” (Heb. 10:1-2)

In the old covenant the high priest was a man who needed to be replaced after his death. There were priests who carried out the service, and it was done in a tabernacle made with hands.

In the new covenant we have a High Priest who serves in the order of Melchizedek, and who lives forever. He is a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord erected. Here on earth all believers are priests to our God. We are ourselves a temple of the Spirit of God, and together with all the others we are being built, being joined together, and are growing into a holy temple in the Lord when we get together in the Name of Jesus. It is not the Prophets who lead us any longer. It is the Spirit of God who guides all the children of God. (Rom. 8:14-16)

#### **NO HOLY BUILDINGS, NO RITUALS**

In the new covenant there are no longer any holy buildings, because *we* are His house. (Heb. 3:6) We are His temple. He no longer lives in buildings made with hands. All systems with liturgies for the service, holy church buildings, priests, gowns, altars, holy places and special days are things that belonged to the old covenant. The new covenant started with the Redemption on Calvary. When Jesus was offered as our Paschal Lamb, it put an end to the old.

When some refer to Jesus clearing the temple as a defense for holy buildings, they have not understood what happened when Jesus shouted, “It is finished!” That is the time when the veil of the temple was torn apart from the top to the bottom. God moved out of stone buildings to live in His people, and we are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (Eph. 2:20-22) Now the

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dedicated temple is us! Even your body is a temple of the Spirit of God. (1 Cor. 6:19) God announces, “I have moved!”

For Christians living under the new covenant it is important to understand that the holy festivals belong in the old covenant. The holy festivals are fulfilled! It was Catholicism that brought back the celebration of certain days, and introduced worship of the Virgin Mary. Passover was a picture of the redemption. When Jesus came, he offered himself once for all. He does not have to die again every year.

Do not misunderstand me: I celebrate Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. But I know that I have been given Easter the whole year through - God is a reconciled God! And I have Pentecost the whole year through - the Spirit is here! It has become more to me than a week in the calendar; these are spiritual realities.

#### **THE NEW CREATION**

In the new covenant it is the new creation that counts. The new creation is faith and love. It is no longer about commandments and ordinances. Let us read from Col. 2:16-23: “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or

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regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—”Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments

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and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”

Here Paul is saying that when becoming religious you can easily become fleshly. He says that it will gratify the flesh to become religious and say that certain things are forbidden, some things are good— do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, keep the Sabbath, keep the holy festivals, etc. But a Christian is freed from all this. We are living under a new covenant.

#### **EXHORTATIONS WITH THE NEW CREATION AS AN ARGUMENT**

The Apostle Paul has given a lot of exhortations to the believers, both about conduct of life and worship. He is radical against sin among Christians, and says that you should not even eat together with Christians who live in evident sin. But all the time he is referring to the New Creation. We are a temple of the Holy Spirit. This is why we should not lie or steal, etc. It is by the power of the New Creation that we are able to live a holy life. Eph. 4:24, Col. 3:10-11, Eph. 2:8-10, and Col. 2:6-10 are examples of this. Man cannot save himself, and certainly not sanctify himself! But the one who is born again and filled with the Spirit, can live a life on a level that is impossible for a man living in his own strength.

*What a privilege to live in the new covenant, after Calvary, and after Pentecost!*

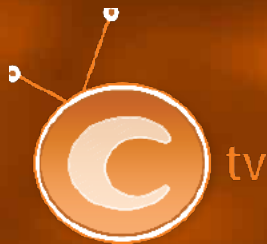


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# 2

## TWO GOSPEL OF GRACE SEMINARS IN KENYA

**Kakamega** | 5 days | November 4 through 8

**Kisumu** | 5 days | November 10 through 14

Seminar coordinator:  
**Bishop Zablon Malema**

GGN contact person in Kenya:  
**Bishop Jefferson Nyatuka**

Please send e-mail to  
**info@GlobalGraceNetwork.org**  
if you need help to get in contact  
with the seminar coordinator.

## Get CoNNeCted

**To connect** to this fellowship of ministers and Churches that advocate the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ, you may register here: [www.GlobalGraceNetwork.org/register](http://www.GlobalGraceNetwork.org/register)

The purpose of GGN is twofold: to help the church rediscover Jesus and to take this message to the world. For more information about GGN read the question and answer section of the Annual Newsletter 2008. [www.GlobalGraceNetwork.org/network](http://www.GlobalGraceNetwork.org/network)

When ministers and pastors register their membership, there is an annual fee of USD \$60.

