

Fivefold Grace of God

Psalm 146:7-9

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FOCAL Read Responsively Psalms 146:7-9 ... The LORD looseth the prisoners: (8) The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous: (9) The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

I've heard a lot of things that have made me laugh. For instance, "**A day without sunshine is like night**". Or one that is so true, "**Nothing is foolproof to a sufficiently talented fool**". Another is "**If the shoe fits, get another one just like it**". Former baseball player Yogi Berra is credited with a number of funny sayings. Yogi was burning leaves one day when the fire got out of hand. He ran into the house and called the fire department, telling them that his yard was on fire and he needed help. The dispatcher asked, "**How do we get to where you are?**" Yogi allegedly responded, "**Don't you guys still have those little red trucks?**"

Here's a funny saying that is one of my favorites: "**Light travels faster than sound. That's why some people appear bright until you hear them speak**". I've never heard an atheist speak where I wasn't astounded by his ignorance. The Bible says that the atheist is a fool. We are told twice in the Scripture "**The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God**" (Psalm 53:1; 14:1). Because he has said in his heart "there is no God" the atheist is corrupt, and he himself – like the leper of old – corrupts those whom he touches.

Without God there are no moral absolutes. Without moral absolutes there is no right or wrong.

It is God – not democracy – that tells us what is right and what is wrong. The farther we draw away from the God of the Bible the more we are imprisoned by our lusts. The farther we draw away from the God of the Holy Scripture the farther we are from the light of truth. The more we try to carry our own burdens apart from the God Who loves us the more bowed down we are by the weight of life. We need God. We need to turn to God and trust Him with all our hearts. We need to love Him, and love the Lord Jesus Christ His only Begotten Son.

When I drive at night I can only see the few feet that are illuminated in front of my headlights. Sometimes when I'm driving and on a curvy, Tennessee road I want to tense up. I'll begin to think **“What about the road ahead? Is it there. Will it make a sharp turn or a twist too quickly for me to navigate? What if there's a bridge that's out?”** As these thoughts pass through my mind I find myself riding the brakes and tensing up more and more. At those times I have to tell myself that it is not my job to build the road, nor is it my job to place signs along the side of the road. I must trust the road builders that they maintained the road I'm traveling. I must trust the sign builders that they will have a warning posted in advance of a stop or a sudden turn. In short, my job is to *stay in the light and drive between the lines*.

Let the atheist – fool that he is – dispute the existence of God. I know that God is. I have met Him many times in

my life, and He is good. Not only I, but millions of others have experienced the joy of knowing God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Rather than foolishly dispute the obvious, why not come to Christ by faith? It's a whole lot easier to live in the light, moment by moment, doing as the Lord directs. The Grace of God abundantly blesses all who come unto Him in faith.

We see that in our text today. Five times in our text we see the Great Name of God, LORD, used with five different great things that He does. He is the **Great Emancipator, freeing the slaves. He is the Great Illuminator, opening the eyes of the blind. He is the Great Comforter, relieving those who trust in Him. He is the Great Lover of the Righteous. And He is the Great Preserver of the Strangers.** Here we see the fivefold ministry of God to those who believe in Him.

1. The Lord Is The Great Emancipator

FOCAL [Psalms 146:7](#) ... The LORD looseth the prisoners ...

Word Study The word "looseth" is the Hiphil Participle of NATHAR (נָתַר pronounced *naw-thar*'), which literally means "keeps on causing to be set free". The Bible tells us that **the Lord - the Eternal I AM - keeps on causing the prisoners to be set free**".

Are you in bondage to moral slavery? Come surrendered to the Lord and He will set you free. In our

world today people have redefined "sin" to be "disease" or "a life style choice". **Alcoholism** is no longer sin, but it is a disease. **Homosexuality** is no longer sin, but it is a lifestyle choice.

Sin may bring you to disease by leading you to dabble with that you ought not to dabble with - but sin is no disease. Sin is sin. It is an abomination, and a deceiver, and a corrupter.

