

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 7

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome and to us today about the fundamentals of the Gospel of Grace.

And if I was going to use one word to summarize this entire letter – it would be the word, “Freedom”

Because His grace brings the believer - freedom

Freedom from the problem of sin (Romans 1-3)

Freedom from the penalty of sin (Romans 3-5)

And over past few weeks – as we have begun this amazing new portion of the letter – (Romans 6,7,8) Paul has and will be telling us how the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has given us freedom from the power of sin.

As a believer,

We no longer have a sinful nature

We have one nature – Christ’s nature

We are a new creation

The old man is dead

Sin no longer has dominion over the believer

We are no longer a slave to sin

We have a new Master – a new allegiance

We are to walk in obedience what our Master's will

And He gives us the ability to walk in the newness – all we have do is simply allow the Holy Spirit to transform us.

We lean on Him

Grace transforms us

He does the work

It is a process - sanctification

So why do we still sin – why does it sometimes feel that we really are not free – that we are still in bondage to sin?

One of the reasons is –

habits – remember the illustration of the chicken with the head cut off.

But there is another bump in the road in the path to sanctification –

And this is what Paul is going to talk about this morning.

That we begin in grace –

We experience freedom from the problem of sin and the penalty of sin

but then at some point in our walk, we revert back to a legal way of relating to God.

We go back into bondage

Following a list of dos and don't's

Failing to follow the list of dos and don't's

Which ultimately leads to a life of condemnation

Not only condemnation upon our own lives but then we become critical of others for not failing to keep the rule that we were incapable of keeping ourselves.

The answer – Jesus.

Let's pray...

Read Text

[Rom 6:14-15 NKJV] 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

We are not under the law but under grace (Paul repeats it twice)— turn to the person next to you and kindly remind them of that.

As I have mentioned before – Paul understands that there are many who are going to read this letter and they are going to argue that grace is a license to sin.

That people will just do whatever they desire.

And the reason that we read verse 14 and 15 is because the first part of chapter 7 is actually connected to our study from last Sunday.

Paul rejects the notion that believers have been set free from sin in order to serve sin.

Jesus didn't die on the cross so that we can continue to be in bondage to sin.

He died and rose again to give us the power over sin.

To give us freedom from sin.

And so here in chapter 7 – Paul is actually going to turn the argument around and say that those who are under the law are really the ones in bondage of sin.

[Rom 7:1-6 NKJV] 1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

Notice who he's writing this to – “those who know the law.”

Paul is speaking to Jews and Gentiles – those who had come to faith in God

So far in Romans, Paul has made it abundantly clear that grace supersedes the Law.

He knew some of his readers, who'd all their whole lives been told the Law was a pathway to God & righteousness, would be struggling, wanting to know, "If righteousness is a gift God bestows on us by grace, what IS our relationship to the Law?"

What role does the Law play?"

Keep in mind - There's a persistent tendency with us to reduce our relationship with God to a set of rules & disciplines that we think is all God wants from us.

That's just a twisted form of legalism.

And we have to be very careful – because sometimes we can become legalistic without realizing.

I will give you an example.

Today is January 28th.

One January 1st – many of us made resolutions

Some of those resolutions were regarding our spiritual walk –

We desire a deeper relationship with the Lord

So we made resolutions to read our bibles, do daily devotionals and set aside time of prayer – everyday.

1st week – we get an “A”, 7 for 7

7 checks for the week

We are doing great!!!

2nd and 3rd week – same thing.

21 checks for the month

We go to work / to the store, see a brother or a sister in Christ– ask them how their spiritual walk is going.

4th week – a hiccup. Forgot to set my alarm one day – woke up late. Didn't do my devotional, my daily bible reading or spend time with the Lord.

Next day however – get back on track

But even though, I am back on track, I can't help myself by looking back and seeing how I have a missed day – even though I am back on track, the fact that I missed the day continues to condemn me, continues to remind me that I failed – and it doesn't feel good.

So this makes me a very critical person and a very condemning person to others.

This is what happens when we live according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit – this is a legalistic life.

And here is the thing to understand church - living a logistic life is a constant burden that God never intended us to carry.

Jesus didn't die for us so that we would always be looking over our shoulders or looking backwards because we have failed.

Here is a news flash.

God already knows that we have failed.

[Rom 5:8 NKJV] 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

So we live and walk by grace – not under the law

And here is why,

Because the law exercises no authority over the dead.

