Our Ambassadorship

The privilege, the responsibility, the fight, and the glory

A 10-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

These ten lessons are Keith Blades' study of our two-fold ambassadorship in this dispensation of grace: with the gospel of God's grace, and in connection with the mystery of the gospel. It is not mainly a how-to course but "a why to course." Keith examines the ambassadorship under four issues, in this order: the privilege (Lessons 1–2), the responsibility (Lessons 3–6), the fight (Lessons 7–9), and the glory (Lesson 10). That privilege — not guilt or obligation — is the only motivation God wants us to operate on. The first and foremost responsibility is to be trained by God His way; the fight is against the policy of evil in its three phases — attack the message, attack the messenger, discredit, discourage the messenger. And God Himself is glorified when we function as faithful ambassadors.

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Lesson Summaries

L1

The Privilege of Our Two-fold Ambassadorship *II Corinthians 2, 5 and 6; Ephesians 6 and 3: Laboring Together with God*

A Two-fold Ambassadorship

- In this dispensation of grace we have a two-fold ambassadorship on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ: with the gospel of God's grace, and with the mystery of the gospel
- Proclaiming the gospel of God's grace is the first and foremost aspect of our ambassadorship — the "first and foremost high privilege" of being ambassadors for Christ; the mystery of the gospel is also part of our ambassadorship, an aspect that often isn't appreciated as it ought to be

The Privilege, the Responsibility, the Fight, and the Glory

- Not mainly a how-to-witness course: understanding the privilege of being an ambassador for Christ gives the proper motivation for witnessing — grace motivation is the issue
- There is a great need for us to be faithful ambassadors; and there is a fight — a satanic policy of evil works directly against us, and Christians can even cooperate with false gospels, perversions of the gospel of Christ
- The glory of our ambassadorship primarily has to do with proclaiming the mystery of the gospel; the four issues together are the privilege, the responsibility, the fight, and the glory

Always Caused to Triumph (II Corinthians 2)

- Whether a savour of death unto death or of life unto life, what takes place is glorifying to God: Paul is caused to triumph in Christ — there is never a defeat

The Word of Reconciliation (II Corinthians 5)

- The word of reconciliation is the gospel of God's grace we have to proclaim — the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as our substitute Redeemer — the first and foremost aspect of our ambassadorship
- We bear a message on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ and of God the Father; when someone trusts Christ, God forgives their sins and makes them the righteousness of God in Christ, and reconciliation is accomplished

The Mystery of the Gospel (Ephesians 6 and 3)

- The word of reconciliation is not the only issue: Paul as "an ambassador in bonds" to make known "the mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6) is not speaking to the exclusion of the word of reconciliation
- In Ephesians 3:9 Paul is not simply talking about getting men saved, but

about teaching them the why of this dispensation of grace

- Those who believe the gospel of God's grace become members of the body of Christ and have the privilege of making an impact for God's honour and glory in the heavenly places — and an intense battle goes on in connection with that impact
- The mystery aspect is set aside until privilege, responsibility, fight and glory are covered for our ambassadorship with the word of reconciliation

Laboring Together with God, in Christ's Stead

- An ambassador represents a king in a foreign land; we represent God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our rightful home is heaven itself, and we are in enemy territory — which is why a fight ensues
- God runs the evangelism show; because of the sanctified position He has given us in His Son, He has enabled and privileged us to labor together with Him in it
- "we pray *you* in Christ's stead": instead of Christ doing it, He has privileged us to do it for Him; we explain and make the appeal, but we didn't make up the message — it's His words
- The grace of God not to be received in vain (II Corinthians 6:1) is the privilege of ambassadorship; the Corinthians had been receiving it in vain and weren't doing anything about it

L2

As a Son with the Father *Romans 6; Galatians 2 and 4; Philippians 2; I Corinthians 3: Our Sanctified Position and the Privilege*

Wrong Motivations vs. the Privilege

- Christians often witness motivated by guilt or obligation; obligation thinking associated with Israel's Great Commissions carries over and is not consistent with how God deals with us in this dispensation of grace
- The whole reason to witness is the privilege of God's grace in enabling us and granting us the right to do it — the only motivation God wants you to operate on

Our Sanctified Position (Romans 6)

- Ambassadorship is one aspect of the privilege we have to labor together with God because of our sanctified position in Christ, set forth in Romans as the second cornerstone to the edification of our souls
- Not water baptism: the Holy Spirit baptized us into Christ's death, burial and resurrection, making us dead unto sin and alive unto God and giving us a new identity
- Romans 6:11 is the summary verse of our identity in Christ in connection with our sanctification; newness of life is "walking consistent with the ones whose life we possess"
- God can now use our bodies as instruments of righteousness, and the fruit we bring forth as we walk consistent with who we are in Christ is acceptable to God's holiness

"that I might live unto God" (Galatians 2)