The Bible tells us that man is bound by chains of sin.

Romans 3:9-12 both **Jews and Gentiles ... are all under sin**; [10] **As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: [11] There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. [12] They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

Both Jew and Gentile are under sin. Sin covers man, woman, and child. We are born totally without goodness.

ILLUSTRATE Are babies free from sin? The Bible emphatically states NO! Consider the twins **Jacob and Esau**. Though **Esau** was born first from his mother, **Jacob** came from the womb clutching his brother's heel (**Genesis 25:26**). We are born in sin, and unless we are **born again** we cannot be free of the chain that binds us. When Jesus Christ entered this world He came to:

Matthew 1:21 **save His people from their sins.**

The Lord keeps on freeing the prisoners. The world and the foolish would have you believe that God saves His people IN their sins. This isn't true. The Lord saves His people FROM their sins. What did our Lord say?

John 8:34-36 ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. [35] And the servant abideth not in the house forever: but the Son abideth ever. [36] If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Those who sin and keep on sinning are the **servants of sin**. God - the Great Emancipator - wants to free you from sin.

Sin even corrupts the goodness of the Law. Our very nature renders the Law of God as unusable, a snare to our souls. The Scripture says:

Romans 7:8-10 **But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. [9] Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. [10] I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.**^{NIV}

The Law of God is just, and holy, and pure. But we are, by nature, creatures who stand against God's Law. The Law says "no" but the master within - our old Sin Nature - says "yes". As the Scripture tells us, (**2 Peter 2:19**) "**a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him**". Sin

masters everyone apart from God's intervention. Turn away from that evil master and turn to God. **"The Lord causes the prisoner to keep on being freed"**.

2. The Lord Is The Great Illuminator

FOCAL **Psalms 146:8** ... **The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind:**

Man not only needs to be freed from sin, but he needs to be given *spiritual sight*. Jesus told the religious Pharisees:

John 8:43-44 **Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. [44] Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.**

The unbeliever apart from God's intervention cannot **hear nor see** the things of God. The Lord must open his spiritual eyes so that he can make a choice for or against Christ. Man is blind.

The great need of man is not more *light*. Man needs *sight*.

We have light, but light to a blind man means nothing. Hold the bulb to his eyes and - no matter how bright - the blind man cannot see. The God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness must open your eyes if you will ever see the things of God.

ILLUSTRATE There were two brothers who owned a rather prosperous business that they built through deception, bribery, and outright theft. These brothers never had time for God in their lives, though they often spent a great deal of time in bars seeking relationships with loose women. One of the brothers got sick and died. His brother went to the local Pastor and asked him to conduct the funeral, which the Pastor agreed to do. The brother said, **"When you're doing the funeral, I want you to call my brother a *saint*."** The Pastor replied, "I really can't do that - it wouldn't be the truth". The brother said, "If you'll say that my brother was a saint I will donate \$10,000.00 to the building fund of the Church." The Pastor thought for a moment, then said **"I think I can do that"**. On the day of the funeral the Pastor said, **"This man was wealthy and greatly blessed of God. Given many advantages in this life he never gave to the Church or to the cause of Christ, though he often spent many dollars at the local bars and escort services. He was a rounder, a thief, and a womanizer. But compared to his brother, this man was a saint."**

Philosopher *Robert Fitch* correctly said said, **"This is an age where ethics has become obsolete. It is superseded by science, deleted by psychology, dismissed as unneeded by philosophy. It is drowned in compassion, evaporates into aesthetics, and retreats before relativism. The usual distinctions between good and bad are simply drowned in a maudlin emotion in which we feel more sympathy for the murderer than the murdered, for the adulterer than for the betrayed, in which we have begun to believe that the real guilty party, the one who somehow**

caused it all, is the victim and not the perpetrator of the crime."

