

## The Restoration of Grace

By Denise Bostic

Jesus Christ came to restore all things. (*Acts 3:20-21*) Just exactly *what* is God restoring to man? Well for starters, God is restoring eternal life to those who believe on His Son. Why does God have to restore eternal life to us? It is because when the first man Adam sinned; sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone and all have sinned therefore everyone needs a Savior from sin and death. (*Romans 5:12*) God is the author of life. His original intention was for us to have life, not death so this is why He put a divine plan into action even before the foundation of the world to return man to his former *condition* and *position* that he had before the fall in the Garden of Eden. (*Genesis 3, Revelation 13:8*) This statement means much more than we could ever cover in this Word in Due Season. For now, however, I will share with you of a specific restoration that God is bringing to many in the Church in this season.

What is restoration? Well, the word *restoration* [or *restitution* (KJV)] in the Greek means: ***“the restoration not only of the true theocracy but also of that more perfect state of (even physical) things which existed before the fall.”*** [*Acts 3:21 Restitution, 605, Joseph Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*] We find within the definition of restoration then that the Lord is bringing man back under God's rule through the salvation of men's souls and along with that salvation, everything that He had originally given to man before the fall. How will we find out what was given to man before the fall? God sent us His Son to restore to us what we have lost as a result of sin *therefore we will find our answers in Jesus and what He has spoken to us through the New Testament.*

God spoke of this restoration through the mouths of His holy prophets of old. (*Luke 1:70, Acts 3:21*) These Old Testament prophets could only prophesy (or foretell) of this coming work however because this restoration could not truly begin until Jesus came to the earth. We find after the resurrection of Christ however, the Apostle Peter preaching the restoration of all things on the Day of Pentecost when the Church began. He declared that the resurrected Christ must remain in heaven until “the times of restitution of all things.” This teaches us that this divine work of restoration is being accomplished under the dispensation of the New Covenant. We also learn by this passage of scripture that this restoration is not just given to anyone however; it is only promised to and procured by those who believe on God's Son. (*Acts 2:37-41, Acts 3:19-26*)

Jesus literally came to reverse the fall of man by becoming our Savior and paying for our sins by His blood sacrifice. Through the perfect obedience of Christ's life and His fulfilling the righteous requirements of the Law in our stead, we may now have grace imparted to us and so be made right with God because we have received Him. (*Romans 5:12-21*) By believing on Christ and receiving His Spirit, we have now been made sons of God, have become joint-heirs with Him and now inherit all things. (*Romans 8: 14-17*) This is all given to us by God's grace or undeserved, unmerited pardon and kindness because we would never be able to obtain them by our own works.

This work of restoration begins when one receives salvation in Christ and then comes progressively over time as we come into the knowledge of His truth and receive the promises of God. There are some things that the Lord had restored to the Church from the very beginning that has now been lost over time by man through false teaching, unbelief and persecution. When this happens, the Lord must restore *again* those things that have been lost to the Church.

Today there are those in the body of Christ that have been receiving what the Lord has been restoring in these last days, even at the cost of being ridiculed and ostracized by others in the Church. At the other end

of the spectrum, those who have been doing the ridiculing and ostracizing have not been receiving what God is doing. Some may not be receiving due to lack of knowledge, i.e. because you can't receive something that you do not yet have knowledge of. Some however are resisting these biblical truths when they are presented to them because of the strongholds of false teaching, the traditions of men, legalism or to avoid persecution. Those that are resisting God do not realize however, that they have become their own worst enemy and are actually hindering the divine work of restoration that the Lord wants to accomplish in their lives. *Many have been rejecting these truths although they were given to the Church from the very beginning.*

How could such a thing happen? It happens as some in the Church listen to and receive the false doctrine of man or the devil instead of hearing and receiving the true teachings of the Lord and His Spirit. It happens as some follow someone or something rather than the Head of the Church. For those that have been going in the wrong direction, however, it is not too late to turn to the Lord and follow the Holy Spirit. For those that genuinely seek and follow God, He is always faithful to restore all things back to us. The Lord will finish the work that He has already begun in us. (*Philippians 1:6*)

Many ministries have been used by God to bring the knowledge of these necessary truths to the attention of the Body of Christ and we are thankful for how this has helped the Church to be able to receive what God wants to restore. These godly restorations, when received, will also help us to grow in the knowledge of the Son of God, become spiritually mature and help prepare us for His return. (*Ephesians 4:11-13*) It is so important that all believers fully cooperate with God's overall plan to restore all things. By doing so, we will be helping to fulfill His divine plans and will in our own lives both personally and for the Church as a whole.

