

Highway of Holiness

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace Church 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 messages 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 © 1997

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

Chapter 1 7

HE IS IN THE HOLY PLACE

Chapter 2 11

ANOINTED AND CROWNED

Chapter 3 16

FOLLOWING THE WAY ABOVE

CONCLUSION 22

INTRODUCTION

“And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah 35:8-10).

For many years, I thought that being on the highway of holiness meant following a list of do’s and don’ts, and living under rules and regulations. But, I discovered that holiness is receiving God’s mercy and lovingkindness. I found out that walking on this highway produces the highest quality of life on earth for me, as God works the truth of His mercy into my life.

Everyone who receives God's holy anointing of lovingkindness and tender mercies can walk on the highway of holiness, crowned as "kings and priests" unto God (Revelation 1:6; 5:10). The "unclean"—those who reject His lovingkindness and mercy—cannot walk on this highway, for God says, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36), and "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Psalm 103:4 tells us that God has crowned us with His "*tender* mercies." It is a great thing to know that we're the objects of the mercy of the Lord, but it is even better to recognize that His tender mercies are with us every day. His mercies are always tender, even when we are not. The highway of holiness is paved with God's love, grace, and truth.

Chapter One

HE IS IN THE HOLY PLACE

If a believer wants to be holy, he must dwell in the Holy of Holies, before the Mercy Seat (Exodus 26:34). When Jesus said “strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14), He was saying that most people never find the holy place of God. 1 Peter 1:15-16 tells us, “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” The only way a sinner, saved by grace, can discover holiness is by understanding that the presence of mercy fills the holy place. Sadly, most pulpits don’t preach about the strait gate and the narrow way with this interpretation.

Cherubim—four-winged angels created by God to guard His holiness—and a flaming sword kept the way to the tree of life, after Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24).

Later, in Exodus 25:17-22, two cherubim with wings outspread were fashioned, one at either end of the Mercy Seat, with the presence of Jesus Christ between them. They were looking at the Mercy Seat, where the blood of Christ was sprinkled. But there was no longer a sword; the cherubim would now judge with mercy, making sure that everyone who would come to the holy place could receive mercy because of the Blood.

Vacationing with Jesus

Many Christians are on the wrong highway. They are walking in a way where Satan can attack them. On this highway, Satan offers people liquor. He offers them jobs that keep them so busy that they don't have time for church. He offers more days at the beach than Carter has liver pills.

There is nothing wrong with taking a vacation. Still, I pity people who are so tired out that they can't wait for their next vacation. The funny thing is that when some people are on vacation, they'll say they can't wait to get home again. They're all tired out trying to be happy away from home, cramped into one little hotel room with one little bathroom that everyone in the family has to share. And they all get weary

trying to be nice to each other—for one little week. Then, they spend too much time on the beach and get sunburned.

When I think of the word *vacation*, I think about Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28-29: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you [a vacation]. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find [a vacation] unto your souls." Hebrews 4:9 says, "There remaineth therefore a [vacation] to the people of God."

A close friend once tried to tell me that I was working too hard. He said, "You're going to drop dead if you keep working like that. You've got to stop it!"

I said, "I'm on vacation with Jesus."

God's people need rest. But it's even better when you can serve God and be on vacation *all* the time. Isaiah 32:18 tells us that there are many resting places for the people of God. The Christian life should be one great big vacation. After all, our sins will never be imputed to us. We have passed from death unto life (John 5:24), and we are at rest in the Finished Work of Jesus Christ.

I'm not against vacations. I hope you have the time of your life on your next one. Read the

Bible, do some witnessing, enjoy some good meals—do whatever God leads you to do. But please learn that life with Jesus Christ can be a vacation all the time.

We are on vacation from judgment, from sin, from nagging, from jealousy, and from fretting. We are on vacation from lust, insecurity, worry, and anxiety. God delivers us from all of these things, so our lives can be one great vacation with Him.

Chapter Two

ANOINTED AND CROWNED

“Great deliverances and triumphs gives He to His king, and shows mercy and steadfast love to His anointed, to David and his offspring for ever” (Psalm 18:50, Amplified Translation).

