WHEN GRACE IS A CURSE.

Tonight as we begin this message, I want you to pray for understanding that God might speak to youir hearts clearly, because your souls' salvation might hinge on a knowledge of this subject.

Last night we preached to you about God's Law, the ten commandments. And we dealt with it almost exclusively in the New Testament because there are those who call themselves New Testament Christians. I prefer to be called a Bible Christian. For all scripture is given by inspiratiion of God.

Nevertheless there are those who say “we're not under the law, we're under Grace.” And ladies and gentlemen, I believe that. But you know it's important for us to see what the Bible really says.

Now another thing you always hear is, “Oh, that ol' law was nailed to the cross.” on Wednesday night our subject is, “What did Jesus nail to the cross?” Amen! It's gonna be so plain that you will never be deceived by that. In fact, we're gonna have a cross up there, and a hammer and some nails. And the things that Jesus nailed to the cross, we're gonna nail to the cross. Riight here in Wednesday night1

now the Bible tells us that God's law, the Ten Commandments, is the only standard that exposes sin: which tells you what's right or what's wrong either inplicitly or explicitly. In Romans 4:15, the Bible says, “… where no law is there is no transgression.” In other words, if you do away with God's law you do away with sin. For sin is the transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4).

Now the Devil attacks everyhting God intends to be a blessing to His people. Everything God sendfs to enlighten and save and to lift up our filthy mess – the Devil attacks! He goes around telling you it's alright to shack up and have a bunch of girlfriends. And then he attacks God's Law which tells us what to do that's right and decent. That's the Devil's program. And he will even use the scripture in his deception.

Now one of the scriptures most often used by Satan in deceiving men is that scripture that says we're not under the law but under Grace. Not that's the truth! But ladies and gentlemen, what is Grace?

One definition is: Christ is Grace! And He is, just as He is love. Another definition of Grace is love unbounded. Limitless love. But the definition I mainly have in mind is Grace is unmerrited favor. Grace is pardon which we don't deserve. Now if you deserve pardon, it's not Grace, it's justice.

If somebody lies on you and goes downtown and tells the judge in the police department that you stole shoes out of Tom McCans' store. And you go down to court, and the judge finds you not guilty, that's not Grace. That's justice. You deserve to be found innocent if you're not guilty. But if you stole the shoes, and the judge said “I'm gonna give you another chance”, you don't deserve that. That's Grace. Amen. Grace is pardon which we don't deserve.

In Ephesians 2:8, the Bible says, “for by Grace are ye saved through faith;...” Amen.

Dwight L. Moody told the story of a man that had a weather's vain on top of his barn. Right

underneath the whether vein rooster were the words “God is Love”. And so one day a visitor wanted to poke fun at the farmer. And so he said what are you trying to say. Are you trying to say that God's love is as changeable as the wind? The farmer replied, “no indeed. What I'm trying to say is God is love no matter which way the wind blows!”

Grace is always available. And do you know that if it were not for Grace, I couldn't stand here and preach to you tonight. If you knew what the Lord brought me from, you wouldn't wanna hear me preach. Matter of fact, I couldn't look you straight in the eye, if you knew. The only way i'm able to do that it is because of Grace! Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see. Grace that brought me safe thus far, and Grace will lead me on.

That God for amazing Grace. One writer said, “when I look at myself, I don't see how I can possibly be saved; but when I look at Jesus, I don't see how I can possibly be lost. Doesn't make sense to be lost when you look at Jesus. Easy to be saved when you look at Jesus. It's Grace! Not something you worked out, but something worked out for you. You're not saved by what you do, but by what Jesus has done for you. It's Grace that saved sinners.

Now, what did Paul mean when he said we're not under the law but under Grace? I'm gonna use an illustriation that will make this clear.

Paul wrote this to the church members. He was to saints. Now I want you to follow this illustration.

I came over here to clearwater. And because I'm a citizen of these United States. I'm free to walk around in this city, to drive wherever I please. Now, downtown there is a great big bank. Are you following me? That bank is open six days a week. When it is open at 9:00 a.m. and the doors are open to the public, am I free to go into that bank? Even though I came from another city? If it's open to the public, I may go in, right? And nobody can bother me for goin' in. I don't even have to do business. I can just walk in there and look around. I'm free ti do that, aren't I?

Now supposed one day, I go down to the bank and I walk in there, you just told me I'm free to do that, and I walk up to the counter, right by the teller's window. And the teller has to go back to the vault for something. And while she's going back to the vault, I look around, and I don't think anybody sees me. So I grab a stack of that money and stick it under my coat. What have I done?

