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# Perspective

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*Perspective* is a monthly journal with articles and book reviews. It is part of the “equipping” ministry of Mount Vernon Baptist Church, where we exist to KNOW, EQUIP, and SEND one another for the worship and glory of God.

## SERMON SCHEDULE

April 5

### **The Resurrection Sermon**

Acts 3:11 - 4:22

April 12

### **The Present is Not Enough**

2 Peter 3:8-13

April 19

### **Obedience is Not Enough**

2 Peter 3:14-18

April 26

### **Strength in Weakness**

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

Guest Preacher: Brad Thayer

For a full list of past sermons,  
visit [www.mvbchurch.org](http://www.mvbchurch.org).

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## A Gracious God, Gracious Ministry, Grateful Pastors

A few weeks ago, Mount Vernon hosted the third annual Feed My Sheep conference. Each year I deliver a message designed to be of particular challenge and encouragement to pastors. This article that follows is adapted from that message. It's about the centrality of grace in the Christian life and ministry. Whatever ministry God has given you, I pray these words are of some encouragement.

~Aaron Menikoff

*If, then, you want to know how one becomes good and how one does good, which is the universal question, I have said that the first and foremost thing is for a man to know that of himself he cannot become or do good, and therefore he must despair of himself, let hands and feet go, declare himself an unprofitable man in the sight of God, and then call upon his divine grace, in which he should steadfastly trust.*

~Martin Luther, 1519

### MARTIN LUTHER REDISCOVERS GOD'S GRACE

In 1517, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the castle door at Wittenberg. This public act did not start the Reformation—Luther was simply being a faithful monk and academic. People nailed items for debate on the castle door all the time. It was the sixteenth-century equivalent of a lengthy blog post. Luther objected to Johann Tetzel's sleazy indulgence selling. It wasn't the fact of indulgences that bothered Luther; it was Tetzel's abuse. In 1517, Luther was still a faithful Roman Catholic who believed that man's salvation is rooted in his own, good and sincere works.

Over the course of time, Luther's mind on the matter changed. It started with his view of sin. Luther came to see how the Fall corrupted each and every one of us, leaving us absolutely unable to help ourselves. No amount of personal, good and sincere works could ever win us God's favor. That would be to make too much of us, and too little of God. But even as Luther discovered the problem of sin, the solution eluded him.

Until, in 1519, while reading Scripture in a tiny room in his monastery tower, Luther grasped the reality of grace. The text before him was Romans 1:17, "For in it [that is, in the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'"

Luther described the change that took place when he finally understood Paul's words: "I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel...' Here I felt I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates."

Luther's biographer, Roland Bainton, commented on the significance of his find: "Luther, as no one before him in more than a thousand years, sensed the import of the miracle of divine forgiveness." Luther rediscovered the truth that salvation is by grace alone.

### GRACE, THE KEYWORD OF CHRISTIANITY

Grace has been called the keyword of Christianity. Grace is central to everything we believe and everything we teach. Righteousness and salvation do not come by our work, but by God's gift of faith—and this is grace. Ephesians 2:5, "even when we were dead in our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved." Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith." The grace of God is the source of our salvation and the grace of God is the goal of our salvation. Ephesians 1:6, we have been saved, "to the praise of his glorious grace."

We worship a gracious God, and his grace confounds us. When Moses led Israel to the edge of the Promised Land, they wondered why God chose them. What was it about them that warranted God's attention and affection? It's the default setting of the fallen human heart to assume we've done something to deserve God's love. But do you remember what Moses told Israel that day in the wilderness?

The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the

LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers (Dt 7:6-8a).

This is grace. It's God blessing us, when we didn't deserve him. It's God choosing us, when we rejected him. It's God loving us, even when we hated him.

My first job coming out of college was an internship. An internship is by definition temporary. I was hoping to get hired, but there was no guarantee. In fact, statistically speaking, it was unlikely. So I did the only thing I knew to do. I worked, and I worked hard. I tried to be the first in the office and the last to leave. I took projects home so I could finish them overnight. I never said no when I was asked to do something. I figured I must have done something right because eventually I was hired. Now I had the job, but I still had to prove I deserved it. I remember being at work one night when my boss called me and some other staffers to meet the big boss for dinner. I refused to go. Why? I didn't want anyone to think that I would let anything get between the job and me. I lived with a constant sense that I had to prove I deserved that job, and I lived with the constant insecurity I didn't.

