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The Desperate Need of the Church Today

By

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Our Need

What is the desperate need of the Church today? I use the word desperate because that's what it has become. We the Church, the Body of Christ, are in great need. Believers of the 1st Century turned their world upside down. What are believers of the 21st Century doing to their world?

Look carefully at these verses. What do you see?

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14

“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or war? ... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” Romans 8:35

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... that He would grant you, according

to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:14-19

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Ephesians 5:18-21

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Ephesians 6:10-12

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,

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among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.” Philippians 2:14-16

“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly loved ... Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” Philippians 4:1, 4

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” Philippians 3:10

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” Philippians 4:8-9

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all

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might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.” Colossians 1:9-11

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” 1 Timothy 6:11-12

“God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7

“Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus ... Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” 2 Timothy 2:1,3

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

“Flee youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” 2 Timothy 2:2

“I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” 2 Timothy 4:6-7

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath

appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:11-13

“We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our body.” 2 Corinthians 4:5-10

“But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceiver, and yet true; as unknown,

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and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” 2 Corinthians 6:4-10

“Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 3:8-9

What I read in all these verses is PASSION and LOVE fueled by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit - Passion and Love for God, Passion and Love for Knowledge, Passion and Love for Ministry, Passion and Love for People, Passion and Love for Righteousness.

What I read in all these verses is COMMITMENT – Commitment to God, Commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Commitment to the Word of God, Commitment to Reaching Lost People for Christ.

The desperate need of the Church today is Christians filled with passion and love for God and a deep commitment to God. We have a great challenge ahead of us. We will need passion, love, commitment and God’s Power to accomplish the great goals God has planned for us.

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Our Responsibility

Is there anything else we need? Yes! We need to understand that God's Grace has made us free from the bondage of sin to serve Him freely and powerfully. We need to become **servants of righteousness**.

"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Romans 6:15-18

Paul uses an excellent technique to emphasize and drive home his point -- "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." This question is similar to the one Paul posed in verses 1 & 2 of chapter 6: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid."

Sin no longer dominates us. We are free from the requirements of the Law. We can choose to do whatever we want. But should we choose sin? No!

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"shall we sin" -- notice this is slightly different than verse 1. The question there is "shall we continue in sin." Verse 1 deals with sin as a habit, a continual lifestyle of sin. Paul says we shouldn't continue in sin. Verse 15 is aorist subjunctive -- it refers to a single act. Can't we just commit a single act of sin since we're not under law, but under grace? "May it not be!" "Away with the thought!" "By no means!"

Verse 16: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" The NIV reads: "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?"

Paul is again dealing with our "position." As believers, we have changed masters. Christ lives "in" us. We belong to Him.

The word "servants" means "slaves." It is the most abject and servile term for a slave in the Greek language. It carries the idea of "one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another." The will of Satan is that sinners sin and continue to sin. That leads to death. God's Will is that sinners obey Him and continue to obey. That obedience leads to righteousness.

Verse 17: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants [slaves] of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."

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Literal - "But thanks to God that you were slaves of sin, but out of the heart you obeyed a form of teaching to which you were delivered."

Paul taught that believers obeyed "a form" of teaching. The word "form" in the Greek is "the representation or pattern" of anything. It is a mold or frame. The Greeks used the term for a frame or cast into which molten material was poured so as to protect its shape. Keep that picture in your mind. "...which was delivered to you" should be "to which you were delivered." Paul's teaching, his doctrine of the Gospel of God's Grace, is the frame or mold. We were delivered into it. We fit the mold, not the other way around.

What is the outcome of this obedience? Verse 18: "Being then made free from sin, you become the servants of righteousness." The NIV reads: "You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness." The literal is: "having been freed from sin you were enslaved to righteousness."

Paul presents our position in "black and white" terms. There is no gray area. We were slaves to sin. Christ died, rose and freed us from sin. The word "free" means "liberated." We were liberated from sin! It's like someone who is under a death sentence and receives a last-minute pardon to go free from prison. We are free from sin! We used to live under a sentence of death. Now we are alive in Christ and are servants of righteousness.

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What about our personal behavior? "Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? Away with the thought!"

"I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from things wherof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:19-23

"I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh." What Paul is saying is that he's putting things in human terms. It's almost an apology for using such human language for high spiritual truths, but he did it because of the frailties or weakness of the natural self.

"...for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

"Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness and holiness." NIV

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Paul gives us further background into the way things used to be: "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." We were free of its control in our lives. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death." What good did all that sinning do for us? Now we're ashamed of our former behavior. All the stuff that used to be so important is now nothing. In fact, our former behavior is an embarrassment to us! Those things resulted in death.

Things are different now. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Paul already told us we are servants of righteousness. The fruit of our service leads to holiness, sanctification, and the end for us is not an end at all-- it is eternal life!

Paul summarizes his points in a powerful and memorable way. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Sin pays its workers. The wages are "death." Sin leads only to death. God, however, does not pay a wage to workers. He gives a "gift" to those who will receive it; to those who will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. His gift to them is eternal life.

God's Gift is a Gift of Grace. We don't work for it. We don't earn it. We don't deserve it. We receive it as a free gift from God. It is the Gift of Eternal Life. It is our Salvation. It is our

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Hope.

If you have received God's Gift of Grace, rejoice! Enjoy it every day.

If you have not received God's Gift of Grace, do it now. There's no need to wait any longer. Life doesn't get better without it. We only get closer to death. When we receive God's Gift through Jesus Christ, we receive eternal life.

Pray a prayer similar to this now if you want to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

"God, I know you love me because you said so in your Word. I know I am a sinner and I agree with You that sin leads to death. God, I believe in you and I believe in your Son Jesus Christ. I believe He died for me, was buried for me, and rose from the grave for me. I believe in His power to save me and give me eternal life. Right now, I place my faith and trust in Him. I know that by believing in Christ I have eternal life. I know that you have forgiven my sins. I know I will be with you forever. Thank you. In Jesus Name. Amen."

If you prayed that prayer, please contact me at mmcgee@gmaf.org. I would love to tell you more about real life in Jesus Christ.

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