

IM-Grace Part One Masterclass

Stephen: [00:43:07] Welcome to the Grace IM master class. Thank you for joining us today. We deeply appreciate it. Grace is a topic that is being explored worldwide. Since we live in a culture that appears to be taking advantage of the word Grace and certainly the meaning of Grace, we decided that it is absolutely critical that we set up this question-and-answer time to get those things cleared up. Before we get started, let me reveal to you our outline, as you can see in the upper right-hand corner. Number one, we're going to do a welcome and instructions, which is basically what we're doing right now. Number two, we're going to play a video for you called, What is Race? Number three, we'll do introductions of each of our hosts today. We have with us Frank Feldman, Armando Gutierrez, Mark Maulding, and of course, myself. Then we'll move on to me asking particular questions of the authors to get things started. After that, we'll get your submitted questions, those that people sent in ahead of time. Those will be our top priority questions. And then we'll finally go back to the chat submitted questions. However, I'd like to note that I will be asking additional questions to the authors throughout the session. My name is Dr. Steven Finney, and I will be your main host today. I am the president and founder of IOM America, The Identity Matters World view Institute and the Online World View School. It is my honor to be able to lead you here today in this particular master class. Due to the number of registrants, Zoom is unable to post all of you via video games. They only allow us to add 49 images to our screen. However, we will know that you are doing

Use the chat option to ask your questions. In addition to those with their check button, you will see all the communications between other attendees and me. The button is located on your Zune to make sure it's on. As you're being hosted, I will be asking the hosts as many of the questions posted through the chat notifications. We apologize ahead of time if you don't get to all of those posted questions. And as you know, we are just a little over an hour to get through each of those questions.

And due to a large number of registrants, this master class will mostly be you listening to the author's answers to the basic questions. Your chat should be like something like this: in that little chatbox, type your first name and then your question, and then just simply send emails, show up on mine. And then I will get to that question as soon as we can. Always keep your mic off that it is very important.

Zoom is designed to activate any attendee according to sensing noise coming you're your video. And that can even be background noise. We will activate that particular video attendee and put him in the front of the screen. And we don't want that. We want to keep our focus on the authors. So, keep your mic off throughout the master class now. Have my chance to address you personally. That's when you turn on your mic. after our dialogue concludes. Yeah. You turn off your mic immediately. This will help us get through this class as smoothly as we can. Now, the session will be recorded to review all the masterclasses and communicate with the master Class web page. That's the page you went to sign up on. And it's found at www.IOMAmerica.net/IMmasterclass. So let's get started.

Stephen: [00:51:08] Well, this is a perfect example of extending Grace to a brother. I'm sorry, I'm learning. This is our first opportunity to do a Zoom call with many people, so I'm learning as we go. So, I appreciate all of your patience. And I'm trusting at this point that our participants had their microphone off so that we can begin to move into the portion of asking questions. OK, so our first question that I'm going to ask each of our co-hosts is this. How would you describe Grace? In a summary statement, Mark, would you like to go first?

Mark: [00:52:03] Love to. Grace is the essence of who God is; Grace is Him planning and deciding to be a people with whom he could unite himself. Grace is Him redeeming us after that failed on our end. Grace is Him sending his son, Jesus, so we could be reunited with him and live from him so we could live for Him.

Stephen: [00:52:38] Excellent, Armando.

Armando: [00:52:44] Grace is a person. Just as the truth is a person, the way is a person; the life is a person, so Grace is a person, and that person is our Creator, Savior, and Lord, the Trinitarian God who self-revealed in Jesus.

Stephen: [00:53:09] Frank.

Frank: [00:53:14] Well, not much to add to that, but I would say, Grace is through the work of Christ being delivered from the economy of achieving in Adam; and placed

instead into an economy of receiving from God all that God is to all that we need in the moment of faith.

Stephen: [00:53:45] Excellent. OK, I'd like to have each of you give a little miniature bio of yourself; it might be and probably is new participants on the line who probably don't know you very well. So, Frank, how about you?

Frank: [00:54:05] Ok, real briefly, I grew up in a home that was not Christian, found Christ in college, became religious, went to cemetery seminary, got even more religious, and had to be brought to the end of that. And the Father brought some circumstances and opened our eyes into the economy of life found in Christ, radically altered everything we do and have just been about sharing Christ as life ever since.

Stephen: [00:54:39] Actually, the one I'd like to point out at this particular time that Frank has put out a book called Stunned By Grace, we will be sending you a follow-up e-mail that will give you the link to be able to get that book. But I'm telling you, it is an excellent book for beginners and those who are quite experienced in the life of Grace. Mark, how about you?

Mark: [00:55:08] Came to know Jesus at age nine, age 19. I experienced Christ as my life but was ambushed by the legal system that sent me on a downward spiral for many years. And then through that came to the end of my own resources and had a fresh revelation of Grace of Christ as life and my identity in Christ. I had a passion for sharing this with other pastors because I was one when this occurred. And so God led them eventually to found Grace Life International in Charlotte, North Carolina. We're not a church, but we counsel people from the grace perspective. We coach people on how to live it out. We teach conferences every month, and we train people in this. I'm blessed to have 30 staff. We counsel people and coax them from all over the country and have also been privileged to write a book. God's Best-Kept Secret. Christianity is easier than you think. And again, blessed. It became a bestseller.

