

God's Mercy and the Devil's Grace Part 1 of 6: What is Grace? What Does it Cost? (Presented June 2016)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsYPv7-xCPk>

***Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a written document. All the Scripture verses are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted and are in the red text. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

We are going to begin a new series today called God's mercy and the devil's grace. I realize this title might sound a little peculiar or maybe even a little off in your mind. I assure you it's not a typo; this is my intention. I intend to send a message, to tell a story.

If you haven't noticed, the Church (the body of believers as a whole) is falling apart at the seams. Think about what's happening in the world today. Our country is literally spiritually collapsing. We have sexual immorality running amuck. We have idolatry, covertness, unforgiveness, bitterness, division, fear, and confusions to mention a few. You need to understand these things are in the Church. It is not just the world, it is in the Church, and it is time for us to ask the question, why? Why are these things happened?

How did we get here? Have you ever gotten yourself in a situation, and you're sitting back reflecting, and you think to yourself, "What in the world happened? How did I get to this point?" There have been people who have been married thirty years and all a sudden end up in divorce. The wife is sitting back saying, "What happened to our marriage?" I'm telling you that is our scenario right now in the modern-day Christian Church. It is time we assess it; it is time we step back and look at what happened.

Let me tell you something. When you begin to investigate what has happened and why things are happening the way they are, and why all these things are running amuck, you will actually find as you go to the very root or core of it there has been an intentional, strategic attack against the grace message. That is why the Church has ended up where it is today. Satan has come to pervert the beautiful grace message God has given in its pure form. That grace message was to bring a life, joy, and salvation. Satan has come and cleverly corrupted it.

How does he do it? It is really simple. He takes perversion and corruption and clothes it in righteousness. What he is doing is peddling, ultimately, a weapon of death. It is a weapon of total destruction. If you have any question to this, open your eyes and look at the Church, look at this country, and look at the world. There is no question about it.

I want to open up today by going to the book of Jude 1:3—**Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.** Now, this is very interesting. Jude is moving out of desperation. Something has him rattled. He is forced to write his brethren. Why? It says—**to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith.** What does this tell you? It tells you he knows we're at war. He is crying out to his brethren, "Wake up! We are being attacked."

So Jude tells them to stand up and fight. The Greek word for contending means to fight. We are to stand up and fight. But what is the attack? What is Jude so worried about? What has got him rattled? As we continue in Jude 1:4, we read—**For certain men have crept in unnoticed.** I want you to understand something. This is within the body of Mashiach; this is within the Body of Christ. These “certain men” have come in, and no one recognizes them for who they really are, ungodly men. They can be preaching, teaching, leading studies, and sitting right next to you lifting their hands and praising the LORD. These men have crept in unnoticed.

Jude goes on in 1:4—**who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men,** [what do they do?] **who turn the grace of our God into lewdness.** Satan came in by stealth in the first century, and what did he go for? He went for the juggler; he went for the grace message. He went to pollute it and turn it into lewdness, which ultimately means filthiness and total, utter corruption. Jude finishes with—**and deny the only LORD God and our LORD Jesus Christ.** When you embrace a corrupted version of the grace message, you actually turn your back on the pureness of Yeshua.

I want you to understand the devil knows just how precious and how powerful the authentic grace message really is. It is a message that has been under attack from the very first century. So what I see that vexes me in the Jude verses regarding the torments of the righteous souls and the Lawless deeds is we are living in the same scenario today. It is Sodom and Gomorrah right now.

So as we see these things, understand it's horrible, and we should be anguished, but we shouldn't be surprised. Praise the LORD for His Word that gives us wisdom, eyes to see, and ears to hear.

What do we do? We know Satan has gone for the juggler; he's gone to attack the grace message. What do we do? Jude tells us what to do—**contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 1:3).** It's time to stand up and fight. That is exactly what we're going to do in this series. We are going to contend for the faith.

With that said, I want to give you a brief overview of some of the things we're going to be covering within this series. And let's begin with the most important piece. What is grace? This is faith 101. How do you contend, fight and defend it if you don't know what it is? The second thing we are going to look at is, what does it cost if anything? Third, why do we need it; how do we obtain it? And last but not least, what is the relationship of the grace of God in respect to the Law of God? Is there a relationship, or are they incompatible? Are Law and grace opposed to one another? We are going to answer all those questions.