Some of you might live in a nation facing financial or political disadvantages, thus making it hard to meet with a full annual

**Welcome** to each one of you that registered as members last month, and especially the 1500 pastors and ministers from Pakistan. We greatly rejoice at the opportunity to stay connected with you, and together we will take the Good News to the world!

fee. You may then choose a subsidized membership, equal in level, value and importance. The annual fee of a subsidized membership is USD \$10.

When Churches register their membership, there is a one time fee of USD \$150. The Church will receive a decorative plaque that identifies the Church and ministry as a part of GGN.

GGN's statement of faith is found in the Annual Newsletter of 2008.



# Related to the old and the NEW COVENANT

## At what time did the old covenant start? At the time of the book of Genesis, the first book in the Bible?

The Bible contains many covenants. The covenant that is referred to as the old covenant did not start with Adam or with Abraham, but with Moses. The old covenant was based on the Law given to Moses, and was dedicated with the blood of calves and goats. (Heb 9:18-20) This was a covenant God established with the people of Israel.

## At what time did the new covenant start? At the time of Jesus' birth or Jesus' death?

Some think the new covenant started at Jesus birth, which is also the way the Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. However, the Bible states that the new covenant could not start before Jesus died and shed his blood. The covenants of God are "covenants of blood." Even the old covenant could not be dedicated without blood. (Heb 9:15-22). The new covenant could therefore only be established when Jesus shed his blood for the remission of our sins. (Heb 9:23-27) Jesus himself said "this is My blood of the new covenant." (Matt 26:28) So the new covenant did not start at Jesus' birth but at Jesus' death, resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. However, when Jesus walked on this earth He was already carrying the sins of the world, and therefore some benefits of the new covenant could be given to individuals in advance.

## Is the old covenant still valid today, running together with the new covenant?

No, the old covenant was only valid until the cross of Jesus. The blood of calves and goats could never take away the sins, only the blood of Jesus could do that. (Heb 10:4, Heb 9:24-28). So the Law was a shadow of the good things to come, but the reality came with Christ. (Heb 10:1) God ended the old covenant and established the new covenant instead. (Heb 10:9, 8:6-8, 8:13) The old covenant had its end at the cross of Jesus. The sacrifices of the old covenant are no longer valid today, and they were never able to remove the sins. Neither is the Law of the old covenant valid to obtain blessings from God today. We are saved and blessed because of Jesus, and not because of our own works. (Eph 2:8-9, Rom 10:3-4, Gal 2:16; 3:5; 3:13-14)

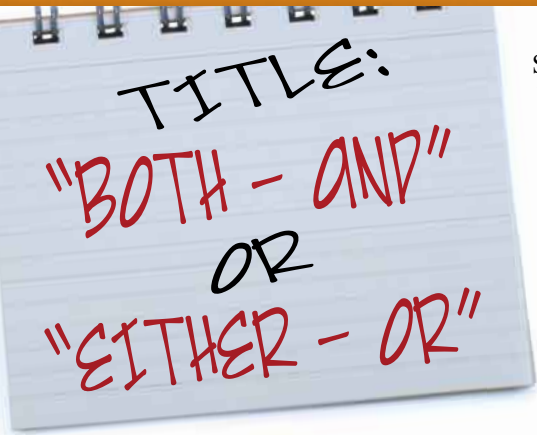
## Please explain Hebrews 10:26: "if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin."

The letter to the Hebrews is written to the Hebrews – to Jews that had received Jesus. We can see that the whole letter is comparing the old and the new covenants, and describing how Christ is the better High Priest, the better sacrifice, the guarantee of a better covenant, etc. This is the context of Hebrews chapter 10. To "sin willfully" in this context is not just any kind of sin, but the sin of renouncing Jesus and returning to Judaism and the old covenant. And this not just for any reason, but because they believed that the blood of Jesus was a common blood and had no value whatsoever. And not just any person, but a person that already was

very enlightened and had experienced much of the power of the Gospel. The only problem with returning to the old covenant is that there remains no longer any other sacrifice for sins. The sacrifices of the old covenant are not valid anymore (and they had never been good enough anyway). The only valid sacrifice for sin today is the blood of Jesus. For sure, if they would turn to Jesus then His sacrifice would still be for them. The only sin that is not paid for at the cross is the sin of "not believing in Jesus." (John 16:9)

## Is there any reason for reading the Old Testament since we are now in the new covenant? Should we now only read the New Testament?

