



# The Sharon Star

## Vigilance & Diligence

*By Albert Hannigan*

Today, as God is calling us to press on to a closer walk with Him in the Spirit, we are admonished to be **vigilant** and **diligent**. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (I Peter 5:8-9). Not only does this devil come as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, but he may also come as an angel of light to deceive those who may be unaware of his tactics.

Thankfully, we have God’s Word, the Bible, which is full of instruction and guidance as to what is right and what is wrong. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto, according to thy Word” (Psalms 119:9). And God has given us his Holy Spirit to bring to our remembrance the things that Jesus has taught us, and to guide us into all truth (John 14:26, 16:13).

Furthermore, God has provided us with a place of shelter—a place of safety. In Isaiah 62:6, He says, “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day or night.”

God has provided Watchmen through his church!

1. In the home, Father and Mother watch over their family. Mom and Dad watch over and care for their children from the day of their birth. All the necessities of life are provided, as well as bringing them up in the nurturing and admonition of the Lord. The

children are taught at an early age to accept Christ into their lives and are warned of the dangers and pitfalls in life. They are taught honour, respect, and obedience—which things will stand them in good stead all the days of their life.

2. Also God has given us Elders and Deacons in the local church, who are shepherds and overseers. They, too, are watchmen, providing spiritual food for the “sheep” week by week, ministering the Word of God by victory in Christ, but at the same time warning them of the dangers along the way. “Moreover by them [the commandments and the statutes of the Lord] is thy servant warned and in keeping of them there is great reward” (Psalm 19:11).

3. And God has provided Shepherds and Overseers [Watchmen] to the universal church, the church worldwide.

In Acts 2:42, we read, “They continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, and in fellowship and of breaking bread and prayers.” It is no different today. We must walk in the apostles doctrine as God has revealed it to them and not in some other doctrine that is the product of the natural mind and not what God has revealed in Jesus Christ. God, by prophecy and the laying on of hands, has provided the church with that foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the Chief cornerstone, and we can continue in the doctrine God has given through that ministry. And that ministry is Christ within, which is the true

foundation. Moreover, our fellowship with one another and the breaking of bread and prayers, are all very important features in Our Christian walk. We can enjoy a wonderful private walk with Christ, but it seems that we so much need that walk together with the rest of the members of the Body of Christ. As we fellowship together, it seems the blessings are multiplied.

And it is the duty of our overseers to watch and warn us of dangers along the way. Is it any wonder that the scripture declares that an Elder must not be a novice, or beginner? Furthermore, God has shown that there is a multiplicity of ministry, whereby there is a balance and a sharing of wisdom that God gives: “In the multitude of counsellors, there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). How wisely and carefully God has made provision for his Church.

I do not want to underestimate the value of every member in the Body of Christ being concerned and watchful and in prayer for every other member of the Body. Even as it says in Romans 12:5, we are members one of another.

We have been taught that we, who have taken Christ into our lives as our Lord and Saviour, are members in particular of the Body of Christ. Each one has a particular function in the Body, even as each part of our natural body has a particular function. Maybe you have been privileged to have the Presbytery lay hands on you and pray for you, and God has made known to you of your gifts and your ministry. Or if that has not happened (though we

trust it will), you may already sense the way God is leading you and what your desires to God are. Whatever your ministry is, it is important that you be diligent to fulfill it. Whether it is in the home, at school, on the farm, or in whatever business you may be engaged in—it is important to be diligent.

To begin with, we need to love God with all our heart, all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength, and also to love our neighbour as ourselves. “But take diligent heed to the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Joshua 22:5). As we walk with God, and He imparts His Spirit unto us, we receive that unction, as we yield to him, to walk in the paths of righteousness. Diligence will become a part of our makeup. God will impart unto us that attribute which is a characteristic of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was

constantly ministering of His Life to the people. He taught them as no other man did, and they were astonished at his doctrine (Matthew 7:28). He had compassion on the sick and the hungry. He cast our evil spirits from many and raised the dead. He was diligent in all His ways. He called the twelve apostles, who were to follow Him and continue on after His passions, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and go out into the world and preach the good news of the Kingdom. As He was diligent in His ministry, even to die on the cross of Calvary, even so must we be diligent in our ministry.