Too many people take this attitude toward their Christian walk. They see every day as a litmus test to prove they deserve God's favor. They take their eyes off the cross, off of the atoning work of Christ our Savior, off of his righteousness, and they put it on their own good works. With the best of intentions they try to win God's love by keeping God's commands, forgetting that grace can never be earned, and it can never be deserved. That's what makes grace, grace.

Those of us prone to wander into the wilderness of works-based righteousness need to remember that our biggest problem is behind us. Long before you were a pastor, an elder, or a Sunday School teacher, you were a sinner. Your sin was a stench in the nostrils of a holy God. You deserved his wrath, and not even a million years of suffering could atone for the way you sinned against Almighty God. His wrath was your biggest problem. You had accrued a sin-debt that you could never, ever repay. So God did it for you! As Paul put it in Colossians 2, you:

were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, [until] God made [you] alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

**Your ministry, like your salvation, is a gracious gift of God.**

This is grace. It's the keyword of Christianity, and it's what makes the Good News, Great! Grace is the content of our message, the reason for our confidence, and the source of our holiness. Were it not for grace we would have nothing to say, no assurance of our salvation, and no grounds to pursue a life of radical obedience to our gracious God.

So before we continue, let me simply ask, are you confident that your salvation is not your own doing, but God's gift (Ephesians 1:5)? Are you overwhelmed by the grace of God that has overflowed for you with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus (1 Tim 1:14)? Are you committed to continuing in the grace of God (Acts 13:43), confident that "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6)?

## A GRACIOUS MINISTRY

Having reminded you of the centrality of grace in the Christian life, I'd like to make a simple observation: your ministry, like your salvation, is a gracious gift of God. You may be a pastor or elder, deacon or teacher, small group leader or counselor. Whatever ministry occupies your time, however large or small, is a commission God has given you for the service of his church and the glory of his name. And since it is from God, it is a gracious gift.

The most obvious place to see this is 2 Timothy 1:6. After thanking God for Timothy and remembering how the gospel was at work in Timothy's mother and grandmother, Paul exhorts Timothy to, "fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands." Timothy was not an apostle. Paul set him aside for a ministry in the local church. But it is God who gifted Timothy for this service, and so Paul reassures Timothy that God is in it. To have the gift is to have the ministry. The ministry is a gracious gift of God. This is

always how God has worked when calling his people into ministry.

We see it in the calling of Isaiah. The prophet is given a vision of the Lord. “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple” (Isa 6:1). The LORD came and revealed himself to Isaiah. This was God’s grace, allowing Isaiah to see him. But the LORD didn’t just reveal himself, God gave Isaiah a revelation of his own sin. “And I said, ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’” (Isa 6:5). First God revealed himself so that Isaiah could see the holiness of God. And then once Isaiah truly saw the LORD as he truly is, Isaiah could finally see himself as he truly is, a sinner in desperate need. But that’s not all. Isaiah is given another gift: atonement! “Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said, ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for’” (Isa 6:6).

Isaiah is given a beautiful gift—the gift of the knowledge of God, holy and righteous. Isaiah opens that gift, and inside is another beautifully wrapped package. It’s the gift of the knowledge of himself—dirty and sinful. And inside that gift, is yet another gift. The LORD makes atonement for Isaiah, doing for this sinner what this sinner could never do for himself. But even that is not the end. There is one last gift, a great commission: “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’ And he said, ‘Go’” (Isa 6:8).

What would sustain prophets like Isaiah and Ezekiel and Jeremiah through the hard days of ministry, when their words are rejected, their character maligned, and their spirits beat down? The reminder that ministry is a multi-faceted gift from God whereby God equips his saints with the knowledge of his holiness, the knowledge of their sin, the atonement of a Savior, and the commission to make his word known. Isaiah’s ministry is a gracious ministry.