- Through Romans 6, 7 and 8 we are declared dead to three things — sin, the law and the flesh; being under grace is acknowledging those three deadnesses
- These verses in Galatians 2 are a synopsis of the Romans 6, 7, 8 teaching;

the issue in sanctification is that you can functionally live unto God right now

- One of the glories of sonship is for a son to labor with his father in his father's business — here the one operation of God under consideration: ambassadorship, God's evangelism business

Sons, Not Little Children (Galatians 4)

- Because God treats us as sons He has equipped us to labor with Him side by side in what He is doing, as a son with the father
- Sonship is not the same as salvation: everybody in God's program with Israel in time past who was justified unto eternal life — men like Daniel, Isaiah, Malachi and Jeremiah — was not treated as a son but as a little child; but as a Christian, you are a son in this dispensation of grace, not a little child. Israel will not get the adoption of sons until a kingdom is established

"as a son with the father" (Philippians 2; I Corinthians 3)

- Of Timothy Paul says, "as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel" — the sonship concept: a son is privileged to labor with his father and be fully educated in his father's business
- In I Corinthians 3:5 Paul does not use the word ambassador, but that is what he is talking about; the Corinthians were so ignorant of their sanctified position they did not see themselves as able to labor together with God
- The issue in sonship is as a son with the Father, not for the Father; God's evangelism show goes on with you or without you — if you won't, He'll use someone else and you miss out on the privilege

The Privilege of God's Grace Is the Reason

- Keeping a tally to declare yourself spiritual is not a reason; the privilege of God's grace is the reason
- Paul saw the love of Christ in the gospel committed to him and the honour of proclaiming it as an ambassador; being "allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel" is a privilege of God's grace

L3

Properly Trained by God: Romans 1 Through 5 *The Responsibility; the Parts of the Gospel; Wrath Consciousness (Romans 1:18–32)*

Two Realms of Impact; Four Issues

- We are ambassadors not only with the word of reconciliation but also with the mystery of the gospel — two realms of impact: the world of unsaved men, and the angelic realm
- Privilege is number one of the four issues, responsibility number two, the fight the third, and the glory the fourth; the privilege was covered in a fundamental sense in the first two lessons

Responsibility: Properly Trained by God

- The first thing under responsibility is being properly trained by God to be the ambassadors He has privileged us to be; there is also faithfulness to the message, to God the Father Himself, and to the overall cause
- Not so much a how-to course as a why-to course: the training we need is built into the divine design for our edification set forth in Romans through Philemon

Romans 1–5 Educates the Ambassador

- The first thing to be established in is the details of our own justification unto eternal life: God imputed Christ's righteousness to your account, permanently

reconciled you, and you are stuck being justified

- At the same time you are educated to function as an ambassador for Christ and take that same gospel you believed, and to detect perversions and distortions in people's thinking about the gospel
- We are God's spokesmen: it is not our wit, intelligence or logic — the power of God to salvation is resident in the gospel
- The gospel has a natural offensiveness and foolishness; making it more palatable — not emphasizing the blood — makes you an unfaithful ambassador; the first aspect of your responsibility as an ambassador is to get God's training

Three Parts of the Gospel, then the Assurance Doctrines

- The gospel of God's grace we proclaim today has three parts; the first, Romans 1:18–32, is wrath consciousness — as a natural human being one is worthy of God's wrath
- The second part, Romans 2:1–3:20: no man can escape the wrath of God by anything he may do; it equips you to handle every self-defense tactic
- The first two parts aren't good news at all; the third, Romans 3:21–26, is the good news itself — received as a free gift by faith in Christ as one's all-sufficient Savior
- The three parts of the gospel, and then the assurance doctrines: the ambassador has the privilege to continue the good news with what remains from Romans 3:27 through 5:21

Everyone Somewhere on the Line (Romans 1:18–3:20)

- Every individual you deal with is somewhere on the doctrinal line from Romans 1:18 to 3:20 — every unsaved man is someplace on that line
- A person who has gotten to the very point Romans 3:20 says is, with honesty of heart, ripe to hear the good news: start at Romans 3:21 — what they cannot provide for themselves, God has provided

Wrath Consciousness (Romans 1:18–32)

- Your first responsibility in witnessing is to make evident that Romans 1:18 is true of the hearer; Romans 1:28–32 is a list designed so anyone can recognize themselves on it — even children
- With a negative response to the first part of the gospel, on the basis of Romans 1:18 you know they are holding the truth in unrighteousness, going negative to the most basic light of God consciousness and wrath consciousness — and that is where you ought to leave them

L4

Self-Defense Tactics: the Second Part of the Gospel *Romans 2:1 – 3:20; the Good News of Romans 3:21–26*