He said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). Your ministry will be your cross.

If you have been a farmer, you know how important it is that you know what is happening in your fields and with your livestock—being diligent to have your ground ready for planting, being prepared and timely with each operation, whether in springtime or harvest. “Be diligent to

know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds” (Proverbs 27:3). All cattle farmers well know how important it is, when calves are being born, to be on top of things, as it were, so that you save the new born animals and that they get off to a good start.

Whatever business we may be in, it is important to know if we are making the best of what God has entrusted us with.

Children can be diligent in their honour, respect and obedience to their parents and their teachers.

Fathers and mothers can be diligent in their love and care for each other and in the training and teaching of their children.

Elders need to know the spiritual condition of their spiritual family, and also to know if their material needs are being cared for.

Every member of the body of Christ is exhorted and encouraged to ever walk diligently with our God Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labours are not in vain in the Lord. Amen.

# "Grace Did Much More Abound"

*By Gilbert James*

*Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 5:20-21).*

Here the grace of God is described as being much more abundant than the abundance of sin that exists among mankind. As evidence shows, and the Bible concludes, sin abounds in every area of society; sin pervades humanity. Nevertheless, according to the Scripture, the grace of God is available in much more abundance to take away the sins of humanity.

## **Law and Grace**

Strangely, in spite of all that is taught in the Scriptures on the grace of God, the people of God often react with a sense of apprehension or hesitancy to an emphasis on the grace of God. We seem to feel that the generosity of the grace of God is too good to be true, and

so, we must always ‘balance’ the doctrine of the grace of God with some sort of ideas of self-righteous efforts. We find it difficult to emphasize the grace of God without concern that irresponsibility, ungodliness, laziness, or indulgence will result.

In this frame of mind, we find ourselves, perhaps without realizing it, swinging like a pendulum between the contrary doctrines of legalism and grace, trying to draw from both, hoping that with some self-efforts of self-righteousness and some help from the grace of God we will achieve God’s righteousness and a place in the Kingdom. However, the truth is that if we clearly understand the promise and purpose of the grace of God, we can rest assured that true grace, and grace alone, is all we need for our full salvation, including reigning in life in the Kingdom of God.

## **Licentiousness and Legalism**

The grace of God does not produce such consequences as irresponsibility,

ungodliness, laziness, or indulgence. Instead, such consequences are really products of the ego and carnality of man, generated by licentiousness or by legalism.

Licentiousness implies no restraint to the ego and carnality of man. The result is unrestricted moral perversion and lewdness as manifested by the “works of the flesh” listed in Gal 5:19-21.

Legalism is completely opposite to licentiousness, and implies strict adherence to law, especially the letter of the law rather than the spirit. Legalism demands perfect subjection to the Law of God by carnal man. Legalism’s intent in presenting God’s standard of righteousness to man is good, but its limitation is that it lacks the ability to empower man to meet its demands. This is because of two important reasons. One is that “**the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can it be**”

(Rom 8:7). The other reason is that “the **Law made nothing perfect**” (Heb 7:19). The result is that legalism generates self-righteousness, frustration, and condemnation in the hearts of carnal man who seeks to meet its demands.

The grace of God, on the contrary, empowers us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live discreetly, righteously and godly in this present world (Tit 2:11-12). The grace of God, therefore, presents a better hope to man of possessing “the righteousness of God apart from Law” and without licentiousness (Rom 3:21-24).

The Scriptures are straightforward and clear on the doctrine of the grace of God. We need not be apprehensive or hesitant to believe and accept fully the truth of the grace of God. If we seek to understand the doctrine of the grace of God, the Holy Spirit will reveal it to us. To understand and experience the grace of God, to benefit from its boundless resources to meet all our needs, we must be willing to confront it boldly. The writer of the Book of Hebrews admonishes us to “come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Let us again explore the promise and purpose of the grace of God as presented in the Scriptures.