When man does "what is right in his own eyes" then the blind lead the blind - and both fall in the ditch. As a society we are blinded. We are blinded by Satan, who, as the

2 Corinthians 4:4 ... god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The Lord enables those who are blinded by sin and self to gain their spiritual sight and see. Our Lord Jesus said:

Luke 4:18-21 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, [19] To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.

It is the Lord Who gives sight to the blind, the Lord Who enables us to see. God enables us to see our own sin, and not just the sin of our neighbor. God lets us see ourselves honestly. Dear friends,

God can never make something great of your life until you admit who you really are. You are a

sinner in need of the Savior. May God help you understand this great truth.

3. The Lord Is The Great Comforter

FOCAL Psalms 146:8 ... the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down:

Word Study The words "bowed down" is the Hebrew KAWFA (כַּפָּה pronounced *kaw-faf*). The first time we see KAWFA is in:

Psalms 57:6 They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen *themselves*. Selah.

That which bows down our souls is the circumstances and people that come in contact with us every day. Every attack can make us *better* or make us *bitter*. If we cling to God in the attack we will be made *better*.

We are often betrayed by those closest to us. **Like Joseph, we are betrayed by family or friends.** As the Psalmist says, **they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen.** Misery loves company, and miserable people love to afflict others with their misery, to drag them into the same pit they themselves are languishing in.

When you are betrayed by life you have two choices. You can become bitter over the betrayal, allowing it to influence the way you act and think. Or else you can turn to the Lord and let Him comfort you. **The Lord raises them that are bowed down.** David said:

Psalms 57:7 ... my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah. [7] My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

Though his soul was **bowed down by the betrayers** he nonetheless **fixed his heart on God his Comforter.** He decided to praise the Lord, to magnify Him, and then to **selah** or **rest** in this great truth.

Another cause of being **bowed down is grief.** Are you grieving over a loss? Do not despair, but turn to Jesus. Do as He has said.

Matthew 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Give the burden to the Lord your Comforter. **The Lord raises them that are bowed down.** He will raise you if you will stop trying to raise yourself.

Are you bowed down because, like the Prodigal Son, you wandered far from the Lord? Then return to His side.

He waits for you, ready to comfort you if you would but come. **Sin fascinates, then it assassinates.** Get away from that assassin and return to the Lord Who loves you. He will comfort you. **He will give you rest.**

4. The Lord Is The Great Lover Of The Righteous

FOCAL Psalms 146:8 ... the LORD loveth the righteous:

The Lord loves the righteous. Since the Bible says that "**there are none righteous, no, not one**" we know that - if the Lord *loves* the righteous, then He Himself must also *make* the righteous.

The Lord makes the righteous by *crediting what Jesus did on Calvary to our account.* We who are saved have the **righteousness which is of God by faith.**

Philippians 3:9 found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Danny Akins said "God is willing to save all, but has not willed to save all". The Lord forces no one to the Cross. He offers salvation to **whosoever will.** Just as

God took the faith of Abraham and credited it to him for righteousness

Romans 4:20-22 {Abraham} staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; [21] And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. [22] And therefore {his faith} was imputed to him for righteousness.

Abraham was an example for all who believe.

Abraham was saved *before* he was circumcised, so no ritual saved him. Abraham was saved *before* the Law of Moses was given, so no Law saved him. Abraham was saved *before* there was ever an Israel, a Baptist, a Methodist, or any denomination or chosen nation. Abraham was saved by faith alone in Christ alone. And Abraham - like all the righteous - is loved by God. Jesus Christ was

Romans 4:25 delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

ILLUSTRATE When you see a wormhole in an apple it's there not because the worm is eating its way into the apple. The worm is eating its way *out* of the apple. The worm got in the apple because its egg was laid in the apple blossom. The apple forms around the worm egg. Humans are born into this life with sin in their core. The worm is there when we are born. The problem is in our *hearts*.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things,

and desperately wicked: who can know it?

ILLUSTRATE You can take a crooked tree and, running it through the sawmill, make a straight piece of wood out of it. Yet if you look at the *heart* of the tree it is still crooked. The heart is the problem. So it is with man.

