

DATE: 3-11-2012

TEXT: ROMANS 5:1-11

TITLE: Grace Transforms

AUDIENCE: LOGAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH

In *Mystery on the Desert*, Maria Reiche describes a series of strange lines made by the Nazca in the plains of Peru, some of them covering many square miles. For years, people assumed these lines were the remnants of ancient irrigation ditches.

Then in 1939, Dr. Paul Kosok of Long Island University discovered that their true meaning could only be seen from high in the air. When viewed from an airplane, these seemingly random lines are enormous drawings of birds, insects, and animals.

In a similar way, people often think of the Bible as a series of individual, unconnected stories. But if we survey the Scriptures as a whole, we discover that they form one great story of God's redeeming Grace — from the opening scenes of Genesis to the final chapter of Revelation we see God's plan. Weaving through all the diverse strands of the Bible is the overarching story of what God has been up to in the rescue and restoration of fallen human beings, from the first nanosecond of creation through the final cry of victory at the end of time. We see God's Grace alone can Transform us and bring us life.

— Timothy George, "Big-Picture Faith,"
Christianity Today (October 23, 2000)

Last week we were reminded of our separation from God. Isaiah understood our problem when he wrote, "Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." (Isa. 59:1-2)

So how does God transform us from sinners to saints. From those who are dead in their sins to those who have been made alive?

Years ago a husband and wife became estranged, and finally separated. They both left the city they had lived in and moved to different parts of the country. The man one day returned to the city on business. He went out to the cemetery to the grave of their only son. He was standing by the grave lost in thought when he heard a step behind him. Turning he saw his former wife. The first inclination of both was to turn away. But they had a common, binding interest in that grave; and instead of turning away they clasped hands over the grave of their son, and were reconciled to one another. It took nothing less than death to transform their relationship.

Listen to what Paul writes in Romans 5:1-11

It took nothing less than the death, the precious blood, of Jesus to reconcile man to God.

- I. We are Transformed By God's Grace
 - A. God's motivation was Love
 - B. His free gift was his own son
 - C. We can make peace with God through our Faith

D. Faith in God's Grace

1. Faith that God sent Jesus to die on the cross in our place
2. Faith that if we do what he told us to do we can be saved from our sins
3. We don't have to do very much to make peace with God, he has done most of the work. All he asks in return is faith.

E. In Western Canada where I lived for a short time one of the main sources of income was the logging industry. The loggers would often cut their own roads into wilderness areas. Many times you would come across one of these roads and if you followed it often it would come to a river and continue on the other side, yet there would be no bridge or ferry. How did they get across you ask? On a bridge of ice. The road had been made in the winter when driving over the frozen water was no problem. No need to build a bridge God had provided a natural way to cross the water by freezing it solid.

F. God has provided us a bridge across the river of sin back to Him, all we have to do is put our faith in the Grace of God.

II. God's Grace Transforms Our Future State

- A. Romans 5:2
- B. Remember what Paul wrote in Romans 3:23.
- C. We have a hope that in the future we will be received into the very presence of God's Glory. We will be given new bodies that will never suffer the curse of this world.

D. As it says in Phil. 3:20-21, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

E. D.L. Moody put it this way to a friend, "Someday you will read in the papers that D.L. Moody of Northfield is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I shall have gone up higher, that is all—out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal, a body that sin cannot touch, that sin cannot taint, a body fashioned like unto His glorious body. I was born of the flesh in 1837; I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die; that which is born of the Spirit will live forever."

F. We will be in God's presence and the true reflection of His glory will be evident in our new bodies.

III. God's Grace Transforms Our Present State?

- A. Romans 5:3-5
- B. We can rejoice in our present sufferings
 1. Revelation 6 lists some common trials we face: war, economic crisis, death, famine, and disease, persecution, other disasters like earthquakes
 2. You can call it tribulation, suffering, trials, but we have all experienced it.

3. In fact as Christians we should expect it. In Acts 14:22 Paul says, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,"
4. Jesus said to be His disciple we must be willing to take up a cross and follow him.

C. How can we rejoice in suffering?

1. With the Spirit's help we can find the strength to persevere
2. With the Spirit's help our faith is strengthened
3. With the Spirit's help our hope is strengthened
4. God's Spirit, the love of God inside us, provides us a way to turn suffering into victory!
5. Christ's own death is the ultimate example. His cry tells us how painful it was, "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?"
6. Yet because of his faithful suffering on the cross we have the opportunity to be saved!
7. Hebr. 12:2-4 "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood."

Why wait he has provided you with all you need to remove the sin in your heart that separates you from his love.

Have you made your Peace with God? Has your life, your present and future been transformed by the saving Grace of God?