



Preface to the Revised and Expanded Edition

Picture this: a runner in ancient Greece arrives exhausted before the emperor. Gasping, he blurts out, “My lord, I was given an urgent message, but . . . I’m afraid I have forgotten what it was!”

This book, originally published in 1981, was written to address a concern that many Christians, entrusted with the gospel message, had forgotten the message and their responsibility to accurately convey it. I wish I could now say that the message has been remembered. The recovery of a God/grace-centered gospel, or, as James Boice has put it, a “rediscovery of the doctrines that shook the world,” is imperative.

This revision includes an expansion of two of the topics: grace and worship. In addition, I desired to offer a new outline of a God-centered gospel for training Christians to share their faith with non-Christians.

GRACE

As my passion for God-centered evangelism grew, I longed to emphasize the centrality of sovereign, saving grace. Why? Because the quickening grace of God in salvation completely exalts God. Grace is God-honoring and humanity-humbling. A clear understanding that success in evangelism is a result of God’s initiating grace frees the evangelist from fear of rejection by others. Indeed evangelism is impossible without grace, for grace is what frees nonbelievers from their enslavement to sin.

Grace continues its effect beyond our initial liberation from unbelief and continues to energize Christians. After nonbelievers become Christians, the





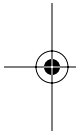
gracious power of the Holy Spirit upholds them throughout their Christian journey. Saved under God-centered and grace-oriented evangelism, they have a wonderful framework for a Christian life of God-centered, grace-oriented sanctification. The majesty of grace in salvation brings honor to the Father who designed it, prestige to the Son who accomplished it and fame to the Holy Spirit who effects it.

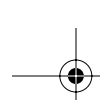
I quickly came to realize that I couldn't develop the marvel of grace without explaining the horror of sin. Grace only functions as grace when it comes to people who have absolutely nothing to recommend them as a candidate for God's favor. People deserve the very opposite—his disfavor in this life and for eternity. Grace is magnified when I see myself as *undeserving*. I have no right to and no claim on God's mercy. God is not obligated to love me. He does not exist just to make me happy. Grace is highlighted by my inability to keep from sinning. Salvation by my efforts is unattainable, no matter how hard I try to improve myself.

I didn't want to write more about sin, but it couldn't be helped. There is a type of love that arises in response to the beauty, value and other commendable qualities of its recipient. Grace is a different kind of love, one that exists although there is nothing commendable in the recipient. Grace only functions as such if its objects are the undeserving and the unable. As I wrestled with touching nonbelievers with love by my actions and attitudes, it was this doctrine of grace that inspired me to witness and connected me with both their minds and hearts. Fantastic grace.

WORSHIP

My entry into teachings on grace brought me into deeper worship. Instead of theology being cold, intellectual, academic and impractical, the doctrine of grace was warm, personal, inspiring and satisfying. It was functional, shaping the God-honoring methods to fit with the God-honoring gospel I was proclaiming. Worshiping an autonomous and graceful Creator-Redeemer freed me to initiate personal evangelism and sustain evangelistic zeal—two major issues that need to be addressed when helping people witness. Reprogramming Christians to experience a macro God through worship led to a recognition that much evangelism training focuses on me-centered tech-





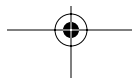
niques and a reshaped gospel emphasizing only “what’s in it for me.” God-centeredness is the basis for the grace that saves people. Without grace-full God-centeredness, evangelism will evolve into nice people being nice to other people in hopes that they will be nice to God, a compromised gospel with a mild God who exists to benefit me. This results in nice “Christians” who are unconverted, not knowing the joy of forgiving and empowering grace, and unready to meet God on that final day.

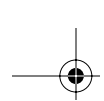
COME HOME

I have decided to revamp an outline of a God-centered gospel to have a theme that unifies the points, a diagram to illustrate our road in life, a Bible story and illustration from life, and more personalizing of the objective truths of the gospel. There are two versions: the Amplified version for training Christians and the Simplified version for telling non-Christians. The extensiveness of this gospel summary may surprise you. I do not apologize for this. I am convinced that God purposes our speaking the *truth* in love as the predestined means of salvation. If all Christians learned these truths, their witness would be more God-honoring and their spiritual growth enhanced as they daily reexperience a gospel of grace. The gospel is for *Christians*. God may use a minimal amount of truth to quicken someone; that’s his prerogative. Our privilege is to enter into the depths of the whole gospel, sinking roots into that life-giving water. I hope that “Come Home” will help Christians to be thoroughly knowledgeable of the life-giving truth content of the gospel. Then, not speaking misleading half-truths but the whole truth in love, they can lift up the living Jesus and let him draw many to himself for salvation.

This is a book about the scandal of sovereign salvation. In it, I blame God for salvation, in the sense that he is totally responsible. He organized a rescue operation within the Trinity—designing, supplying, accomplishing and restoring those who were in peril. Our triune God is the Author and Filler, the Originator and Consummator, the Creator and the Redeemer. It’s all God’s fault—a grace that gives response-ability to the spiritually dead.

The Lord of the universe is a *lover* who woos spiritual adulterers like you and me, providing everything needed to reconstitute a relationship.





*“Therefore I am now going to allure her;
 I will lead her into the desert
 and speak tenderly to her.
 There I will . . .
 make the valley of Achor [trouble] a door of hope.
 There she will sing. . . .*

*“In that day,” declares the LORD,
 “you will call me ‘my husband.’ . . .
 I will betroth you to me forever
 . . . in righteousness and justice,
 in love and compassion.
 I will betroth you in faithfulness,
 and you will acknowledge the LORD. . . .*

*I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’
 I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’;
 and they will say, ‘You are my God.’” (Hos 2:14-16, 19-20, 23)*

I want to express my deep appreciation to Mrs. Kathy Wargo whose ability to translate my handwriting and whose efficiency in computer skill made it possible to bring this revision to you, and to Jim Hoover and Allison Rieck for editing. The prayers of friends, family and especially students at the University of Delaware undergirded my writing.

Together, let us make God’s name famous.

Sola Gracia Dei

By God’s Grace Alone

