

Four Spiritual Dimensions

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

Copyright © 2005

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Chapter 1 8

LOVE THAT GOES BEYOND ALL SIN

Chapter 2 13

LET GOD TURN YOU

Chapter 3 17

SEATED ABOVE IN CHRIST

CONCLUSION 22

INTRODUCTION

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

“May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:17-21).

“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them” (Deuteronomy 33:27).

Paul was saying in Ephesians 3 that if we are

rooted and grounded in love and Christ dwells inside of us by faith, then we have to learn to comprehend the breadth, length, depth, and height of love. In these four spiritual dimensions, God wants to fill us with Himself.

There is no breadth to measure by human standards, and there is no length to measure, because God's love is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2). There is no depth, because God's eternal arms are under us. Furthermore, in Psalm 89:2, God declares, "I will build mercies forever into the heavens." His mercies go to immeasurable heights, way beyond the demons of the air and the demons of the dust.

This principle—concerning the breadth, length, depth, and height of God's love—means that in the Finished Work, love passes by knowledge of every single thing. In other words, many people have tried to measure Ephesians 3:18, but it is an eternal breadth, an eternal length, an eternal depth, and eternal height, from everlasting to everlasting. The eternal work of Jesus Christ surrounds every single area in these four spiritual dimensions. It means that the work is completely finished, with a love that passes by knowledge.

In Deuteronomy 33:27, we see that there is

no “bottom” because of eternity. Underneath the “bottom” are His everlasting arms. Below our very lowest place, God’s arms are still there, holding us up. Inasmuch as He holds us when we fall (Psalm 145:14), we are not utterly cast down (Psalm 37:24). I really want you to grasp this picture as you read this booklet. For born-again, blood-bought Christians, there is no dimension where God is not present in our lives.

Chapter One

LOVE THAT GOES
BEYOND ALL SIN

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Galatians 6:1).

There is a wonderful song called “He Looked beyond My Faults and Saw My Need”. We have sung it in our churches. I am sorry to say that this title is technically untrue. Maybe we should change the words.

Let me show you why. We have faults, and faults come from weakness. These faults can rear up at any time because of the old sin nature that is resident within us.

Sin, however, comes from active rebellion.

Paraptoma is the Greek word for “fault,” and it speaks of a lapse or deviation from the truth (see Galatians 6:1). Moses had a tremendous fault before he led Israel out. That fault was a

bad temper, and it was ingrained within him. That kept on being a fault of his until he became meek. Even after he had been good for forty years with God, Moses' fault came back out of the weakness that was ingrained in his nature—human frailty.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for sin is *hamartia*, and it means “to violate God’s law” or, to go against God’s divine government. Sin is more than a fault. It speaks of a willful choice to do wrong.

The Covenant that Covers

“Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin” (Deuteronomy 9:27).

“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

“For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (Hebrews 8:7-8).

We recognize that God saw Israel’s faults—the people’s inherent weakness—and He would give them a new covenant. For them, that new

covenant does not come until the Millennial Reign. If, however, a Jewish person gets saved today, he comes under the new covenant with the Church. These are two distinct covenants.

So, God *saw* Israel's faults, but He did not look upon their sins.

In Deuteronomy 9, Moses said of the children of Israel, "God, look not upon their stubbornness. Look not upon their wickedness. Look not upon their sin." This is clear: God has forgiven every sin.

The Past Is Not Present

"O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low" (Psalm 79:8).

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34).

"And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them: but they shall know that I am the Lord

GOD" (Ezekiel 29:16).

The children of Israel remembered their sins and they lacked confidence, because they didn't turn their hearts to God. Ezekiel 21:24 says their sins came back. They remembered them. They discovered their iniquities. As their sins came back in their remembrance, the language of the original text reveals that they were taken into bondage.

Every time you discover your iniquities, your sins come back into your memory and you are taken into bondage. This is so because you did not understand the meaning of love, the meaning of grace, nor the meaning of the Finished Work in its completion. Thousands of Christians do it, leaders do it, people do it. They remember their sins instead of believing that Christ died for them and forgave them.

The Word of God says, "Do not look upon their stubbornness. Don't look upon their wickedness. And do not look upon their sin." Moses had the mind of God.

There are millions of believers who mix grace with everything else. They do not understand this amazing message. The truth is that God saves us to the uttermost, and He will one day save Israel to the uttermost. God's nation

will one day know the eternal length, breadth, height, and depth of His love.

Chapter Two
LET GOD TURN YOU

Israel made the terrible mistake of remembering their sin. Addicts are addicted because they remember their sin all the time. We have drug addicts, alcoholics, sex addicts. Some people have psychological addictions, needing to be counseled all the time. A woman told us that every week, for her whole life, her entire family saw a psychiatrist every single week. She was a psychological addict, and she hated it.

Now, I want you to see the truth: God knows our faults that come out of our inherent weakness, but God looks beyond our sins and sees our needs. So, when a precious lady in our church was in drug addiction, God looked beyond her sin. She has come so far, and we love her so much. She comes to every service, and she is doing great. God looked beyond her sin and saw her need.

One man has been such a help and a servant

to me. At one time, he was homeless, eating from garbage cans. At one point, he was told he would be in an institution forever, but then he got saved. God looked beyond his sins and saw his need, and He has made him a pastor and a real servant of God.

