

*So Loving the World
through Christ*

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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.

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in *Hallmarks from the Heart, Vol. 1*

Reprinted 2005

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

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INTRODUCTION

“For God so loved the world...” I never want to be familiar with this message. Through the Holy Spirit of God, as the fruit of our lives, is this the normal mental attitude of our hearts? Or, do we say, “This is difficult” or “That is difficult” (which means we are far, far, far from even being spiritual)?

Jesus Christ’s yoke is easy, and His burden is light. That is what the Word of God says, in Matthew 11:30. If, however, after exercising faith, a person finds that the yoke is not easy, and the burden is not light, then there is some resistance going on in his soul—either through a sin of ignorance or through a sin of commission in the flesh.

God so loved the world that He sent us His Son. In this booklet, we will consider the awesome love of God that is for us and can go through us to a world that needs to rest in His everlasting love.

Chapter One

THE TEST OF THE SPIRIT'S FILLING

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16-18).

The test of whether or not I am Spirit-filled is determined by this: Is my yoke easy and my burden light? If it is not, then the Word of God makes it very clear that I am yoked up with my soulish animal nature rather than with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The people who say “This is difficult” and

“That is difficult” have not entered into faith-rest. I cannot twist the Scriptures, neither can I privately interpret them. Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). The encouragement is to come, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. If you are yoked up with Jesus Christ, you shall find rest unto your soul. That is what the Scriptures teach. If, however, we know what Jesus Christ says, and we desire to fulfill it, but we are not yoked up with Him, then we will be extremely frustrated and have divided hearts.

There is a rest for the people of God. But people who do not yoke up with Jesus Christ experience what Isaiah 28:20 says: “For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than he can wrap himself in it.” Anything other than yoking up with Jesus Christ is like a bed too short and a covering that is too narrow. There will be no rest, no matter how sincere our confession, how proper our theological understanding, or how desirous our heart is.

Sadly, that is where a lot of Christians live their entire lifetime, especially when the trials of life are sent through Jesus Christ’s plan. They re-

veal Isaiah 28:20 because Matthew 11:28 is not a reality.

No Greater Love

“For God so loved the world.” First of all, notice that God did not come just to love Palestine. God did not come just to love the Jewish people, even though He certainly loved them. God did not come just for America. God so loved *the world*. When the Word of God teaches this, it is imperative that we let it affect every part of our being.

He came into the world that He made, but the world knew Him not (John 1:10). In Matthew 13:38, the field is the world. In Matthew 24:14, the Gospel shall be preached to all the world. In Mark 16:15, we are told to go into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature. There seems to be one thing on God’s heart, and that is the world—“For God *so loved* the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”

A Surrendered Life

When a life is surrendered to Jesus Christ, when the Cross completely takes away the old nature of a man in experiential Christianity, and when the Holy Spirit begins to shed love abroad

in his heart, then his life changes entirely. He is no longer occupied with personality clashes. He no longer has any problem with indifference. His daily life does not render to him a yoke that is difficult or a burden that is complex. Instead, he begins to experience a love for the whole world. His life is occupied with the passion of Jesus Christ.

When a person is on a missionary team somewhere in the world, and that person complains that he is not being ministered unto, he misses the whole point of how God ministers to people. Jesus Christ did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister (Matthew 20:28). This does not mean that, as sinners saved by grace, we do not receive portions from others in the ministry. Rather, it means we have no demands to be ministered to by people, besides what God gives through His providence. So, I have no demands outside of what happens, because all things are for my sake, according to 2 Corinthians 4:15.

A person who is discontent and sows discord is operating in a total misunderstanding of why he is saved. Probably, over the years, this person will never be satisfied with any one leader or church for very long because his de-

mands are greater than the plan that God has provided for his life. This person doesn't understand what it means to "so love" the world as God "so loved" it.

What "So Love" Does

"So loved" means that God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). "So loved" can perhaps be best explained like this: The Bible does not say only that God loves. In fact, the Bible says that He loved and that He loves. He loves *because* He loved.

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3).

Is "so love" selfish? No, it is not. Is "so love" indifferent? No. Does it claim certain rights? No, it does not. Is His "so love" just for America? No. "So love" will go beyond the comforts and conveniences of America and will lay down its heart in a passionate love for the whole world.