There are many reasons to read the Old Testament. Jesus is revealed in all the books there through symbols, pictures and prophecies. (Luke 24:27, 24:44-45) As we read the symbols and shadows in the old covenant, we can more fully understand what we have today in the new covenant, where Christ is the substance! And all the promises of God have now received their fulfillment in Christ. So we may read the old covenant to see the promises, and then we thank God that they have been given to us because of Christ. (2 Cor 1:20). However, it is extra important that we spend much time in the New Testament, and especially study the letters of Paul, which reveal essential truths about the new covenant. This helps us to understand the Old Testament in the right way.



Such short words, but what a huge difference in meaning - and what a huge difference in our lives as we understand how these words are used concerning truths in the new covenant.

Is it “both law and grace” or is it “either law or grace?” Is it “both the old and the new covenant” or “either the old or the new covenant?” The answers to these questions have a huge impact on all areas of people’s lives: salvation, sanctification, growth, ministry, well-being, prosperity etc.

**A. The promises of God are “both - and,” and not “either - or!”**

- All the promises** of God are “YES” in Christ. (2 Cor 1:10, Rom 8:32.)  
No need to negotiate with God: “If I renounce this promise, can I then have the other promise instead?”  
Not “*either* serve God *or* be financially blessed.”  
Not “*either* become a pastor *or* have a good house.”  
(At the same time: We know what our *highest values* are and what we prioritize the most.)
- The fulfilment of God’s promises is **for everyone!** (Rom 1:10-13, Rom 8:32)  
Not “either him or me,” but “both him and me.” God is **rich enough** for us all! There is no discrimination!  
No need for competition or envy, but rather let’s encourage each other and stand together.

**B. The two covenants are “either - or,” not “both - and!”**

- Either the old or the new covenant**, *not both* the old *and* the new covenant at the same time.  
We cannot read some here and some there and think that it’s all concerning us today...  
The old covenant based on the law was given via Moses and was valid until the cross.  
The new covenant started at the cross/resurrection/Pentecost and is the only one that now is in effect.

Heb 8:6-7 ...a better covenant... For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

Heb 8:13 In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete.

The old covenant (and all its system) is over. The sacrifice of blood is no longer valid (as it was never able to remove the sins.)

Example: Payment of annual fee for driving cars. The stamp for 2007 is no longer valid in 2008.

Jesus fulfilled the law in the old covenant as He became the perfect lamb offering and obtained ETERNAL forgiveness for sins! Now there is no longer any need for more sacrifices to get forgiveness for sins or obtain blessings from God. A brand new covenant has started - with better conditions and promises. And it works in a different way.

- Either Judaism or the Gospel of Grace**, *not both* Judaism *and* the Gospel of Grace at the same time.  
Judaism is the old covenant, and the Gospel of Grace is the new covenant.

**C. Law and grace is “either - or,” and not “both - and!”**

- The old covenant was based on the Law of Moses, and **the new covenant is based on grace**.  
When the Bible talks about “the Law,” it most of the time refers to the Law of Moses. We are under a different law, called the law of Christ / the law of Love.  
Grace and the law of Christ are connected together, but grace and the Law of Moses are opposites.  
Since God is a God of grace we can see much of God’s grace in the Old Testament too, even though God at that time was not yet reconciled with men through Jesus.
- We are under grace** and not under the Law of Moses (John 1:17, Rom 6:14)  
“Since we are under the Law it is really good that we have the grace,” is a wrong statement that mixes the two.  
The Law of Moses was given to the Jews for a purpose and for a certain time period.  
Jesus then fulfilled all the requirements of the Law, and on the cross he annulled the Law.  
The Law of Moses is no longer in effect.  
No religions can help people save themselves by their own works, but Jesus has been given as Saviour for **all** people in **all** kinds of religions! HIS sacrifice is valid forever!
- We live and serve in “**the newness of the Spirit**” and not “the oldness of the letter.” (Rom 7:6, 2 Cor 3:6)  
Even though we are not under the Law of Moses, sometimes we have still brought some of the “ways of the letter” into the Churches or into our personal lives. However, the Bible says that when we preach the pure Gospel without mixing it with the Law we will see much more glorious results. We’ve got something **better**.

