

The
BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

March 2026



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This month's cover features Khao Lak Light Beacon, Phang Nga Province, Thailand.

The **Purpose** of the *Berean Bible Society* is to help you understand, enjoy, and apply the Bible. The **Mission** of BBS is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ by proclaiming the whole counsel of God according to the revelation of the Mystery. Our **Goals** are to evangelize the lost, to educate the saved in "rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), to energize the transformation of the Christian life, and to encourage the local church.

BBS is a faith-based ministry dependent on the gifts of God's people.
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A Note from the President



Dear Friends in Christ,

People often ask me if I pastor a local church. They ask because, if I did, they might watch a livestream on Sunday mornings or visit the church sometime. In the past, for over 10 years I served as a pastor at a local church, while also working full-time at *Berean Bible Society*. However, when I was called to be President of BBS, I stepped down from my pulpit ministry.

The responsibilities involved in leading BBS make it nearly impossible for me to pastor a local church as well. Every week, my schedule is full of deadlines. I prepare and record four episodes of *Transformed by Grace* every month. I also review four to five recordings before they are finalized and sent to the television network. In my role as editor, I write articles for the *Berean Searchlight* and oversee its content, layout, and design each month. In addition to these priorities, I have speaking engagements, correspondence, administrative duties, board meetings, and the creating and writing of new materials.

Others ask if *Berean Bible Society* is a church and if it has worship services. *Berean Bible Society* is not a local church; it is a literature ministry that publishes a monthly magazine and books, booklets, charts, and tracts to help people to understand, enjoy, and apply the Bible. BBS is a para-church organization that supports the ministry of the local church through printed Bible study materials, videos, guest speaking engagements, and advertising.

Something that can make people think that BBS might be a church is that next door to BBS, there's a church called *Berean Family Worship Center!* Naturally, many think the church is affiliated with BBS in some way, but that's far from the case: it is a Pentecostal church.

While BBS is not a church, for many stranded grace believers without a grace church nearby, we are their lifeline. Through our magazine, literature, and videos, we minister to individual grace believers throughout the USA. Some viewers of *Transformed by Grace* have even told me that they consider me their pastor, for which I am very grateful.

Grace and Peace,
 Pastor Kevin J. Sadler



Pastor Kevin J. Sadler has been serving as president since 2016. He appears on *Transformed by Grace*, a daily television program that airs nationally. In addition, he is the editor of the *Berean Searchlight*, authors grace literature, and is a Bible conference speaker.



ARE YOU GAMBLING *with* ETERNITY?

There are so many ways to gamble these days! Casinos seem to be everywhere. People gamble on sporting events, at racetracks, and in state lotteries. But even if you have never placed a bet, if you are not saved, you are gambling with eternity.

I wonder if at some time in your life you've sung that most beloved of all Christian hymns, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." You may have sung the song, but are you saved? We call the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior; well, the purpose of a Savior is to save people! Has He saved you?

The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Now, if you are wondering what it is specifically that you have to believe about Christ to be saved, the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians,

"...I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you...By which also ye are saved...how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day..." (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

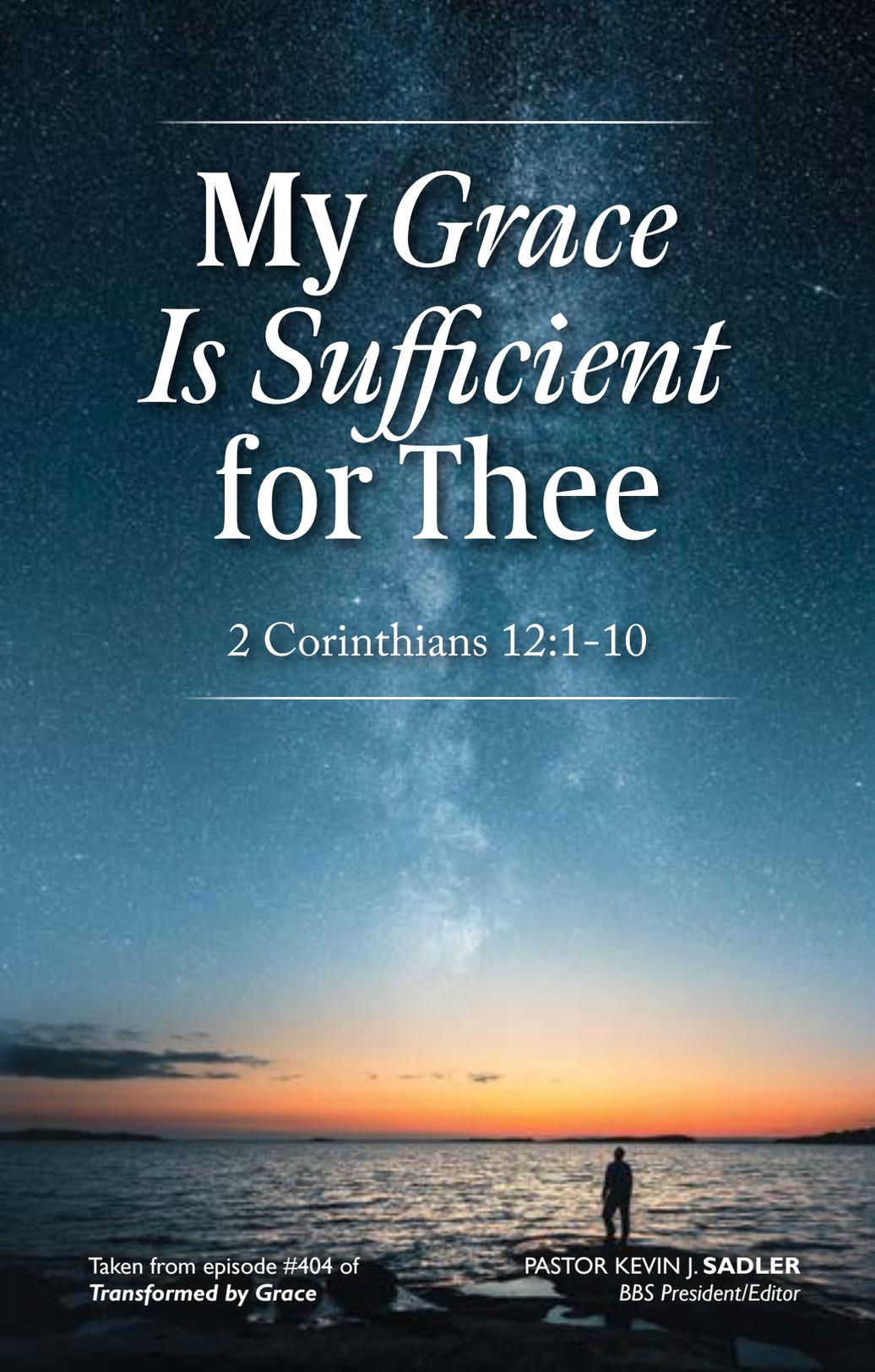
Here, the Bible clearly says that the way to be saved from your sins is to believe that Christ died to pay for your sins. So, the only question now is, do you believe God when He says your sins are paid for? Do you trust Him when He says that? If you do, the Bible says that you are saved!