Let's look at the illustration that Paul is going to use.

2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to [her] husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of [her] husband. 3 So then if, while [her] husband lives, she marries another man, she

will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

In Genesis 2:24

We have God's design for marriage.

[Gen 2:24 NKJV] 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

And we pretty much spend the rest of our lives trying to figure out which one.

Now – it is very important that we don't lose sight of what Paul is saying here because it is simple but very profound.

Here is the point that Paul is making –

As long as a husband and wife live, they are under the authority of the law of marriage.

If the woman leaves her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery

If the husband dies, she is free to remarry.

And the reason is that death breaks the marriage relationship.

And so the point of the illustration is that death changes a legal relationship

It frees up a person to enter into a new relationship

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another--to Him who was raised from the dead, that **we should bear fruit to God.**

This is what Paul is saying –

Our death in Christ releases us from one union and united us to another union.

By our first birth, we were bound to the law

All of us apart from Christ – we were married to the law

As long as we were alive the law was condemning our sin.

The only way out is death.

But our faith in Christ identifies us with Him, as it says so clearly in Chapter 6

when He died on the cross, what we were before we came to faith in

Him, died with Him.

and when he rose from the dead, we rose to a new life as well

all of this is pictured in baptism

We are now, born again

no longer under the rule of law,

we are now bound to Christ – into the freedom of grace.

In the illustration – the husband died

But the application doesn't match the illustration.

In order for the wife to remarry – she is going to have to die and be brought back to life

–

Again a picture of baptism.

Coming to faith in Jesus means God terminates our relationship to the Law & marries us to His Son.

We cannot simply ignore the law or pretend that it is not there – for everyone, apart from Christ – they are still under the Law.

They are not under the grace -

They are still going to be judged on the basis of their works.

None of us could ever live up to the standard of the law – it is holy, it is righteous, it is good – but here is the thing – we are not.

And so since the law would not die – we are the ones that have to die, in Jesus Christ.

We are the ones that have to yield

We are the ones that had to repent

And once we throw off the burdens of legalism – fruitfulness becomes the main part of our lives.

I had you make a note of the last portion of the verse –

Our union with Jesus Christ – will result in fruitfulness – we will bear fruit unto God

Turn your bibles with me to John 15

[Jhn 15:5-8 NKJV] 5 “I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw [them] into the fire, and they are burned. 7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

This is the work of grace –

This is His work in us as we lean on Him.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

When we were in the flesh – meaning apart from Christ –

Because we were bound to the law – the law didn’t simply reveal our sin.

The law provoked our sin.

Here is why –

Apart from Christ, we were lost and in rebellion to God. You guys agree?

We were all rebels.

Some may express that rebellion in more obvious ways than others, but we were all rebels to one degree or another.

And here is the thing about rebels – it is their nature to rebel.

There is something perverse in our hearts that is provoked by the Law or by any rules.

I am pretty sure that we have all heard this phrase –
rules were meant to be what?

Broken.

Doctor says – “avoid foods high in sugar and processed foods” – and then we have our church potlucks.

The sign on I19 says 65 MPH – but that seems so slow

Think about the Garden of Eden

God gave Adam and Eve complete liberty

Adam and Eve were not in a one tree garden

There was an infinite amount of trees where they could have eaten the fruit of those trees.

There was one tree which they did not have access to.

There was one rule

There was one prohibition

And with a little encouragement from the serpent – plus the desires of the flesh – we have rebellion to God's will.

That is the function of the law

To simply reveals to us the passions and desires of our hearts.

That if we are left to our devices – the idea to do what we want instead of what God wants for our lives becomes very enticing.

[Gal 3:19-25 NKJV] 19 What purpose then [does] the law [serve]? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; [and it was] appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator does not [mediate] for one [only], but God is one. 21 [Is] the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22

But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor [to bring us] to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

The purpose of the law was to show us that we were rebels – apart from Christ

To show us that we are incapable meeting God's standard of perfection on our own.

To show us that we need a Savior.

And so – we have a choice to make

We can identify with Christ and die to self and be abide in Him and produce fruit as we abide in Him

Or we can stay bound to the law and produce death

6 But now – here is another big but of the bible

This is in contrast to what we just read about when we were married to the law and provoked by the law

we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not [in] the oldness of the letter.

The believer in Jesus Christ has been delivered from the law –

In what way?

Because we are dead

The law has no obligation to dead people

That means that we are free of having to follow the external rules and conduct that were prescribed by the law.