So, folks, don't sing "He Looked Beyond My Faults" any more. He looked beyond our *sins*. Remember, there is a difference between the two: A fault comes out of human frailty and weakness, but sin is a rebellious act of the will. When we live in sin, we are diminished from the full measure of the Finished Work, living in ignorance of what we should know and crossing over the boundary line when we know it is there.

The Father Looks upon the Face of Jesus

Notice this so carefully: The Father looks upon the face of Jesus Christ. "Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed" (Psalm 84:9).

God the Father looks upon the face of His anointed. Today, it is the resurrected, glorified face of Christ in His glorified humanity, making intercession for us in heaven. So the Father is waiting for Jesus to tell Him, to His face, what

we need and for Him to plead our case (Hebrews 9:24).

It is a beautiful thing that the Father looks upon the face of His anointed, and that it is a glorified face in heaven. It is a *Finished Work*. The Son took care of every single one of our sins, so the Father has to answer every single one of His prayers. We are hid with Christ in God forever (Colossians 3:3); therefore, when God looks at us, He sees His Son. When we fail, we must receive the gift of repentance and let God turn us.

“I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God.

“Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth” (Jeremiah 31:18-19).

Remember the woman who went into Simon the Pharisee’s house. Though her sins were many, they were forgiven, for she loved much. But those who are forgiven little, love little (Luke 7:47). God looked beyond her prostitution and saw her need. And Jesus said to her, “Your

faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

Chapter Three

SEATED ABOVE IN CHRIST

“And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

“They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

“Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

“This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

“So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

“And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

“And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one,

beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

“When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

“She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (John 8:3-11).

This woman was caught in the very act of adultery, but after her accusers went out, Jesus said, “Is there anyone that condemns thee?” and she said, “No man, Lord.” And He said, “Neither do I. Go, and sin no more.” He looked beyond her adultery and saw her need to be forgiven and her need to be kept from falling. The Lord’s forgiveness covered the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth of her sin. In every dimension of her life, this woman was set free, and she could go forward in the plan and purpose of God.

The Lord is determined to present us faultless before the throne of His glory (Jude 24). Consider the beautiful thing that He did with Peter, in John 21. A backslidden Christian, Peter’s fault was fear, and it caused him to deny

Christ (Matthew 26:69-73). But God looked beyond his backsliding, saw his needs, and commissioned him again.

Moses' fault was his anger. David's fault was sensuality. But every time they sinned, God looked beyond their sins and saw their need.

That is not all He saw. He had respect for Israel. According to Exodus 2:23-25, in their bondage, in their state of reaction and rebellion, the children of Israel cried. "And their cry came up to God by reason of their bondage." He heard their groaning, He remembered His covenant, He looked upon them, and He had respect. He saw their affliction, and He came down to do something about it.

God Is Waiting to Forgive

The Word of God says, in Psalm 86:5, that the Lord is waiting to forgive and plenteous in mercy to them that call upon Him—just waiting to forgive, plenteous in mercy.

Please, please understand that if you remember your sins, God does not. If you remember those things, you are not a Finished Work believer. If you remember those things, you have no understanding of this message.

They remembered their sins and had no con-

fidence, and they were taken into bondage. But glory be to God, He remembers them no more, and the past can never affect our present state in any way because of what Christ did at Calvary.

A dad was teaching his son about heaven, and he said, "This is what heaven is like: Beautiful golden streets, no sin, no death, no sorrow—a place of tremendous reunion. And this is what hell is like: A bottomless pit, unsatisfied thirst, a place where you can't forget what you've done."

And he said to his son, "Which place would you rather go?"

The son said, "Wherever you go, Daddy, because I love you."

Sort of sounds like Moses in Exodus 32:32: "If You're going to take their names out of the book of life, take mine out, too." Or, Paul in Romans 9:3: "I'd be willing to go to hell for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

This is a great representation of God's love for us. Christ came down from the heights of heaven. The length of His life was just long enough to fulfill the eternal purpose of God. His arms were wide open, and the breadth of His reach extended to whosoever would come unto Him. He went into the depths of death to be res-

urrected.

Now, Christ sits high above all principalities and powers and the rulers of this world. There He reigns, and we are hid with Him in God. Every dimension of a believer's life is wrapped up in the Son forever. That is the Finished Work of Christ.

CONCLUSION

In Matthew 6:8, God knows our needs before we ask. In Matthew 6:32, He knows the Gentiles' needs in all things—every need. And in Isaiah 65:24, "Before you pray, I will answer, and while you speak, I will hear."

This is how God's attitude is toward us. He knows every need and He answers before we call, because He knew what it was going to be. But while we speak, He hears.

Then the Holy Spirit takes part of our infirmities, because we don't know to pray as we ought (Romans 8:26). He prays with groanings that cannot be uttered. And the Word of God says, "He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the *Spirit*" (with a capital "S"), because He knows and prays and intercedes for all the saints, according to the will of God.

We have the Finished Work. The Father looks upon the Son's face as He intercedes for us. The Holy Spirit prays for us with unspeak-

able groanings. The Father answers before we ask, and still He listens while we pray, to answer us. God knows all our needs, and He desires to meet all of them (Philippians 4:19). But in everything, He desires that we would all come to know every dimension of His love for us—the breadth, the length, the depth, and the height—and that we might be filled with all the fulness of God, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.