### ***The Fall of Man***

When Adam fell, sin was introduced into the human race and immediately began to multiply in the corrupt conduct of man. As the human race multiplied, so sin multiplied, and reproduced itself in the nature of every one born upon the earth.

Paul gives us a graphic description of the corruption of the human race, as it has existed since the fall of Adam. We read in Rom 3:10-18:

“Not even one person is righteous. No one understands. No one searches for God. All have turned away. Together they have become worthless. No one shows kindness, not even one person! Their throats are open graves. With their tongues they practice deception. The venom of poisonous snakes is under their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Ruin and misery mark their ways. They have not learned the path to peace. There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Paul goes on to conclude: “For **all**

**have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23).

Sin has not only corrupted human nature, it has also exerted devastating effects on human society. The sinful products of man’s corrupt nature, listed in Gal 5:19-21 as “sexual immorality, impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of anger, quarrels, conflicts, factions, envy, murder, drunkenness, wild partying, and other similar behaviour,” wreak havoc in society and leave individuals in miserable bondage and morally paralyzed.

The Scriptures identify the devastation of sin as manifestations of the rule of death. Sin and rebellion brought Adam and his seed under the cruel dictatorship of death. God had instructed man (in Gen 2:17): “you shall not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Man did not follow God’s instructions, but instead ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and brought damnation upon him and the whole human race. As sin entered the world, death began to reign over mankind. We read in Rom 5:12: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon **all men, for that all have sinned.**”

The Scripture goes on to point out that after Adam’s fall even prior to the introduction of the Law, when sin was not yet formally identified according to the Law, death exerted its cruel reign over man: “For until the Law sin was in *the* world, but sin is not imputed *when* there is no law. But **death reigned** from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is the type of Him who was to come” (Rom 5:13-14).

It may appear that this glamorous world offers some form of the “good life” to man without submission to God, but it is a dangerous illusion — sweetened venom. Indeed, “she who lives in self-pleasure has died while living” (1Ti 5:6). The god of this world seeks to blind us and seduce us into self-destruction (2Co 4:4; Eph 2:2). Jesus describes the sole intention of the adversary’s interest in us in this way: “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (Joh 10:10).

Therefore, all of us have been deeply

affected by the cruel bondage and devastation of the rule of sin and death, in one form or the other. Paul makes it plain to us in Eph 2:1-3:

“You were once dead because of your offences and sins, in which you once lived according to the ways of this present world and according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now active in those who are disobedient. Indeed, all of us once behaved like them in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of our flesh and senses. By nature we deserved wrath, just like everyone else.”

Thus man, poisoned by sin and iniquity, and drifting down with the popular current of worldliness and evil, was pronounced dead by the Creator. In such an ultimately helpless and hopeless state, who can help himself?

### ***Legalism***

Not even the Law, when it was introduced, could bring man deliverance from sin and death. The Law coded and defined sin, making man aware of his sinfulness. For instance, Paul explains to us in

Rom 3:19-20: “But we know that whatever things the Law says, it says to those who are under the Law; so that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may be under judgment before God, because by the works of the Law none of all flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *is* the knowledge of sin.”

Therefore, as good as the Law was for its particular purpose, it could not deliver man from the bondage of sin and death. At its best, the Law attempts to impose codes of righteousness upon sinful and dead humanity. At its worst, the Law uncovers man’s corruption and death. In putting the Law in its right perspective to sin and death, Paul writes (in 1Co 15:56): “The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the Law.” Thus, whereas the Law was good in its role as a sort of teacher, teaching us and identifying to us our sins, and their cursed or woeful consequences, it could not give us life or victory over sin and death.