And the same is true for us. Though none of us here are prophets like Isaiah, certainly we have received, albeit in different ways, everything Isaiah received. We have been given the gift of the knowledge of God. That was not our own doing—God gave us eyes to see. We have been given the gift of the knowledge of ourselves. We see our

sin. That was not our own doing. God’s Spirit convicted us of our unrighteousness. We have been given the gift of atonement. God did for us in Christ what we could not do for ourselves. God saved us. And then, God said, “Go.” He gave us the call to go and make disciples of all nations—each of us in different places, and in different ways, but each of us gifted by God to minister in a lost and dying world.

We find a similar turn of events in John 21:15-19. Like Isaiah, Peter is given the gift of the knowledge of God. Only God does not come to Peter in unapproachable light. Peter sits down and has breakfast with the Creator. Peter, like Isaiah, is also given knowledge of himself. Jesus makes sure Peter is aware of his sin. Three times Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love me?” Those three questions must have reminded Peter of the three times he denied the Lord. But there is a third gift: atonement. Peter can know that on the cross Jesus atoned for his sins. And how can he know this? Because instead of being rejected, Peter is called into service—which is the fourth gift. Peter, like Isaiah, is given the great commission. Peter’s ministry is a gift from Jesus; it is a gracious ministry.

The prophets and the apostles had a unique ministry, a special gift. And yet there is a parallel truth for each of us. Wherever we serve the Lord, we are serving in a ministry God has given us. And this is God’s grace. Peter put it this way in 1 Peter 4:10:

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Just as God has gifted us with salvation, so he has gifted us with ministry. To say that God’s grace has overflowed for you is not merely to say God saved you, but to say God gifted you for and with a ministry in the local church. God has gifted you to serve your brothers and sisters. Ministry is a gracious gift.

### GRATEFUL PASTORS

Salvation is all God’s grace, and ministry is God’s grace, too. So what are we to make of this? How should it affect the way we pastor or serve in the places God has called us to? Here are four implications.

**First, there is no room for bitterness in pastoral ministry.**

I think it's far too easy for bitterness to grow in the garden of our ministry. We start to tell ourselves that nobody truly understands the pressures we face in shepherding the flock. We wonder if we are really appreciated for all the time we spend laboring to feed Christ's sheep. We question the value of our work when we don't see obvious, spiritual fruit.

But if we view the ministry as a gracious gift from God, we will root bitterness out of our heart. We will remember that God has graciously given us a field to labor in. The labor will be hard and painful, but we can rejoice in the difficulty because we know that even the hardship is part of God's gift.

Ignatius of Antioch pastored during the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan in the early second century, about fifty years after Peter's death. Ignatius refused to recant his faith in Christ. Trajan arrested him and had him hauled off to the Roman coliseum to be executed. On his way, Ignatius wrote a letter to the church in Rome, and asked them not to fight for his release: "I am truly in earnest about dying for God – if only you yourselves put no obstacles in the way. I must implore you to do me no such untimely kindness; pray leave me to be a meal for the beasts, for it is they who can provide my way to God."

We might decide that Ignatius was a little too eager to die! But he clearly embraced the cost of ministry. He didn't live with the false delusion that it would be easy and, in fact, he considered it a privilege to suffer for the name of Christ. He embraced his suffering the same way he embraced his salvation—as a precious gift from God preparing him for the Last Day. These are the words of a pastor who refused to be bitter when faced with the reality that ministry would cost him his life.

There is no room for bitterness in pastoral ministry. Ministry is a gracious gift from God. We have the wonderful privilege to follow our Savior in the work of the Lord. We are ambassadors for Christ and should expect to be treated the way Christ was treated. And though none of us will probably lose our heads in a foreign land, all of us will lose friends and partners in ministry. Each of us has and will say goodbye to brothers and sisters who seemed so committed to the work, and yet chose to leave it. We will disciple some only to see

them fall away from the faith. Their departures will test our heart, tempt us toward bitterness, and bring to light sins that we must repent of. But because we know that the ministry we have is a gift, by God's grace, we will not remain bitter.

**Second, pastoral ministry is a cause for great thankfulness.**

We should be thankful that God has given us the privilege of shepherding his people. We should be in awe of the fact that God was kind not only to save us, but to save us for ministry. Our first thought when we wake in the morning ought to be, "God, thank you for saving my soul." But soon we should pray, "God, thank you for the ministry you've called me to." I've entitled this message, "A Gracious God, Gracious Ministry, and Grateful Pastors," because I believe that gratitude ought to especially mark those of us given the privilege of leading God's people.