The Second Part of the Gospel

- The first part of the gospel is wrath consciousness, God wanting all men aware they are worthy of God's wrath; their flesh nature immediately tries to come up with a way of self-justification, some way to satisfy themselves they can escape that wrath
- Romans 2:3 holds a key expression for all Paul deals with down through 3:20: the thinking of men trying to justify themselves and escape the judgment of God
- The ambassador functions much like Paul, as God's prosecuting attorney; the

goal is Romans 3:19–20 — "that every mouth may be stopped" — the man realizing he is guilty before God, with nothing he can do on his own

Five Categories — Really Four

- Paul gives the tactics in order of frequency or commonness: Romans 2:1–11, 2:12–16, 2:17–29 and 3:1–8; because of the persistence of one of them, he goes over one again in 3:9–20
- So Keith says there are five categories of self-defense tactics — "Really, there's only four, but the fifth one really is a reiteration of the first one"

Relative Righteousness (Romans 2:1–11)

- The first and most common tactic is relative righteousness — "I'm not as bad as some other people" — thinking God will judge by comparing members of the human race
- The ambassador asks the questions God asks, God's way; as verse 4 says, God is leading the man to repentance, a change of mind: "not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance"
- Verses 5–11 describe in advance the day of wrath and judgment; then it will be his righteousness compared to Jesus Christ's righteousness, not to the guy down the road

Extenuating Circumstances; the Jewish Self-Defense

- Tactic two (Romans 2:12–16), extenuating circumstances, is a peculiar Gentile response; something of their own nature, structure and function will condemn them in that day just as if the law had been given to them
- Tactic three (Romans 2:17–29) equips you to handle the unique Jewish self-defense: you need to make them realize there is no such thing as natural holiness and natural righteousness, which they think they have by nature

Tactic Four (Romans 3:1–8): Cease and Desist

- Tactic four comes out of Jewish thinking but isn't exclusive to it; Keith calls it a self-defense tactic, though "it really isn't" — the individual is persisting in one of the previous ones
- Persisting, he ends up blaspheming the grace of God; at "whose damnation is just" your ambassadorship to that individual ends and God expects you to cease and desist — though he could change his mind later

Tactic Five, the Good News, and the Training

- The fifth: if God would give his standard of righteousness, the man says he could keep it — that's where the law comes in; but God gave the law to manifest sinfulness, never for justification (Romans 3:9–20)
- Once they acknowledge they are guilty and can do nothing, they are ripe for the good news (Romans 3:21–26); the ambassador ceases as prosecuting attorney and functions in the full joy of his ambassadorship
- From Romans 3:27 through chapter 5 come the assurance doctrines: faith alone, works excluded; Abraham before the law and David under the law; and the initial three judicial results of justification
- Your first and foremost responsibility is to receive the training of Romans 1–5; having received it, you are responsible to faithfully proclaim it, faithful to the message regardless of the responses you get

L5 Stewards Found Faithful: Faithful to the Message *I Corinthians 4:1–2 and 1; Galatians 5:11 and 1:6–10; II Corinthians 2 and 4; I Thessalonians 2:4*

Two Aspects, Four Components

- Our ambassadorship primarily has two major components; the most obvious is ambassadorship with the gospel of God's grace, while ambassadorship with the mystery of the gospel is held for the final lessons of the series
- Four components are being examined — privilege, responsibility, the fight and the glory; the fight cannot be appreciated until privilege and responsibility are first seen

"found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:1–2)

- Paul dealt with faithfulness because the Corinthians went by the outward appearance; the issue is not how the minister looks but faithfulness to what he has been entrusted to do
- A steward has a responsibility entrusted to him, something given him to dispense to others; faithfulness is what God is concerned with
- Faithfulness breaks down into three components: faithfulness to the message; faithfulness to the one who has privileged us — really, to the opportunities given us; and remaining loyal, or faithful, to the cause
- Keith uses the word loyalty for the third to lead into the fight; this lesson takes up faithfulness to the message itself, and Lesson 6 continues with the one we represent

Natural Offensiveness and Foolishness (I Corinthians 1)

- The gospel of God's grace is not naturally welcomed by human nature; it has a natural offensiveness to the pride and ego of man, and the faithful ambassador is not to try to avoid that
- The self-defense tactics of the second part of the gospel give a psychoanalysis of an unsaved man — all arising because his pride and ego is offended by being worthy of God's wrath
- Going through them makes it so the flesh cannot glory in God's presence: "That no flesh should glory in his presence"

Not Softening the Message (Galatians 5:11; 1:6–10)

- The tendency is to adjust, soften or make the message more palatable, which would not be faithfulness; only remaining faithful to it exposes that the foolishness is in the hearer's thinking, not in the message
- Preaching circumcision would give works to do, the offense of the cross is gone, and the persecution stops; one great ally of the adversary is the message's natural offensiveness and foolishness
- Being an ambassador by position does not make one faithful in practice; as the Galatians talked to people about how to be saved, they were unfaithful ambassadors, proclaimers of another gospel
- The best way to please men is to preach a perversion of the gospel of Christ; the servant of Christ is to be faithful to the message, pleasing not men but God who entrusted it

