

WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

The Glory of Grace

TEXT: [John 7:40–52 \(ESV\)](#)

EXPLANATION

The words of Jesus brought division to his hearers. Some wondered if he really was the promised Prophet that Moses spoke of (Deut. 18:15–18); some thought he might be indeed, the Christ; and some refuted that notion affirming the Christ was not to come via Galilee. He was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea. However, this crowd was only focusing on his life in Nazareth, not his birth. Some, we read, wanted him arrested. The bottom line is that “there was a division among the people over him.”¹ Enter the chief priests and Pharisees. Perhaps they are wondering why nothing has been done about Jesus yet. Back in verse 32, we read, “The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.”²

Who were these officers or guards? They were Temple guards, instituted by God in 1 Chronicles 26. There was a strict watch over the Temple by the guards. They were composed of three priests and twenty-one Levites. They guarded the gates, the courts and the corners of the temple. So these were not highly trained military fighters. They were very attuned to things religious. They answered the chief priests and Pharisees: “No one ever spoke like this man!”³

The caustic remarks of the Pharisees were swift:

- a. They accused the guards of having been deceived.
- b. They assessed the divided crowd as being ignorant of the Law.

Interestingly Nicodemus, the night visitor of Jesus (John 3) responded to their assumption of how well they knew the Law, to show they were ignorant of the Law regarding jurisprudence. The Pharisees continued to show their ignorance of the Law by trying to slander Nicodemus, but they showed that they didn't know the Scriptures, either. There had been several prophets come from Galilee, Jonah for one.

This whole response from the chief priests and Pharisees occurred because the temple officers had failed to arrest Jesus because (in their own words) they were so impressed by what he said. “*The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!”*” (John 7:46, ESV). What did Jesus say that was so unique? “*On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”*” (John 7:37–38, ESV)

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 7:43). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 7:32). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 7:46). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

MAIN POINT

The point is: **The Gospel invitation by Jesus is like no other!**

THE STUNNING WONDER OF THE GOSPEL

But in today's passage the numbing astonishment of the Temple Guards was caused by his stunning Gospel invitation: "*Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'*" (John 7:38, ESV). Fanny Crosby wrote a hymn that is not too familiar, but the lyrics are so profound:

1 O wonderful words of the gospel!
O wonderful message they bring,
Proclaiming a blessed redemption
Thro' Jesus our Saviour and king.

Refrain:
Believe, oh, believe in His mercy
That flows like a fountain so free;
Believe, and receive the redemption
He offers to you and to me.

2 He came from the throne of His glory,
And left the bright mansions above,
The world to redeem from its bondage;
So great His compassion and love. [Refrain]

3 O come to this wonderful Saviour,
Come weary and sorrow-oppressed;
Behold on the cross how He suffered,
That you in His kingdom might rest. [Refrain]

4 There's no other refuge but Jesus,
No shelter where lost ones may fly;
And now, while He's tenderly calling:
O "turn ye," "for why will ye die?" [Refrain]

WAS IT THE GRACE?

I'm not sure what exactly it was about the words of Jesus that paralyzed the Temple Officers from arresting Jesus. It was certainly something about the uniqueness of the words. If you will allow me some liberty this morning, I think that what was stunning about this invitation was the obvious grace. Let me define grace for you in a way you may never have heard. The grace of the Gospel is that:

Everything God demands from a sinner to be reconciled to Himself; He supplies through Christ!

There is not message like it. There's not philosophy, no religion like it. This principle: that everything God demands; He gives, is a foundational principle in Christianity. It defies the common statement: *You do all you can, and God will do the rest.* It challenges the error that says, "God will meet you halfway." In the Gospel, we need everything and God, in Christ, supplies everything. **What God Demands He supplies.** It's grace. These Levitical priests and temple guards only knew one thing: What God demands we must do. The Gospel is what God demands; He has done.

I hope you are familiar with the story of Abraham and Isaac. God told Abraham to sacrifice his only son. Abraham was set to obey. In disbelief Isaac turned to his father and said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"⁴ Abraham replied, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."⁵ Then we read these words:

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."'" (Genesis 22:13–14, ESV)

That's one obvious illustration of the point. What God demands; He supplies. Look me run over a few Gospel demands:

1. God demands that we call upon Him in faith. Peter preached that at Pentecost. He said, *"And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* (Acts 2:21, ESV). Peter quoted from the prophet Joel whose full words read this way: *"And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls."* (Joel 2:32, ESV). The point is that we call upon the Lord because the Lord first calls us.
2. God demands sinners to repent. Paul preached that in Athens saying, "Now he [God] commands all people everywhere to repent."⁶ The same Paul reminds us what? "That God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?"⁷
3. God calls us to have believe in Christ, have faith in Him. We are also reminded that *"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,"* (Ephesians 2:8, ESV)
4. God calls us to obey Him so He causes us to be born-again by the living Word (1 Peter 1:23); and God says through Ezekiel, *"And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."* (Ezekiel 36:27, ESV)

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ge 22:7). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ge 22:8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ac 17:30). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ro 2:4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

5. God demands that you pursue holiness. *“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”* (Hebrews 12:14, ESV). Thankfully we can trust that *“it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”* (Philippians 2:13, ESV)

OBJECTION!

Now I hear the objection. What are we robots? Do we have no part to play? Are we just onlookers to our own Christian life? No, of course not! Listen to Paul’s testimony: *“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”* (1 Corinthians 15:10, ESV)

Or again in Galatians 2:20 (ESV), *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

Is Paul working? Is Paul living? Of course, he is. God’s grace is dynamic, it’s active; and it doesn’t produce passive saints. Grace works. *“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,”* (Titus 2:11–12, ESV). That word “training” is a *present, active verb*. God’s grace works and it creates believers who work, otherwise you don’t have grace. Working grace is serving in the power Christ gives so that He gets all the glory – and we don’t.

CONCLUSION

And we could go on. The point to remember is that there is no Gospel like the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. All that a person needs; all that is required of you, is supplied by our Savior and Lord. No wonder the guards looked upon Jesus and said, *“No one ever spoke like this man!”*⁸

What did this Man say? *If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”* (John 7:37–38, ESV). That’s grace. That’s the Gospel. There is nothing like it anywhere. Why would anyone reject such an offer?

⁸ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Jn 7:46). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.