Paul explains this wonderful truth further to us in Gal 3:21-26:

“***Is the Law*** then against the promises of God? Let it not be *said!* For if a **law** had been given which could have given life, indeed righteousness would have been out of **Law**. But the Scripture shut up all

under sin, so that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under Law, having been shut up to the faith about to be revealed. So that the Law has become a trainer of us until Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But faith coming, we are no longer under a trainer. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

#### *Grace*

Praise God, after the Law grace came in greater abundance than the power and effects of sin and death to save mankind through Jesus Christ. For the Law came through Moses, *but grace and truth* came through Jesus Christ (Joh 1:17). Hope came to the fallen human race through the abundant grace of God in Jesus Christ. The grace of God did for mankind what the law could not do. As stated in Heb 7:19: “For the **Law** made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*, by which we draw near to God.”

The grace of God offers this better hope. While the Law vainly and hopelessly drives us to try and achieve God’s standard of righteousness on our own, the grace of God gives the hope of victory to fallen man by proclaiming that all we need to do is to believe and receive God’s righteousness. Grace, by its definition, shines a bright light in the thick darkness of hopelessness and helplessness that has enfolded fallen man. Grace is usually defined as the *unmerited* favour. Demoralised and spiritually battered man sees in the unveiling of the grace of God the bright hope for righteousness without the effort he cannot put forth and the merit he does not have.

Because man in his state of utter helplessness and unworthiness cannot work or put out any adequate effort to attain God’s righteousness, if he is to be saved in righteousness, he stands in need of the grace of God. The Scriptures therefore argue the importance of the grace of God for man’s salvation in this way: if, according to the Law, righteousness must be attained by working, then it is a reward that “is not reckoned according to grace, but according to debt. But to him **not working, but believing on Him justifying the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness**” (Rom 4:4-5). Hence, it is only by the grace of

God that sinful man can obtain salvation and the righteousness of God.

Paul gives us deeper insight into this “better hope” in Rom 8:2-4:

“But the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; so that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

Hallelujah! Now by the abundant grace of God mankind can be overwhelmingly delivered from the bondage and corruption of the rule of sin and death through Jesus Christ to walk in abundant life. Jesus Himself promises: “The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they might have life, and that they might have *it more abundantly*” (Joh 10:10). Indeed, “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Joh 1:17). Paul describes this amazing deliverance from sin and death into righteousness and life in this way: “For if by the one man’s offence death reigned through the one, **much more** those who receive **abundance of grace** and of **the gift of righteousness** will **reign in life** through the One, Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:17).

The wonderful news is that as thoroughly far-reaching as the devastation of sin and death seem to have penetrated into the human nature, **the grace of God** has now penetrated farther. “*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*”

The grace of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has brought to mankind the glorious hope of deliverance out of the abyss of sin and death. Nothing else could have done it. The grace of God has effectively and abundantly brought deliverance to mankind from the cruel rule of sin and death. According to Rom 5:17, this deliverance has come in a two-fold manner: the believer receives from God “*the gift of righteousness*” and a “*reigning life*.”

#### *The Gift of Righteousness*

First is the “*gift of righteousness*.” This is referred to as the justification of the sinner by God. Justification provides man with an acceptable standing in heaven before a holy, righteous God. To be justified is to be

declared guiltless or right, or to be freed from all blame, by a supreme authority or judge. God, the Supreme Judge, has brought man deliverance from sin and death by justifying him by grace through Jesus Christ.

It was indeed good news, as it is still to us today, when Paul announced to a congregation of devout Jews in a synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia: “Therefore be it known to you, men, brothers, that through this One (Jesus Christ) the forgiveness of sins is announced to you. And by Him all who believe are **justified from all things**, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses” (Act 13:38-39).

Paul goes into further detail in describing this process of justification of man by God in Rom 3:21-28:

“But now a righteousness of God has been revealed apart from Law... even the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe.... For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being **justified freely by His grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness through the passing by of the sins that had taken place before, in the forbearance of God; for the display of His righteousness at this time, for Him to be just and, forgiving the *one* being of the faith of Jesus.... Therefore we conclude that **a man is justified by faith without the works of the Law.**”

So, the gift of righteousness or justification is the first aspect of the two-fold manner of deliverance from sin and death wrought in man by the grace of God. The sole means, as we have seen, by which this righteousness is imputed or credited to the believer is the grace of God. And the sole condition on which it is received by the believer is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; trust in the faithfulness and graciousness of the Lord.