Armando: [00:56:22] Well, I was born in Bogota, Colombia, to a family of nonpracticing Jews who had embedded into Roman Catholicism, and because I was the oldest male, I was slated to be a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. At the age of 14. I had a question about how a priest knows if one is repentant when one walks into the

confessional and nobody has answers. At that point, I walked away from the church, from my religion, and pursued cash, cars, cuties, career, and carousing. The Lord found me on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps on June 19th, 1980, and made it very clear that I needed to make a choice that day. Was I going to continue to blaze my own trail? Or was I going to follow Him? On that day, I saw the empty cross, the empty tomb, and the emptiness in me for the first time. And the Lord manifested his indwelling presence that evening, and ever since, I've been learning how to walk by his indwelling life.

Stephen: [00:57:47] Thank you, Armando. Armando is also my associate; he's the associate pastor in our local church here, which we do. And a little bit about my background is that I grew up in a very dysfunctional home, or it's certainly something that most people could claim. And I was born again, supposedly when I was 16 years old. And then, after I got married, I fell into a crisis of belief. That crisis of belief put me in a position of feeling pretty hopeless, and then one of my colleagues, while living in Iowa, worked for the same organization. Handed me a book, tossed it on my desk, and said, "I think you would be interested in this. That was the Handbook to Happiness. (Just as a reminder for those logging in, please make sure your microphone is turned off. Thank you.) And so I read that book, and it was the first book I had ever read from cover to cover in my entire life because I was functionally illiterate. I ended up calling the author. He invited me out to an internship. I packed up my family from Iowa. We moved to Denver, and about halfway through my internship, I had basically what most people would call a mental breakdown. I was overwhelmed with sorrow, regret for my childhood or my adulthood. And ended up in Dr. Solomon's office because my intern supervisor felt I was.

Stephen: [01:00:04] In need of the founder's care; in other words, I was a big mess. While I was in Dr. Solomon's office, He listened to my story very carefully, and I've never had anyone do that before. And at the end of my dumping on him, he said, you know, someone has to die today. I think it's time for a funeral, and of course, that was all a bit perplexing to me, so he led me to understand that to have life, you must die. I was thinking that he was saying suicide or something like that. But no, he explained to me the beauty of coming to the end of yourself, releasing your life to Christ, and allowing Christ to live out his life through you as a vessel. And so, I had a funeral that day. Then, I ended up on staff with Grace Fellowship, and during that process, I started hearing more and more about Grace. Since I came from a do-good type of mentality

from my childhood, to keep everyone happy. I began to discover the power of Grace in the life of Christ. And the power of Grace is released within me from Christ dwelling within me. And I didn't come across any grace books back then because, honestly, there were not many of them out yet.

Stephen: [01:01:54] So when I came across a book like Mark's book On God's Best Kept Secret, those books began to change how I was thinking regarding Grace. And so all the legalism that comes with not understanding the grace life was what I was living, even while I was on staff with a ministry that focused on your identity in Christ, so it's been a growing experience for me, and I am now at 66 years of age, I have grown into having a pretty solid understanding that Grace is not just a word. It is an extension of life. And to have the power of Christ coming through your vessel, in your mind, will, and emotions, and even your body became more and more real to me over the past 20 years. And so when God called me to focus on the grace life in ministry, I'm telling you, it was like eating from the bowl of fruit handed to me from heaven because every day we grow in Grace. And when you are growing in Grace, you will understand that we are no longer in bondage to the law. And that's what today is about. OK, I'm going to start firing some questions. Frank, your first question is, since God for the law, how can we disregard it as believers?

Frank: [01:03:54] Well, that's a great question, Stephen, and I think the answer is found in the question itself. Disregard. I don't think we, as believers, disregard the law in this sense. We want to make sure that it's used correctly. And when we look at the New Testament in 2 Corinthians chapter three, it tells us that the law is the ministry of death and condemnation. So it has a purpose. Its purpose is to kill and condemn us. And then you tie in Galatians three, when we're dead and condemned, will be crying out for life and be led to Jesus. And when we find Jesus, we find this incredible truth through faith that he put us on the cross and killed us, buried us, and then resurrected us. So it's not that we disregard the law; it's that we died to it. That relationship ended! Romans 7:1 is so clear, death and relationships. A dead man doesn't have to worry about paying his taxes. A dead man doesn't have to worry about following the law anymore either because now he has life. And I think one of the things that many Christians forget that new covenant people forget is Romans 8, and that is that by this spirit, we fulfill the righteousness of the law, which is amazing. So we fulfill the righteousness of the law by not following the law but by following the spirit. So it's not that we disregarded. We've

died to it. We've got something far better, the life of Jesus. And when we trust him and walk by faith, we will fulfill the righteousness of the law by not following the law. And now we use the law to beat the daylights out of other people until they come to Christ as life. So we don't disregard it. We want to use it properly. Great question.

Stephen: [01:05:50], one of my favorite verses, the Law of the Spirit of Life. And that explanation, Frank, was perfect for that true? OK, Mark, what does it mean to live by Grace? (Mark, you need to turn on your microphone)

Frank: [01:06:26] All right. Not sure how that happened. So that's OK. Great question. To live by Grace is, first of all, to live informed about what the new covenant is. I can't live by Grace if I don't understand the gospel of Grace. I can't live by Grace if I think I'm still obligated to keep the law. I can't live by Grace if my identity is somewhere other than Christ; I can't live by Grace if I believe it's all up to me to help God out so I can live for him. So to live by Grace, on the other hand, on the positive side, I need to understand that the one who is full of Grace and truth, truth lives in me, Christ himself. But sometimes, I ask Christians, why did Jesus come to live in you? Well, there are several reasons, but I think one that's missed a lot is he came to live in us, first of all, to love us from the inside, to be intimate with us, to talk with us, let us talk to him, and then not only to love us from the inside but then to express himself into the world that we live in, into our spheres of influence, our relationships so that his love can flow through us. I also need to know who I am, that my identity is not being the president of Graceland International but an author. My identity is not in my past or the opinions of others. To live by Grace, I must constantly know and remind myself I am a son of God. I'm not the Son, but I am a son. And as one of His sons, I'm like my father. He is holy. And so because Christ lives in me, I am as well. He is righteous, and so am I. He says I'm blameless. He says I'm chosen. He says I'm adopted. And for me, I need to rehearse those truths over and over. I teach them every day. But I need to rehearse those so that I can live by Grace. And also, I need to understand that when I blow it, I don't go to God and tell Him my sin that I'm sorry to get forgiveness. I go to him with the reality and understanding that I'm going to Him already forgiven. I just want to be honest with Him, and that, in all of that and more, I live by Grace, and I want to extend it as He lives through me to the people around me.