If you are not sure what I'm trying to say, suppose for a moment that you have a serious gambling problem, and that you have racked up a million dollars in gambling debts. One day, some dangerous men threaten to kill you unless you pay your debt. Naturally, you are very afraid, because you don't have the money. But just then, a friend emails you to say, "I heard about your problem, and I paid your debt."

Now you must ask yourself, "Do I really trust him when he says my debt is paid?" If you don't believe him, you'll have to keep trying to pay your debt on your own. But if you do trust your friend when he says he paid your debt, you'll thank him for it, and simply rest in what he did for you.

That's all God asks of you to be saved from your sins. Believe that Christ paid for your sins, and rest in what He did for you. If you'll do that, the Bible says you are saved.

—*Pastor Ricky Kurth*



My Grace Is Sufficient for Thee

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Taken from episode #404 of
Transformed by Grace

PASTOR KEVIN J. SADLER
BBS President/Editor

“I KNEW A MAN”

“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:1-2).

In this context, Paul is affirming and defending his apostleship. In doing so, he recognized that “to glory,” or boast, was necessary to defend his office, but he stressed that it was not “expedient” or profitable. Paul found it distasteful, but he had no choice and was forced to do it.

Thus, he told them, “I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.” Visions are seen, and revelations are heard. Through visions, Paul, as an apostle, received direct revelation from the Lord. “Revelations” refers to an unveiling of truth from God. Paul had direct encounters with the Lord in which he saw and heard Him and learned things he did not know before. When Paul was saved on the road to Damascus, the Lord told him, “But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16).

The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Paul many times over the course of his ministry to make known to Paul “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25). The mystery is the body of grace truth; it is the faith that God revealed for the current dispensation of grace. This was revealed to Paul *first*.

The mystery had been kept secret since the world began; to make this previously hidden truth known, the Lord appeared to Paul to reveal it to him. However, the mystery was not made known to Paul all at once. It was gradually unfolded to him through a series of revelations.



Twenty years into his ministry, when he wrote 2 Corinthians, Paul was still receiving visions and revelations from the Lord and was expecting more.

PAUL'S SPECTACULAR VISION

“And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

“How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard

unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

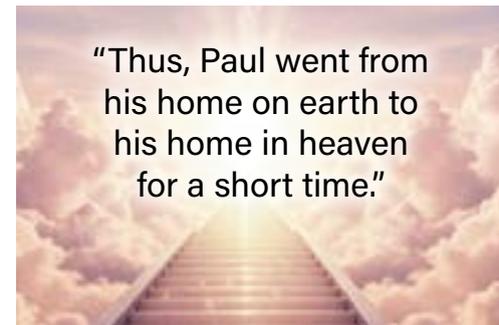
“Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities” (2 Cor. 12:3-5).

Speaking of visions and revelations, Paul elaborated on the most spectacular one of them all in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. When Paul wrote of this vision, he switched to the third person to describe it because of his reluctance to boast about himself and his ministry. He did everything he could to relate the experience while taking the focus off himself.

Paul wrote, “I knew a man in Christ.” The “man,” of course, was Paul himself, and he added his blessed position and eternal identity: being “in Christ.” This encounter occurred 14 years before he wrote 2 Corinthians. This means it took place between Paul’s conversion and his first apostolic journey. More specifically, it occurred during Paul’s years of ministry in and around his hometown of Tarsus (Acts 9:30). Thus, Paul went from his home on earth to his home in heaven for a short time. Paul had kept quiet about this experience for 14 years, and only then did he humbly and reluctantly mention it to defend his apostolic credentials.

Paul wrote of this experience, “(whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;).” Paul did not know whether

the Lord had transported him physically in his body, or if his experience had been out of the body, as a strictly spiritual experience. Paul said that only God knew for certain.



Whether in the body or out of the body, Paul wrote, “such an one [was] caught up to the third heaven.” That Paul was caught *up* to the “third heaven” tells us that he was taken to the abode of God Himself. The third heaven is where God’s throne room resides (Rev. 4:1-2). It is where the Lord ascended to and is where He is exalted at the right hand of God the Father (Col. 3:1). The third heaven is the place where believers who have died under grace are present and at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

Paul reiterated in 2 Corinthians 12:3, “And I knew such a man” and, for emphasis, affirmed for a second time, “(whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;).” Paul was undoubtedly overwhelmed by this heavenly experience, and, by way of his repetition, he reinforces

the fact that he truly did not understand the mechanics of how it occurred.

However, what Paul did know for sure was “that he was caught up into paradise.” The third heaven and paradise are the same place and synonymous here. Paradise in the third heaven above, however, was not the same location that the Lord and the believing thief on the cross went to when they died. When Christ told that thief, “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23:43), this referred to Abraham’s bosom in the center of the earth (16:22). Our Lord spent three days and three nights in the heart of the earth before He rose from the grave (Matt. 12:40).