#### *Reigning Life*

The other aspect of this two-fold deliverance is the gift to “**reign in life** through the One, Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:17). This is also referred to as walking in **newness of life** (Rom 6:4). This is Kingdom life, and it is a life of victory over sin and death. The act of faith which thus secures our justification

secures also at the same time our sanctification for our on-going experience of walking in holiness with God. Thus the doctrine of the grace of God does not lead to licentiousness, unlike what some have wrongly assumed. “For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, **who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness**” (Jud 1:4).

Receiving the true grace of God transforms the sinner from a lifestyle of iniquity into one of godliness and holiness. We read in Rom 6:2-4:

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? Let it not be! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised up from *the* dead by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in **newness of life**.”

Therefore, the abundant grace of God is much more than sufficient to deal with the devastating effects of sin and death in Adam’s fallen race. Not only does it justify, or impute righteousness to, the sinner who believes in Jesus Christ, it imparts into the believer a newness of life, which is nothing else but the eternal life of Jesus Christ. By the power of this divinely imparted new life, the believer is freed from the power of death; the old nature or the body of sin is destroyed; and the believer is now able to live unto God in a holy and godly life.

This is exactly what Paul explains to us in Rom 6:6-14:

“Knowing this...our old man is crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, that from now on we should not serve sin. For he who died has been justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that when Christ was raised from *the* dead, He dies no more; death no longer has dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died to sin once; but in that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise count yourselves also to be truly dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore do not let

sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. Do not yield your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but yield yourselves to God, as *one* alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under Law, but under grace.”

Oh! How glorious is the abundant grace of God to Adam’s fallen race! It does not only bring forgiveness of sins, or justification from guilt, to the sinner. It overthrows the cruel reign of sin and death in the sinner’s life, and imparts a new reigning life into the believer, even the resurrection life of Christ. The powerful new life enables the believer to walk victoriously in godliness, overcoming sin and death in this present world. We must see the promise and purpose of the grace of God as not only an expression of God’s merciful attitude to us, but also as an impartation of God’s divine energy into us to enable us to do His will and be like Him in the earth.

#### *The School of Grace*

We must distinguish clearly between the judgemental role of the Law and the empowering or life-giving role of grace in our Christian walk. Let us consider, for example, being at school. If we are in school, the course we are undertaking may be for weeks, months, or years. Finally, at the end of our training, we may be evaluated by an examination. The examination is the standard by which our achievement in the course is judged. The result, or grade, that we obtain in this examination, whether we pass or fail, determines our final assessment in terms of our competence in the subject matter of the course.

This examination can be likened to the Law. Its role is to simply judge or evaluate us. The Law simply judges us to be righteous or unrighteous — pass or fail. Unfortunately, the Law evaluates carnal man without giving him an opportunity and the resources to become righteous and meet its standard.

However, school gives us the opportunity and resources to learn and to be trained to become competent in the requirements of the course that we are undertaking. We have enlisted

in school because we recognize our need to learn and to be trained in this course. During our period in school, there may be several tests and drills. We may pass some and we may fail some. Yet as long as our period of training is not over, the results of these tests and drills are not final judgements, but rather indicators of how much we have learned or have not learned so far. Therefore, the results of these tests and drills may enable our teachers and ourselves to know more precisely our areas of weakness that we can be helped to improve.

Our schooling may be likened, therefore, to the grace of God. By grace, God is actually teaching and perfecting us. The period of our schooling is the entire Dispensation of Grace. During this period, there may be drills and tests that we may pass or fail. If we fail, we can acknowledge our failures and God will forgive us and cleanse us (1Jo 1:7-9). In this period of grace, God is dealing with us by His grace, not according to our merit. At His throne of grace, or in His school of grace, we can obtain His mercy and find His grace to help us according to our needs.

