

The Sound of *Many Waters*

Many Waters is a weekly article written by Ron Cipic, lead pastor of Grand River Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. To comment or ask a question about this piece, write to Pastor Ron at pastors@grandriverchurch.org. Related Scripture verses for further study are cited at the end of this piece.

Now Is The Acceptable Time

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. We then, workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says, 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation." ~ 1 Co. 5:21-6:2

Jesus didn't become the one and only sacrifice for sin so Christians would go on sinning. He died that Christians would be free of sin, that they would live life "sin free." This is the gospel or good news of Jesus Christ. This is the abundant life that Jesus promised those who are one with Him. Note the goal of Christ's sacrifice: *"that we might become the righteousness of God."* God, by His very nature, is righteous. He is holy and perfect in all His ways. He wants to manifest His righteousness through the lives of His children. Those who are born of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, share His very nature and manifest God.

Now folks get really uneasy when someone talks about "sin-free living." They may ask, "How can I possibly be that good?" The answer is simple. Apart from God, nobody can be this good. Everyone apart from God is a hopeless sinner. But salvation isn't going it alone. It isn't trying to be good. It isn't proving ourselves to God and trying to earn our way to heaven. Christ died that we

could be one with Him. To be one with Christ is to have Christ living His perfect life through us. This is the true Christian life. We were saved from an independent spirit or sin. Now we are totally dependent on God and as a result of that dependence, we can manifest His glory.

Paul pleaded with the Corinthians, and by the Spirit, he pleads with the church today *"not to receive the grace of God in vain."* These Corinthian believers were deceived into believing that God's grace was a ticket to go on sinning. After all, aren't we saved on the basis of what Christ did, not on the basis of what we do? But the lie we can go on sinning because Jesus did it, like every good lie, contains enough truth to make it believable. True, there was nothing the Corinthians could do to set themselves free from sin. Only Christ could do that on the Cross. But He did it. Then He sent His Holy Spirit to live in them and make holiness a reality in their lives. His grace was and is not a grace to go on sinning, but a grace to be free of sin.

So Paul reminded the Corinthians and he reminds us that *"now is the acceptable time...the day of salvation."* Salvation from what? Sin. We are not to patiently wait for a "someday" salvation. Now who do you think would want the sinner to believe that freedom from sin is not possible in this life, that a Christian should just go on sinning, that death is the ultimate sanctifier? Not God. God says that "today" is the day of salvation. The power of the Cross that destroyed the power of sin has been available for two thousand years. It is not a future work. It is a past work. It is finished work for whosoever believes. *RC*

Study Verses: 2 Co. 5:1-21; Ro. 6:1-23; Jn. 10:8-10; and Heb. 10:12-23.

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