Our motivation is no longer following a list of dos and don't's

Our motivation, our empowerment comes directly from the Holy Spirit who lives inside of us.

And we are challenged to live out the love of Jesus

And the character of Jesus

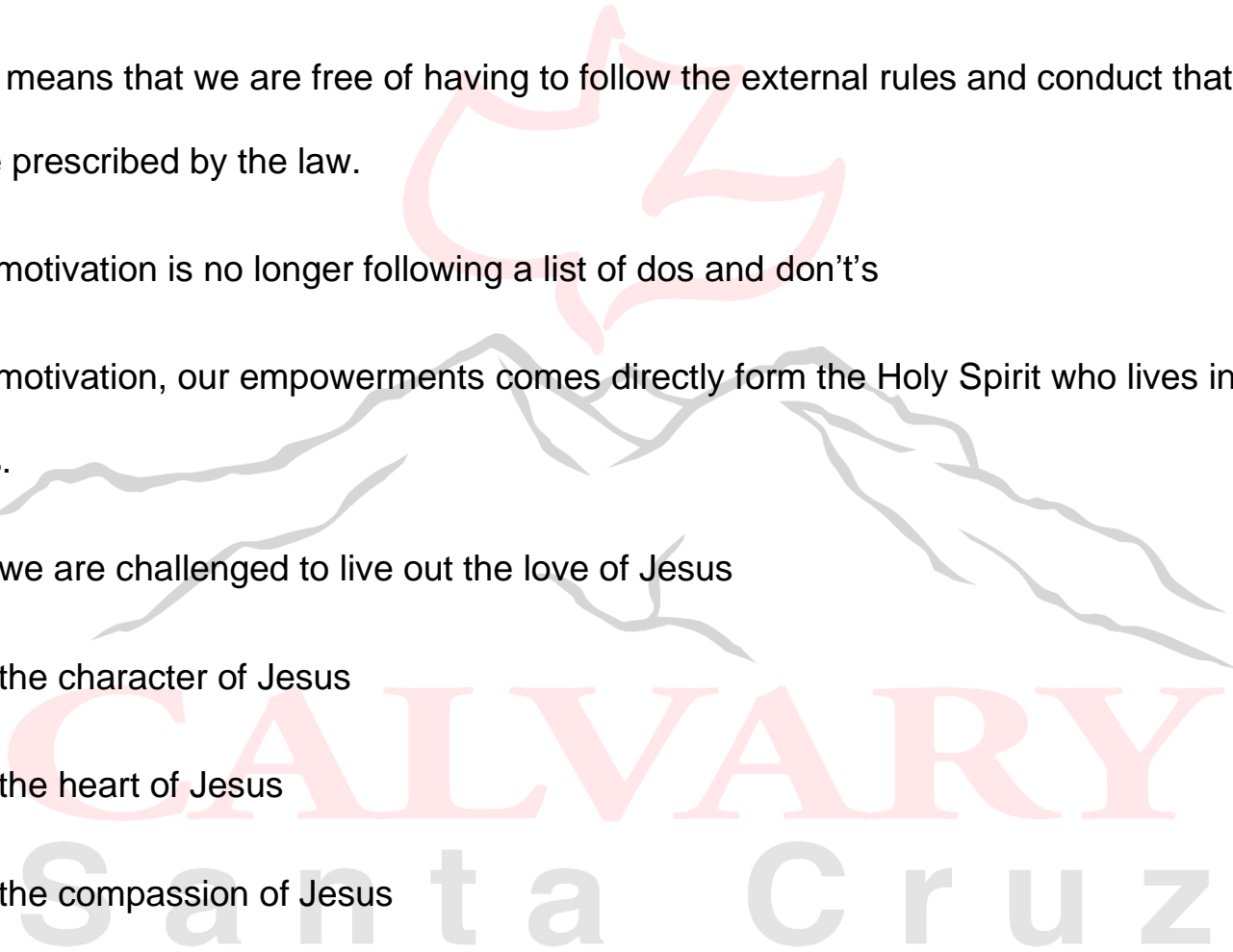
And the heart of Jesus

And the compassion of Jesus

That is our motivation

It is no longer a burden of – I have to do this or I can't do this.

Our motivation now is I get to do this.



I want to do this because this is what Jesus wants me to do

There is a big difference!!!!

Dead to self means that we are free to do anything that Jesus wants us to do and we are prohibited from doing anything that Jesus knows is not the best for us.

