

Grace to You

Mercy Triumphs over Judgment

By Michael Bailey

Jesus stood before the religious rulers condemned by them for blasphemy against God. Their anger was expressed in spit and blows that pummeled the face of Grace. Mocking Jesus in their unbelief they demanded to know whose fist it was that brought the blows. They thought themselves clever and took His silence as proof of their great wisdom.

- But He knew whose fist struck His face.
- He knew whose hands shoved the crown of thorns into His brow.
- He knew whose spit ran down his cheeks.
- He knew whose whips tore His flesh.
- He knew who drove the nails that pinned Him to the cross.
- He knew whose mouth spewed the curses.
- He knew whose spear pierced His side.

Jesus wasn't the one who didn't understand and lived in darkness. It was the hands that committed these heinous acts against love that lived in darkness and ignorance. Isaiah said (ch 53) We considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him. Don't look back for the answer to the question. We threw the punch. Our sin was and is a spit in the face of Christ. We drove the nails and caused an innocent One to die in our stead. We all like sheep have gone astray and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Many look back to that terrible day and wonder how they could do such things to perfect love. The fact is we were there and we struck the blows on the One who is pure. And as a sheep before her shearer is silent Jesus refused to open His mouth. He could have opened His mouth and condemned from knowledge all of us who struck the blow. Thankfully, Jesus did not come to condemn the world but that through Him the world might be saved.

I'll never get over the truth that Jesus knew all about us and loved us still. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

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THERE'S ALWAYS MUD IN THE SPRINGTIME!

by Eva Boob

Did you ever hear the saying, "Here's to mud in your eye?" Or have you stood behind a vehicle that is stuck and when the pedal is put down—the mud flies right on you? No one wants to be in that place or position! No one wants to get stuck in the mud!

But Spring does produce mud because all the grass has not grown in yet and lots of rain causes the dry, hard ground to soften and soften! It is an understandable situation, yet Mothers still yell when kids go out to play, 'stay out of the mud!' because she has to clean up the mess!

Mud is messy. It can make a lasting mark on clothing and not wash away. Unkind words and deeds can be like mud—producing situations that are unpleasant and can be messy. But love applied is like the most amazing stain cleanser, it covers and washes clean, just as if it never happened.

*"This one was dead,
and now he's alive.
He was lost, and
now he's found!"*

What if someone throws mud at you? That sounds intentional. Most of the time, it is remarkable how well you can deal with that situation when someone comes along side and helps clean up the mess. All you may see is the mud, but a friend can release such grace into your heart when they deal with the problem with you and help find the solution.

Matthew 7:1-6 says, *"Someone with a critical spirit jumps on others failures and criticizes their faults. It is easy for them to see mud on their neighbor's face and be oblivious to their own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'let me wash your face'—when your own is distorted? Wipe that ugly sneer off your face and then you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor."*

Does heaven applaud when mud is thrown on us? When we suffer for doing good? When we are loving, following the steps of Jesus? Yes! Mud is not all bad! It has a purpose. Luke 6:22-23 says, *"Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone sneers or blackens your name (mud!) to discredit Jesus. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and that person is uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—all of heaven applauds!"* When was the last time you were glad for the mud throwing you experienced at work? *"Great is your reward....."* when you know what to do with mud!

Some people can get lost in the mud, wasting all they have, being undisciplined in life, trying to find their own way, but failing to reach a true green-grass destination. Forgetting themselves, they wallow in the mud as pigs, eating the slop fed to them. The Father's love and responding to that love can bring one as this back to right relationships and true destiny again. Luke 15 says this about it: *"When he was a long way off his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out embraced him and kissed him."* Our Heavenly Father embraces us even when we are covered in mud, stained with mud and stink like mud. He kisses us with His heart pounding and exclaiming for all to hear, *"This one was dead, and now he's alive. He was lost, and now he's found!"* Even mud cannot separate us from the Father's richest love.

Why Did it Have to Be a Kiss?