So don't just pray for God's help in the work of the ministry, thank God for the work of the ministry. At Chik-fil-A they always say, "My pleasure" whenever you express gratitude. That expression has become part of the culture of the company. Perhaps it will become part of the culture of our church and especially the character of our own heart to regularly say and even more regularly think, "I'm thankful for the privilege of serving."

**Third, there is no room for envy in pastoral ministry.**

Never in the history of Christianity have we been more tempted to measure our success by comparing our ministry to that of our brothers. I know that envy has been around since the Fall: Eve envied the knowledge of God. Cain envied the favor God showed his brother, Abel. Envy has been around a long time.

And yet, if we are honest, we'll admit that social media presents an unusual temptation to the faithful pastor. As we look at the evident blessing our brothers experience, we may wonder if we are doing something wrong or, worse, we may simply covet what they have.

But if ministry is a gracious gift from God, there is no room for envy. It is our job, as faithfully as we know how, to preach the word in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2) and it is God's job to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:7).

I just wrote that never in the history of Christianity has there been such a temptation to envy the ministries of our brother and, yet, perhaps I'm wrong! In April of 1521, Martin Luther traveled to the Diet of Worms to stand trial for his teaching. This is where he refused to recant and famously said, "Here I stand! I cannot do otherwise. God help me." But on the trip to Worms, Luther preached at a church in Erfurt. A huge crowd gathered to hear him—including a large number of men pursuing the priesthood. And Luther rebuked them all:

You say the Psalter, you pray the rosary, you pray all kinds of other prayers, and say a lot of words; you say mass, you kneel before the altar, you read confession, you go on mumbling and maundering; and all the while you think you are free from sin. And yet in your heart you have such great envy that, if you could choke your neighbor and get away with it creditably, you would do it; and that's the way you say mass. It would be no wonder if a thunderbolt struck you to the ground.

Luther wasn't one to mince words! But couldn't the same be said of us? Our theology may be better, but envy remains a real foe. We preach sermons, lead meetings, disciple Christians, evangelize the lost, study the Bible, and all the while our hearts are filled with envy. But it doesn't have to be this way. If ministry is a gracious gift from God, there is no need for envy and there is certainly no room for envy.

God has given you your ministry—it is custom fit for you. It is handcrafted by God for the good of those you serve and the good of your own soul. Your ministry has its own challenges, and these are the challenges God saw fit to give you. If he wanted you to have other challenges he would have given you another ministry. There is no room for envy in pastoral ministry because pastoral ministry is a gracious gift.

#### **Fourth, pastoral ministry is a cause for great contentment.**

If ministry is a gift from God, then we should be content with the ministry God has given us. I am not saying that you should never leave your church, nor am I saying you should become fully satisfied with the health of your church. I am saying that you should see your position as a gift from God and find contentment in the knowledge that God has you right where he wants you. I have found it tremendously encouraging to realize that my presence

at Mount Vernon was no accident. That though there were interviews and meetings and decisions that had to be made, behind it all was a sovereign God moving his people where he wanted them.

I'm from Oregon, and though I worked for a number of years in DC, and though I spent a few years in Louisville, Kentucky, it was always my expectation that I would one day return to Oregon and pastor there. And yet, somehow, I find myself ministering in the land of Sweet Tea and "Y'all." About six weeks after starting here I received a phone call from an elder of a church in Portland, Oregon. If there was one church I had hoped to pastor, this was the church. It seems their pastor had just stepped down, and my friend asked, "Have you found a church yet?" It was all I could do to keep from laughing.

And yet, on that day, I was never more convinced that God wanted me in Atlanta. God is sovereign, and whether he wants us in a church for three weeks or three decades, his will cannot be thwarted, and we should be content where we are.

