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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

"they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so."

1

I Thessalonians



2

I Thessalonians

chapter #1
- **Respect** the Word & Way of the Cross.

chapter #2
- **Respond** to life's circumstances.

chapter #3
- **Receive** from a spiritual community.

chapter #4
- **Resist** carnal & cultural temptations.

chapter #5
- **Renew** their heritage and hope.

Grace **Aliens**

3

All of Paul's letters start and conclude with grace.

1 Thessalonians 1:1
"Grace to you and peace."

1 Thessalonians 5:28
"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

Jesus' words seem to support what Paul teaches.

John 3
"16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For **God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.**"

Matthew 11
"28 Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. **...** 30 For **my yoke is easy, and my load is light.**"

Matthew 7:7
"7 Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. 8 For **everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.**"

4

Matthew 5
"17 **Do not think that I came to abolish the Law** or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill."
"48 Therefore **you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect**."

But Jesus also says:



Matthew 7
"21 **Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.** 22 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 **And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; *depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*'**

This does not sound like GRACE?

5

1. Grace must be understood in context.

1.	2.	3.	4.
Church authority	Creedal authority	Civil authority	Biblical authority

But how are we to understand the Bible?
CONTEXT - genre, cultural, textual, theological

Galatians 4
"3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, **born under the Law**, 5 **in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law**, that we might receive the **adoption as sons.** 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then **an heir** through God."

6

2. Grace satisfies the Law covenant.

The Law's demands of us are met by Christ

Romans 3:25

"**propitiation** in His blood through faith.... that He might be **just and the justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus."

Its domain over us is terminated in Christ

Our death to it is final with Christ

Romans 7 (Gal.2:19, 3:24-25, Col.2:20)

"4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were **made to die to the Law** through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been **released from the Law**, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter."

7

3. Grace is to bear the fruit of Christlikeness.

Paul's letters

What Christ has done	*What Christ is doing*
FOR us.	*IN us and THROUGH us.*
Faith	*Fruit*
Our Identity	*Our Integrity*

Ephesians 2

"8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works,** which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

8

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Sanctification / Holiness

Perfection	Parole	Pardon	Purgatory
- power to fulfill the Law	- set free on conditions	- charges dropped	- afterlife purification

Propitiation - penalty paid and imputed

Matthew 5:17

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I did not come to abolish but to fulfill**."

9

4. Grace is the heart of our calling.

2 Corinthians 5

"14 For **the love of Christ controls us**, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. 16 Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, **new things have come.** 18 **Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation**, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation."

God is glorified only when our behavior is motivated by grace and love, not by law and fear.

Matthew 23:13-33

"27 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like **whitewashed tombs** which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."

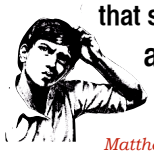
Galatians 5:13

"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another.**"

10

5. Grace needs to be sensitive to culture.

Discipleship starts with eyesight,



that sets expectations,

and then sparks experiences,

that shape expressions.

Matthew 6

"22 The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But **if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness**."

Romans 10:2

"For I bear them record that they have a **zeal of God, but not according to knowledge**."

James 4

"1 What is the **source of quarrels and conflicts** among you? ... 3 **You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.** 4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

11

Satan's temptation of Eve & for many of us is:

to find wisdom for a good life with our sight, not God's word.

Genesis 3

"1 indeed, has God said, '**You shall not eat from any tree in the garden**' ... 5 For God knows that on the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman **saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took some of its fruit and ate**; and she also gave *some* to her husband with her, and he ate."

We are pressured to see life in terms of "here, now, and Me.



12

Satan's temptation of Jesus & for many of us is:

to have a zeal for God so long as it brings heaven to earth.

Matthew 4:1-11

"3 **Command** that these stones become bread."

Change circumstances!

6 **He will command His angels concerning you** so that you will not strike your foot."

Claim promises!

9 All these things I will give you, **if you (prostrate yourself before) me**."

Compromise means!

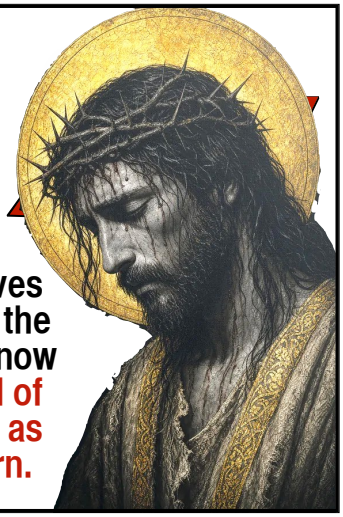
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13

Jesus

"the Chaplain of the American dream"



American culture loves Jesus as a means to the "good life" here and now but not as the model of the way of the cross as we wait for his return.

14

American culture?

"It's all about the economy, stupid!"



having false hope,
in money we don't have,
to buy things we don't need,
to impress people we don't like,
while expecting peace we don't get,
and blaming politicians we don't trust.

Welcome to American Caesar!

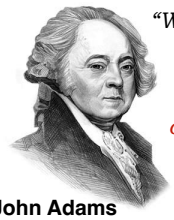
15

Ways in which American culture has infiltrated some Evangelical churches



16

"Liberty & justice for all" can be a door to glory or genocide.



John Adams

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our constitution was made only for a moral and a religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."

"America is a nation with the soul of a church."

Or is it vice versa?



G.K. Chesterton

17

Two of America's great characteristics are -

Liberty & justice for all

But they come with great risks.

Liberty can crowd out "general welfare"

Liberty can cancel out the Way of the Cross.

NOTE: Jesus' and the Apostle's hostility was not leveled at the "worldly Romans"



but at the religious, "worldly Jews".

18

In 1 Thessalonians Paul makes two points:

1. He praises the church for its testimony in resisting the temptation to cave in to a worldly culture's pressure.

1 Thessalonians 1

"6 You also became **imitators of us and of the Lord**, having received the word **in much tribulation** with the joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that **you became an example** to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia."

2. He exhorts them to keep it & step it up.

1 Thessalonians 4:1

"Finally then, brethren, we **request and exhort** you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God **(just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more**."

19



20