Isaiah 43:15 says “I am the LORD, your Holy One.” His name is *Holy*, and it means lovingkindness, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. God’s mercy and steadfast love are always toward His anointed. All of God’s people have an anointing (1 John 2:20, 27), meaning that they are sealed, regenerated, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:19).

In the Old Testament, every prophet, priest, and king had to be anointed with oil upon entering into their office. David was anointed on three separate occasions (1 Samuel 16:13; 2 Samuel 2:4; 5:3), each time signifying entrance into a new phase of his call. The ingredients that made up the anointing oil (Exodus 30:23-25) reveal the

unconditional love and undying mercy of God for His people. In Exodus 29:20, every priest had to be anointed with blood and oil on the right ear, the right thumb, and the right toe. In other words, his hearing, his service, and his walk had to be consecrated unto the Lord. God wants us to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit on His special highway.

Crowned with Lovingkindness

“Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies” (Psalm 103:1-4).

God crowns His people with lovingkindness and tender mercies (Psalm 103:4). A crown is God’s heavenly covering for our minds—something we wear all the time when we’re “on vacation.”

“[In Zion] will I make the horn [power] of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp [the human spirit] for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish” (Psalm 132:17-18). David

was anointed and crowned with God's tender mercies, and those mercies were going to flourish. David will one day reign as prince in the future millennial kingdom, which will flourish on the earth. But more than that, his own *life* would flourish because he was anointed and crowned with God's tender mercies.

In Acts 13:22, the Lord declares, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." David fulfilled all of God's will because God crowned him with lovingkindness and tender mercies from the very beginning (1 Samuel 16:13).

Every child of God has sure mercies. Just as David was crowned, we, too, are crowned—God's tender mercies are over our heads. "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (Isaiah 55:3).

Psalm 105:15 makes this command: "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." To touch God's anointed is to touch the believer's crown of mercy and lovingkindness—the unfailing love of God that rests in the Finished Work.

Mercy that is Far Above

“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear [trust] him....But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children” (Psalm 103:10-11, 17).

God is telling us something that our natural minds cannot comprehend—the Holy Spirit must reveal it. It is impossible to calculate heaven’s height above the earth, because no one knows where heaven is. God knows how we think. In our limited human understanding, the way to God is upwards. We think of heaven as extending light-years beyond our solar system. With all of the great scientific discoveries, no one can fathom the size of the universe, which reaches far beyond the farthest star ever seen: This is how great the measure of God’s mercy is toward those who trust Him.

God is saying, “There’s no way I can explain to you how great my mercy is.” He cannot explain how He crowns us with lovingkindness through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. No one

can figure out God's mercy and He doesn't want us to try. "Just live before the Mercy Seat," He is telling us. "Remember, you are crowned with mercy and lovingkindness."

Chapter Three

FOLLOWING THE WAY ABOVE

“And I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity” (Ecclesiastes 8:10).

The writer of Ecclesiastes “saw the wicked buried.” He saw people go in and out of the place of mercy. They went in and came out unchanged, because they never received God’s mercy. They died and went to hell.

Today, scores of people go into the holy place—in the presence of mercy—and come out unchanged. They go to church on Sunday morning and hear the preacher say how much God loves them, but they never receive His love. A father, a mother, a brother, or a sister may reveal mercy by showing them the Gospel. A wife may stay with her unsaved husband, consistently revealing the holiness of God, through an expression of His mercy. Yet, so many never respond to

God's mercy. Finally, they die in their wickedness and are buried.

But, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle" (Hebrews 13:10).

God wants every believer to come to His throne, the altar from which the priests in the Old Testament could not eat. And this altar is the Mercy Seat inside the heart of the Church Age believer. This altar is on the inside, because that's where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are abiding.

According to Hebrews 10:11-12, the Old Testament priests never sat down in the holy place when they offered sacrifices. But after Jesus our High Priest ascended to heaven and poured His blood on the Mercy Seat, He sat down at the right hand of the Father. Ephesians 2:6 reveals that every believer has also been seated there with Christ.