God did not just *say* He loved the world. He so loved it that He gave His only begotten Son! Jesus so loved the world that He came Himself. He wasn't like churches that have a missionary budget while they remain totally comfortable in

their Christian lifestyle. He didn't just have a prayer meeting. He came Himself. He didn't just talk about it and have a few missionaries (to whom people were indifferent) in the pulpit. He came Himself. Many in this congregation should be in the world preaching the Gospel within a few years, and not just in America, for God so loved the world that He gave Himself for it.

Chapter Two

RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE

In 1979, a report numbered 33,000 ordained pastors in the United States of America, a nation which has only six percent of the world's population. Ninety-four percent of the world has just a small group of pastors, compared to this country with its 33,000. Most of the major Sunday schools in the world are in this country. Three-quarters of a billion dollars was spent in one year to get the Gospel to this country through television. Three-quarters of a billion dollars was spent to overly saturate the United States! More than 150 million dollars was spent to build edifices—church buildings—in the United States.

The United States of America had 33,000 ordained pastors, and yet hundreds of languages have no Scripture translations. Half of the world's population still has never heard the Gospel, while churches in America play their

games. The more rights we have, the more complicated our lives become. The more that we are given to push-button ease, the more we want. The more we get, the more independent we tend to become.

Yet, God “so loved” us in our wicked, sinful condition. He died for us even before we thought of responding to Him in any way. Is that the kind of love you have toward people? You have a personality clash. You are indifferent. Is your life difficult? It is because there is a part of you that is very selfish. There is a part of you that is not converted. There is a part of you that is wicked and filthy, and you won’t face it with God. You go on with some confessions, but you remain the same person. The more you get the light from the Gospel, the more you react to the messenger or to the ministry that is producing it, because you live in comfortable America.

Oh, we can afford millions of dollars for nice buildings so we can really enjoy a church service in the beauty of a pleasant environment. World Literature Crusade reported that there are 30 multi-million dollar churches within a radius of 30 miles in one little section of the U.S. Yet, hundreds and thousands have never been told there is a Christ who loves them.

He Gave

For God so loved the world that He gave. This means that the character of His love was sacrificial. He gave His only begotten Son. He didn't keep something for Himself. The scope of His love was the whole world.

What does it mean for the Father to give His only Son? It means that when the Holy Spirit sheds abroad that love in my heart, I won't stay home from church for the sports show. I will be learning doctrine. I won't stay home from soul winning. I will plan in my schedule to go. It means that if I am an elder or a deacon I won't wonder how much authority I should have. I will be available to love, to soul-win, to pray, and to give at every opportunity. I will "so love" as a real leader.

A real leader is always laying down his life. He is not worrying about his authority because he is a slave forever to the commands of the Scriptures. He has no authority other than to implement and to share the commands of Scripture. That is his only lawful right.

Please see this with me. People need to be born with the "so love" of the Gospel. God gave a sacrificial gift, which was His Son. Likewise,

every one who “so loves” gives his most precious possession if it means it will help others. The interest of others is the highest interest in his heart. “So love” in a man finds out what the needs and interests of others are, then it submits to the Holy Spirit and to the Word of God. Then it becomes a slave to Christ—not to the person—to be an instrument to meet that need through his life with God. That is “so love.” For God *so loved* the world. He didn’t just love the world; He *so loved* it.

A woman so loves her husband that she remains faithful for many years, never murmuring, being a tremendous wife while he has spent most of his life being a wicked person. We have seen cases where the husband gets beautifully transformed after many years of receiving the “so love” of God.

A man so loves his wife and family that he will do everything he can for them and for the church by remaining faithful to the Scriptures.

“So love” is a friend who loves at all times, He will do everything possible for that friend, because he understands that he was born for times of adversity. He doesn’t run others down with words or become negative because of projections. No, he builds up with the “so love” of

God.

It is a person who, in the will of God, will “so love” his enemies that he will turn the other cheek. He will not compromise, but he will turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, and give the other cloak. He does it for his enemies because he has been “so loved” by God.