**D. Self-righteousness and God’s righteousness are “either - or,” and not “both - and!”** (Rom 10:3-4, Phil 3:8-9)

- Self-righteousness is based on our own life and works; God’s righteousness is based on Jesus’ works and life. The Gospel (the good news) is that we have received God’s righteousness as a gift. Self-righteousness (Law, old covenant) and God’s righteousness (grace, new covenant) should not be mixed.
- We never come to God based on our self-righteousness but based on God’s righteousness given to us. Self-righteousness is no longer valid! (And it was never good enough anyway.)  
Our own works are not valid to deserve salvation, healing, God’s favor, ministry, etc.

# What sort of people does God use?

Over the last few years in ministry as a pastor and teacher, I have come to understand something that has had a great impact on my personal life and my understanding of God's perspective and way of working. It is this: **"God loves to use weak people."** In fact he is an expert at using people who have failed, have messed up and are weak in the eyes of the world. The renowned missionary to China, Hudson Taylor, once said, "All God's giants were once weak people." God specializes in turning weaknesses into strengths. He uses people that the world would not consider suitable.

## GOD IS NOT LIMITED!

Everyone has their own weaknesses. In fact, you have a bundle of flaws and imperfections: physical, intellectual and emotional. You may also have uncontrollable circumstances that weaken you, such as financial or relational limitations. Usually we try to deny our weaknesses; we defend them, excuse them, hide them and resent them. This only prevents God from using them the way he desires to. **God has a completely different perspective on our weaknesses.** We think that God only wants to use our strengths, but he also wants to use our weaknesses for His glory. When you think of your own limitations you may be tempted to conclude, "God could never use me." But God is never limited by our own limitations. In fact, he enjoys putting His great power into ordinary containers. He is a real expert at turning situations around and creating victory in the midst of human defeat.

**God has never been impressed with strength or self-sufficiency.** In fact it seems that he overlooks those that are qualified and able in themselves, and he is drawn to people who are weak and are ready to admit it. If God only used

"perfect" people then nothing would get done, because none of us is flawless or qualified to serve Him. International missionary Lester Sumrall has said that "every man of God has clay feet." Like common pottery, we are fragile and flawed and break easily. But God will use us if we allow him to work through our weaknesses.

## TAKE A LOOK AT HISTORY!

We only need to take a quick look at the people God has used in a profound way in the last century to see that God is not limited by human weaknesses. International evangelist Billy Graham had a bad speech defect as a child but this did not stop God from calling and equipping him. We all know what happened after that! Healing evangelist Kathryn Kuhlman had a disastrous marriage and experienced rejection and shame, but God turned things around and she became a channel of healing to thousands of sick and suffering people. Faith teacher Kenneth Hagin was seriously ill and bedridden as a teenager. His father left his family when he was a child and his mother suffered from very serious depression, but God raised him up to be a "voice of faith" to a generation of believers in the charismatic movement. These are only a few examples of how God can turn hopeless situations around and use people whom the world would consider unqualified.

## GODS GRACE COMPENSATES OUR WEAKNESSES

Realization of one's own weaknesses prevents arrogance and keeps our egos in check. Our weaknesses also encourage us to accept others, whereas human strength breeds an independent spirit which makes us intolerant of other people's weaknesses. Most of all our weaknesses increase our capacity to show mercy and understanding to others. We are far more likely to be

compassionate and considerate to others who are weak. **Real ministry begins with vulnerability.** The more you let down your guard, take off your mask, and share your struggles, the more God will be able to use you in serving others. This is why God wants to use your weaknesses, not just your strengths. If all people see are your strengths, they get discouraged and think, "Well, good for him, but I'll never be able to do that." But when they see God using you in spite of your weaknesses, it encourages them to think, "Maybe God can also use me!" God gives grace to the humble; to those that do not deserve it. His grace is His ability and His strength. **His grace more than compensates for our weaknesses!**

To those that have failed and are frustrated in our performance-centred, self-sufficient generation, the wonderful message of God's empowering grace has a revolutionary effect! Be encouraged! God is in the business of using ordinary people from very ordinary circumstances. He is not put off with your weaknesses and past life. God has a completely different perspective on your weaknesses. His thoughts and His ways are much, much higher than ours. Welcome to the club! All of God's champions of faith in the Bible started from zero! **That which is impossible with man is possible with God!**



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