Not Corrupting the Word of God (II Corinthians 2 and 4)

- "we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God": the corruption Paul means is watering down the gospel to remove its offensiveness and foolishness — handling the word of God deceitfully
- Functioning as an ambassador for Christ is a privilege of God's grace (I Thessalonians 2:4); we will not speak a message pleasing to men, but be faithful to the message
- The first component is to stand faithful to the exact message entrusted to us, regardless; it is not our responsibility to try and alter, swerve around or avoid

the expected response, and the judgment seat of Christ will evaluate our function

L6

Faithful to the Opportunities, Loyal to the Cause *II Corinthians 5:19 – 6:2; Titus 2; I Thessalonians 1–2; Philippians 2*

An Ambassador Is to Speak

- Two more components of faithfulness remain: faithfulness to the one who has privileged us, and faithfulness — loyalty — to the cause of our ambassadorship, especially in the face of opposition from the satanic policy of evil
- An ambassador's job is to speak, not to sit there like a piece of furniture; the message committed to us is the word of reconciliation, and that word has to come out of your mouth
- The message has God's beseeching in it — "as though God did beseech *you* by us" — and God has privileged us to be His mouthpiece

Faithful to the Opportunities (II Corinthians 6:1–2)

- Keith first described the second aspect as faithfulness to the one who has privileged us, and it is certainly that; in particular it is faithfulness to the opportunities
- We are laborers together with God; He calls people by the gospel and uses our mouth to make the call; as opportunities occur, the Corinthians are to "receive not the grace of God in vain"

Adorning the Doctrine; Good Works (Titus 2)

- The cure is to let the privilege of our ambassadorship take a grip upon you; the fountain for all ambition, enthusiasm and delight is realizing who you are in your sanctified position in Christ
- To "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour" — adorn, not adore — is to decorate it, to manifest its beauty; the major ones that see that are the angelic beings
- One grand privileged category of good works is to labor with Him in this dispensation of grace, including evangelism — hence we are ambassadors for Christ

The Thessalonians: "sounded out the word of the Lord"

- Most of us function more like the Corinthians, receiving the grace of God in vain; Thessalonian-type saints are in the minority
- The word of the Lord sounding out is not terminology for two or three people occasionally talking about the gospel; it describes their ambassadorship, part of the work of faith — as opportunities existed they took them, and created them

Loyal to the Cause: Afflictions of the Gospel

- Loyal to the cause means remaining faithful regardless of the opposition; if the policy of evil cannot get you to become an unfaithful ambassador, its goal is to intimidate you and get you to clam up
- Phase two of the satanic policy of evil, the intimidation tactics, and phase three, the discrediting, discouraging, dejecting tactics, were taking their toll on Timothy
- With a fight going on, afflictions of the gospel are to be expected: the psychological afflictions of responses to its offensiveness and foolishness,

and persecution from the policy of evil to intimidate you into silence

- Loyalty means sticking it out to the end regardless of the responses you get — just being the ambassador and leaving the consequences to God Himself

Bold in Our God; Holding Forth the Word of Life

- The Thessalonians received the word "in much affliction" and counted it a joy to be ambassadors on enemy turf; Paul's boldness came from the doctrine, and the result of boldness is remaining loyal to the cause
- The policy of evil works to make the Philippians draw the light back in; deliverance from phase two amounts to remaining faithful to the cause and continuing to hold forth the word of life

L7

The Fight and the Satanic Policy of Evil *II Timothy 4:6–8; I Timothy 1; II Timothy 1*

The Fight Begins

- The fight needs at least lessons 7 and 8; it comes down to an endeavor to make us unfaithful to the message, unfaithful to the opportunities, and not loyal to the cause
- The present focus is our ambassadorship with the gospel of God's grace and witnessing to the unsaved; the ambassadorship with the mystery of the gospel is reserved until the end, and the four issues — privilege, responsibility, fight and glory — are to be brought along with us
- Satan has a policy of evil against Israel and God's program with them, and one against us today as members of the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace

"I have fought a good fight" (II Timothy 4:6–7)

- There are three phases to the satanic policy of evil against us in this dispensation of grace; all the armor of Ephesians 6 is designed to handle them
- In his last epistle Paul's three expressions — "I have fought a good fight," "I have finished *my* course," "I have kept the faith" — show him withstanding phase one, two and three respectively

Phase One: Attack the Message

- Phase one attacks the message committed to us for and about this dispensation of grace, to produce doctrinal corruption in our hearts and minds — unfaithful ambassadors proclaiming a corrupted message
- A corrupted message leads believers to try to follow things from Israel's program, not in effect in this dispensation of grace, and keeps God's Word from effectually working within us
- Hymenaeus and Alexander, who made shipwreck concerning faith, taught out of the Bible but did not rightly divide the word of truth or recognize the dispensational change