Paul was “caught up,” and taken to the third heaven. The vision was all of God and something He chose to grant and do for Paul. God chose to declare to Paul the Church’s eternal position in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3; 2:6-7), and so God chose that Paul be caught up to those heavenly places for a time.

Paul wrote of what he had heard while he was there, not what he had seen. Concerning what he heard, Paul gave a vague description, stating that he “heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” Paul heard the language of the third heaven, and he understood what was spoken. “Unspeakable” means

inexpressible or unspeakable on account of its sacredness. The words Paul heard were too sacred to be repeated. They were ineffable or too great and holy to be expressed in the common words of our earthly languages.

In 2 Corinthians 12:5, Paul, again in deference and humility, wrote, “Of such an one will I glory,” or on behalf of such a person and his experience, he would boast—while it was, in fact, Paul himself, writing of the experience impersonally, as if it had occurred to some other man he knew. Paul spoke for that man and boasted that he had something to boast about: that God had given him such a privilege and experience. “Yet of myself,” or when Paul did speak of himself, he would not boast of himself or glory in his accomplishments, but rather he would boast “in mine infirmities.” Paul then explained what he meant by that.

CHRIST’S SUFFICIENT GRACE

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

“And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly

therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

Paul was not immune to the danger of pride. He could have been “exalted above measure” due to the numerous appearances and abundance of revelations given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly he could have easily been prideful due to the spectacular vision of the third heaven that he described and experienced in verses 2-4.

However, Paul was in no danger of becoming too impressed with himself due to a thorn in his flesh that was given to him, which reminded him of his limitations and kept him humble and grounded. The word “thorn” means a sharp stake, a pointed piece of wood, or a splinter. A sharp “thorn

in the flesh was. All we can say for sure is that it was a painful affliction in Paul’s life. God has not revealed the precise nature of it, perhaps so that all afflicted believers throughout this age and in all places, who themselves have their own thorn in the flesh, may be encouraged and helped by Paul’s unnamed, yet painful experience. Thus, it is a good thing that we do not know, because no matter what our sufferings may be, we can apply the lessons Paul learned from his thorn and find the same comfort.

Paul regarded his thorn in the flesh as “the messenger of Satan” that was designed by the devil to “buffet” him. The Greek word translated as “buffet” means to strike with the fist or, more generally, to batter or maltreat violently. Paul’s thorn



in the flesh” is painful. Paul is referring to a constant, painful physical affliction with this word picture.

What was Paul’s thorn in the flesh? It has been much debated, but it is impossible to say dogmatically what the thorn

was painful and caused suffering; it was a tool of Satan to discourage and frustrate Paul.

There is a stark contrast between two of Paul’s experiences in this chapter: from paradise to pain. He experienced the blessing of God in the third

heaven and then felt the buffeting of Satan on earth.

Satan's design for the thorn of the flesh was to hinder Paul in the work of the Lord, but the Lord used it to further that work by keeping Paul humble and causing him to rely on the Lord and His grace.

Due to the pain and discouragement from his thorn in the flesh, Paul wrote, "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me" (v. 8). "Besought" means to beg or implore or entreat. In the intensity and constancy of his suffering, Paul drew near to the Lord, and three times Paul passionately prayed and begged the Lord to remove the thorn in the flesh.

This passage demonstrates that, with His change of dispensations, there was a change in God's will and promises regarding prayer. Thus, what happened next was not, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22). To Paul's first prayer, no answer came. To his second prayer, no answer came. To his third prayer, the Lord "said unto me,

My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). The Lord answered Paul's prayer in a way that he did not expect. The Lord answered Paul's prayer, but denied his request.

The Lord had a higher purpose for Paul's thorn of affliction: to teach the apostle dependence on the Lord and the sufficiency of His grace. The thorn had driven Paul to recognize his insufficiency and weakness. In Paul's state of suffering and inadequacy, the Lord promised that His grace was sufficient for Paul's insufficiency because the Lord's strength would be made perfect in Paul's weakness. Instead of removing the thorn from Paul's life, the Lord would give and keep giving His grace in it, and the grace that He gave Paul was sufficient to meet his needs. Rather than removing the burden as Paul has prayed and pleaded for, the Lord said that He would continually give Paul the grace to bear it.

"My grace is sufficient for thee." This is the grace of God, a grace that comes in infinite and endless supply. It is a grace

that is more than sufficient to meet our needs. God's grace is a dynamic force. It is God's love, kindness, and mercy in action. It is the power of God available to each believer. It is God's provision for our every need.

"My grace is sufficient for thee." Always in the present, God's grace is sufficient and available to provide and strengthen us in our need. It is not that His grace was sufficient. It is not that His grace will be sufficient one day down the road. It is right now, at this moment, at all times, in the present, His grace is sufficient. It is always available. It is always enough.

"My grace is sufficient for thee." God's grace was more than adequate and fully sufficient to meet Paul's needs. In dealing with our own thorn in the flesh, God's grace is sufficient to hold us up, strengthen us, comfort and encourage us, bring us through any out of any and every type of trial and difficulty, and enable us in the end to triumph over it.

"My grace is sufficient for thee." It was sufficient "for thee"—Paul—a member of the Church, the Body of Christ, who had a thorn of affliction. This promise of Christ to one member of the Body of Christ is true for every member. This promise made to one believer who had a thorn in the flesh is true for every believer who has any type of thorn. The "thee" means you. God's grace is sufficient for you!

In your pain, suffering, and anxiousness, with your personal thorn, Christ is saying the same thing to you today: "My grace is sufficient for thee."



The Lord told Paul, "for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Like Paul, when believers find themselves without strength, and we look to the Lord in faith for His aid, He faithfully provides His all-sufficient grace for His strength to be made perfect in our weakness.

The Lord wanted to display His grace and power in Paul's life and ministry (1 Cor. 15:10). Through His almighty strength alone, the Lord wanted to make Paul truly strong. However, in order for the Lord's strength to be received and worked in and through Paul, pride and self-confidence needed to be worked out of his life. This took place through Paul's thorn in the flesh, which brought him to a humble place of weakness and helplessness. When Paul turned to the Lord in faith, this allowed His strength to be made perfect in Paul's weakness.