The Law, therefore, has no authority to judge us now with its final judgement of condemnation. We “are not under Law, but under grace” (Rom 6:14). In other words, now, it is not final examination time for believers, but a period of training and maturing. According to the Scriptures, the Law can only serve as a schoolmaster or trainer to evaluate our condition and point us to Jesus Christ, who by grace is perfecting us in the school of grace (Gal 3:24). Therefore, we believe that if we allow God to minister to us under grace, and we, like obedient students, learn to stand in God’s righteousness, which God imparts into us by His grace, the standard of our character will exceed the requirements of the Law (Rom 3:21).

#### *Grace to Live in the Kingdom of God*

The grace of God gives us birth into the Kingdom of God and sustains us there. The grace of God empowers every believer to function effectively in his or her ministry. Therefore, the believer’s need for and absolute

dependence on the grace of God never ends during his pilgrimage in this world. Grace is needed for our justification and for our on-going sanctification in Christ. Grace brings about the new birth in the believer, generates spiritual growth and maturity in the believer, and continues to be the sole means of sustaining the believer as an overcomer in this world. Grace will never become obsolete to the believer.

Jesus used the vine and its branches to illustrate the importance of believers being integrally connected to Him and remaining completely dependent on Him in order to be spiritually productive (Joh 15:1-8). “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remains in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me” (Joh 15:4). Anyone who understands the integral connection between a vine’s branch and stem, and the necessary dependence of the branch on the stem for the sap needed for its continuing growth, fruit-bearing, and even existence, will appreciate what Jesus is teaching us about our need to abide in Him and continually depend on Him for our spiritual life and fruitfulness. This may be an affront to the ego of the religiously arrogant and self-reliant, but it is good news of hope to those of us who are aware of our total human weakness, and have come to acknowledge that without Christ we can do absolutely nothing. We thank God that grace has come through Jesus Christ.

Many Christians do not follow the admonition to live the Christian life with the same simple faith with which they have received Christ, when they came to Him, dead in their sins and trespasses, hopeless and helpless, and relied only on the grace of God for their salvation. Instead of living in absolute dependence on Christ, “rooted and built up in Him”, continually drawing their sustenance from Him, they allow themselves to be robbed of the grace of God “through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col 2:6-8). Not trusting the sufficiency of the grace of God, some attempt to live victoriously by merely

doing the best that they can by their own human abilities. With an air of self-piousness, they profess that they hope to achieve their crowns by prudently doing their best and leaving the rest to God. This will always prove inadequate, until they sincerely acknowledge that salvation is by grace through faith, and not of themselves; “it is a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph 2:8-9).

Some Christians are reluctant to accept this concept because they assume it leads, as mentioned earlier, to irresponsibility, ungodliness, laziness, and indulgence. This is a good concern, but, as we have seen, it stems from an improper understanding of the grace of God, and shows a lack of faith in the active power of the grace of God, who has purposed to transform us into His own righteousness in Christ by His grace (2Co 5:21). Moreover, anyone who has entered the school of the grace of God will embrace earnestly the work of training and perfecting being wrought in his life by the grace of God. It is impossible to partake of the empowering and life-giving grace of God and be irresponsible, lazy, and indulgent.

It has been said often that “salvation is free but the Kingdom of God will cost us everything.” This is an interesting saying that needs our careful consideration. It is helpful and truthful if only it contributes to our understanding that we must give up everything we have in order to receive all that God has for us. God does not put new wine in old bottles (Luk 5:36-39). The rich young ruler who desired to follow Christ was told by our Lord to give up all that he had (Mat 19:21). Paul had to settle himself to lose all that he considered gain to him to win Christ (Phi 3:7-9).

