SMS 03205-532 10/05/2003
CHEAP GRACE? Decatur, IL

INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **Romans 2:1-4**.

B. Two quotes from Dietrich Bonhoeffer from his book entitled, "The Cost of the Discipleship."

1. Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our church (p. 35).
2. We must therefore attempt to recover a true understanding of the mutual relation between grace and discipleship (p. 47).

C. This morning, contrasting cheap grace (treating grace cheaply) and costly grace.

I. **CHARACTERISTICS OF CHEAP GRACE.**

A. Cheap grace means <u>the justification of sin, without the justification of the sinner</u>. Therefore, the only way to justify the sinner is to condemn the sin (Rom. 3:23-25a; 8:3).

(Rom 3:23-25) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; **25** whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

(Rom 8:3) For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did:* sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

B. Cheap grace is <u>something that we bestow on ourselves, it does not come from God</u>.

True (costly) grace comes from God (Eph. 1:7-8a).

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, **8** which He lavished upon us.

C. Cheap grace says that <u>since everything is paid for in advance by X, it can be had for nothing</u>.

1. But there is a cost to God for this grace--His Son.
2. There is a cost to us too--obedience (Ti. 3:4-7).

But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, **5** He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, **6** whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

D. Cheap grace says that <u>since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using it are too</u>.

1. Shall we continue to sin that grace may abound (Rom. 6:1-2)?

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? **2** May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

2. By our faithful obedience that we have been introduced to saving grace (Rom. 5:2).

through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

E. Cheap grace says that <u>no repentance is required, your sins are covered anyway</u>.

1. God commands that all everywhere repent (Ac. 17:30-31).

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, **31** because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

2. The goodness of God should lead us to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

F. Cheap grace produces <u>no real desire to be delivered from a life of sin</u>.

Paul wanted to be free from his "body of death" (Rom. 7:24-8:3).

Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? **25** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. **8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. **3** For what the

Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did:* sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

G. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance.
   1. The sorrow of the world (regret without repentance) leads to death (2Cor. 7:10).
      For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.
   2. Paul preaching was to get people to turn to God for forgiveness (Ac. 26:18).
      to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

H. Cheap grace is baptizing believers without requiring a death to the old life.
   1. This was one of the problems in Rome--they were still slaves to sin (Rom. 6:12-15).
      Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, **13** and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. **14** For sin shall not be master 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? May it never be!
   2. Baptism is where we die to the old life and begin living the new one (Rom. 6:3-5).
      Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also *in the likeness* of His resurrection,

I. Cheap grace is the taking of communion without self-examination and confession (1Cor. 11:28-29,32).
   But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly…. **32** But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world.

J. Cheap grace is faithfulness without discipleship.
   1. How can you say Lord, Lord and not obey X? (Mt. 7:22-23).
      "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' **23** "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'
   2. If you love Jesus you will keep His commandments (Jn. 14:15).
      "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF COSTLY GRACE.

A. Costly grace causes us to deny self, take up our cross daily and follow X (Lk. 9:23).
   And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

B. Costly grace says that we lose our life for the gospel's sake (Mk. 8:35; 10:29-31).
   (Mk 8:35) "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it.
   (Mk 10:29-31) Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, **30** but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. **31** "But many *who are* first, will be last; and the last, first."

C. Costly grace stands in strong condemnation of sin (Rom. 7:13; 1Tim. 1:13-15).
   (Rom 7:13) Therefore did that which is good become *a cause of* death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.
   (1Tim 1:13-15) even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; **14** and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus. **15** It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.

D. Costly grace recognizes the price God paid for our salvation--the life of His only Son (1Pet. 1:18-19).
knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, **19** but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.

E. Costly grace compels us to submit to the yoke of X.
1. Literally, the love of Christ leaves us no choice (2Cor. 5:14-15).
For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.
2. If we want the rest, we must wear the yoke (Mt. 11:28-30).
"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. **29** "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. **30** "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

F. Costly grace causes us to continually ask, seek, and knock concerning righteousness. Only those who ask-receive. Only those who seek-find. Only those who knock-have it opened unto them (Mt. 7:6-8).
"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. **7** "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. **8** "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened."