WHAT IT ALL MEANS TO US NOW

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor. 12:10).

Sorrow, physical pain and suffering, disappointments, and failure all can bring the believer to that place of weakness and dependence on the Lord. But when we look to the Lord and depend on Him, we become a channel through which God’s power can flow freely and be perfected in us.

We are called to live by God’s grace through faith. Spiritual maturity comes through an acknowledgment of our weakness and our constant need of the Lord. The more we recognize our weakness and trust the Lord, the more God’s grace and divine power work through us.

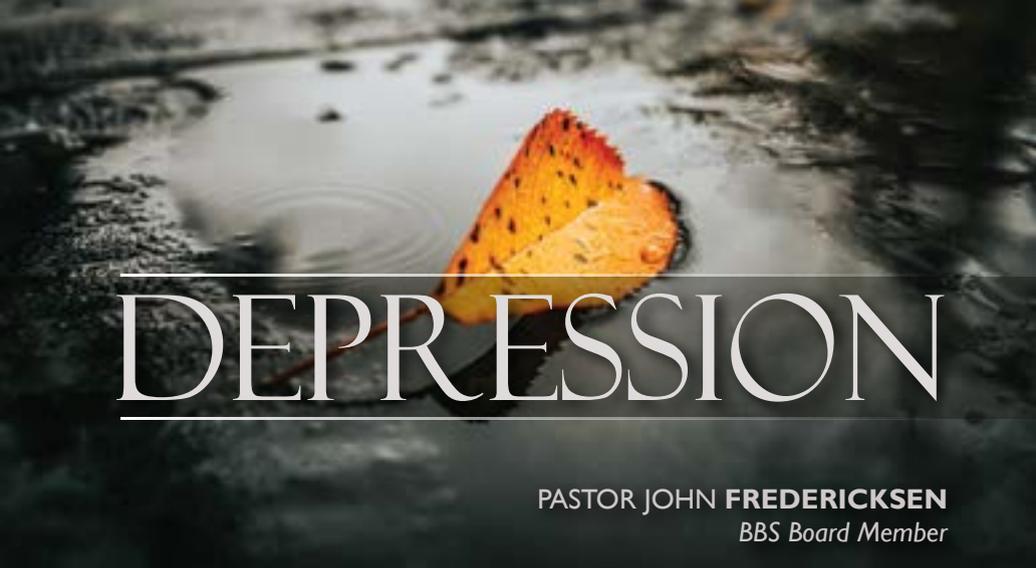
As a result of all that happened in his life, Paul gained a new perspective. He saw and experienced the blessing of the Lord’s answer. He rejoiced that God had brought him to a place in his life to rely on the Lord’s grace and to see it at work. Thus, with conviction, Paul wrote, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor. 12:9).

So thoroughly had Paul learned this concept that, rather than boasting in his accomplishments as an apostle, he boasted in his infirmities (vv. 5,9). And he had come to “take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake” (v. 10). Paul did so because he knew that when he was “weak” in those times, the Lord, by His grace, would provide the power that Paul needed, making him truly “strong.” 

“There is no perfect life, no perfect job,
no perfect childhood, no perfect marriage
and no perfect set of people who will
always do what we expect them to do.

“What we have is a PERFECT GOD,
Who is able to lead us through this
imperfect life with unfailing strength,
incomparable wisdom and infinite love.”

—Elisabeth Elliot



DEPRESSION

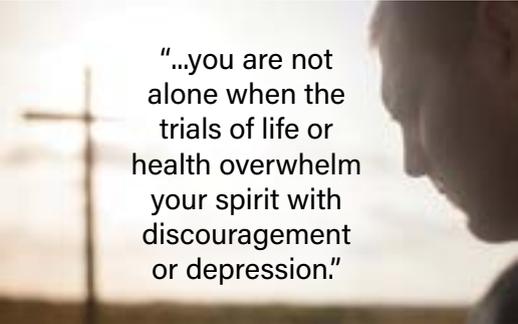
PASTOR JOHN FREDERICKSEN
BBS Board Member

Let’s begin by saying, **YOU ARE NOT ALONE** when depression overwhelms you. It is a very common human emotion for both the unsaved and the saved. “The World Health Organization named depression as the second most common cause of disability worldwide after cardiovascular disease....In the United States, 5 to 10 percent of adults currently are experiencing the symptoms of major depression...and up to 25 percent meet the diagnostic criteria during their lifetime, making it one of the most common conditions treated by physicians.”¹

Christians are not exempt from depression either. The godly man Job became so worn down and depressed because of his prolonged physical pain that he cried out, “Let the day perish wherein I was born...” (3:3), “my soul is weary of my life...” (10:1). Elijah said, “It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers” (1 Kings 19:4). David wrote, “Why art thou cast down O my soul?” (Psa. 42:5) and said, “...my spirit was overwhelmed within me...” (Psa. 142:3). Even the Apostle Paul wrote that he “despaired even of life” (2 Cor. 1:8) and admitted that he and his coworkers had times when “we be beside ourselves” (2 Cor. 5:13). Believers are not immune to depression, even the depths of it.

The Scriptures reveal that depression can come from a number of sources. Solomon learned that “time and chance happeneth to them all” (Eccl. 9:11). One might put into this category a propensity to disease due to our genetics or accidents. For Cain, depression began with a sinful choice and the loss of close fellowship with God. For Moses, depression came from being overwhelmed with

too heavy a workload. For Job, it began with extreme physical stress. For Jonah, depression resulted from disobedience to the Lord and not getting his way. For Paul, it originated from sinful individuals attacking God's children. For Timothy, his fear and depression seem to have been magnified by not availing himself of the medical advantages available to him. Any one of these above sources, or a combination of them, can drag a Christian down into depression.



"...you are not alone when the trials of life or health overwhelm your spirit with discouragement or depression."