One of the most notable restorations of a godly truth came during the time of the Great Reformation during the middle ages. God chose to work through a man name Martin Luther to bring *reformation* to the Church. The Lord had to bring restoration to the Church because it had gone off into doctrinal error and corruption. The clergy of that day sold indulgences to the people and told them that this would ensure them an entrance into eternal life in heaven. Of course, the Church was made very wealthy through ill-gotten gain. Only the clergy had access to the scriptures and they used them to gain ungodly power and control over the people. They usurped the authority and position of Christ as Mediator by becoming mediators between God and man. God restored the doctrine of salvation by faith and grace alone and the priesthood of all believers because the Church had lost the knowledge of this powerful truth.

We will find that when God is restoring truth to the Church that there also must be a reformation as well. You may be wondering what the difference is between restoration and reformation. Well, restoration is when God is returning us to a former *condition* or *position*. Reformation however is corrective, it literally means "*a time of setting things right.*" So, we will find that when we have reformation, it means that the Lord is setting some things right *that have been wrong in the Church*. The Great Reformation serves as an excellent example of how God not only restores truth but also how He wants us to reform to His ways. Oftentimes, when God is restoring truth to us then, we must also be willing to repent of that which we have been doing wrong and as well as embracing what He wants to give us.

Since the beginning of the Church, the Lord has been restoring many things to His people such as man's righteous rule (dominion) in the earth (through the Church), the Great Commission of preaching the Gospel to the whole world, the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of faith, healing and the ministerial positions of the New Testament apostles and prophets to name a few. All of these had originally been given by Christ and practiced by the Church from its inception but some of these truths were lost over time, again due to the infiltration of false doctrine, the traditions of men, legalism, unbelief and persecution. In many instances the Church has lost ground but the Lord is making up for this by restoring these things in the last days. If we will believe it, God can help us to supernaturally redeem the time that we may have lost and do what He has given us to do even in the midst of these present evil days. (*Ephesians 5:16*) The Church must fulfill the great commission before the Lord returns and we can only do that effectively as we receive all that Christ *has already given* to us.

Due to the infiltration of legalism in so many Churches today, there are a lot of believers that need to have **grace** restored in their lives. Legalism and false religion will hinder us from being and doing all that the Lord wants us to so we must cast off these weighty chains. (*Galatians 5:1, Hebrews 12:1*) The truth shall set us free and enable us to walk in God's perfect will for our lives. The Lord is the Shepherd of His sheep and His

love and grace knows no bounds. When any of His sheep go astray, He will go after them. He protects His people by exposing deception and reveals truth through the light of His word and the discernment of His Spirit.

### **Beware of False Restoration**

For every thing that is genuine in God, there is a counterfeit. There is a false restoration movement that has been going on for several years and it has gained much momentum. Today there is a major lie spreading like a cancer in the body of Christ and it is that God is restoring the works of the Law of Moses (the Torah) to the end-time Church. Proponents of this belief will teach followers of Christ that they should return to their Jewish roots by keeping the Sabbath, observing the Hebrew festivals, giving according to the rules and regulations of the law and also keeping the Levitical dietary laws. These false teachings are simply a repackaging of a very old deception though. (*Galatians 4: 9-11, Colossians 2:16-17*) Those that receive this deception don't realize that they are slowly but surely being brought into bondage to an Old Covenant Law that Christ has set all men free from. (*Galatians 3:1-5*) Adherents to these teachings also do not know that by observing these works of the law, they are actually falling away from Christ and His grace! (*Galatians 5:1-4*)

Those that propagate these false teachings are deceived into thinking that they have received them as restorative truths from God in these last days. Nothing could be further from the truth! It's important for us to understand that *whatever we believe to be* a revelation from God must line up with the truth of the Gospel of Christ. If it doesn't, then we have not truly received it from God. The bible teaches us to test the spirits to see whether they are of God. (*1 John 4:1*) It's vital then that we find out whether what we are hearing or seeing is truly from God and *especially* before we teach it to others. (*James 3:1*)