So to kick things off, I want to give you a couple of different definitions of the term, grace. First, I want to take you to a secular definition from Merriam Webster—**a: unmerited divine assistance given humans for their regeneration or sanctification. b: a virtue coming from God. c: a state of sanctification enjoyed through divine grace.** When you look at these, they are good definitions of what biblical grace is. Let me give you the definition from Bible Dictionary—**God's unmerited favor toward humanity and especially his people, realized through the covenant and fulfilled through Jesus Christ (*The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (437). *Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. Myers, A. C. 1987*).**

Both the secular and faith-based definitions did a very good job of conveying the grace concept. You will notice there's one specific word used in both these sources and other sources. That word is, unmerited as in unmerited favor.

You need to understand something about the grace message. We don't deserve it. One of the most critical aspects of understanding true biblical grace is understanding none of us deserve it. It is unmerited.

There's another definition I want to show you that comes directly from the Bible. I believe it is the best, most comprehensive definition we can have. It really changed my world and the way as I started navigating through the New and Old Testament. When I understood what I'm about to show you, it unlocks all sorts of doors.

I want to take you to Paul's letter to Titus. In Titus 2:11—**For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.** Paul is talking about Yeshua, the Word becoming flesh, and dwelling among us. The very person who gave His life for us is literally the grace of God. This is the purest definition you can have. When you take this, and you start going to Scripture, it unlocks deeper context.

Let me give you an example from Ephesians 2:8—**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.** This is one of the most prolific verses in all of the New Testament regarding the grace of God. If you go up to a typical believer and ask them what they know about grace, they will probably take you to Ephesians 2:8. If you apply the principle I just showed that defines grace being Yeshua, then the verse would read this way—**For by [Jesus] you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.** Talk about unlocking doors in the deepness and richness of understanding regarding the grace of God. This is it. Grace is Yeshua.

As you start investigating what Biblical grace is, this is a primary fundamental principle that needs to be applied. It is Yeshua. You know what it does? It personalizes it on a very intense level regarding what this grace really means. It is personal rather than just conceptual. It turns into intimacy and relationship. So to answer the question, what is grace? Simply put, it is Yeshua.

Moving on to our second question. What does it cost? That depends on what I mean by that. On the one hand, I can tell you it will cost you everything. Everything you have, it will cost you. On the other hand, I can legitimately tell you at the very same time it cost you nothing. It is a free; it is a gift, and I want to show you this scripturally.

Yeshua said in Luke 14:33—**So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.** Yeshua is grace, and you can't have grace unless you give up everything. You have to be willing to give up everything. Remember the passage in Matthew 19:16-22 when the rich young man says to Yeshua, "I've done all these things. I've kept all these commandments." Yeshua tells him, "One thing you still lack. Go and sell what you have and give to the poor. Then come and follow me." At that point, the rich young man hung his head and went away sorrowful.

I want you to understand something. If you want grace, it is going to cost you. It is going to cost all these fleshly desires. All the things the world is telling you need, you are going to have to walk away from. Do you want grace? Do you want forgiveness and redemption? That is what it's going to take.

But on the other hand, at the same time, I can tell you it is a gift. In Romans 5:15, Paul says—**but the free gift.** He uses this specific term multiple times in this chapter—**but the free gift.** Here is the verse—**But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace**

of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many (Romans 5:15).

The grace of God is free in the context you cannot buy it. No amount of money is going to get you into heaven. You read in Acts 8:20 where Simon the magician saw the power the apostles had, and he was offering money for that power. Peter responded to him—**Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!** You cannot buy grace.

Let me take it a step further, and this is very important. It doesn't matter how many good works you have done; they will not merit your right to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. I love to use this analogy because it really puts it into perspective. If you were to take every human being who has ever existed from Adam until today, and you stripped them of all the righteous acts and deeds they had done, and you were to give them all to one person, that person would still not get into heaven. It would not merit the Kingdom of Heaven. I want you to ponder that. You cannot buy grace; it is a free gift.