But we must also not forget that Satan seeks to defeat us. Both Peter and Paul warn about our adversary, the Devil. He is "as a roaring lion, [who] walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8 cf. Eph. 6:11). So, it should be no surprise to believers that Satan opposes our walk with the Lord. "We are

not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11). He uses our flesh to lure us into sin or self-reliance, and he uses the flesh of others to thwart us. As in the case of Job, he can send illness or dire circumstances.

When the trials of life or health overwhelm your spirit with discouragement or depression, it does NOT mean you are not saved or are less a Christian than anyone else. It means you are human, and in need of God's divine comfort and strength. We can learn from other saints who struggled with depression. The Apostle Paul learned the Lord does not spare us from having trials because He intends to use them as a growing experience. For Paul, his physical ailments caused him to rely on the strength of God's grace rather than his own strength (2 Cor. 12:9-10). Other times, his trials were allowed to draw him closer to "the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3), or to learn "we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead" (1:9).

It is noteworthy how tenderly and patiently God dealt with Job, David, Moses, Elijah, and the Apostle Paul. It is also important to see how these believers responded while in the midst of depression. Job continued to love and trust the Lord saying, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15). He also continued to spend quality time in God's Word for nourishment and comfort for his soul (23:10-12). Moses accepted the help of others (Num. 11:14-17,24-25). The Lord dealt softly with Elijah, encouraging him to eat, and sleep, assuring him that others were still being faithful, and telling him to get back to work for the Lord (1 Kings 19:5-8,15-19).

Paul accepted his circumstances, trusting the Lord to carry him through (2 Cor. 12:7-10). We conclude that Timothy heeded Paul's advice to use what amounted to medicine to help ease his symptoms (1 Tim. 5:23). We should also remember that God promises us His peace when we continue to take our burdens to Him (Phil. 4:6-7).

The point is to take comfort in the truth that you are not alone when the trials of life or health overwhelm your spirit with discouragement or depression. Trust in Him, pray often, accept help, avail yourself of rest, nourishment, and medicines. All the while, lean hard on the Lord.

1. Don G. Blazer, "The Depression Epidemic," Christianity Today, (3-6-09).



Amazing Creation



The Snowshoe Rabbit

Snowshoe rabbits weigh approximately 4 1/2 pounds and are about 16 inches long. God has made them so that each winter their coats turn white so that they blend in with the snow for protection.

As the days get shorter and winter approaches, the white hairs grow first on their feet, then their ears turn white, followed by the sides of the nose, the head, and the rest of their body. God made them change like this because it wouldn't be good for them to turn solid white all at once, during the time of year when the ground is not completely covered with snow yet.

Snowshoe rabbits turn half white and half brown, just like their surroundings, when the bare ground still shows along with patches of snow. By the time the shortest day of the year arrives, they are all white, except for the little black tips of their ears and tail, which never change color.



The black hairs on the snowshoe rabbit's ears and tail serve an important purpose; they are a *decoy*. God put them there to draw attention away from the rabbit's body and, as a result, it saves the rabbit's life many times.

The snowshoe rabbit is again quite a proof for the fact that an all-knowing and all-wise God created all things!

*“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 Saviour Jesus Christ;

“Who gave Himself for us,
that He might redeem us from all iniquity,
and purify unto Himself a peculiar people,
zealous of good works.”

—Titus 2:11-14—

That I May **KNOW HIM**

PASTOR GREGG **BING**
Guest Writer

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

Paul mentions three areas in which he desires to know Christ: the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, and conformance to His death. Each of these areas deals with an aspect of the earthly life of Christ: His resurrection, His sufferings, and His death. But notice that these are not in chronological order. You would expect to find them listed as: His sufferings, His death, and His resurrection. Why the different order?

One reason is that Paul is not just referring to knowledge of the facts concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. You typically learn the facts of Christ’s life in chronological order. This is the basic order given in the gospel accounts. It is important for

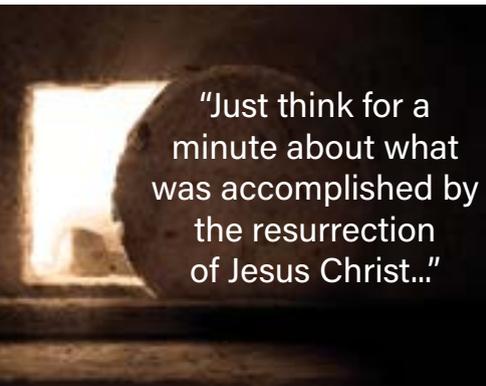
us to know the facts about the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, but Paul’s desire to know Christ goes far beyond the facts.

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

The first thing the believer must experience is the power of Christ’s resurrection. “Christ... is our life” (Col. 3:4). Because He lives, we can live. His resurrection is the basis for our life.

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:17-22).

Just think for a minute about what was accomplished by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; death was conquered (Rom. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:20-26), sin was conquered (Rom. 6:5-14; 8:1-2), and Satan was conquered (Heb. 2:14) for all eternity. Think of the tremendous power that was required to accomplish this. How can we experience this power?



In Romans chapter 8, we are taught that the Holy Spirit of God dwells in all those who have trusted Christ as Savior (v. 9). This passage goes on to say that this is “the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead” (v. 11). What a tremendous statement this is! What a wonderful truth to know and experience; that the Holy Spirit of God, Who raised Jesus Christ from the dead, dwells within the heart of every believer.

The word “power” (Phil. 3:10) speaks of the inherent power that is present within us in the person of the Holy Spirit. Just

think what potential we have to work for the Lord, not in our own strength, but in the strength of the Holy Spirit. Once again, look at the tremendous power put forth at the resurrection of Christ. He was raised from the dead. He was seated at the right hand of the Father in the heavenlies. He was given a position far above all principalities, powers, might, dominions, and names, both in this age and in the ages to come. He was exalted to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body. In Christ dwells all the fulness of God and He is able to fill completely all those who trust in Him (Col. 2:9-10).

Ephesians chapter 3, verse 20 exalts the One Who “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” God’s power is able to do far beyond anything we could ask or even think of. But the amazing thing is that this very same power works in us!