God so loved the world! Instead of smoking or listening to rock music, teenagers should be planning what kind of mission field they will go on. They should get every single thing out of high school to fulfill that goal now so they can be better trained. They may be living in the decade when Christ comes back. Oh, how we need to grasp the “so love” of God.

Chapter Three

GOING INTO ALL THE WORLD

What are we going to do about half of the world's population? What are we going to do about millions who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Are we willing to "so love" that we go ourselves? Are we willing to "so love" and be so committed at homebase that we love and build up the Body in our local assemblies, so that every one who can go will be able to go?

Are we willing to be constrained day and night by compassion that is God's "so love" for the world? Or, are we going to be occupied with details? Are we going to be occupied with little things? Are we going to be occupied with a hundred details about people? Or, do we just so love the world that we go?

I remember speaking to an alcoholic. He was very soft spoken and he said, "I am an alcoholic, and you are doing a good work. But I am an alcoholic." Within two or three minutes, I wept,

and he wept. He prayed the sinner's prayer. Though we were total strangers, the Holy Spirit came between an alcoholic and a servant of God and interacted. The Spirit bore witness with him, and he saw my tears when I said, "Oh, God help him and deliver him from alcohol." That man responded to love.

Creating and Redeeming

I believe that when we go out with the "so love" of God, it does two things: It creates a capacity, and then it redeems. Love is creative before it is redemptive. It is creative, meaning that it creates a capacity so a person can leave the bondage of Satan and the bondage of the flesh to choose what he wants. God gave us His love, and we love people individually, intimately, and specifically. Ultimately, that person you have prayed for and ministered to has tasted the love of God as it should be, and he has a capacity to choose. He may choose the wrong way. He may choose the world or he may choose to be a carnal Christian in church. He may choose to be egocentric. Nevertheless, you know he has had a clear opportunity to be delivered by the "so love" that was ministered to him through you by the Holy Spirit.

Next comes the redemptive love of choosing Christ. Through this kind of love, a person is brought back to the place where he makes right choices with Christ. So many of our ministries are ministries first of creative love through Christ, then of redemptive love, imparting a capacity to choose Christ.

The Bible says that Jesus did not come into the world to condemn it. There was not one single thing about Him that would reveal anything but love. Here is a whole world full of sin, yet Jesus didn't come into the world to condemn it but to save it. Will you understand that the character of "so love" is that it does not condemn?

We do not go to Europe or to any country to condemn anyone or to point fingers. We are not going to some of the filthy immoral countries to expose their sins. We will be honest about the truth, but we are not going to condemn them. Nothing we could say could add to their condemnation. They are condemned already. We can't add to that. They are condemned already because they do not believe. But we go to "so love" them.

And in those moments, the Holy Spirit will take the Word of God, and people will be standing before you, and the Holy Spirit will come

down and use your physical body as an instrument of righteousness to weep in front of them. Someone will stand and say to them, "God loves you. Do you understand? He loves you so much that He died and shed His blood on Calvary and paid for all of your sins. Please don't reject Him! Please don't, because you are so loved." This is called "so loving" the world through Christ.

I am not occupied with relationships. I am not occupied with materialism. I am not occupied with my comfortable lifestyle. I am not occupied with incompatibility with a wife or husband, with insecurity because of loneliness because of being a widow or divorced. I am not occupied with selfish motivations. I am occupied with "so love," accompanied by a constraining passion to minister to the world.

The Call of the Field

Unless there is a special call of God, we don't need another pastor in another city that already has a hundred pastors. God only knows we need "so love" for the hundreds of people groups who have never heard the Gospel.

Some of you are so unhappy at times because you are trying to find a place outside of God's perfect will. You are trying to find a min-

istry rather than being one. You want to be blessed rather than to be a blessing. You want things to be better rather than taking things to Calvary.

You worry about your plans being interfered with rather than getting into the plan of God. Some want to fall back on their personality for security rather than lean on Jesus Christ for life. Some want a certain kind of ministry that isn't in God's will, but that is not "so love." That is a selfish motive and a wrong direction that is going to hurt the ministry, hurt your family, and hurt you. Get on your knees in prayer and say, "I am available, Lord Jesus, for the world."