Let me take you back and show you Paul's commentary on this in Ephesians 2:8-9—⁸ **For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast (emphasis added).** Paul couldn't make it clearer. It is not of works. Nothing you do is going to merit the Kingdom of Heaven in and of itself.

Look at what Paul says in Titus 3:4-5—⁴ **But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us (emphasis added).** Try to think about what Paul is actually conveying conceptually. Can you imagine very righteous men getting together back in the day before Yeshua came? Men like David, Elijah, Moses, and Abraham. Can you imagine them getting together, looking up, and saying, "Yeshua, you have to come down. Look at our righteousness. You have to come down because we deserve it. Look at everything we have done." Is that preposterous? None of those righteous men made such a statement because they knew what Paul knew.

Let me take it to Acts 13:39-40 so I can show your Peter's synopsis on this. Keep in mind Peter is talking to fellow Jewish brethren in this statement—³⁸ **Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; ³⁹ and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses (emphasis added).** This is a Jew speaking to Jews, and he is telling them they can't be justified by the Law of Moses. All those works and righteousness that you walked in didn't merit the mercy of God.

Let's go to Galatians 2:15-16 where we read a dialog between Paul and Peter—¹⁵ **We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, ¹⁶ knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; for by the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified (emphasis added).** No matter where you go in Scripture, this is what you're confronted with. It literally takes the hammer of God and pounds the pride right out of you. It takes us down; it humbles us.

Going to Galatians 2:21, we read the following—I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died in vain. One of the things that keep me up at night, which is one of the things we need to talk about in this series is the growth or returning to Torah. Christians are having the scales ripped from their eyes and now see that Matthew to Revelation does not constitute

the entirety of the word. It is Genesis to Revelation. That is a very powerful move; it's very spiritual. I am telling you, and this is not hyperbole, we are being contacted from all over the world. Places such as South Africa, parts of the U.K., Indonesia, and Canada are just a few of the places.

But let me add this. In the process of Christians all over the world coming back to a reality of Torah because Yeshua is assembling His pure and spotless bride, if you think for a second the enemy is not going to come in and attempt to disrupt that work, you're deceived. What I'm telling you is he has laid a trap and a snare for those coming to Torah. He has laid the trap, the snare, of legalism. I am telling you right now because I've seen it with my own eyes, people are fallen into that trap. You know what they're doing? They are moving closer and closer to Torah, and they do exactly what Paul said he would not do, which is take the grace of God and set it aside and seek to establish their own righteousness in the Torah. They are taken by storm; it is total deception.

I can't tell you how many families have left the faith in their pursuit of Torah. The reason that is happening is they set aside the grace of God. If you do this, I can promise you because it's a biblical fact, if you set aside the grace of God, which is Yeshua, and you take your eyes off of Him, you are dead. You are a dead man, and all that good and righteousness you are pursuing is for nothing. What a waste!

So a word of warning. Don't do it. Don't set aside the grace of God. Keep your eyes on Yeshua. Only through Him can we truly understand Torah. Only through Him are we going to be able to walk it out in pureness and holiness.

Moving to Galatians 3:21—**Is the Law then against the promises of God?** The last in the series of questions I asked was, "Is there a relationship between grace and the Law?" We're not going to cover that today, but here is a little hint in this verse. Again, from the start of Galatians 3:21—**Is the Law then against the promises of God? Certainly not!** [So the Law is not opposed to the promises] **For if there had been a Law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the Law.**

Think about what Paul just said. What would be the point in Yeshua coming if the Law gave us life? There is absolutely no point. If we could attain it of our own accord, we don't need Yeshua to come. But we did need Yeshua to come. Why did He have to come? Paul answers the question for us in the very next verse—**But the Scripture [Torah] has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe (Galatians 3:22).** So what is the problem? Sin!

Let me take it a step further. Every single one of us has sinned. Paul says in Romans 3:32—**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** Not one of us is exempt. So we have a very serious problem. We need a Savior. We need help. We need grace! That's what we need. Psalms 143:2 says the same thing. I want to put this into context for you because David was so righteous that he set the bar. All the kings of Judah were measured by his righteousness. In fact, the LORD in speaking with Solomon told him if he walked in the footsteps of his father David, God would establish Solomon's throne. 1 Kings 15:5 says—**David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.**

That is how righteous David was. Now he is crying out to the LORD—**Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no one living is righteous (Psalm 143:2).** I can appreciate David's statement. How many times have you cried out, "LORD, God forgive me. I have failed." That is beautiful because that's the conviction of the Holy Spirit that drives you to repentance.