I've broken the law. And up until now, I could walk into the bank and do as I please. But I have broken the law, for the law says, “Thou shalt not steal money from thy bank.” Now when I take that money and slide it under my coat and start to the door. Just when I get to the door, blue eyes and brass button walks up to me and takes me by the arm. And he says, “Young man, I want you to come with

me.” When he does that, I'm under what? Now if you don't believe it try it.

Are you with me now? Until I broke the law, he couldn't bother me. He might not even like the way I look. Can't do anything about it. I'm free! But when I broke the law, he grabbed a hold of me, and I'm under the law.

He says to me, “Young man you are coming with me.” But I say to him “Sir, I would prefer not to go with you, I wanna go out to the bay and look at the bay.” And he'll say, “Oh, I didn't realize that, pardon me, go ahead,” right? Not when you're under the law. Now if I hadn't stole that money I could walk to the lake. But when I steal the money I'm under the law, and it' tuff when you're under the law. And so he takes me where I don't want to go, and he puts me where I don't want to be. Behind bars! And I look at the mattress, a little mat on a board, and I say, “look here man, I can't stay in this cell because I'm used to sleeping on a Sealy Posturepedic, so you'd better let me out.” Does he let me out? It was alright to sleep where I pleased until I stole that money. Now I'm under the law.

After a while he brings up my dinner and he's got beans and bread. And I say “look, I don't wanna eat this, I prefer to have some cabbage, and salad, and potatoes.” He goes running to please me, doesn't he? When you're under the law it's rough. And the man that's under the law is the man that what? (Broke law). You can't go as you please, you can't do as you please, you're in a mess and you need help!

And I'm sitting in this cell and I get to thinking. And I say to myself, “you know one thing Baker, you were a fool to steal that money. You shouldn't have done this. We call this repentance. You know you shouldn't have done that, what got into you, the Devil.

And so I go up to the bars and I tell the jailer, “I wanna make a phone call – the law allows me - and I call up a good lawyer. And the lawyer comes to see me. And when he walks into the cell to see me he says, “Baker did you take the money?” Now if I say no, he's gonna plead for justice. If I say yes, he's gonna plead for Grace. And so I say to my lawyer, “Attorney, I was a fool. I stole that money.” Now this is confession which follows repentance. “I stole that money, but I'm sorry! And if you will help me get out of this I promise you I'll not do it again!”

So my trial comes up. And the judge walks in and takes his seat. And he bangs on the desk and calls the court room to order. And the judge says, “Baker! Stand up!” And I stand up. And right beside me is a policeman holding me by the arm. Are you with me now?

And he says, “How do you plead? Guilty or not guilty?” I say, “Guilty, your honor.” Now ladies and gentlemen, that settles it. When I say guilty the judge doesn't even need to have a trial. All he have to do is turn over to the lawbook, and the lawbook says, “Thou shalt not steal money from thy bank, and if thou stealest money thou shalt spend 20 years in jail.” Now it's settled when I say “guilty” the

judge could give me 20 years, and he would be just. He wouldn't be a bad fellow for giving me 20 years, that's what I deserve! The law says that's what I deserve. They wouldn't say that the judge is unfair giving me 20 years, they would say that he is just.

The judge is now looking at the law and he's ready to prescribe, when the lawyer stands up and says, “Your honor, may I approach the bar on behalf of my client.” The judge looks at the lawywe, and he likes him, he's a good fellow, and they're friends. He'll listen to the lawyer, but he doesn't wanna listen from a thief. So the lawyer speaks in my behalf. And he approaches the bar and says, “Your honor, my client is a thief, he stole that money, my client deserves 20 years, he knows it, I know it, you know it.

“But your honor, I visited with him many times since he did that. And he has convinced me that he's sorry he even did it. He's willing to pay it back, and he promises me if we give him Grace, he'll never steal again – Your honor, I believe in him. So I'm asking you sir, if it's in your heart, to give this fellow another chance.” Are you with me?

Now the judge trusts the lawyer's judgment. So the judge says, “Baker, stand up again!” And I stand up feeling terrible. And the judge says, “You know one thing, you stole that money out of that bank, and according to the law, you should go to jail for twenty years for doing that.” And the judge says, “I might send you to jail for 20 years.” A, Oh – start to feel better now. “But because of your lawyer, I know attorney so-and-so and I trust his judgment, and he has convinced me that maybe you're worth another chance.

“And so Baker, not because of you, but because of your lawyer, for your lawyer's sake, I'm gonna give you another chance, I'm gonna let you go! But don't you ever do it again!” And the judge picks up his gavel and the minute that gavel (mallet) hits he says, “case dismissed.”

When he says that the policeman is still holding me, I say, “turn me a loose, don't be holdin' on to me, I'm not under the law, I'm under Grace!” Amen.