Phase Two: Attack the Messenger

- If phase one fails, phase two attacks the messenger, to get you to clam up and not take hold of your opportunities; in "I have finished *my* course" Paul was not deterred off his course
- II Timothy especially deals with phase two: the personal attacks were taking their toll, a spirit of fear was developing in Timothy, and doing the work of an evangelist was one of the first things he shut down

Phase Three: Discredit the Messenger

- Phase three is to discredit you as the messenger — Keith adds, "Actually involves more than that" — discredit, discourage the messenger, producing such discouragement that you voluntarily retreat or give up
- "I have kept the faith" involves a perseverance concept; rumors that Paul was a common criminal, an evildoer, were discrediting him, and that is why they were leaving him
- The three phases are true in the overall general sense and in the particular sense; what is said now of our ambassadorship with the gospel of God's grace will also be true of our ambassadorship with the mystery of the gospel

Three Phases, Three Components; Other Gospels and Perversions

- There are three components of faithfulness because there are three phases: faithful to the message because phase one attacks the message; phase two intimidates you and depletes your ambition to preach the gospel when you have the opportunity; faithful to the cause regardless because phase three discredits and discourages
- Through other gospels and perversions the policy of evil aims to keep the unsaved unsaved, believing a gospel that can't save them; Satan also seeks to get you to proclaim them yourself, picking up common gospel-perverted cliches
- A gospel of works for salvation, outright or mixed with faith in Christ, is a perversion of the gospel of Christ; the gospel of God's grace is salvation by grace through faith alone without works of any kind at any time

L8

Remaining Faithful to the Gospel Message Itself *Galatians 1; Philippians 1–2; II Timothy 2; Romans 1–3, 11:6: the Three Phases and Four Gospel Clichés*

Phase One: Attack the Message (Galatians 1)

- The three phases of the policy of evil: phase one, attack the message; phase two, attack the messenger; phase three, discredit, discourage the messenger
- The Galatians became unfaithful ambassadors for Christ — they were really going to become ambassadors for Satan rather than for Christ
- God does not have two gospels in effect in this dispensation of grace; the other gospel is not another valid gospel, and no one can get saved by it
- A perversion of the gospel of Christ doesn't deny Christ died upon the cross; the perversion is saying that God's requirement of faith alone in Christ alone isn't enough

Phase Two: Attack the Messenger (Philippians 1–2)

- Phase two of the policy of evil clicks in against you, and the attacks become personal against you as the messenger; against Paul the goal was, if he could not be got to proclaim a false message, to get him to shut up with the truth
- The Philippians were not victimized by phase one, so they began to suffer under phase two just like Paul did — some thrown into prison and under the sentence of death
- A conversation "as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27) is to take hold of every opportunity and not clam up; the goal was to have them no longer remain faithful to the opportunities

- There are many kinds of salvation in the Bible; in Philippians 2:12, having given them the doctrine, Paul has them work out their own salvation from phase two, so they are not ashamed and are bold to take the opportunities

Phase Three: Discredit and Discourage (II Timothy 2)

- Phase three is to discredit and produce great discouragement so that you voluntarily give up; it came upon Paul as an ambassador, but though he was in prison, "the word of God is not bound" (II Timothy 2:9)
- Even though Paul could not see any fruit of what he was doing, he knew it was there; the doctrine, not the circumstances, dictated his evaluation — that is how you survive phase three

Phase One the Most Important

- If you do not become victimized by phase one, phase two will follow, and if you do not become victimized by phase two, phase three will follow; don't expect phase two if you become victimized by phase one — remaining faithful to the gospel message itself is the most important thing of all

Other Gospels and the Gospel of Christ

- Other gospels are legitimate Bible gospels — such as the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 3) — but not the gospel God proclaims in this dispensation of grace; no one can get saved today believing the gospel of the kingdom
- The gospel of Christ (Romans 1:15–3:26) is the legitimate gospel to proclaim in this dispensation of grace; its good news has two major components: the work of salvation all done for us by Christ's redemptive work, and no works to be performed to obtain it
- A perversion adds works of any kind at any time to faith in Christ; grace and works are mutually exclusive (Romans 11:6), and the only thing compatible with grace is faith, a non-meritorious way of receiving something

Four Popular Gospel Clichés

- Keith takes four popular gospel clichés as typical examples of perversions of the gospel of Christ: "Make Jesus the Lord of your life," "Turn from your sins and accept Christ," "Commit your life to Christ," "Invite Jesus into your heart"
- These expressions subtly inject works: each describes works of service, it is impossible for an unsaved man to do any of them, and none of them is found in Romans 1–5