By Barbara Mannino

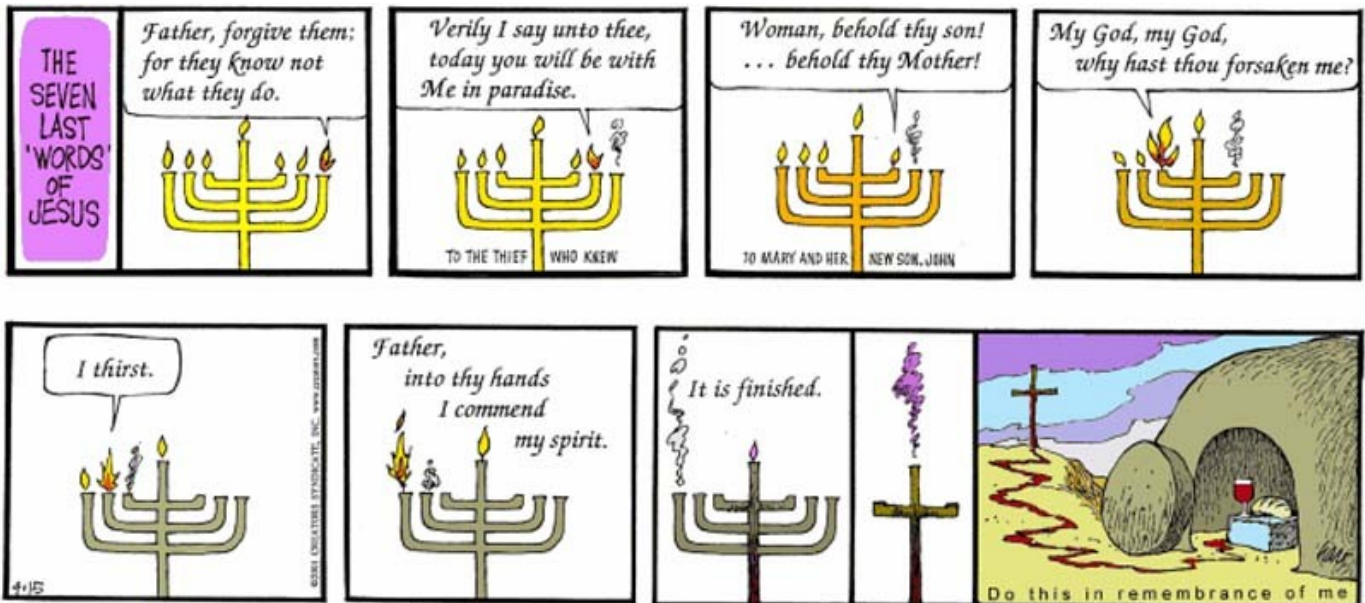
When we celebrate the risen Savior my mind always goes back in time to the last night that Jesus would spend with all His disciples gathered together in one place. The Bible calls it Passover and we refer to it as that, or more commonly, The Last Supper. When we think of a kiss during this season of combined heartbreak and celebration, most of the church looks ahead to the Kiss of Betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. Stop! Don't picture that infamous kiss in the Garden of Betrayal. Linger with me and allow the Holy Spirit to help us look at another kiss that would impact the world to a much greater degree 2,000 years later and even until eternity in heaven begins.

It has been a heartbreaking evening for Jesus and the twelve, as He knows what lies ahead, and they struggle to understand all that He has shared with them. The moment has come for Jesus to minister to them by washing their feet and lovingly giving them one last, hands-on lesson in humility. The Holy Spirit would remind us of that evening by giving us a fresh look and deeper insight into what actually took place that last time when all were together.

Imagine, if you will, the mixture of emotions pouring forth that night from Jesus and His twelve friends and followers. Sadness and incomprehension from many. Doubt from some. Absolute commitment from the One who would be betrayed. But what a hodgepodge of emotions filling the betrayer. Guilt mixed with fear. Greed and condemnation combining with shame and even some regret. Love played a part for all twelve, yes, even for the betrayer, but the master would be the only one filled and compelled totally by love. Please read on and allow the Holy Spirit to help you envision the scene.