However, it is extremely important that we do not perceive the things that God calls upon us to give up as payments for our possession of the Kingdom. This would be utter presumptuousness on our part. Is there anything on earth that is worth the price of the Kingdom of God? Rightly, Paul also did point out that those things he gave up he considered dung, or waste matter that had to be purged out of his system in order that he “may win Christ and be found in Him; not having

my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but through *the* faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith” (Phi 3:8-9).

There is no point at which we may reach in our walk with God in this world where the freeness of salvation ends, and if we are to go further, we must begin to pay. To entertain the idea of paying for the Kingdom may sound pleasing to the self-righteous and boost the ego of religious snobs. It may give a sense of self-distinction to those who perceive that they are among a sort of elite group of “Kingdom people,” who are able by their own moral efforts to pay for a certain achieved Kingdom status, which is not freely available to all believers as is the grace of God that brings salvation. Thank God, to think this way is to think foolishly. “Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, **are you now being made perfect by the flesh?**” (Gal 3:2-3).

There is definitely no room in the order of the Kingdom of God for our worldly snobbery and prejudice. The free grace of God that brings us salvation is the same free grace that brings us to rule and reign in the Kingdom of God. It is available freely to all who will come and believe and partake and grow into mature sons of God to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Some will accept it and will go on to perfection by the grace of God. Others will reject it, and remain dead in their sins and trespasses, or spiritually stunted and carnal. Paul himself admitted, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace which *was* toward me has not been without fruit, but I laboured more abundantly than all of them; yet not I, but the grace of God with me” (1Co 15:10).

The freely available grace of God that brings us salvation will give us the Kingdom. In this light, **the gospel of the grace of God is the gospel of the Kingdom** (Act 20:24). If by grace we are born again to enter the Kingdom, by grace we shall live, rule, and reign in the Kingdom. Praise the Lord, **grace did much more abound!** “For if by the one man’s offence death reigned through the one, **much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ**” (Rom 5:17).

# PINELOW SUMMER CAMP

North of Spokane  
**August 11-17, 2003**

From Spokane, North on Hwy 395 toward Coleville, past Loon Lake 3.1 miles or 5 km, turn east on Deer Lake North Road 1.7 miles or 2-3/4 km to Pinelow Park.

**Adults: \$85, Children 3-11: \$45, Family Rates with children up to 18 - \$285. (Rates - US Funds)**

Send reservations to:  
NOTE: Daryl Martz is taking reservations for Pinelow Camps.  
Ph. (604) 858-9009  
Fax: (604) 795-5365  
email: martz@shelbrook.com  
(NO PETS)

**Campground registration starts at 4:00 pm, August 11, 2003**

# PINELOW FALL CAMP FAMILY CAMP

**November 8-11, 2003**

Contact: Daryl Martz

Fax (604) 795-5365

e-mail: martz@shelbrook.com

# PARK VALLEY LABOUR DAY WEEKEND

HELD AT  
**RAGNAR AARRESTAD'S FARM**

**Starts Friday, Aug. 29/03 at 5:00 pm  
and ends Monday, Sept. 1, 2003 at 1:00 pm**

Contact: Ragner Aarrestad  
Box 515, Debden, SK. S0J 0S0  
Phone: (306) 469-4962

Please be advised that our

# CARIBBEAN CAMP

will be held in Trinidad  
El Dorado Youth Training Center

**DATE:**

**July 27 - Aug. 3/03**

**CONTACT PERSON:**

Crafton Lewis  
Holder's Terrance  
Stanislaus St.  
Success Village, Laventille  
Trinidad, West Indies  
Ph. 868-623-1141  
Fax: 868-623-1684  
email: craflew@hotmail.com

# HIDDEN ACRES FELLOWSHIP SHAKESPEARE, ONTARIO

**Friday, August 29 - 6:00 p.m. to September 1, 2003 - 1:00 p.m.**

Please bring bedding, toilet articles, musical instruments, bibles, swimwear.