Ecclesiastes 7:20—**For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.** Not a single one. We are talking about righteous men; we are not talking about the world. There is not one righteous man who does good and does not sin.

So to identify the problem is to say we have all sinned, and God's holy, righteous, and powerful Law, His Torah, condemns every one of us. Roman 6:23—**For the wages of sin is death.** What has every one of us earned? We haven't earned salvation; we've earned death. We need the Messiah Yeshua.

The Apostle Paul explains this beautifully in 1 Corinthians 15:56—**The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law.** I love this passage because it explains the relationship between sin and Law. You go read Roman 6 and 7. Paul actually utilizes the terms sin and Law as though they're transposable. And if you didn't know better, it could be very confusing. There is a relationship between sin and Law. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of that is the Law. Think of it this way, and I always use the analogy of a snake. When a snake bites you, it's not the bite that kills you. It's the venom that is released. In the very same manner, sin is the bite, but that's not what kills you. What kills you is God's Law. God's perfect and holy judgment comes and bears witness saying, "You are wicked. You have failed. You are sinful." Think about what Paul says and 2 Corinthians 3:6—**for the letter [the Law] kills, but the Spirit gives life.** You better start hearing these things and understanding them because these things are salvational.

So we looked at what Paul and Peter had to say. I want to show you what John had to say in his Gospel. Look at what he says in John 1:17—**For the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.** So there was a dispensation, and I'm not a fan of that word so don't take me out of context. I am not a dispensationalist. Let's be clear on that, but dispensation is simply a matter of a time of revelation. There is a dispensation of Law in that Torah was revealed at Mount Sinai. It was revealed, it was given to a nation, and they entered into covenant. That's a dispensation of Law. Then Yeshua came and there's another dispensation that John recognized. John didn't say, "Oh, it's just normal business as usual." No. He makes a distinction in that the Law comes through Moses; grace and truth come through Yeshua.

What did John see in Yeshua? Why does John pair grace and truth? I want you to think about something. Do you know what truth is? How does Scripture define it? Scripture says truth is Law. Psalm 119:142—**Your Law is truth.** Yet we have grace paired with Law. What was it John saw? Let me reveal to you what he saw in Proverbs 16:6—**In mercy and truth.** In grace and truth is the same thing. They are transposable terms. Again—**In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity.** Isn't that fascinating? John looked at Yeshua, and what did he see? He saw the same thing John the Baptist saw—**Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).** John knew this miraculous convergence of Law and Grace meant forgiveness.

Look at Psalm 85:10. This is a prophecy of Yeshua—**Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed.** This is the miraculous convergence.

Think about righteousness. What does Paul talk about in Romans 3:21—**But now the righteousness of God apart from the Law is revealed.** Here you have this prophecy in that righteousness, the Law or the Torah, and shalom have kissed in the embodiment of Yeshua when He came.

Let me take you to Romans 4:1-4—¹ **What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?** This is interesting because where does Paul go? He goes to the Torah because this is where Abraham is recorded. Continuing—² **For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.** ³ **For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."** ⁴ **Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.** In other words, you can work, and work, and work till the cows come home. None of that work will be considered as your right of entry into the Kingdom; it will only be counted as debt. Period. End of discussion.

This is what Paul is drawing out here, but then he goes on to say in Romans 4:5—**But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.** I want to be very clear about something you are going to see in the very next verse. I only bring this up because it's been brought up to me by some people who want to read this—to **him who does not work**—as Scripture telling us to rebel against the commandments of God. According to them, we are not supposed to do what is holy and right. We don't have to work; if we're going to be under grace, I can't work.