L9

Gospel Clichés: Christian Service Confused with Salvation *II Corinthians 5; Romans 6, 2 and 12; II Thessalonians 2; II Corinthians 2; Ephesians 6: Four Clichés and Standing Fast*

Salvation Confused with Christian Service

- The four gospel clichés on the board: "make Jesus the Lord of your life, turn from sin and accept Christ, commit your life to Christ, or invite Jesus into your heart or into your life"
- These expressions describe works of Christian service a saved person really ought to be doing; Christian service confused with salvation itself is the most common way perversions of the gospel take place, and the most subtle, because the Bible itself is used to produce the perversion
- None of these expressions is found in the gospel of God's grace in Romans 1–5; the concepts are found in passages like Romans 6–8, Romans 12–16, Ephesians 4–6 and Colossians 3

- Ambassadors must spell out that God's sole requirement is faith placed in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior — not a work at all — and that works are only an issue once saved

Make Jesus the Lord of Your Life (II Corinthians 5)

- Proponents of what is called lordship salvation say you can't be saved without making Jesus the Lord of your life; Paul makes it plain that the only appropriate place for making Jesus Lord is once you are already saved — it's not how you get saved
- It's salvation that gives you life and the capacity to live unto God; living unto God first requires being identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, a gift of God's grace that is part of the salvation package
- Telling an unsaved man to make Jesus Lord is telling him to do something absolutely impossible for him in order to be saved; justification and sanctification have to be there first — it is an issue of Christian service

Turn from Sin and Accept Christ (Romans 6 and 2)

- It is absolutely impossible for someone God has not justified and sanctified to turn from their sins; Romans 6 teaches it as one of the fruits of sanctification — only those dead to sin can turn from sin; an unsaved man is dead in sin
- Repentance does not mean to turn from sin; it means to change your mind. In Romans 2 it concerns no longer thinking one's works can contribute to salvation, and it is needed every time one of these gospel clichés is used

Commit Your Life to Christ (Romans 12:1–2)

- This is the same thing as making Jesus the Lord of your life, worded another way; Romans 12:1–2 is not telling the Romans how to get saved, but addresses saints already justified and sanctified
- Acts of Christian dedication and Christian service are only appropriate when you are a Christian; you can't become a Christian by doing them

Invite Jesus into Your Heart (II Thessalonians 2:14)

- God doesn't use that terminology in His gospel; Paul says God is the one who does the calling, so the expression has the whole thing backwards — God offers salvation as a free gift, and you take it by faith
- Salvation is offered as a free gift and taken by faith; that doesn't require anybody to walk down an aisle, perform some ceremony or submit to some ritual. Revelation 3:20 has nothing to do with the Lord appealing to a sinner to trust Him as Savior

Standing Fast; the Other Aspect

- Stand fast against phase one of the policy of evil; as you stand fast for phase one, you will incur phase two, the attacks upon you as the messenger to intimidate you into silence, and it is easy to become dejected, despondent and discouraged
- Paul understood he was "unto God a sweet savour of Christ" regardless of the response (II Corinthians 2:15); the issue is the privilege — if God Himself is the only one who smiles at what you say, that's all the reason you need
- All of this is also true of the other aspect of the ambassadorship, having the mystery of the gospel to proclaim to the saved — helping them to recover themselves out of the snare of the devil; Paul requested prayer to proclaim the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19–20)

L10

The Glory of Our Ambassadorship *II Corinthians 5; I Thessalonians 2; Ephesians 3; Colossians 1; II Timothy 2: Privilege, Impact, Deliverance*

The Glory of It: the Final Matter

- The ambassadorship has been treated under four matters: the privilege of it, the responsibility of it, the fight of it, and in this final lesson, the glory of it
- The series deals with the why-to rather than the how-to; understanding these things gives all the whys you need to be enthusiastic, ambitious and zealous as the ambassador for Christ you are
- God could have put the gospel of His grace in the hands of angels and not used us at all; understood from God's viewpoint, it is a good fight, a good warfare, with a glory associated with it by nature

God Himself Is Glorified

- God Himself is glorified when we function as faithful ambassadors — as we walk after the Spirit and live unto Him; for the most part this glory doesn't come from men on earth, but God Himself, especially in the face of His angels, gets glorified

The Glory of the Privilege, on Both Counts

- The two aspects of our ambassadorship: ambassadors with the gospel of salvation for the unsaved, and ambassadors with the mystery of the gospel for the saved
- The grace of God has granted us the privilege of being His spokesman for "the word of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:19–20); there is glory in seeing an individual who responds pass from death unto life
- In I Thessalonians 2:4, "allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel" is the privilege, and there is downright glory associated with it
- As ambassadors with the mystery of the gospel for the full edification of the saved, there is glory in the pure privilege of that — a glorious grace privilege of God unto us