**Cost will be:** \$20 - 13 years of age & older;  
\$10 - 12 years of age & under; or \$50 per family.

**Please send reservations to:**

Garry Tyler, 360 Douglas Street, Stratford, Ontario, N5A 5R3  
or call (519) 271-7185 or

Kelvin Martin, 14 Dickens Place, Stratford, Ontario, N5A 7G1  
or call (519) 273-4581 or email: garry.tyler@sympatico.ca

## RESERVATION FORM FOR CAMP 2003

Cut out and mail

Please fill in ALL information and cut out and mail to the following address: ROOM RESERVATIONS, Sharon Children's Homes and Schools, Box 878, North Battleford, Sask., S9A 2Z3. Mail as soon as possible. If you are unable to attend, please cancel your reservation, otherwise we will have to charge you for the room held open for you. **YOU MUST RESERVE** your room, we cannot hold accommodation without you supplying us with the information outlined in the blank application. You will NOT receive written confirmation from us UNLESS we cannot supply your requirements. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated and helpful.  
THANK YOU.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Adults: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Children: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Arrival \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Departure \_\_\_\_\_

## DATES OF IMPORTANCE

- North Battleford Camp ..... July 6 - 13, 2003
- North Carolina Camp, Salisbury, NC ..... July 27 - Aug. 3, 2003
- Trinidad, West Indies Camp ..... July 27 - August 3, 2003
- Pinelaw Summer Family Camp ..... Aug. 11 - 17, 2003
- Young People's - Hidden Acres, ON ..... Aug. 29 - Sept. 1, 2003
- Young People's - Park Valley, SK ..... Aug. 29 - Sept. 1, 2003
- Family Camp - Winkler, MB ..... Aug. 29 - Sept. 1, 2003
- Minden Meetings ..... Sept. 19 - 21, 2003
- Scripture Studies - North Battleford ..... Oct. 5 - Nov. 1, 2003
- Pinelaw Fall Family Camp ..... Nov. 8 - 11, 2003

Non Profit  
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Minden, NE 68959  
Permit No. 40

**WINKLER LABOUR  
DAY  
WEEKEND CAMP**

Held at Winkler Bible Camp  
Starts Friday, August 29  
evening meal  
and ends after breakfast  
Monday, Sept. 1, 2003  
**RESERVATIONS ARE  
NECESSARY.**

Please contact: Bob Waldner  
Box 205, Altona, MB ROG 0B0  
(204) 324-5963

## North Carolina Camp Meeting

July 27 - August 3, 2003  
Catawba College, Salisbury, NC

Catawba College, site of the camp, is located in the town of Salisbury, NC, about 40 miles from either Charlotte or High Point via Interstate 85. The campus is about 3 miles west of Interstate 85 (Exit 76-B) on West Innes Street (Hwy. 601) and can also be reached from the west and Interstate 40 via Hwy 601 or Hwy 70.

You may bring linens (single bed), towels, & pillows, or these can be rented at \$5 per set.

Check-in time begins at 2:00 pm on Sunday, July 27. Meals will be served in the college dining hall beginning at 5:00 pm on Sunday, July 27, followed by the first meeting at 7:30 pm. The camp will conclude with the noon meal on Sunday, August 3.

Buildings are air conditioned. Swimming pool, gym, and other recreational facilities are available.

Charges for Room & Board:

Age 0-3	No Charge
Age 4-6	\$60.00 per week or \$12.00 per day
Age 7-Adult	\$90.00 per week or \$18.00 per day

Send reservations to: Global Missions Regional Camp  
c/o Mrs. Anita Love  
112 Queensbury Rd.,  
Winston Salem, NC 27104

or call: Anita Love 336-765-9271

or email: <ASLOVE1@aol.com>

Flight arrangements may be made to Charlotte or Greensboro, NC.  
For Greensboro Airport pickup call Dave Heath at 336-841-0607 or e-mail <DDPACK@juno.com>

For airport pickup in Charlotte call Kim Kaufman at 704-583-0651 or email <kkaufman@carolina.rr.com>.

**Sharon Children's Homes and Schools**  
Box 878, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S9A 2Z3

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