The Highway of Holiness

"And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people. For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place,

with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:14-15).

“Cast ye up”—the Hebrew imperative *calal*—refers to “a highway above a highway.” There is a highway above the world’s highway; a way where there is no danger or violence; a way where there are no thieves. On this highway we can experience our crown of loving-kindness and mercy. We are seated together in heavenly places with Christ (Ephesians 2:6). We’re not walking on the devil’s highway; we’re on a holy highway, not because of *our* holiness, but because we have come to the Mercy Seat, through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and we stay there in fellowship, enjoying the highway above.

1 John 5:18 tells us that the wicked one cannot touch us on this holy highway because Jesus has sealed us with His Spirit. He’s indwelling us, and He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Being on the highway of holiness doesn’t mean we are always seeking for something great. On God’s highway, we have received the greatest gift—the abundant life through personal faith without works.

Unclean Spirits and Plagues

Unclean spirits and plagues hinder many people. An *unclean spirit* is anything in my life that isn't derived from my access to the Mercy Seat. *Plagues* are unclean spirits that never go away. Satan, as an angel of light, deceives people so they will not recognize a plague and, therefore, never deal with the unclean spirits.

Plagues often develop through a generational (genetic) curse (Exodus 34:7). These plagues can begin to appear in adolescence. Guilt, negativity, insecurity, gossip, slander, fear, relative righteousness, and striving to be good are all examples of the things that plague people's lives. If something goes wrong, they begin to withdraw from fellowship and church. Why? Because they have hit a stumblingblock. They are on the wrong highway. Deliverance will never come as long as they continue to walk on the lower highway.

The highway to victory is in heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and thrones, and dominions, and might (Ephesians 1:21). We are hid with Christ in God, far from all the unclean spirits, far from the plagues, far from the generational curses.

Judgment Turned Away Backward

“And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, the truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. And the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment” (Isaiah 59:14-15).

Judgment is turned away backward, therefore justice stands afar off. Judgment is an expression of justice. If justice says, “Keep the Law, keep the commandments,” then judgment would say, “If you don’t keep the Sabbath, then you must die.” But thank God, that’s not the way it is today. The Lord is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). The Sabbath represents our rest—it is no longer an observance of a day, it’s a relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, mercy now rejoices over the judgment of condemnation (James 2:13).

From His Finished Work throne, God looks down and sees mercy rejoicing against judgment in the lives of those who trust and reverence Him (Psalm 33:13; James 2:13). But for those who are not fellowshiping at the Mercy Seat, judgment turns backward and justice

stands afar off. Truth is fallen in the street. People are occupied with guilt and the details of their personal lives.

Truth falls in the street when a Christian is on the wrong highway. On this highway, Satan has access to the subconscious mind through projections, and he resists believers by successfully assaulting their emotions.

So many people are damaged, wounded, and bruised; they are plagued with fear, insecurity, heartache, and guilt. The truth about God's mercy has fallen in the street, where it is neither received nor understood. People stumble at mercy rather than walk in it. The problem is that they have never found the narrow way. It isn't the Law. It isn't works. The narrow way is the Mercy Seat road. Only God's mercy and grace can bring the deliverance that's needed.

The best thing any believer can do is take up the truth about mercy. Go up to the highway of holiness—the highway that's above—where the work is finished.

The veil has been rent. Let's go into the holy place. We can gather around the Mercy Seat. He will not reward us after our sins, or deal with us after our iniquities. Instead, He has crowned us with His lovingkindness and tender mercies.

CONCLUSION

Jesus is calling us to walk on His highway. “On this highway, you will not be occupied with your flesh or the devil,” He says. “You will be on My precious road. I will protect you from the thief, the robber, and the murderer. The accuser won’t be able to bring any charges against you. I will protect you, and you can have a vacation on My highway as you live, work, and serve Me.”

Live on the highway of the Mercy Seat. Follow the road where mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, where mercy follows you all the days of your life and His mercy endures forever.