Around 72% of Americans surveyed say that they believe in Heaven. 60% of Americans say that they believe in Hell. But of those surveyed, 96% believed they were going to Heaven and the remaining 4% believed they were Hell bound. Those who thought they were going to Heaven believed they were going because of what they weren't doing. They weren't doing this particular sin or that particular sin.

God doesn't allow you to enter Heaven because you *aren't doing something*. He allows you to enter Heaven because you *have trusted in Jesus*.

God views righteousness as a thing to be *added or imputed*. God must make us righteous. God - the Maker of Righteousness - must *impute* or credit righteousness to us, or we can never enter Heaven

God didn't come to rub our sins in. He came to this earth to rub our sins out! He loves to make believers righteous.

If you have loved the Lord Jesus and are His by faith, rest in Him. Trust that He loves you no matter what life may send your way. **The Lord loves the righteous.** He

loves His children. Scripture says:

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; **I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**

The Lord dwells with His people. Are you saved from your sins? Then you are royalty, you are Kings because you are covered by the Blood of the King of Kings. Are you saved from your sins? Then you are priests, because you are covered by the Blood of the only Perfect and Immortal High Priest. Were you a sinner, but now are redeemed?

Galatians 4:4-7 ... God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, [5] To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. [6] And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. [7] Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Then you are no longer servants but are sons of God, adopted and indwelt by the Spirit of God. What wonderful thing has God done to us who are His Children? We are adopted sons because we are covered with the Blood of His own dear Son.

5. The Lord is the Great Preserver Of The Strangers

FOCAL Psalms 146:9 ... The LORD preserveth the strangers ...

God told Israel:

Exodus 22:21-23 Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. [22] **Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. [23] If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry;**

The **stranger** was the person who was not in the covenant of salvation with God, but who entered Israel's territory and lived amongst them. These were guests in Israel, and were to be treated with the same care and respect as was afforded the widow or the orphan. As long as strangers - foreigners to the covenant - obeyed God's Laws and did not disrupt God's people they were to be treated with all hospitality.

God not only loves the righteous, but **He loves the world**. The Bible tells us in that old familiar verse:

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. [17] For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Some of you who are visiting with us today may be

strangers to the covenant of salvation. You may not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The Lord bids me to remind you that **The Lord preserves the strangers.**

Word Study The word "preserves" is the Hebrew SHAWMAR (שמר pronounced *shaw-mar*'), which means, "to set a watch over, to guard round about, to set a protective hedge of thorns around". The Lord has been preserving your life to bring you to this moment of decision. Will you trust your life to Jesus Christ? The Bible tells us that God didn't send His Son into this world to condemn you. He sent Jesus Christ to the Cross so that you could be saved. **He that believeth on the Son is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already.** The Lord gave His life on Calvary for you. If you believed in Him, believe that He is the only Way, the only Truth, and the only Life then God shall save you. If you do not then you shall not be saved.

Will you believe on Him? God has loved you, and continues to love you. Your heartbeat proves this. Will you not give yourself to Him today?



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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1. The Lord Is The Great Emancipator

Romans 3:9-12; Genesis 25:26; Matthew 1:21; John 8:34-36; Romans 7:8-10; 2 Peter 2:19

Word Study The word "looseth" is the Hiphil Participle of NATHAR _____

2. The Lord Is The Great Illuminator

Psalms 146:8; John 8:43-44; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Luke 4:18-21

3. The Lord Is The Comforter

Psalms 146:8; Psalms 57:6; Psalms 57:7; Matthew 11:28-30

Word Study The words "bowed down" is the Hebrew KAWFA _____

4. The Lord Is The Lover Of The Righteous

Psalms 146:8; Philippians 3:9; Romans 4:20-22; Romans 4:25; Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 57:15; Galatians 4:4-7

5. The Lord Preserves The Strangers

Psalms 146:9; Exodus 22:21-23; John 3:16-17

Word Study The word "preserves" is the Hebrew SHAWMAR _____