Stephen: [01:09:11] Absolutely excellent. One of the key things that I think that is being dismissed in our church culture today is exactly what Mark was saying regarding the fact is, if we believe that Christ lives within us and we believe what the scriptures say is that you have the mind of Christ within you, the key practical point is releasing the mind of Christ through us. And I am a classic testimony of that because I can tell you the point in my journey where I went from I do the thinking by using Christ's knowledge versus letting Christ use me as a vessel to share the truth with others. And even my mentor told me many times before he died said that I too could tell when you made the transition from you do the thinking through theology versus Christ is using you as an open vessel to do the talking, sharing, and ministering through you.

Stephen: [01:10:32] Armando, now I will put you on the spot with the question, why is Grace the single most defining characteristic with that biblical faith, apart from all the other faiths and religion?

Armando: [01:10:55] That's a great question. And Steve, I believe it's because the people have to merit the Grace of their God or gods in all other religions or faiths. They have to earn it based on self-effort. And biblical faith is measured out of the gift of the giver of all gifts. The gift comes to each of us when we hear the gospel and of Jesus's vicarious atonement, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and seating. It's his story that is our glory. And our story is his work and also his glory. As a dear brother recently put it, the Gift is the Giver, and The Giver is the Gift.

Stephen: [01:12:10] Thank you, Armando. Now you know why He's on my team. Every day. You're a great brother to have on the team, Armando.

Armando: [01:12:25] Thank you. Thank you, Stephen. I wanted to piggyback on what you were saying just before you asked me the question if that's OK? In Psalm 103, the Lord showed me one day in this first little verse, for the psalm opens up with - "Bless the Lord oh my soul and all that is within me, bless his holy name." And I said, Who's talking to whom? If we are created in the image and likeness, we, too, are trinitarian beings. In this case, the spirit in the psalmist is instructing the soul, commanding the soul, and everything within the body. So, I began to see that whenever I say, "I'm going to think about this or that," That is what I'm saying is "I'm going to go have a conference with

myself." And unknowingly, I was grieving the Holy Spirit because I was not turning to Him. I was trying to figure it out on my own.

Stephen: [01:13:55] How many people have Zoom meetings with their self-life seriously? They work desperately to figure things out with their human mind. What happens is that it backs them into a corner and leaves the person with more questions, versus just trusting in Christ Jesus, that he will show us these details in his timing. And so, using the human mind is Christ's way of releasing himself to the world, a deprived world, and we have to be willing to be open and completely rest in Christ before he can use our brains to communicate truth to a hurting world. Frank, I have a question from Bob, and he says, What does this verse mean? "See to it that no one comes short of the Grace of God, that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it, many are defiled.

Frank: [01:15:19] I think it's the same principle that's found in the book of Galatians when people go back to the law, he says, they fall from Grace. And what that means is when you take your eyes off of Jesus and put it on to something else, it hinders that flow of Jesus through you. It doesn't mean we lose our salvation, but it does mean it stops the flow of life from the spirit, as Armando was saying, through the soul, out the body. In Galatians chapter one, Stephen, it's a very interesting insight that Paul says you received him, not that you received the doctrine or a message you received him. And then, a couple of verses later, he says, when you do something like turn to circumcision or the law, you pervert the gospel because you are leaving him. And it's fascinating. But the word pervert is the word reverse. So, you're taking your eyes off of Jesus. We like to think sometimes that when we take our eyes of Jesus, we go one click or two clicks. No, no, no. You go one hundred and eighty degrees because you've taken your eyes off of him. Now, with that principle, I think that's the same thing that he's talking about with a root of bitterness. What are we fixing our eyes on? We're fixing our eyes on the wound that we got from somebody. And what that's going to do is hinder that flow of the life, the Grace of Jesus Christ through us to forgive someone. And when that happens, then we're going to end up in bitterness and unforgiveness, in anger and a critical negative attitude. And that has stopped that flow of life. It doesn't mean that we lose Grace or we lose forgiveness. It's always ours, but we can hinder that flow, and we're going to end up in bitterness when we do that.