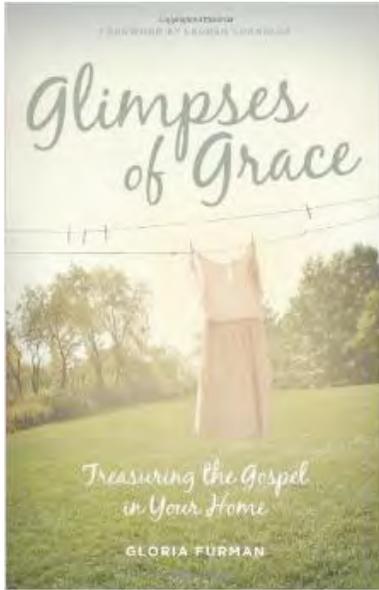
Life is too short to measure our success next to the standard of another brother's numbers. But more to the point, God's grace is too glorious for us to care. Each of our ministries is a gift from God; God will do with each as he sees fit.

~Aaron Menikoff

## Glimpses of Grace

Written by Gloria Furman

Bookstall Price \$15



If you have ever wondered, “What does the Gospel have to do with my everyday life in my home?” or “What does life-changing faith look like on a day-to-day basis in the midst of the mundane?” Gloria Furman answers both questions in *Glimpses of Grace*. She explains how when we are tempted to think the Creator of heaven and earth cannot possibly be involved in me washing a *second* full sink of dishes today, He sees our our hearts as we choose to serve our family joyfully or bitterly as we wash. Insightfully, Furman states, “Both worldviews, that God is detested with the mundane and the mundane is my

god— are deceptive and destructive.”

She stresses the importance of “teaching our children that fellowship with Christ is not constrained to formally religious experiences or places.” We are to impress on our children that we do not have to be in a church building to worship God because Jesus is currently ruling and reigning over the whole world. They should see us resting in the Word of God in all circumstances. If you’re relying on 30 uninterrupted minutes to seclude yourself to read God’s Word, you will view every distraction as an attack of Satan. Jesus is with us even in the busyness of life. Furman goes on to empathize that if your season of life has you feeling lonely with little time to invest in friendships, find other Christian sisters with whom you can “do life together.” We all need godly women speaking the truth of the gospel into our lives.

Contentment in Christ cannot be found by following any man-made action plan. Paul encourages the Philippians to simply, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” Furman reminds us that Paul found contentment in any circumstance because of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit that dwells in you!

– RECOMMENDED BY CAROLYN VERSELE

## Excerpts from the Book

### 1

“What a miracle that God would take sinners and give us new hearts with a disposition to love him and trust him in the midst of our circumstances. Self-centered pity is conquered. Faithfulness is produced. This supernatural work of a loving God meets us in the laundry room, in line at the grocery store, or wherever you are. Praise God for the loving kindness he’s shown us through Jesus.”

– Divine Power and Precious Promises  
for the 2am Feeding, p. 86

### 2

“I humbly submit to you, if your heart is anything like mine, it doesn’t matter how well you have organized your storage closet, kid’s toys, or your in-box... If there is discontent bound up in your heart, then there is no room in your house where you can go and feel peace. You will, as I have, attempt to create the perfect environment that is rid of distractions so that you can focus. At the end of the day you will find out that the chaos isn’t your environment— it’s in your heart”

– Does Contentment in Christ  
come with a Nap?, p. 171

### 3

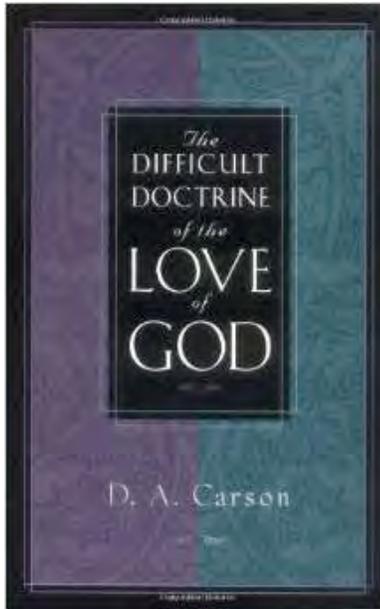
“God is a good Father, and he never, ever considers for one moment letting us remain satisfied with anything less than himself, because he is the most satisfying treasure in the whole wide world. Psalm 37:4 says, ‘Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.’ When our delight is in the Lord, the desire of our heart is the Lord.”