Chapter Four

STIRRING UP THE FIRE

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16).

Some want to go back to their Egypt (Numbers 11:4-5; Acts 7:39). Egypt represents the places where it is comfortable and easy for them and their families. In those places they may have a kind of family unity, while God wants them to take a step of faith that is bold and courageous in the character of Christ. That faith obeys the Great Commission and makes a person willing to give his life to fulfill God’s heartbeat.

Your Bible college classes are designed not just to give you Bible knowledge. They are designed to impart a burden, to stir up a fire within you that can’t be put out, so you will be happy in nothing short of complete obedience to God’s will. Graduation from Bible college is

more than a diploma. It signifies the responsibility of a worldwide commission, a commandment to go out in the world and make disciples, teaching them and baptizing them as Jesus commanded.

That is the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. We are to win people and be there on the mission field to disciple them. And then, after we have really discipled them, we go and do it somewhere else while they stay and minister in their native land. That is “so love” in operation.

“The Gospel should be preached in all the world before I come back,” Jesus Christ is saying to us. “My burden from the very beginning of the world is this: I came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

In Luke 15, the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son are all trying to tell us that Jesus has always been seeking the lost. The field is white and ready to harvest, but the laborers are few. Do you understand that you must get your mind, your heart, and your soul geared to Christ’s heartbeat? The “so love” of God must take over, and the Great Commission must become paramount.

You will never be happy competing in

America. You will never be happy in your mundane problems. As for those of us who might be led to stay here to make it possible for others to go, we need to give our lives to prayer, to each other, for the lost, and for the lukewarm Christian society that exists in this country. We must give our lives to Truth and sacrifice our lifestyles. We don't need to murmur and react and complain and have an independent brand of Christianity, which is arrested by our own ego in our consciousness.

The Time Is Short

Everyone needs to stand up and be counted and say, "I know the time is short. I know the hour is late, and we have only reached half of the world's population." The factory job that you have, the office work that you do, the sales position and the teaching position you hold—all are jobs that can be filled by men and women under adverse conditions.

Many people who go out as missionaries come home as casualties. They can't take it because they lack "so love." Everyone feels bad because they are going through so much. Well, they haven't been through so much. They haven't died on a tree yet. They haven't been

through a scourging or six illegal trials the way Jesus was. They are still alive.

A ministry will never be of any value with God unless His "so love" operates in every heart every day. Nothing else matters to those who "so love."

The angels could say to Jesus, "Most of the world will never accept You."

"But," He would respond, "I am still going to die for them."

"But some of them are going to reject You. In fact, all of them are."

"But I am still going," He would say.

"Jesus, the world won't even recognize You, and those who interpret the Scriptures will crucify You."

"I am still going."

"Jesus, Your own family won't even consider that You are God-sent. They won't believe. Even when You go to the Cross, Your own loved ones won't accept You."

"I am still going."

It wasn't difficult to make the decision. No obstruction could stop the "so love" of God from giving His life selflessly for the highest interest of others, no matter what we would do. That is "so loving" the world.

CONCLUSION

I don't know precisely how long it will be before Jesus Christ comes back. But, I do know that life is a very fragile thing. I know that in 1 Samuel 20:3, there is one step between us and death. I know that while you are reading this, hundreds will die. I know that many in the world during this hour will perish and go to hell. America has let it happen. She has stood by.

Many are saying, "I need more money. I need more security. I need a bigger house." Meanwhile, the Word of God is not going out, and souls are perishing in hell.

When are we going to let the Holy Spirit come down with a baptism of love and sweep away our egos at Calvary? When are we going to let God change the world that He died for? When are we going to let Christ change the Church and make it a Church where we can speak freely and go forth boldly with the Gospel?

Satan has hindered us in proclaiming the old-fashioned Gospel for too long. The reason is that people have not even begun to understand John 3:16. So many do not know the “so love” of God.

Dear Father, never let us get familiar with this love—this “so love” that continues to us and through us today. As we face circumstances and trials, let us see You in each aspect. Let us carry Your heartbeat to the world because the time is short and the fields are ripe. In Jesus name we pray this. Amen.