Stephen: [01:17:38] Ok, well, that means ...,

Mark: [01:17:40] Stephen. Let me jump in on that, if you don't mind, just for a moment or so; in counseling, we deal a lot with everyone who comes in with us on how to forgive people who wounded them. Frank, you talked about this a little bit already; I think you interpret that scripture correctly. I agree with that. There's also an application, though, that when our focus is on somebody rather than being willing to forgive them (and we have to show people how to forgive). Lots of Christians think they know to forgive, they have, but they haven't. The Grace of God is the great enabler to forgive because the Grace of God is the great forgiver Himself who lives in us. And so in Ephesians 4, it says, "forgive one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. I teach people, and we teach people that you are a forgiver. That's your very nature now; that's your identity. So we have the Grace to forgive people. It's difficult sometimes; we don't want to feel the pain; we don't want to revisit what happened. But the apostle Paul said, forgetting what lies behind it, pressing for what lies ahead. Well, sometimes, you can't go ahead until you face what was behind you. You have to look at it and say, I'm willing to forgive. I had a lady who came to see me one time, and she was in her 70s. She said, you know, I'm depressed, and I don't know why. When I heard about her story, I said, well, I think we know why. You said all these people as a child, as an adult, deeply wounded you and violated you. And I talk to her about forgiving. God has given you Grace. She wasn't willing to do that yet. I said, OK, that's fine. God will take you to that place at one time. One day she came to see me, and I knew something had happened. I said, what happened? She said, I finally forgave everyone. So she was acting like who she was finally, and in short order, she said, I don't want to see you anymore, I'm free. I said, Good, because you found Jesus to be enough, not me. God's Grace takes us out of that root of bitterness.

Stephen: [01:20:15] Thank you Mark.

Frank: [01:20:16] And can I add one thought, Stephen?

Stephen: [01:20:19] Yeah,

Frank: [01:20:20] Mark quoted a verse, and I think it's an amazing insight. He said, "Forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven you." And we're talking about this verse

where if you're bitter, you know, you're hindering the Grace of God. Well, the word for forgive in the New Testament is normally *aphieme*, but the word that is used in Ephesians four is *charizomai*, which is built on the root word of Grace. So, what he's really saying there is "grace others as God in Christ is graced you". It's a huge insight, I think.

Stephen: [01:20:59] Well said.

Armando: [01:21:00] And one more thing, if I may?

Stephen: [01:21:03] All right.

Armando: [01:21:04] I find that many believers cannot differentiate between guilt and resentment. Guilt is the result of my own sin. But resentment is the impact of the sin of another that's close to me. And I think that's a very important piece, and sometimes we don't separate those two realities.

Stephen: [01:21:40] One of the things that I bring out in discipling others particularly when it comes to this whole topic of bitterness, I believe, Frank, what you were saying in regard to that shift that takes place in the mind of letting your life follow grace life versus following flesh law is one of the greatest battles that I see in discipleship. It's that shift. So that the verse of "set your mind on things above not on things of the earth. I can put those words in that passage as well. Set your mind on Grace, not on the law that is on the Earth, because all of us know this world is ruled by law, and it is that law that becomes a tutor to lead us to Christ. Well, we can say that in this fashion, that is the law becomes a tutor to lead us to the grace life of Jesus Christ. So that was absolutely excellent. The other thing I want to point out here is in a discipleship meeting when people are talking about guilt and condemnation and so forth. What I taught people through the years is pretty simple, once you become born again and the life of Christ comes to live within you from that day forward, you need to not use the word guilt. You need to use the word conviction. The spirit continues daily all day long. It's necessary to convict us of things that are enhancing or advancing the law. Guilt is for unbelievers, that's what I my belief anyway, and conviction is for a believer, and if you really get your arms around that piece alone, what you're going to discover is this condemnation thing. And when God said through this holy word, therefore, there is no condemnation for

those who are in Christ Jesus. Well, that's a fact. Condemnation follows guilt. Condemnation does not show conviction, conviction prompts change, yielding oneself to the very mind of Christ within us. Armando, I have another question for you. Do you believe that human Grace is different than divine Grace, if so, how?

Armando: [01:24:50] I do I believe that human Grace is different because humans give gifts seldom, if ever, we truly give ourselves. But in divine Grace, again, the gift and the giver are one in the same. God gives himself. He has openly revealed Himself. And that's why many will say to him on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name, cast out demons and in your name perform many miracles. Well, yes, they did all that, but he never knew them. Why? Because they used his name for their own purposes and their own glory, and they never allowed him in, he knocked on the door, but they never opened. So, he never knew them. The creature opens up to the Creator. But if the creature doesn't open up, He won't force his way in.

Stephen: [01:26:15] Yes, there is a definite difference than using the name of Jesus to accomplish ministry versus releasing Christ within you to do the ministry. That is the proof, that is the evidence of a true born again believer. Many people in our world today are using the name of Jesus Christ to accomplish some significant things. But it boils down to the simple fact. What was that day when you received His life versus preached about it. That's what I think that person's applying to. Many people have been in ministry. They have done great things in ministry, but they have never been brought to this point of receiving. Now, I want to ask a question, either either one of you can answer this or all of you can answer this. When it comes to the whole idea of Grace. Now, I'm kind of a cultural nut specialist, so to speak, and I study every cultural movement that hits the Internet. And what I found with a lot of church goers is this issue of Grace can be applied and used by people whether they are participants of the church or if they're truly indwelt. How would you guys answer that? Is there a difference between world grace? And the Grace of Jesus Christ.

Frank: [01:28:19] Well, Stephen, I have a real concern in my own heart of hearts, if I look at the strategy of the enemy in the Corinthian letters, Paul said his goal is to blind the minds of the unbelieving. So his number one thing is to keep people from faith. Once someone comes to faith, I don't think he has a real problem with that. If they remain religious, trying to perform for God, they're really not a threat. They don't have a

lot to offer. But when someone comes to understand the new covenant, then they are a real threat. And now I think his tactic shifts. And that's this, if he can't stop. The economy of Grace from being understood through revelation and applied by faith, then what he's going to do is join the movement and try to pervert the message of Grace. And that's what I see happening today, in our modern church new covenant movement, I think we're turning the Grace of God into a message, into a doctrine. And there's no power in a message. There's no power in a doctrine. There's only power in the person of Jesus Christ. And I think in my own conviction that we're starting to proclaim a grace, apart from the cross, you know, the only way we entered into Grace, which is a person, was through the cross, through the death of Jesus, but then through revelation that we ourselves died, we died to the law, we're resurrected and now married to Jesus. So I have a great concern that we are proclaiming a very human grace message today, apart from the cross. And it's almost a... I don't want to be too strong, but a Mister Rogers grace, a grace, prosperity, gospel. True Grace is through the cross. And I don't know if we really are going to understand Grace without the cross. And I think if we don't, all we will be as men with a message or women with a word. But we won't be able to beget life.