– Conclusion, p. 180

## The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God

Written by D.A. Carson

Bookstall Price \$14



When listing the most difficult doctrines, the love of God is not one that is consistently mentioned. The Trinity and the dual nature of Christ are mentioned, but the doctrine of God's love is almost assumed. Many simply assume that God loves all people equally. Yet, that simply isn't what scripture teaches.

In his work *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*, D.A. Carson seeks to show why the love of God is a difficult doctrine that believers should understand on a theological level. Carson gives five reasons a biblical understanding of

the love of God has been lost. First, he rightly argues that culturally many people say they believe in God and that he is a loving being, but their understanding of God's love has no basis in Scripture. Second, culture has set aside complementary truths about God and the result is "the love of God has been sanitized, democratized, and above all sentimentalized" (11). Third, a postmodern cultural shift to a pluralistic view of religions has made it hard for some to say God has a special love for his people. Fourth, the church has allowed cultural sentiment to influence its beliefs about the love of God, resulting in a view of God's love that is inconsistent with Scripture. Fifth, Carson points out that churches often present God's love as a simple doctrine and miss out on some of the teachings that make it more difficult to understand.

Carson spends the rest of the book on four key themes: The distortion of God's love; God is love; God's love and God's sovereignty; and God's love and God's wrath. He uses each of these sections to skillfully correct misguided and false assumptions about the love of God and help reconcile the perfect love of God with the perfect and just wrath of God. Carson uses Scripture to explain what the love of God truly is and how God in His sovereignty engages humanity. *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* provides a compelling case why the doctrine of the love of God is not a simple truth to be assumed and yet provides a strong theological foundation to gain a better understanding.

– RECOMMENDED BY ERIC BARBOUR

### Excerpts from the Book

## 1

"Equally however, all of God's will or choice or plan is never divorced from his love—just as it is never divorced from his justice, his holiness, his omniscience, and all his other perfections."

– God's Love and God's Sovereignty, p. 60

## 2

"The reason is that in itself, wrath, unlike love, is not one of the intrinsic perfections of God. Rather, it is a function of God's holiness against sin. Where there is no sin, there is no wrath, but there will always be love in God."

– The Love of God and the Wrath of God, p. 67

## 3

"God's wrath is not an implacable blind rage. However emotional it may be, it is an entirely reasonable and willed response to offenses against His holiness. At the same time His love wells up amidst His perfections and is not generated by the loveliness of the loved."

– The Love of God and the Wrath of God, p. 68



*All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned – every one – to his own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all*

– Isaiah 53:6

Christian, in this verse you read your personal story of God’s love in redemption – you, the guilty, are set free to live. As the modern hymn *Amazing Love* says,

My Lord, what love is this  
That pays so dearly  
That I, the guilty one  
May go free!

The prophet is unmistakably clear that everyone of us has “gone astray” and “turned to his own way.” Our “own way” epitomizes our sinful nature inherited from our first parents. It was they – Adam and Eve – who first chose to go their own way by obeying Satan. He is described in that epic Fall as “more crafty than any other beast” (Gen. 3:1), and it could not be a more fitting description, for his craft, that is his specialized trade, is to lead us astray from our Creator God.

But lest we be quick to cast all blame on him, look again at the prophet’s words: “All we like sheep have gone astray.” To be likened to a sheep is often commendable according to the biblical writers, but no so here. For here

we are reminded of the sheer stupidity and hopelessness there is in straying from God’s loving authority.

A sheep that strays from its shepherd abandons its only means of loving care, protection, and provision. Oh yes! It may live and be safe for a while; it may even enjoy fresh pastures for a season. But eventually it will get caught in a thicket or be hunted by wolves only to die. That is what the prophet likens our rebellion against God to. We believe there is freedom and pleasure in our wandering only to discover there is death, and a death rightly deserved.

Christian, how sweet it is that God revealed to you just how foolish your “own way” was! And do you feel the temptation penned by the hymnodist “prone to wander, Lord I feel it; prone to leave the God I love:” Then remember the joy of such undeserved love when the Lord laid on him – Christ, the Suffering Servant – *your* “iniquity,” *your* lawless rebellion. Could there be a greater love than that of redemption when God “for our sake he made (Christ) sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21)?

– BRAD THAYER