To truly come to know Jesus Christ, we must first experience the power of His resurrection working in and through us. This means that the Holy Spirit of God must have control of our lives. Christ was not raised from the dead by the efforts of the flesh. He was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. To truly experience the power of His resurrection, we must allow the One Who is able, to work through us.

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:12-13).

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25).

THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS

While He was here on earth, the Lord Jesus Christ endured untold sufferings. He was beaten, spit upon, crowned with thorns, pierced with a sword in the side, and nailed to a cross. He was mocked, scorned, and rejected by the very ones He had created (John 1:10-11). Ultimately, on the Cross of Calvary, He bore in His own body the sins of the entire world (1 Pet. 2:24) and was forsaken by His own Father (Matt. 27:46).



Paul desires to know Christ in the “fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil. 3:10). The Greek word translated “fellowship” is *koinonia*, which means to have in common or to share. Paul desired to share in the sufferings of Christ.

But how is this possible? We are told in Philippians 1:29,

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

The apostles of Jesus, including the Apostle Paul, experienced tremendous sufferings. These faithful men experienced hunger, pain, beatings, stonings, imprisonments, ridicule, rejection from their own people, and eventually, for most of them, execution.

This verse does not say that all believers will suffer persecution, but that all believers who live godly lives in the power of Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. We may not suffer as the apostles did. For instance, we may not be put in prison, and we may not be beaten, and we may not be put to death, but we will be persecuted.

One of the most difficult forms of persecution is being rejected by other people. All of us want to be liked and accepted, yet we must not let this natural desire detract from our testimony for the Lord. Timothy must have been, by nature, a timid person. This is probably why Paul was led to remind him of the Spirit that God had given him.

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou

partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim. 1:7-8).

God has not given us a timid, fearful spirit, but a spirit of great power, and of love, and of a sound mind. We are to take a stand for the testimony of our Lord and for the truth of the mystery committed to the Apostle Paul. We are to be partakers of the affliction that is sure to come to those who take a stand for the gospel of the grace of God. We can't do this according to our own power. We must do it according to the power of God that dwells within us. Do you begin to see why Paul's desire to know Christ started with the power of His resurrection? We cannot share in His sufferings unless we are relying upon His power.

From a human standpoint, we are often drawn closest to other people when we share a common experience of pain or sorrow, such as the loss of a loved one, or sharing a common illness or injury. Even so, our relationship with the Lord Jesus becomes closer and more intimate when we share in His sufferings. Let's respond as the apostles did and rejoice when

we are given opportunities to suffer for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

BECOMING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH

The final area that Paul desires to know Christ in is “being made conformable unto His death” (Phil. 3:10). This expression refers not to a one-time occurrence, but to a continuing process. The Greek is in the passive participle form of the verb here, so that it really carries the idea of “becoming conformed to His death.” What does it mean for a believer to be conformed to the death of Christ? The answer to this question is found in Romans chapter 6.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (vv. 3-4).

The word “baptized” comes from a Greek word which means to dip or dip under. A good illustration is dipping a piece of cloth into a dye. The primary

idea conveyed by this word is identification. For example, in the case of the cloth, it becomes identified with the dye by taking on its color. Here in Romans 6, we see that all believers in Jesus Christ are identified with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. God sees us “in Christ.” When Christ died, we died. When Christ was buried, we were buried. When Christ was raised from the dead, we were raised unto a newness of life. We read further in verses 6 and 7 that,

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

The victory over sin in our daily lives has already been accomplished for us at the Cross of Calvary. When Christ died on the cross, He not only died for our sins, but He also died to sin. Our old sinful nature was crucified with Him, and as a result, we are no longer slaves to sin. We have been freed from sin. This does not mean that we are sinlessly perfect after we are saved. It simply means that Christ has made it possible for us to have the victory over sin when we put our complete trust in Him and Him alone. He goes on to explain what our part is in verses 11 to 13,

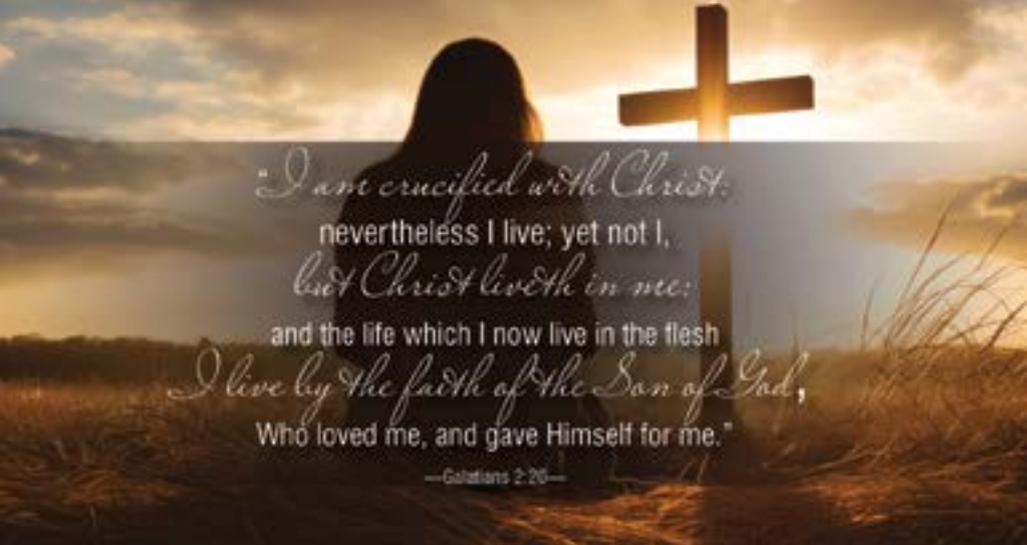
“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

If we are to have the victory over sin, we must “reckon” ourselves to have died unto sin with Christ. This means we must *count as true* what God has said in the first ten verses of this chapter. We have died with Christ. Our old nature was crucified with Him as well. As a result, we are no longer slaves to sin. We have been raised unto a new life in Christ. We have a choice. We can allow ourselves to be controlled by our old sin nature, or we can allow ourselves to be controlled by God. We choose by yielding or presenting ourselves to one or the other.