The truth is that the New Testament teaches us that we are not under law but grace. (*Romans 6:14*) Grace is the undeserved, unmerited grace of God upon our lives; it is a free gift. (*Ephesians 2:8-9*) Today, many preachers tell lost souls that that they can receive salvation in Christ by grace and rightly so. After they are saved and become believers however, many are mistakenly taught that they must perform works of law in order to obtain favor (grace) with God and receive their inheritance blessings with Christ. This is not how God has designed the free gift of salvation however. He has designed the believers' salvation to be a complete, entire package of not only salvation but also *all of those things that accompany salvation as well*. (*Hebrews 6:9*) Everything is to be received by grace and faith in Christ alone. (*Acts 15:6-11*)

God has already declared that no one can be justified by their own works but only by faith in His Son and what He has already obtained for us through His vicarious sacrifice. Jesus fulfilled the law perfectly in our stead because we were unable to do so. (*Galatians 3*) Our salvation and all inheritance blessing associated with it could never be obtained by works of the law because God gave it to Abraham by promise so that it would come by faith and grace. (*Romans 4:13-16*)

Because many lack knowledge and understanding of the depths of God's grace, they are easy prey for the deception taught by false teachers. It is so necessary that every believer have the sure foundation of Christ and His grace in their lives. God has designed His grace to permeate every area of our lives. Grace is undeserved, unmerited pardon but it is also much more than that. Grace is a supernatural endowment given to us by God to live the life of Christ. Legalism or rules and regulations of the Law could never help us do that.

Grace has not been lost of course; it has always been available to us as believers. God's people however, can cut themselves off from their personal relationship with Christ by falling from His grace. Remember the work of restoration is to return to a former condition or position. For those that have backslidden into the Law or are just beginning to be set free from various forms of legalism, the Lord must restore them to their former condition or position of grace before God. God does not remove grace from our lives, but we can fall away from Christ and his grace by trying to justify ourselves by works of the law or flesh. (*Galatians 5:1-4*)

### **Receive God's Grace**

Many in the body of Christ have become involved in different restoration movements over the years and this is a good thing when that restoration has come about by God's hand. We must bear in mind that a true movement should not be a passing fad like something we walk in for a short period of time and then stop.

God means for us to take what we have learned and carry it with us always as part of our overall growth in Christ. This is true of grace. Grace is something we must always walk in and we should never let anyone rob us of it.

Those that have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church today will also receive what God wants to restore. Right now, it is necessary for God to restore grace in the lives of those who have alienated themselves from Christ and fallen from grace. The Lord is accomplishing this work by bringing this doctrine to the forefront of the hearts and minds of believers and ministers alike and by releasing revelation knowledge from *within* by the Holy Spirit.

A true, divine work of restoration is always initiated by God and not man. To begin restoring those that are falling away from grace, the Lord has already begun a mass exodus of believers out of religious institutions that have actually imprisoned His people with the chains of false religion and legalism. Those teaching the letter of the Law have actually been ministering death and therefore have been spiritually killing believers a little at a time. God's is now rescuing these battle weary believers from those that minister death and is beginning to minister the refreshing Spirit of life to them. (*II Corinthians 3:6*)

If you are one that needs to be released from the chains of legalism and you sense that God is speaking to you through this word, please receive God's work of restoration in your life. Do not receive the condemnation that comes from those that are teachers of the Law, receive God's grace instead for this is His will for you. There is no condemnation for you when you are in Christ. (*Romans 8:1-4*) If God has already brought you out of a religious institution and from the oppression of legalism please understand that God will start you on the process of learning how to walk by grace in every area of you life. He will begin to release a faith and grace to you by giving you divine revelation and understanding personally and also by teaching you as well through those ministers in the body of Christ who are obedient in teaching the grace message.

The Lord began this divine work of restoration when He came the first time, He will bring a final completion to this great work when He returns. When the Lord returns He wants to find *faith* in the earth. He also wants a Church that is full of His *grace* and that will be eternally grateful that God has given us this precious, *free* gift of salvation. He wants a people that will give God the glory because they understand that they have not earned or obtained any of this on their own. How can we properly give grace to others if we are not willing to accept God's grace for ourselves? When we receive God's abundant grace however, we will be able to give that same grace to others and in that grace, they will know that they are loved unconditionally and truly accepted in the beloved. (*Ephesians 1:2-14, Revelation 22:17 KJV*)