The Glory of the Impact (Ephesians 3:10)

- Ephesians 3:10 speaks of the impact made with the fellowship of the mystery in the face of "principalities and powers in heavenly *places*"
- God is going to reconcile the positions of principality, power, might and dominion back to Himself through the agency of the new creation, the church, the body of Christ He is forming in this dispensation
- If God Himself is the only one who hears what you say, you are "unto God a sweet savour of Christ" regardless, and He is happy to hear it

The Glory of the Deliverance

- Glory is associated with the deliverance that takes place the moment an individual trusts the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior — they not only receive deliverance from the debt and penalty of their sins, but they have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated to the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1)
- There is also glory in the deliverance ambassadors with the mystery of the gospel take part in; the main goal of phase one of Satan's policy of evil is to keep members of the body of Christ doctrinally immature, as children tossed to and fro
- The adversary works to keep the mystery a mystery and have Christians conduct themselves as if under Israel's program; he doesn't care whether you're scriptural — the last thing he wants you to be is dispensational
- Timothy is encouraged not to cave in under phase three; those in the snare of

the devil (II Timothy 2:24–26) are believers, not unbelievers, and need a doctrinal deliverance — when one recovers, God Himself is glorified

Closing the Series

- Take hold of the privilege, remain faithful to the responsibility, and fight the good fight of the faith; it may not be until the judgment seat of Christ that all the glory comes to bear home, but appreciate it right now

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

One Two-fold Ambassadorship: the Word of Reconciliation and the Mystery of the Gospel

Keith calls it a two-fold ambassadorship. Witnessing with the gospel of God's grace is "the first and foremost high privilege" of being ambassadors for Christ; our ambassadorship also involves the mystery of the gospel and what God is doing in this dispensation of grace. The word of reconciliation in II Corinthians 5 is the gospel of God's grace — the good news of Christ's death, burial and resurrection — and "that's the first and foremost aspect of our ambassadorship." The mystery aspect is one that often "isn't really appreciated as it ought to be." Keith gives the two aspects to our ambassadorship: ambassadors with the gospel of salvation for the unsaved, and ambassadors with the mystery of the gospel for the saved — the latter an ambassadorship we work out among ourselves as members of the body of Christ. There ought to be the same kind of zeal to witness to an unsaved man as for telling a confused member of the body of Christ about the dispensation of grace; the privilege, responsibility and fight issues apply "equally as well" to the mystery of the gospel for the edification of the saved.

The Mystery of the Gospel: the Impact in the Heavenly Places

In Ephesians 3:9 Paul is not simply talking about getting men saved but about teaching the why of this dispensation of grace — making all men see "what *is* the fellowship of the mystery." Ephesians 3:10 speaks of the impact made with the fellowship of the mystery in the face of principalities and powers in heavenly places: God is going to reconcile those positions back to Himself "through the agency of the new creation, the church, the body of Christ." It is not simply God's purpose in Christ to reconcile the earthly sphere; His plan is to reconcile the heavenly sphere unto Himself as well, and to unify both realms under the one imperial headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Keith says the glory of our ambassadorship primarily has to do with proclaiming the mystery of the gospel — a special category of glory — though he does not mean there is no glory with the gospel of salvation to the lost.

Sons Today vs. Little Children in Time Past

Because God treats us as sons, He has equipped us to labor with Him side by side, as a son with the father. Sonship is not the same as salvation: in God's program with Israel in time past, everybody who was justified unto eternal life was not treated by God as a son — men like Daniel, Isaiah, Malachi and Jeremiah were treated as little children — and Israel will not get the adoption of sons until a kingdom is established. But "as a Christian, you're a son in this dispensation of grace, not a little child." The issue in sonship is laboring "as a son with the Father, not as a son for the Father" — laborers together with God, not for Him.

Ambassador by Position vs. Faithful in Practice

Keith says, “Just because you're an ambassador by position doesn't mean you're going to automatically be a faithful one in practice.” God gave a message with a natural offensiveness and foolishness to the human heart; trying to make it more palatable — such as not emphasizing the blood — makes you an unfaithful ambassador, functioning as the satanic policy of evil wants. The foolishness is not in the message but in the thinking of the hearer, and remaining faithful to the message is the only thing that can expose that. When it comes to your ambassadorship, “the best way to please men is to preach a perversion of the gospel of Christ”; the issue is not pleasing men, but God who entrusted you with the message.

Other Gospels vs. Perversions of the Gospel of Christ

Satan has things called other gospels and things called perversions of the gospel of Christ. Other gospels include legitimate Bible gospels that are not the gospel for this dispensation of grace, such as the gospel of the kingdom; you can’t legitimately tell someone the kingdom of heaven is at hand today, because it’s not; Israel’s program is temporarily suspended. A perversion of the gospel of Christ does not deny that Christ died upon the cross; it says God’s requirement of faith alone in Christ alone isn’t enough, adding works of any kind at any time to faith in Christ. God does not have two gospels in effect in this dispensation of grace; something “either has to be 100% by grace or 100% by works.”