Stephen: [01:30:58] That's that's a very, very good point, I deal with a lot of people online, I commentate for a couple of news outlets, and when we get into the topic of Grace, worldly Grace, one of the most frequent things that I run into is when we start talking about the importance of the law being a tutor to lead us to Christ. It is to lead us to the cross itself, for co-death, burial and resurrection. And I have used the terms with many to say there is a grace that is sustained by the law, then there is a grace that is not sustained by law. It's a grace that has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ that lives within the believer, and whenever I put that out in front of them, because they can argue all day long about, well, you know, the Grace of God covers me. And that's an issue to me, because the Grace of God does not cover people, if they're going to hell, they're on this mission to go to hell. The Grace of God is used so they don't; so that they can come to the cross and have true authentic Grace. And I'll be pretty blunt with most of the people I deal with online. They are absolutely clueless about where to go after that. That there is a difference of Grace of the cross and Grace that is within the world. So, I agree, Frank, there are two pathways of Grace being presented in the world today, and it's guys like us, to be honest with you. I know there's hundreds and thousands of them

around the world who can clearly communicate the authentic, real Grace of the life of Jesus Christ. Marc, Armando do have some comments.

Armando: [01:33:08] I really liked the clause that Frank just used, Economy of Grace. Grace is the economy of the kingdom of God, nothing is earned, nothing is bartered for, nothing is traded. Everything is given. And we, the indwelt believer, are the only ones that can reveal that on planet Earth because we can live out of the economy of Greece, out of the economy of our kingdom, in the midst of the cultures of men, where everything is bartered, everything is earned, everything has to be purchased. We're totally different. We're we're weird.

Stephen: [01:34:10] Mark, what about you?

Mark: [01:34:12] Yeah, I would say a couple of things. One is there is something often called common Grace where God cause he values people and his creation for those who do not have Christ, then he still gives a measure of Grace to. Then Jesus said the rain falls on the righteous and the unrighteous. So their blessing God gives to people the ability to work, earn a living and provide, some of those things that are common Grace. But that's not saving Grace. Of course, that's not the Grace that leads a person to Christ, even though it can be one thing God can use. Obviously, the Grace that leads to Jesus is the same Grace that leads us to know him as life. The other thing I'll say is, I think when we think about the body of Christ as a whole, there's a lot more people today than twenty six years ago that they really do know Christ as life, they do know the new covenant message, a whole lot more, there used to be very, very few. So sometimes people will get angry when they begin to hear it and say, why haven't I heard this before? It's right in the scripture. And they become very angry, and really angry at certain people or pastors. I understand why, I get it, but I have to tell them people can't teach what they don't know and what they haven't experienced. So I think make, we need to give Grace to those who don't know Grace yet, who really are in ministry sometimes, but also pray that God will also reveal that Grace to the greater body of Christ. Because I do think there, I think we're in a little bit, maybe bigger than I know, of a grace awakening that is gaining momentum. And no wonder things are happening like Frank described as well, where it's being perverted a little bit.

Stephen: [01:36:20] Very good. Now, this is a tough question. It comes to us from California. She asks, What is the balance between Grace and preaching of the coming judgment of God? Any one of you can answer?

Armando: [01:36:43] I think the balance is found at the cross. You want balance, you've got to look at the cross, you reject the cross, you reject the savior. So we preach in light of what has already been done. And that's the balance because that's the gospel.

Stephen: [01:37:12] Well, we do live in a culture today where not only is it not popular to talk about hell. Not only is it not popular to talk about many of the things that the Lord Jesus Christ gave to John to write down, which is what we reference as the Book of Revelation, the Book of Revelation does reveal the end times, the final times. And I know there's four primary views with people in viewing the Book of Revelation, but one thing I have come to realize in talking to theologians around the world, and that is this simple fact, most of them believe that there is going to be one thousand years of judgment, which is one day of the Lord. So, when we bounce back to our culture today, where hell is not a popular topic, and Grace is a very, very popular topic. Some have asked me, actually many have asked me, is this world's form of Grace dismissing the doorway or the window of opportunity to become born again? Is this worldly Grace so focused on the ideologies of Grace that they're missing the window of becoming born again? How would you guys respond to that?

Frank: [01:38:56] Well, I'll go first to Stephen. You know, in Proverbs, it says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So, there's nothing wrong with fear. Fear is a wonderful thing in the hands of the Holy Spirit. So, but then we know from First John for the perfect love casts out fear. So, I like to refer to fear as kindergarten, in the economy of God, and the love of God as graduate school. And, you know, I don't know if you saw Stephen, but Rob asked the question, how do we evangelize in Grace? I think the answer to that is we be led by the spirit. And we don't make evangelism a method. And what I mean then to tie that in is, when I'm dealing with somebody, the Holy Spirit might lead me to communicate the law of God, that they've broken that law, that they are guilty and condemned and they're going to stand before a holy God. By the same token, the Holy Spirit might lead me to talk to somebody and say, hey, let me show you a verse out of Romans two, "the goodness of God leads to repentance". So, sometimes it's good news the idea of fear. Sometimes it's the love of God. We want to be led by the