Now until the judge did that, he's holding me. The minute the judge says, “case dismissed!” “Turn me loose. I came in that door, but I'm goin' out the front door with all these nice people now.” And I walk out the door with honest people, because I'm not under the law now, I'm under Grace.

And now I can go right back downtown and go into that same bank. Is that right? I can walk in there and look around, and the same policeman that arrested me is standing there watching me. But he can't do nothing now. I'm under Grace! - Amen!

Now ladies and gentlemen that's plain. Now I wanna ask you a question because I trust your intelligence. If that story really happened as I just told you. The fact that the judge said, “I'm gonna give you another chance and let you go – that means that since I'm under Grace, I don't need to worry

about the law, I can go in and break it again, right?

Wouldn't it be awful for me to go back in and do it again after that judge went so far in my behalf? In other words, if anybody makes sure he keeps the law, it's the man under Grace. He shouldn't let the judge down, and he shouldn't let his lawyer down! Amen!

Being under Grace doesn't mean I'm free to break the law again, it means I ought to be very careful with the law.

Now the breaking of God's law is sin? Is what? That's 1 John 3:4. The wages of sin is what? And all have what? Sinned and come short of the glory of God. So that means everyone of us here tonight has sinned. And if the wages of the sin is death, everyone of us deserve to die.

But God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him should not die, but have everlasting life. Amen.

Now if we deserve to die because we have sinned, we are guilty, what should we do? Just thing you do is get a good lawyer. The Bible says if any man sins we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

How do you get in touch with that lawyer? All you need to do is drop on your knees and come boldly before the throne of Grace and you'll find mercy to help in time of need. As the Psalm says, you can call him up and tell him what you want.

All you've got to do is fall on your knees in prayer and say, “O Jesus, I'm a sinner, I deserve to die, I need a lawyer.” And when your case comes before God the Father who is a righteous judge, He can look at you a sinner and destroy you and be a just God. God could kill everybody under this hall and still be a just God. For all have sinned and the wages of sin is death. And when you come up before the judgment, you deserve to die. But thank God there's a lawyer standing at the right hand of the Father, and Jesus has the Father's confidence.

And Jesus turns tot he Father and says, “Father, Baker deserves to die for he sinned. But I heard him pray. He confessed his sin and asked me to forgive him.” But the Father says, “Yes, but look the wages of sin is death, Baker ought to die!”

Then the lawyer raises up his nail-scared hands, His heart is moved with pity and he turns towards me and He says, “For Jesus' sake I'm gonna let you go. Go and sin no more!” When God says to me I'm a Christian now, I'm not under the law, I'm under Grace – Do you see it? Do you see it?

Now I wanna read a text. Romans 6:1,2. This is the same man who says we're not under the law but under Grace. You know when you just read one text you're always in trouble, you gotta read all the man says.

In Romans 6:1;2, Paul says, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may

abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

Ladies and gentlemen, if Jesus could have changed his law, he wouldn't have to die. For where no law is there is no transgression. Adam and Eve broke God's law. If God could have changed his law all He needed to do was throw away the old one. And Adam and Eve would have been clean. And then HE would just write a new one. And leave out the one they broke.

But our God is not only a merciful God but He's a just God. Which means he has respect for the law. And will not throw out the constitution of the universe. Easier to die than to do that. So Jesus said, “Alright Father, I'll go die for sinful man!”

They nailed him on a cross, between two thieves, and a soldier's spear ruptured his side, the blood came trickling down. God was dying! Life died! In order to destroy death. Jesus did all of this because He could not change the Law, and because the word of God must stand forever!

God says He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. God says the grass withereth, the flowers fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever. Because the word could not be broken, Christ had to come and pay our debt. But when He did it folks, He opened up a fountain of Grace. And when you're ready to stop breaking the Law by sinning, then He will wash away your past. Cover you with His life – you're under Grace then. You're free from the condemnation of the Law which says that a sinner ought to die. You're under Grace!

I'm under Grace tonight ladies and gentlemen. Not under the Law but under Grace. Now if tonights message is clear let everybody who wants to be through with condemnation so that you're not under the Law, everybody who wants the Grace to do everything God has commanded I want you to stand now.

Prayer:

Lord we're standing up. And you heard the appeal and you know why we're standing up. We're not stupid, we understood the appeal. And we're standing to indicate that we want to do all that You have commanded. We wanna start doing what God has said. We need strength and help Lord, that's why we're standing.

There is hope for you, we're not under the Law but under Grace.

There is hope for you, we long to see His face.

There is hope for you, the Lord is ever near.

There is hope for you, we are but a pilgrim here.

There is hope in Christ for you.