Remember, Paul anticipates some of the readers misinterpreting his words –

Saying grace is a license to sin

That he is teaching lawlessness

That he is teaching people to hate the law

That is not what Paul is arguing

Paul teaching everyone to love Jesus

To honor Jesus

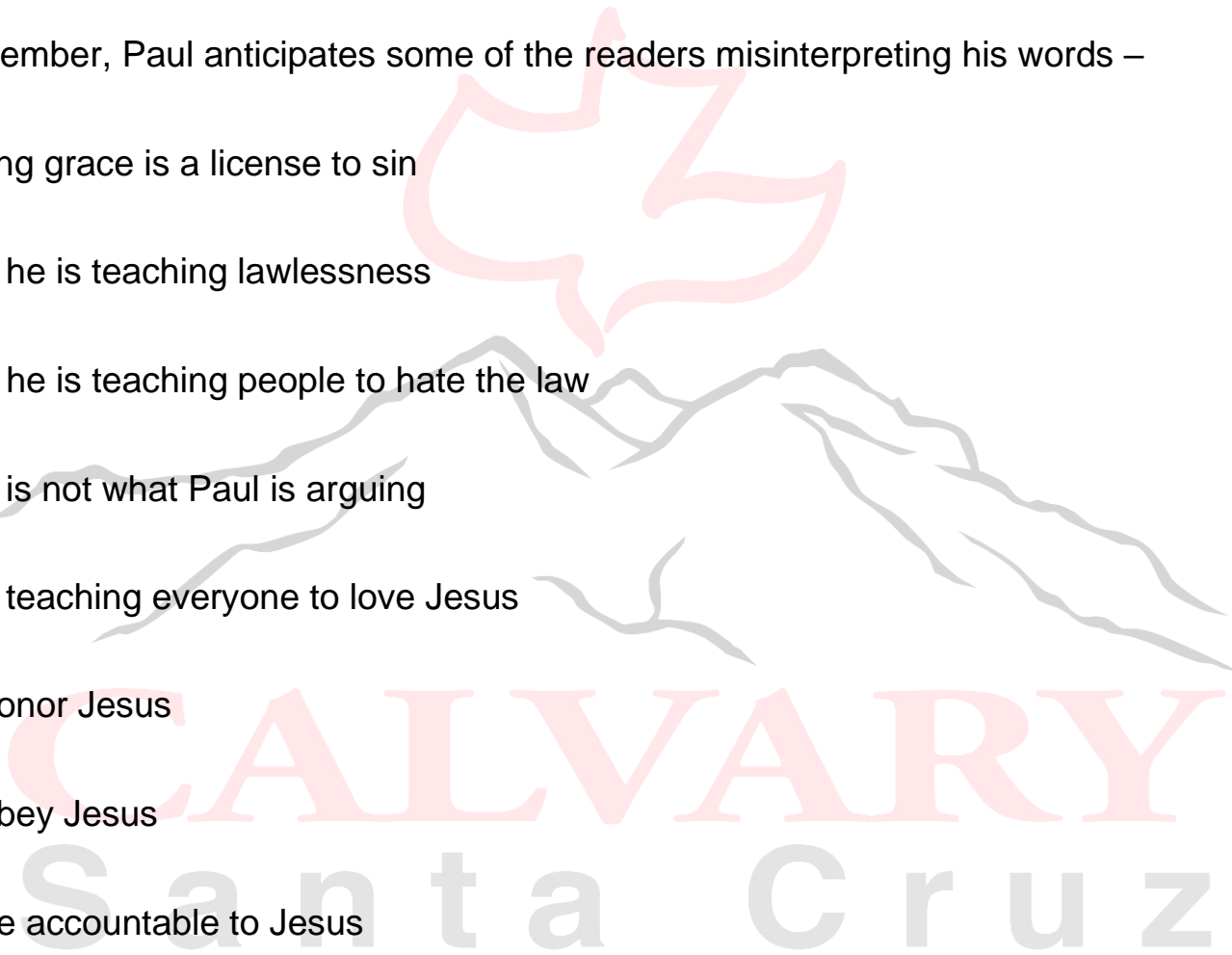
To obey Jesus

To be accountable to Jesus

Because in Jesus we find our rest, in Jesus, we find our fulfillment

He is the solution to the problem of sin

He is the giver of grace



He is the Author and Finisher of our faith

He is the Beginning and the End

And in Him, we have hope, we have forgiveness, we have redemption, we have reconciliation.