spirit in this. We don't ever want to form a methodology. And if I could take just one more second to share a personal experience. When I first got saved, I was on a college campus and I was very, very bold about my new faith. And so in a coed softball class, I ran out to get a ball and a girl ran in to get the ball and she had a crosse around her neck. And I said, hey, what's that around your neck? She said, It's my crucifix. I said, Oh, are you a Christian? She said, No, I'm Catholic. I said, Oh, that's too bad. And about an hour later, she tracked me down and she said, What do you mean, that's too bad? I said, Well, let's look at our Bible and I got to lead her to faith in Christ. So I said, wow, this really works. So a couple weeks later, there was a girl walking down the hall and she had a cross. And I say, what's that around your neck? She said, That's my crucifix. I said, Are you a Christian? She said, No, I'm Catholic. That's too bad. But the problem is, I never saw you until three years later. And she happened to be coming out of the prayer room of our local church. And so I said, wow, that's that girl. So I walked down there and I said, hey, you're coming out of the prayer room. What happened? She said, I just received Christ. I said, Wow, that's exciting. Do you remember me? She said, Yeah, you're one of the reasons it took three more years. So we don't ever want to make a method. We want to live by the spirit. Sometimes we should preach the judgment of God has come, and sometimes we should say, boy, look at how good God is don't you want to know Him? And just don't ever follow a method. Follow the Spirit.

Stephen: [01:42:04] Yeah, I try to remember when I'm ministering to people that are certainly giving the evidence that they are not saved is to focus on the point of where does Grace take you in the end? And where does the law take you in the end? So, I was explaining the judgment, or the revelation issue is kind of easy for me, because I understand that it is the destination that is important to God for all of humanity. So, we do have to address the law a little bit. We do have to address Grace a lot a bit, but I think every one of us who is listening knows that it was the love of God that loved us into wanting to be born again, to be filled with the life of Christ. And so, I think all of us as leaders, we need to continue to pray for leaders working around the world, who are wanting, all who are willing to listen a little bit to the gospel. And it's all about the end destination. The Bible was literally written out that way, the Old Testament was to press in with the law, the New Testament was filled with those who were freed from the law because someone fulfilled it. And the Book of Revelation has helped us to basically ignore. The Old Testament and the New Testament and the life of Christ, so judgment doesn't have to be a discussion of condemnation. It's a discussion of where you go and

what's the final point. What is the arena that you will live in for eternity? I really do believe it comes to being seasoned with Grace in everything you're doing, whether you're an evangelist or a disciple or pastor, or whatever. We have a question from Raju from India, and he asks this. And so, Mark, I'll have you take this one on? What is the relationship between Grace and forgiveness?

Mark: [01:44:35] A couple of ways to answer that one. First of all, from God, Grace and forgiveness are inseparable. God provided through his Grace and his son, Jesus Christ, full forgiveness for all who believe. So, in that sense, there is no forgiveness without Grace. It is an impossibility. So, God provides that for us through Jesus; of course, his death, and his burial resurrection proved that as well. So on the other hand, I would say that if he's talking about us forgiving someone; and I'm not sure if he is. We can't separate Grace from that either because it's the Grace of God that we've been given that lets us know we are fully forgiven past, present and future - Colossian 2:13-14, But also that Grace enables us to say what God forgave me of that much, I want to pass that on to the person who's undeserving. If we think about it, we teach people this in forgiving other people, that we did not deserve the Grace and forgiveness of God, and the person you're about to forgive. They probably haven't even asked before, but they don't deserve it either. So, you're extending Grace to them by forgiving them. And let me be clear here. You don't go to the person usually and tell them you forgive them. This is between you and the Lord, where you said, Lord, this person hurt me, this is what they did to me, because of that I'm making a choice because you forgave me. I forgive them. So we're extending Grace in that sense as well. So, there's maybe two ways of looking at depending on how the questions being asked.

Stephen: [01:46:33] Very good. Cindy from Kansas as the similar question, she asks, what is the relationship between Grace and obedience? Armando, you take that on?

Armando: [01:46:52] The relationship between Grace and obedience is because we have been born again, we have been given a new heart, is the natural disposition of the indwelt believer, we delight in obedience.

Stephen: [01:47:10] Ok, Frank, I know you want to say something,

Frank: [01:47:14] But why do we have to make this complicated? For many, many new covenant people, obedience is a bad word, you know, because it was hard done under legalism so much. But obedience is a beautiful word. I love the way Armando just put that. . It's a beautiful response of love back to God. But the only thing I would add is what that word means. The Greek word is hupakoé a compound word. You know what it means. It means to listen under. Isn't that a beautiful picture? It's not this obligation that I have to do to try to merit from God. I just listen to Him, to the voice of the spirit, calling me to go here, to go there, to not go here did not go there. It's just listen under the voice of God. And you put that in the context of John 10. It becomes so beautiful. I'm the good shepherd and my sheep hear my voice. Man isn't obedience is one of those beautiful new covenant words there is. And the religious people have made it bad. And unfortunately, Grace, people are making an anathema and we shouldn't, it's beautiful.

Stephen: [01:48:36] Now, the way I view it over the years, particularly the past year, and that is obedience is something everyone has in their functioning minute all day long. Twenty-four hours a day. Were obedience is not an issue to talk about, really. Obedience is a natural response to whom you consider your God. I can consider myself God. Or I can look to some external person as a God, or I can literally view the enemy, the father of lies as a God. We are naturally obedient. It's who are we obedient to is the issue. So I'm with you, Frank, it's kind of like why focus on the obedience thing when obedience is a natural response to whom we believe is ruling our lives. And so I'm with you, obedience is just either a forced effort to follow someone we don't really believe in that much. And let's just call it who it is, Satan, the father of lies, or as an indwelt believer, it just, it just happens. Because it's a part of our lives of giving his love right back to Him. Because he's loving on us, obviously, without conditions. Well, why wouldn't we be without conditions going the other direction?