That is the mantra that is being peddled. That, however, is not what Paul is saying. It is not even close to what he's saying. Here is what is interesting, as we continue, we find out in Romans 4:6-8—⁶ **just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:** [Now Paul is quoting David] ⁷ **"Blessed are those whose Lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;** ⁸ **Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."**

Isn't that interesting? Paul was not quoting the New Testament or one of the other apostles. He is quoting David who was a man who kept the commandments of God and feared God in all respects. David is a Torah observant Jew. And what does David say? He says— **Blessed are those whose Lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.** That is a revelation. Understand that David didn't believe for a second that he was justified of his own accord.

If you'd like some Scriptural support for that, let's take a look at this in Psalm 16:1-2—¹ **Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.** ² **O my soul, you have said to the LORD, "You are my LORD, my goodness is nothing apart from You (emphasis added)."** Do you understand Paul's talking about the fact works cannot save us in and of themselves; David's on the same page. All the righteousness he commits is all for nothing; it means nothing apart from Him, which is to say apart from faith in Yeshua. Go read Romans 10. That's exactly how Paul articulated the scenario of why these Jewish people who have a zealot for Torah and walk in righteousness have not attained righteousness. It was because they did not seek it by faith. So here we see David's heart. He is bearing his soul and wisdom for us to download.

Let me take you to Psalm 31:1—**In You, O LORD, I put my trust; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in Your righteousness.** Does he say, "Deliver me in my righteousness? See how holy and righteous I have been in the Torah? No. He says—**deliver me in Your righteousness.** Let me point something out so you. As I told you, grace is Yeshua. When we read in Scripture the word "righteousness," that is also defined as Yeshua. This is prophetic. It says—**deliver me in Your [Yeshua] righteousness.** God revealed His righteousness to the earth through Yeshua, and David cries this out. So what is David's forefront? It is Yeshua. That's what his focus is on.

Psalm 74:16—**I will go in the strength of the LORD God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.** That's fascinating! David doesn't sit there and tell the LORD all the great things he's been

doing within the Torah, and how he should be recognized. When David fell to his knees and cried out calling upon His righteousness, he reminded the LORD who He is. If you want to have a successful prayer life, you will want to take notice of this. If you want to have answers from the LORD, that is the way to approach the LORD.

Let me build upon this. When the children of Israel were coming into the Promised Land, it was indicative; it was a picture of God's children entering into eternal life, entering into heaven. Moses was not allowed to go into the land, but as they're leaving to go into this land, he sends them this wisdom; he gives them a warning. It was more of a peeling back the scales of their eyes and letting them know the real scenario. Listen to what he says as they are going in to inherit the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 9:4-5—⁴ Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them [the occupants of the land] out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you. ⁵ **It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (emphasis added).**

That is a Torah principle—it is not by our righteousness; it is only by the grace and mercy of God. That is exactly what Deuteronomy says. That is exactly what Moses is conveying to his fellow brethren.

Let me show you some commentary regarding the children of Israel after they entered the land and inherited it. This ties in with exactly what Moses just said. We read in Psalm 44:3—**For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; but it was Your right hand, Your arm.** I have to stop again because we're confronted with Yeshua. The “right hand or arm” in Scripture is a messianic term explicitly referring to Yeshua. Over and over again we see it is Yeshua of Nazareth. Continuing—**and the light of Your countenance.** Who is the light of His countenance? Yeshua. Didn't Yeshua said—I am the light of the world? Continuing—**because you favored them.** So they didn't get to enter the land because of their righteousness; it was only because of Yeshua. That's our focus; don't ever take your eyes off of Yeshua.

Isaiah 54:17—**No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD (emphasis added).** Our righteousness is not of ourselves; it is from God. It is from Yeshua.

When you look at all these passages we discovered in the Tanakh, not the New Testament, the Tanakh is filled with passages that revealed justification, redemption, and salvation come only and directly from Elohim himself. Isn't that fascinating?

I'm going to tell you something. For you to identify this fact is monumental because this is a reality that could absolutely revolutionize and change the way modern-day Christianity looks at the Torah. Think about this for a second.

A while back I participated in a debate. Prior to the debate, we were given specific questions they wanted the debaters to address at some point within the debate itself. All questions are good, but one of the questions they asked really was a revelation for me, and it broke my heart. It showed the state of

malnutrition many believers are in today. The question I was asked to be prepared to answer was, how were people saved before Yeshua the King.

