

OBSTACLES TO GRACE

General Comments:

Of all the “Grace” or “Pastor” talks, this is the one in which the widest latitude should be afforded, to allow the speaker to formulate it as he/she sees fit.

Basically and simply, it is a “talk” about sin. Sin is (and certainly is in the context of all the “grace” talks and this entire weekend) that “thing” or nature or whatever “it” is within all of us which refuses the love God is trying to give us and rejects the way he is trying to lead us; which causes us to turn away from rather than toward God.

I. Definition or explanation of “sin” especially in light of the previous “grace” talks

a. **Sin is choosing our will rather than God’s.**

It is the old Burger King slogan: “Have it your way” as opposed to God’s way.

It is, to summarize a favorite Beatles’ hit:

“You (God) say Yes, I say No;
You say Why, I say I don’t know;
You say Hello, but I say Good-bye.”

b. **Sin is a “condition” of humanity which causes:**

rebellion against God, refusal to be subject to him (Romans 8:7);

enmity against God (Rom. 5:10; 8:7; Col. 1:21);

& disobedience (Rom. 11:32; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 2:2; 5:6; et al).

It is humanity’s desire-to-be-in-command-of- itself; wanting-to-be-as-God

II. **Sin as a “power” which can only be overcome by a higher power, i.e. That of Jesus Christ, who conquered it** (see Romans 7 & 8).

We cannot overcome/conquer/quit sin by trying harder or vowing to do/be better; but only through the power of Christ. We must (as Paul writes) want to do God’s will, and call on Christ to help us do that.

III. **God accepts/loves/graces us as we are; forgives us when we “return,” (i.e., repent) to him; and will change us for the better if we want him to do that and are willing to let him.**

Questions we need to ask and answer: (this is from the old Emmaus outline)

Do I still rationalize my sin?

Am I harboring any known sin?

Have I attached myself to something (or someone) that I know is separating me from God?
Am I open to being changed?

- IV. What must be stressed is that with, alongside of, because of Christ and our continual, ever-increasing reliance and dependence on him, we can “die more and more to sin and live more and more to righteousness,” (“from glory to glory he’s changing me.”) This needs to be stressed, because it is the theme of the day and leads into the possibility for the new life proclaimed in the theme of the next day and the Fourth Day.