Frank: [01:50:25] Can I add something through that statement, do you mind?

Stephen: [01:50:28] Yeah.e

Frank: [01:50:29] Another perspective, I think of obedience is a few things here you cannot separate. Grace from obedience, when you do, you enter into self-effort, determination and legalism, and that's a mistake that's been made many, many times. Another thing I'll say is we can't separate obedience from our identity in Christ, because

obedience is really an expression of who we are as sons and daughters of God. So, for example, if you read through or study, Ephesians, the first three chapters, they don't tell us anything to do. They tell us what God has done, who he is, who Christ is in us and who we are, and what we have in him. But then you get to the last three chapters, it begins with saying, you know, live in a manner worthy of the gospel. What is he saying? What is he saying, I've just told you what it was. I just told you what you have and who you are and who is in you. Now to live that out, don't disconnect from what I just told you they go together. Our union with Christ is expressed in obedience. And so we can't separate those, once we do, that's why obedience some people don't like, and that's what legalism all about. It's obedience that is really apart from our union with Christ, apart from an expression of our identity in Christ, and in Christ us.

Stephen: [01:50:29] Excellent. And this is a at the wedding feast. Good stuff. OK, I'm going to give you one of my questions. I know you guys deal with this

Stephen: [01:52:28] When were in a position. And let's go right down to the very moment where someone is rejecting us, hurting us, or whatever is happening externally to put us in the position of Gracing, this person, while they are harming us. Give me some practical solutions for that very moment, because this stuff is easy to think through when we're alone or talking with another believer who believes the same things, I'm talking about right in that moment when you are being persecuted, distressed, or you got difficulties going on, give us the practical solution.

Frank: [01:53:21] I'll begin on that one. I think. There are times when those things are happening in relationships and maybe certain cases as well, where Grace actually may mean to speak the truth back to that person in the moment, in a manner of love, not in a manner of anger and those kinds of things, but there is a grace to speak the truth back. Remember, Jesus was full of Grace and truth. He is in us, the one who is full of Grace. And so we are full of Grace and truth. So I'll begin by saying one thing that may need to happen, again, led by the spirit to speak the truth back to that person in the situation.

Stephen: [01:54:08] OK, but what if you are absolutely overwhelmed with emotion? Some old bitterness is popping up a summary of therapy. And we are in this position where we need to make a decision on what to do while we're being overwhelmed with

emotion., maybe caused by stress come life experiences. Somebody is giving me some medical advice... sounds Like Google.

Frank: [01:54:37] Yeah, well, there's always the default - Slap them in Jesus name. But actually, two things I have tried to put into my practice, and this is important. You know, the scripture talks about practicing these things. So we do have to learn how to walk by faith. I have a mantra. I don't always live by it, but it's to be a responder, not a reactor. I don't live by that all the time. But it's a good one. I want to respond to a circumstance, not react to it. The main things that I've done Stephen, is I use a quick little catch phrase: "For this I have Jesus." "For this I have Jesus." Because it instantly puts my mind into Romans five, that He is here to save me with his life. My patience is not good enough, His patience is. My mercy is not good enough, His mercy is. So that little catch phrase is for this. It gets my eyes off of that person and on to him who is Life. The second thing that I've done, which I think is really unique, that the Holy Spirit showed me, which is out of the book of Genesis. And there it says, We were made in his image. So God functions kind of like a mirror. And so it's like, am I Ok God? Well, you're made in my image, son. You're OK. Well, then I go to the fall. Who ate? Adam and Eve. What was the temptation? You'll be like God in that day. So what happened is I became my mirror. So now I look in the mirror, Am I okay? Well there's two general responses to that. Most of humanity is going to go, yuk, you're not okay, you're not okay.

Frank: [01:56:29] All right. Some of humanity looks in mirror and say wow baby, you know, they got a whole other problem. But the flip side of this is Adam is not the only one who ate Eve is. So Eve is representative of everybody else. And so now I look at them, are you my mirror, Am I okay? Well here's the glory? I got delivered from that, and so did you. And so did all of us in Christ. So when I have somebody who's attacking me like that, in my mind, I do this. I really do. I've done it many, many times. I look at them and I go, You are not my mirror anymore. I don't say that to them. But I put it in my mind. You do not determine my value. You do not determine my significance. You do not determine who I am. And it's a reminder to me that I don't have to react against them, because usually a reaction is caused by my putting too much value on what they're saying about me. And we've all been delivered from that. We've got to get our eyes back on what he is saying about us. And then that gives me the freedom to say maybe they're a tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit here, and they're pointing out something to me I need to hear, or maybe they're a tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit to

remind me they're not my mirror, God is. And so that's kind of the practical things that I've done.