Jesus had finished washing their feet but, I want us to picture, once again, what took place as He knelt before Judas. I believe He knelt a little longer at the feet of His betrayer. Can we picture ourselves lovingly taking our hands and sluicing the water down over the feet of our own personal Judas? We all have one, or maybe, we've been the one who's guilty of the act of betrayal? Let us imagine how Jesus' tears must have mingled with the water as He gently kept washing those guilty feet. But wait a minute! Did you see what I just saw? Jesus just finished drying those feet but, the finishing touch was a kiss! Why did it have to be a kiss? BECAUSE LOVE HOLDS NO WRONGS! LOVE NEVER FAILS! He had to finish with a kiss because that's how love acts. Love keeps no record of wrongs and He is total love. If Jesus had a million parts, every piece would be labeled LOVE!

I don't know about you, but I want to always remember that kiss. That kiss will forever echo throughout eternity! That kiss held all of the love and compassion of a Holy, Righteous God! He wants you to experience His kiss of love and forgiveness. He wants you to feel His loving hands gently washing away your guilty stains as His redemptive blood continues to flow from Calvary. His blood hasn't lost it's power and His kiss of love is just as loving and compassionate. His grace is still free and His mercies are still new every morning. He also wants you to remember that no one will ever love you the way He that He loves you. I love you, too!



THE WORD IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

By Phil May

From Exodus to Deuteronomy it is repeated over 2000 times; “Thus saith the Lord.” We see throughout the Old Testament that God speaks to people giving instruction, direction and warning. The Word reveals who God is and who we are as His people. John tells us that the Word became flesh in Jesus. The Word is the logos, alive and active, not written words on a page, but in the heart and on the lips of a believer.

The Word is used to renew our minds so that we begin to think and act as the Word says we are, not as the world says we are. Read Romans 12:2, Colossians 3:10 and James 1:22. The mind is renewed by the Word of God when it is acted upon--made a part of your everyday life. When you DO the Word not just study, memorize, or say it, but LIVE it--in it and by it-- transformation takes place.

Colossians 3:16, “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” John 15:7-8, “If you abide in me and my Word abides in you, you will bear much fruit.” The Word brings forth its own kind in us. We need to let the Word become an integral part of our being. Let it live in us. The Word dwelling in us and our dwelling in the Word is equivalent to Christ personally being in us. The Word having control of your life is Christ having control of you. The Word dominating your thinking and actions is the Lordship of Jesus Christ in you.

Acts 20:32, “Now I commit you to God and to the Word of His grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” The Word builds the Christ nature, the love nature of the Father in us.

The past several months I have been renewing my mind and confessing what the Word says about who I am. We need to know who we are in Christ or we will never become the person the Word says we are. It is time to stop preaching condemnation to Christians and speak what the Word says we are.

Here’s what the Word says about us using personal pronouns. According to 2 Peter 1:3-5, “I have everything I need to live a life that pleases God. It was ALL given to me by God’s own power, when I learned that He had invited me to share in His wonderful goodness. God made great and marvelous promises, so that His nature would become part of me. Then I could escape my evil desires and the corrupt influences of this world.”

The divine nature became part of me when I believed (and acted upon) the promises of God found in His Word. That divine nature is in me but it does not bear fruit until it is activated by the Word.

After reading this Word, I pray along these lines, “Father, I thank you that I have everything I need to live a life that pleases you. It was all given to me by your own power. When I learned that you invited me to share in your wonderful goodness, you made great and marvelous promises so that your nature would become part of my life. I could and will escape my evil desires and the corrupt influence of this world.

I have over twenty scriptures that I am learning to act upon, confess and live out in my everyday life. The transformation is in process!

May Calendar

- **Saturdays:** Prayer, 8-9:30 am (LE & MU)
- **Sundays: Morning Worship,** 10:00 (LE & MU)
- **Wednesdays:** 7:00 Bible Study/Youth Group (LE&MU)
- **Monday, May 5th & 19th** Men’s Group Meeting (MU)
- **Saturday, May 10th** Hand of Grace Full Distrib(LE)
- **Monday, May 12th & 26th** Women’s Meeting (MU)
- **Saturday, May 17th** Hand of Grace (MU)
- **Wednesday, May 21st** Children’s Church to Ohession (7:00 Sharp)
- **Saturday, May 24th** Hand of Grace, Produce Only (LE)