When we trust in Jesus Christ as Savior, we receive a new spiritual nature (Eph. 4:22-24). This nature is Christ dwelling within us in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Our old nature, however, does not change, nor does it go away once we are saved. It is just as sinful, just as selfish, and just as much a follower of Satan as it ever was (Eph. 2:1-3). But, as we have already seen, our identification with Christ in His death on the Cross has freed us from the power of sin.





You may ask, “Then why do I still find myself being a slave to sin?” The reason for this is described in Romans chapter 7, verses 15-25. This passage describes the struggle that a believer goes through when he tries to live for Christ in the power of his old nature. The result is always the same. We are always defeated by sin (7:23). The only possible way to gain the victory over sin is through Jesus Christ our Lord (7:25). Paul describes this way of victory in Galatians 2:20,

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

This is what Paul meant by becoming conformed to His death; counting ourselves to have died to sin with Christ, to have been raised with Him unto a new life, to be incapable of

living this life ourselves, and to be totally dependent upon Christ to live this new life through us. The only part we have is to exercise complete faith in Christ and not in ourselves. This is not a one-time dedication of ourselves to Christ. It is a continual process of spiritual growth in which we learn how helpless we are in ourselves and how dependent we are upon the Cross of Christ.

“But 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” (Gal. 6:14).

CONCLUSION

Philippians 3:10 summarizes what the Christian life is all about. It is not about religious organizations, traditions of men, or ordinances of the law. It is about coming to know our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is more than just knowing the facts about Christ. It is even more than knowing Christ as

our Savior. It is about coming to know Christ in a personal and intimate way by experiencing Him living in and through us. As we come to know Him in this way, we grow and mature

spiritually, and we are used of God to accomplish the purpose He has for us (Phil. 3:12). May Paul's desire be the prayer of each of us as Christians, “That I may know Him.” 

Question Box

 “Can a color or an item mentioned in Scripture have more than one meaning?”

A color or an item used in Scripture can carry more than one meaning. For example, leaven is often used to symbolize sin in Scripture. The Lord Jesus Christ warned His disciples in Matthew 16:6, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” The Apostle Paul also used leaven to symbolize sin. In 1 Corinthians 5:8 he wrote, “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of...wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” However, leaven can also represent growth. This is how the Lord Jesus used it when describing the growth of the Millennial Kingdom in Luke 13:21-22.

The same principle is applied to the color white. It is true that white often symbolizes righteousness and purity. In the Book of Isaiah, we read, “...though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (1:18), but the color white is also used to show the deceitfulness of the Antichrist (2 Thes. 2:9-10). It will appear to the unbelieving world that the man of sin will bring righteousness and peace when he comes on a white horse and conquers with a bow but no arrows—meaning peaceably (Dan. 9:27; 11:21,24; 1 Thes. 5:3; Rev. 6:1-2). Remember, Satan knows Scripture, and the Antichrist is imitating the Lord Jesus Christ Who will return in judgment on a white horse, but He will rule in TRUE righteousness and peace (Isa. 9:6; Rev. 19:11-21).

—Pastor Jim Tollar

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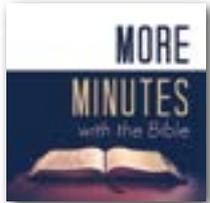
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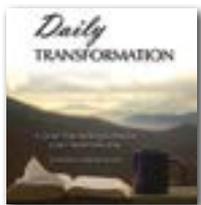
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PARENT to PARENT

“LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

“Behold, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

“Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

“And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee” (Psa. 39:4-7).

Life is short and fleeting. The psalmist writes that our days are “as an handbreadth,” comparing the length of our lives to the short distance across the palm of the hand. The decision to live for the Lord during our short time of life on earth is one we will never regret in eternity. We will only wish we had done more or lived for Him longer or more fervently. The Lord God is our hope, and when we place our hopes and dreams in Him, we will never be disappointed.

I don’t believe the problem of a shortage of people in ministry and in the pastorate stems from young people nowadays not being as interested in the things of the Lord as they once were. I believe the problem lies with their parents. I say this because I saw it firsthand while attending *Berean Bible Institute*. There were young men planning to attend the institute who had visited and made it clear they would be coming to school, only to change their plans at the last minute and never come. The reason they didn’t follow through with their plans was their parents’ wishes.

Parents often discourage their children from entering the ministry because it is a life of difficulty, uncertainty, and financial instability. This is severely short-sighted. What is best for one’s children is for them to live in light of eternity. We will live a whole lot longer on the other side than on this side. Security is not found in money or in owning a nice home; the Lord is where true security is found. If your children or grandchildren are considering the ministry, please encourage them! To live for Christ and what is lasting is truly what is best for their lives.

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2).

—Pastor Kevin Sadler

BBS Letter Excerpts



From Our Inbox:

“The *Searchlight* has been my source of strength and a place where I find peace. It has also been the source of my growth in the grace message.”

From Facebook:

(Responding to *Two Minutes with the Bible* “The Word of Truth”) “Thank you for another inspiring word. Praise the Lord for ministries like yours and all the people who serve the Lord in your ministry and others like it.”

From Florida:

(Responding to *Berean Searchlight* “Keep Looking”) “I have read this article several times. I LOVE it! The photo caught my eye right away. I worked on a golf course for 12 years...so true about a fixed spot out there to focus on....”

From South Carolina:

“For a long time, I have enjoyed *Transformed by Grace* with Pastor Kevin Sadler. Enclosed is a gift to support that ministry, the only connection with your excellent teaching. I am looking forward to the Grace Study Bible.”

From Michigan:

“Please use this gift to help with the work of the *Berean Bible Society*. We read *Two Minutes* every morning, watch *Transformed by Grace* every day, and read the *Searchlight* monthly.”

From YouTube:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace* “I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life”) “Another great sermon, brother Kevin! So easy to understand. Love the shirt too!”