G. Costly grace is like the treasure in the field, in which we sell everything to obtain (Mt. 13:44).
"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field."
What are you willing to give up to gain the grace of God?

H. Costly grace is willing to make whatever sacrifices are necessary.
1. Pluck out the eye, cut off the hand, etc. (Mt. 18:8-9).
"And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire. **9** "And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell."
2. Participate in the sufferings of X (Phil. 3:10).
that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

I. Costly grace causes a complete change of lifestyle, leaving the nets and boats to follow X.
1. Simon, Andrew, James, and John made the change (Mt. 4:19-20).
And He said^ to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." **20** And they immediately left the nets, and followed Him.
2. Transformed by the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:1-2).
I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

J. Costly grace must be protected from the world and not thrown to the dogs.
1. We have this treasure within ourselves -- the gospel of grace (2Cor. 4:7,15).
But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;… **15** For all things *are* for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.
2. Take care of the gospel of grace (Mt. 7:6; Rev. 22:11,15).
(Mt 7:6) "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."
(Rev 22:11,15) "Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and let the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and let the one who is holy, still keep himself holy"… **15** Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

III. **SOME QUOTES FOR CONSIDERATION.**

A. From Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

1. The Christian life comes to mean nothing more than living in the world and as the world, in being no different from the world, in fact, in being prohibited from being different from the world for the sake of grace. The upshot of it all is that my only duty as a Christians is to leave the world for an hour or so on a Sunday morning and go to church to be assured that my sins are all forgiven. I need no longer try to follow Christ, for cheap grace, the bitterest foe of discipleship, which true discipleship must loathe and detest, has freed me from that (p. 42).
2. The only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace alone is the name who has left all to follow Christ. Such a man knows that the call to discipleship is a gift of grace, and that the call is inseparable from the grace. But those who try to use this grace as a dispensation from following Christ are simply deceiving themselves (p. 43).
3. But do we also realize that this cheap grace has turned back upon us like a boomerang? The price we are having to pay today in the shape of the collapse of the organized church is only the inevitable consequence of our policy of making grace available to all at too low a cost (p. 45).
4. We poured forth unending streams of grace. But the call to follow Jesus in the narrow way was hardly ever heard (p. 45).
5. This cheap grace has been no less disastrous to our own spiritual lives. Instead of opening up the way to Christ it has closed it. Instead of calling us to follow Christ, it has hardened us in our disobedience (p. 46).
6. Having laid hold on cheap grace, they were barred for every from the knowledge of costly grace. Deceived and weakened, men felt that they were strong now that they were in possession of this cheap grace--whereas they had in fact lost the power to live the life of discipleship and obedience. The word of cheap grace has been the ruin of more Christians than any commandment of works (p. 46).

B. From Gottfried Reichel:

1. One of the main concerns in the changes in the churches of Christ in America is that change itself is the main agenda. The simplicity of endeavoring to by just Christians, to live and proclaim the Christ of the Scriptures and the church as found in the NT had been often replaced by the urge to keep us with the trends of what is popular in the religious world (GA; Aug. 2003; p. 14).
2. Many churches give up the plea to restore NT Christianity in an urge to be accepted in the realm of ecumenical Christendom, hoping also to grow and reach more people. These churches are often the ones that, after an initial success, grow the least (GA; Aug. 2003; p. 14).

IV. **THE ANSWER TO CHEAP GRACE.**

A. The answer to cheap grace is to renew the call to discipleship. It is time to go back to Lk. 9:23.
And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

B. The answer to cheap grace is to renew the call to obedience. It is time to go back to Mt. 7:21.
"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven."

C. The answer to cheap grace is to renew the call to renounce sin. It is time to go back to Titus 2:11-12.
For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, **12** instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

D. The answer to cheap grace is to renew our appreciation for the costly grace God gives in X. It is time to go back to Eph. 1:7.
In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

A. Any change that takes us away from the discipleship that Jesus calls us to is a change for the worse. That change is a symptom of cheap grace.
B. Any change that would take us away from calling false doctrine, false, and calling sin, sin, is a change for the worse. That change is a symptom of cheap grace.
C. Cheap grace will cause us to lose our soul, costly grace will save it.
D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.