May Nursery Schedule

Sundays:
May 4 — Glee & Alexei Pavlova & Kelsey Johnson
May 11 — Leisle Kauffman, Candace Rager
May 18 — Nikki Scyoc, Jenny Hartzler
May 25 — Maralee Seeley, Christen Amspacker, Nakita Rager
Wednesdays:
May 7 — Melody Bratton, Jackie Alters
May 14 — Genia Mathews, George Camp
May 21 — Anneliese Smith, Jen Neavling
May 28 — Cyndi Neff & Carrie Baumgardner
Contact Angie Kerstetter to serve in the nursery: 717-667-6864

Sundays:
May 4 — Patti Hutton & Krissy White
May 11 — Jennifer Walker & Beth Drake
Mat 18 — Pat Gilsbaugh & Angie Knable
May 25 — Autumn Woodward
Wednesdays:
May 7 — Patti Hutton & Danielle Neff
May 14 — Jean Speck
May 21 — Lisa Harris & Carol Henry
May 28 — Sue May & Diane McCallister

KNOWING WHO YOU ARE!

By Bobby Griebel

Often I will sit back in a comfortable spot in my living room to enjoy watching my shelties interact with each other. If you have never experienced multiple-dog ownership, I can tell you that it becomes quite evident rather quickly that each dog has its own unique personality and traits even if the dogs are all of the same breed.



Last year I had the opportunity to adopt my first male sheltie. Up to that point, I had

three females. It was interesting and amusing to watch Buddy try to assert himself as the leader of the pack. Initially, the girls did not put up with Buddy's behavior. Moki, who was the oldest of the girls, very confidently stood her ground, barked sharply and backed Buddy into a corner and effectively established her authority over him to the point that he simply sat down and then lay down in submission to her. He did not attempt to challenge her again. Unfortunately, Moki died last fall. Denali, the second oldest of the girls, has always been very passive. I noticed that, without Moki, Denali acted almost shy around Buddy. I also observed that Buddy began asserting himself again. Denali would move aside for Buddy to drink from the

water bowl before she did. If he wanted the same toy she had, she would immediately lay it down for him.

As I thought about what a contrast this was, the Lord began to teach me something. I believe He was saying to me that I needed to be more like Denali when I approached Him, but more like Moki when I am faced with dealing with the enemy. I sometimes have it backwards.

James 4:7 says: "So humble yourselves before God..." with many translations saying submit instead of humble. 2 Corinthians 9:13 says "You will be glorifying God through your generous gifts. For your generosity to them will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ." Obedient or "subject to" or "submitted to" the Good News of Christ. Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary defines the word submit as "to retire, withdraw, to yield." The New Webster's dictionary defines the word submit as "to offer oneself of one's free will, to cease to offer resistance, to defer to another's wishes."

So, of course, it made perfect sense for the Lord to want me to be more like my sweet Denali in my encounters and in my responses to Him. Did it make sense, though, to see Moki's personality as a reflection of how I could or should deal with the enemy? I returned to James 4:7. The verse says in its entirety, "So humble yourselves before God.

Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." Romans 8:37 indicates "...overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loves us. We are more than conquerors through Him." Matthew 28:18-20 says, "Jesus came and told his disciples, 'I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this. I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" In Revelation 1:17-18 John recorded what he saw and heard from Jesus. "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But he laid His right hand on me and said, 'Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one who died. Look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.'"

Now, I understand. The enemy has no control over me. I am submitted to the One who is holding the keys! I can have the same confidence to bark into the face of the enemy as Moki had with Buddy. She didn't let his presence change who she was. She stood her ground, trusting her authority as the established matriarch of the pack. "For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need," Philippians 4:13. I can't do battle with the enemy on my own, but with Jesus in me, I can!

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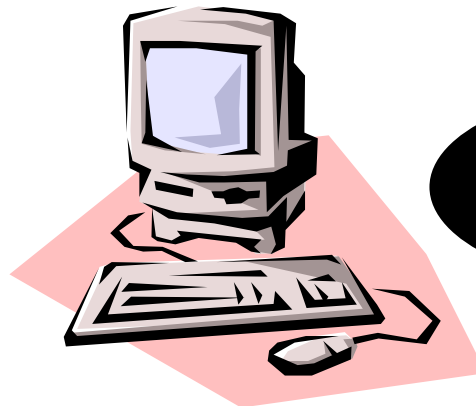
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