From South Carolina:

“Thank you for all you do!”

From Our Inbox:

“Greetings in Jesus name, I am glad to tell you I have received the September and October issues of the *Berean Searchlight*, the most valuable Christian magazine so far. Thank you and God bless you all; keep sending, I am making use of them.”

From Florida:

“Thank you for your ministry and faithfulness to the Word rightly divided. We appreciate it and all the materials.”

From Our Mailbox:

“Our family wants to thank you so much for your outreach ministry that has touched so many lives!...Your *Transformed by Grace* television series truly does transform lives.”

From Our Mailbox:

(Responding to *Berean Searchlight*) “Thank you for getting my order to me so quickly. I really appreciate the *Searchlight* and the fine rightly divided articles. I am praying for all those who work on the Grace Study Bible and can’t wait to see it when available. God bless you all.”

From Florida:

(Responding to *Two Minutes with the Bible* “The Truth of Christ”) “Anyone who rejects Paul is rejecting the Lord Jesus, as Paul got his revelations of the mystery from the Lord directly, which [rejecting] would put them under the old economy of the law, which was never given to save, instead of under grace.”

From Our Inbox:

(Responding to *Two Minutes with the Bible* “Faith Amnesia”) “Thank you for this; it is so true and often I think, ‘Am I the only Christian I know who has this problem?’ I pray for Pastor Kevin Sadler and BBS every day and have been for a long time.”

From Arizona:

“Thank you for your labor and service to the Lord.”

From South Africa:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*) “Firstly a heartfelt thanks for the faithfulness of the Bereans and pastors for the daily messages received over the years. Today, the message was about the fact that we are called ‘Christians.’ I love the fact that Pastor Sadler spoke on this issue...this is the most precious title for which I am eternally grateful to our Lord and Savior. Thank you, Pastor. I’m a bit of a loner here in South Africa, and the Lord knows how much this connection means to me and my studying.”

From Our Mailbox:

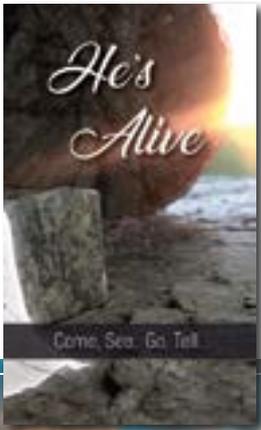
(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*) “I wish you were on the air for an hour or more! I really enjoy your teaching. Please stay on.”

From Wisconsin:

“Here is my annual donation to the *Berean Bible Society*. I am thankful for the *Berean Searchlight* that is received monthly. My life took a change for the better when I accept[ed] Jesus Christ as my Savior by believing Jesus died on the cross, was buried and rose for the forgiveness of sins.”



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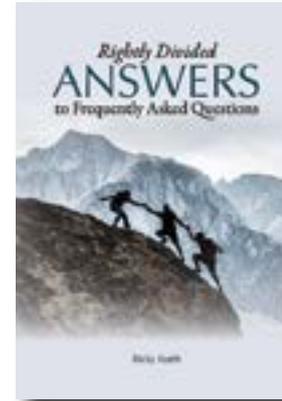
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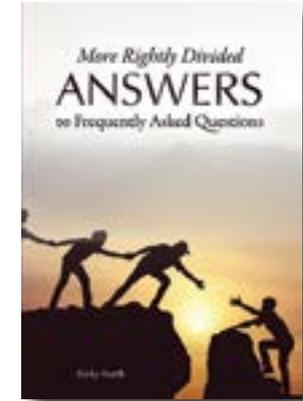
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News & Announcements



Illinois Grace Bible Conference: On Sunday and Monday, March 29-30, Pastor Kevin Sadler and Pastor Jim Zaebsch have been invited to speak at *Victory Baptist Church* in Macomb, Illinois (10460 N. 1200th Rd.), on the theme of "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth." For more information about these meetings, please call Pastor Michael Eddy of *Victory Baptist Church* at 309-331-3223. Pastor Eddy has been teaching mid-Acts dispensationalism to his congregation and has even started a podcast to share his journey to seeing the truth: mjeddy.podbean.com.

International Orders: For tangible goods, *Berean Bible Society* takes international orders by phone or email only. Our friends outside the USA cannot place an order through our website because our site does not calculate the variable costs of international shipping. However, international customers *can* continue to place orders by email (christinem@bereanbiblesociety.org) or by phone (262-255-4750). Once we determine the shipping cost, based on the order's size, weight, and destination, we relay the total cost by phone, email, or PayPal invoice. The order is then paid for by credit card or PayPal funds. When we receive payment, we ship the order via our international delivery service or USPS International Flat Rate shipping.

Pastor Wanted: *Altoona Bible Church* in Altoona, Pennsylvania, is seeking a full-time grace pastor to lead their assembly and proclaim the riches of God's grace. If you are interested, please call or text Darryl Warner at 814-931-7086.

BBS Board of Directors: BBS is a board-run ministry, and the following are the members of the board: Kevin Sadler (President), John Fredericksen (Chairman/Vice President), Jeff Seekins (Secretary), David Brown (Treasurer), Ken Lawson, Jeff Bertram, and David Havard.

Upcoming Conferences to put on your calendar!

Illinois Grace Bible Conference
March 29-30, Macomb, IL

Iowa Grace Bible Conference
May 16-17, Wall Lake, IA



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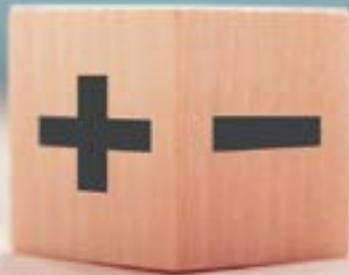
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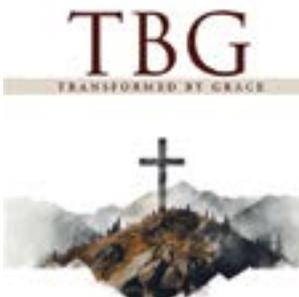
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