Now, it's a good question, but it broke my heart because with that question, they created a dichotomy between the Old Testament and the New Testament. They presented the idea no one could have been saved because no one was saved until Yeshua came. If you read Ephesians 1, you read that Yeshua was sent to die on the cross before the foundation of the world. You need to understand this especially if you are going to defend the grace message. From the very beginning, as found in Genesis, all the way to Malachi, which encompasses the entire Tanakh, there was not a righteous man who feared God and served Him who was under any different assumption than the fact they were saved by grace. Why is that important? Because it reveals an authentic relationship between grace and Law.

At this point, you might say to me, "Daniel, what do you mean." Well, these righteous men were clinging to Torah, they were keeping His commandments, and they had a zeal for truth and that which was honorable. It was a good thing. At the same time, they were not deceived. They knew they needed salvation and forgiveness.

This is what the Church should look like today. We should be clinging to the Torah. We should be seeking it and study it, but only through the lens of Yeshua knowing apart from Him, we are as good as dead. It doesn't matter how much time you spend studying Torah. It doesn't matter how much time you spend applying it to your life. There are many Orthodox Jews today who are walking the commandments out marvelously. They are doing this far more impressively than any of us. However, if they do not accept the grace of God and put that as the pillar of their foundation, they will be lost.

This is why we have to reach them. This is the importance of the grace message. Do you want to know why Satan would go for the juggler? Because it's a death kill. It is certain death. If you mess with the grace message, it's certain death. That's all that is left.

I want to close today with a story from Luke. This story is very special to me because years ago it humbled me. The LORD caught me with this story at just the right time as I was studying the Babylonian Talmud and Torah like nobody's business. I read this story, and it brought me from a very high place of arrogance in my mind to the floor.

Luke 18:9-10—⁹ Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. I don't have time to get into this, but it would be a lot of fun to show you the historical context of this on a much deeper level. The Pharisees were the religious leaders. They were revered and respected. That is something this country has lost sight of. People in this country don't know how to respect the righteous men of God. But the Pharisees were respected. They were known, and they devoted their lives to studying the word and teaching it.

Then you have a tax collector. The way the Jewish people in the time of Yeshua saw tax collectors was as betrayers. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Who were they collecting taxes for? Rome. These tax collectors were seen by the Jewish people as total betrayers to their own nation. They would force the Jewish people to pay taxes to Rome. During the time of Yeshua, this was getting totally out of hand.

So here we have these two people, a Pharisee and a tax collector in Luke 18:11-12. This is the part that convicted me and brought me to the floor because I was praying prayers just like this one—¹¹ **The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men— extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'** Isn't that holy?

So this guy is walking more righteously than the majority of Christians. He's filled with charity; he's giving of what he has. He fasts twice a week, Monday and Thursday. He's got it all together. Yet he looks at everyone around him thinking they are a bunch of heathen pagans. I, Daniel, confess these things before you out of my own foolishness; that's what I thought, "I'm surrounded by total heathen pagans. Oh God, just take me out of here. I don't deserve to be here. This is not my place. I'm too holy. I have to take a shower just being around these people."

This is the scenario. This is legalism. Satan sets the trap; then he hooks you. Once the hook is in, it is dangerous. Then we move on to Luke 18:13-14—¹³ **And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'** ¹⁴ **I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."**

I tell you, you see people get caught in the study of Torah, and again, it's a good thing, but Satan wants to pervert it. What he wants to do is to sow into your flesh. He wants to puff the flesh up and get you to exalt and actually follow him. The reason Satan was cast out of heaven was because of pride. He wants to make you arrogant; he wants to puff up your flesh. If you do that, it will be your demise.

One more passage in Daniel 9 before we close. The Jewish people have been taken captive by the Babylonians. God is judging the Jewish people. Daniel cries out, and this is the end of his prayer in Daniel 9:17-18—¹⁷ **Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the LORD's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. ¹⁸ O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.**

This is the same scenario we saw with the tax collector in Luke 18:13. Daniel was a holy, righteous, and very knowledgeable man. He was one of the wisest in the land, and yet this man in all his wisdom and all his righteousness falls before the Holy Creator. He says, "We're not going to be delivered in our righteousness. Anything we've done is only because of His mercy." That is the grace of God. That's the grace we need to cling to.