Stephen: [01:57:58] Yeah, those are those are excellent points and solutions, when you're in the middle of the emotions that are overflowing, you know. Another thing that I usually tell people is: there's nothing wrong with you just weeping on the spot. I mean, there are obviously passages that are revealed to us, that Jesus stopped and he wept. He was overwhelmed with emotion. If you go into a crisis situation where you're being harmed in some way and you're in the mind set, your mind is set on heavenly things, you are going to be able to respond versus react. That's a fact. So whatever words the Holy Spirit gives you, are excellent. But if you are at that fork in the road where the emotions have completely taken over you at the moment, there's nothing wrong with stopping and weeping or stopping and just letting the person see you are overwhelmed by this rejection. But don't stay there, move beyond that, because the mind is built in such a way that once it releases its emotion, it can be communicated to again. It's hard to communicate to people when they're overcome by emotion. The spirit can do it, believe me, but God is a respecter of the way that he made us, and there's nothing wrong with revealing, of course, you can't have pride going on, or revealing that this is very harmful or it hurts; whether it's truth or whether it's a lie. And you'll discover, at least I have over 40 years of discipling people. You'll discover that you'll calm down rather quickly and the spirit will begin to move through your mind and say the right thing or walk away from this situation or whatever is needed in Grace, which is through Christ. It is a tough one. That's where the rubber hits the road with all of this stuff we know, is in that moment.

Armando: [02:00:24] it's important for us to remember that the person in front of us is not where the war is. Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities and rulers. And so...

Sister question: [02:00:50] How is physical pain incorporated into this conversation, when you're in that moment and you're in so much physical pain that you can't think straight. And you're trying to decipher what's going on in your life, and around you? How do you, how do you get the physical pain to stop overtaking those emotions?

Stephen: [02:01:21] I would like to respond to that. The body obviously is the vessel that God uses, and including the five senses, of course to set off some alarms. But in the moment when that physical pain is occurring. I always think of my persecuted brothers and sisters. I do, that's where my mind goes. Because they are at this pinnacle of physically being harmed from whether their fingernails are being pulled out or their burned at the stake. There are tons of stories through the generations. How God can I be like Stephen when they are burning me and yet being able to see a vision into heaven and keep preaching until they die? That has always been a great mystery to me. And many, many of the things that, for example, Marc was saying earlier, it is that the moment you enter into that moment with your mind set on heavenly things, you're going to be like Stephen. I'm telling you, it's a promise by God when you're in physical persecution and it doesn't mean you're going to implode. It is how you view it, and if you'll let God use it to lead you into heavenly places, so to speak, and that's what happened to Stephen. In the midst of being burned and stoned to death, he entered into heavenly places.

Sister question: [02:03:10] Well, what if, what if, the physical pain is continuous. And it's been going on for years and years because of illness? How do you, how do you wrap around that in situations when it's just completely constant, and you get a little bit of relief, but then it comes back, you get relief, it comes back. How do you how do you work that into to being able to comprehend, you know, that God loves you, but you're in this physical state of just agony. Constantly, for years and years and years and years,

Stephen: [02:03:59] That is an excellent question because there are droves of people all over the world who love Jesus and receive his precious love and Grace on a daily basis, and some people have to live in that twenty-four hours a day. I agree. And I will use my own struggles. A year ago, I was diagnosed with a degenerative nerve disease. And I can't even communicate to you the amount of physical struggles I have to go through even to join the podcast today, I was wondering if I was going to be able to make it. Well, I've got my story, you have your story, and your neighbor has her story. But the fact is, I'll tell you what I told one of my board members. As in yesterday, he asked, how in the world do you do this? How do you keep pressing forward? How do you get through this pain? Because he himself was about to go into another surgery because of his back deteriorating and causing daily twenty-four hours a day pain. And now this is going to sound so simple, but I'm telling you, it keeps me at the keyboard,

and in meetings, and in what I do every day. And I told him I immediately, when the pain shows up, I immediately shift to serving others. And soon as I start serving others, my mind just goes into heavenly things, and I get strength that I cannot define.

Sister question: [02:05:51] So helping others in any way, shape or form can help relieve that pain. I agree with you on that. One hundred percent. Thank you for that comment, I appreciate it very much.

Stephen: [02:06:07] You're very welcome. It is, I think an individual saying that God imparts his Grace to according to the circumstances that that person is in. Some people suffer from being physically and mentally abused every day. The solution is always the same set your affections on things above not things on the earth. Obviously, what they're doing to you is on the earth and it is hurting you. And there is no magical solution to getting out of the pain. But I'll tell you what, there's a miraculous solution on setting your affections on Christ. That's my experience.

Sister question: [02:06:59] Thank you.

Stephen: [02:07:00] You're welcome. Well, we are at the end of our particular. Master class, but here's what I like. Before you leave, I'm going to leave the meeting open for a few minutes before you leave, if you would like to follow up part two. Of IM Grace, let me know in your chat. Because we didn't get anywhere close to all of our questions. And I'm glad, because good healthy discussions and letting each other share from their personal lives, as well as from what they have learned in Christ Jesus, in their wal is critical because this isn't about knowledge, it's about life. So I'll be the first to raise my hand. You can even push that little button on the reaction and put a hand on your video and I can see it instantly, if you would like a part two.

Stephen: [02:08:18] Excellent. OK. I want to thank every single one of you for joining us today, and I thank those of you who sent in your questions ahead of time. Sorry we didn't get to all of them, but we will if we do this again. I haven't even asked Mark and believe Frank is already off to the airport. But I'll check with him to see, and you again, Mark, to see if you would like to do some type of follow up. And we could literally narrow down the topic a little more if we want, but I think we should consider it. So, again, I want to thank you guys for joining us. We got lots of fun things coming up, just to let you

know my objective is that will do these Masterclasses on a regular basis. In September we're going to do one on The reality of Hell. We're hoping that Jack Gibbs join us with that one, but we're going to discuss the issue of hell, because it is a cultural ignored piece of theology that a lot of people have questions about. So we'll do topics like that. And then these videos will basically be posted in an online course, so people can go and take them any time they want. Any questions or comments before we leave? OK, I've got a little video I'm going to show you before you take off. That is, if it cooperates by the Grace of God.