



## Costly Grace – Part 2

BY: Chris Harper

### *Colossians 4:2-6*

So what does God's free grace cost us? Everything.

The apostle Paul says, *"At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the message, to speak the mystery of the Messiah, for which I am in prison..."* It is very clear that the Gospel cost Paul everything... even his liberty, he says in vs 3: *"to speak the mystery of the Messiah, for which I am in prison."*

Paul was constantly beaten and jailed, yet he was unwavering; willing and wanting to speak the "mystery of the Messiah," the mystery about God's grace, and doing so with urgency and with thanksgiving.

As we begin this holiday season it would behoove us to see Paul's example. To watch Paul as he surrenders both his rights and his life for the sake of the Gospel.

And let us see and hear Paul's exhortation to us! This Paul, who was *"free from all, made himself a*

*slave to all, so that he might win more..."*

This Paul, who became a *"Jew to the Jews and the law to those under the law..."* *"To the weak he became weak..."* This Paul, who denied his own rights at the church of Corinth and endured everything and anything so that there would be no obstacle in the way of the Gospel...

Paul presses us to *"endure anything"* so that the Gospel may be presented freely, openly and without fault in our lives.

Brothers and sisters, because we are privileged, because of our prosperity, simply because of our geographic position, we celebrate and exercise many rights, many freedoms, every day that many in the world live without and some can't even imagine...

In this life we have the right to friends, marriage, family, safety, security, health... our constitution even demands the right to happiness...

## Upcoming events



### Friday, 12/12

B JV/V Basketball vs. Rock Creek, 6 p.m.

### Saturday, 12/13

B JV/V Basketball @ Paoli, 6 p.m.

### Tuesday, 12/16

G JV/V Basketball @ Rock Creek, 6 p.m.

We have the right to eat, drink, watch, wear, read, study, listen to and practically say whatever we want to say...

We have the right to organize our schedules, spend our time, choose our career, make money, use money, take a vacation and plan our own retirements...

We have the right to do what we want to do...go where we want to go...and live how we want to live...

In the free exercising of these rights, it is easy to miss the essential Gospel truth that God's grace compels us to surrender these rights, every day, for the sake of the Gospel.

We surrender our rights so that the "*mystery of the Messiah*" can be made known where we live and in the world around us.

God's grace, demonstrated at the cross and freely given to us - this grace should create in us a compulsion to tell of and share the Gospel. As one theologian said, "God's gracious conversion of us... creates a Gospel compulsion in us..."

The Bible tells us:

*14 For Christ's love compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: If One died for all, then all died. 15 And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised.*

*16 From now on, then, we do not know anyone in a purely human way. Even if we have known Christ in a purely human way, yet now we no longer know Him in this way. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. 18 Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." - 2 Cor 5:14-20*

So I ask...

How are we going to use God's grace this Christmas? Will we spend it eating, drinking and doing what we want? Will we go where we want to go, see who we want to see...spend time, money and effort on ourselves...Or, will we lay down these rights for the sake of the Gospel? Let us act according to God's rich mercies and grace and say with Paul, "*Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.*"

And let us remember, though Paul is a wonderful, powerful example... it is not Paul's

example that we follow. No, like Paul, we follow the example of another - Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, the one who, "*existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. 7 Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men. And when He had come as a man in His external form, 8 He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death - even to death on a cross.*" - Phil 2:6-8

We die to self and live for others because Jesus died for us so that we can live with Him...forever.

How are we going to live this Christmas? This year? The rest of our lives? Have you laid down your life for the sake of the Gospel? Have you tasted God's good grace? Can we say with the psalmist:

*"I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. 5 Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. 6 This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. 8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him."*