Salvation vs. Christian Service: the Four Gospel Clichés

Keith’s four typical examples: “make Jesus the Lord of your life, turn from sin and accept Christ, commit your life to Christ, or invite Jesus into your heart or into your life, or into your heart and life.” These expressions describe works of Christian service that a saved person ought to be involved in doing; confusing Christian service with salvation itself is the most common way the gospel is perverted, and the most subtle, because the Bible itself is used to produce the perversion. None of these expressions is found in the gospel of God’s grace in the first five chapters of Romans; God’s sole requirement is faith placed in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, and that is not a work at all. Only those who are dead to sin can turn from sin — an unsaved man is dead in sin; and repentance does not mean to turn from sin but to change your mind.

Israel’s Program vs. the Dispensation of Grace

Obligation thinking associated with Israel’s Great Commissions carries over and is not consistent with how God is dealing with us in this dispensation of grace. The law is not the standard by which God deals with us today; as Paul taught in Romans 6, we are not under law but under grace. Phase one of the satanic policy of evil is to attack the message, produce doctrinal corruption and deceive Christians; he’d rather have Christians trying to live by the Bible but not trying to follow God’s program for this dispensation of grace: “he doesn't care whether you're scriptural. The last thing he wants you to be is dispensational.” The snare of the devil in II Timothy 2 catches Christians — the doctrinal snare that gets them to depart from the truth for and about this dispensation of grace and operate under Israel’s program; ambassadors with the mystery of the gospel have the privilege of being involved in providing for their deliverance.

Key Scripture References

Matthew 3	The gospel of the kingdom: a legitimate Bible gospel, but not the gospel God wants proclaimed this dispensation of grace
Romans 1:15–17	Paul not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; the power of God to salvation is resident in the gospel
Romans 1:18–32	First part of the gospel: wrath consciousness
Romans 2:1 – 3:20	Second part of the gospel: the self-defense tactics — Keith says five, though “Really, there's only four”
Romans 2:1–11	Relative righteousness, the most common tactic; God leading the man to repentance, a change of mind
Romans 3:1–8	“whose damnation is just” — the ambassadorship to that individual ends
Romans 3:21–26	Third part of the gospel: the good news itself
Romans 3:27 – 5:21	Taking them through the assurance doctrines
Romans 6	Our sanctified position — verse 11 the summary verse; turning from sin taught as one of the fruits of sanctification
Romans 12:1–2	Addressed to saints already justified and sanctified — not how to get saved
I Corinthians 1:17–29	The natural foolishness of the preaching of the cross; making it so that the flesh cannot glory in God’s presence
I Corinthians 3:5–9	“labourers together with God” — laborers with Him, not for Him
I Corinthians 4:1–2	“it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful”
II Corinthians 2:14–17	Always caused to triumph in Christ; “unto God a sweet savour of Christ” regardless of the response
II Corinthians 4:1–6	Minds blinded by another message; the light shone in the face of Jesus Christ
II Corinthians 5:14–15	The love of Christ constraining; making Jesus Lord is the natural response once saved, not how to get saved
II Corinthians 5:18–21	The word of reconciliation — the first and foremost aspect of our ambassadorship; “in Christ's stead”
II Corinthians 6:1–2	Workers together with Him; not receiving the grace of God in vain — faithful to the opportunities
II Corinthians 11:3–4, 13–15	Another gospel; Satan’s ministers of human righteousness
Galatians 1:6–10	What the Galatians ended up believing was a perversion of the gospel of Christ; the best way to please men is to preach a perversion of the gospel of Christ
Galatians 4:4–6	The doctrine of sonship; justified saints in God’s program with Israel were not treated as sons
Ephesians 3:7–11	The fellowship of the mystery; the impact in the face of principalities and powers in heavenly places
Ephesians 4:11–14	Full education unto a perfect man, versus children “tossed to and fro”

Ephesians 6:18–20	Paul “an ambassador in bonds” for the mystery of the gospel
Philippians 2:12–16	Working out their own salvation from phase two; “holding forth the word of life”
Colossians 1:12 ff.	Delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son
I Thessalonians 1:3–8	The work of faith; from the Thessalonians the word of the Lord sounded out
I Thessalonians 2:4	“allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel” — a privilege of God’s grace
II Timothy 1:3–8	Timothy affected by phase two: a spirit of fear, the gift of God dwindling
II Timothy 2:24–26	Believers caught in “the snare of the devil” and helped to recover
II Timothy 4:6–8	Fought, finished, kept: Paul’s withstanding of the three phases of the policy of evil
Revelation 3:20	Nothing to do with the Lord appealing to a sinner