I want to end with this –

There are two things that the law is incapable of –

The law is incapable of making anyone holy

The law is incapable of giving anyone the right heart to serve with the right attitude.

Jesus gives the believer the right heart and the right attitude

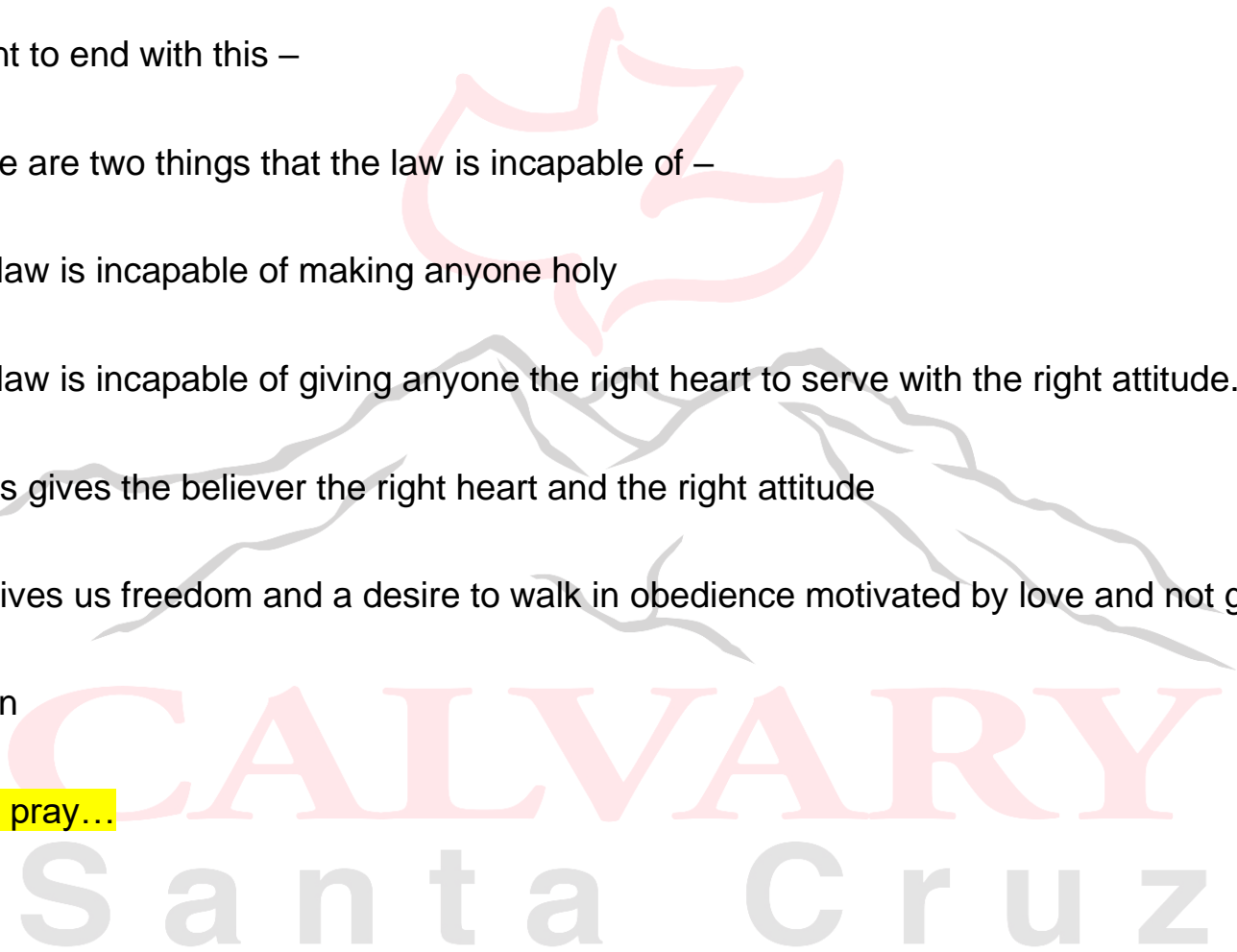
He gives us freedom and a desire to walk in obedience motivated by love and not guilt.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."



Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

We struggle so much grasping holiness.

But we must remember that God doesn't want us to become experts on the subject of holiness.

He simply calls us into a fervent love affair with Him where holiness grows as a byproduct of the relationship.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

