

Pleasant Valley  
Church of Christ

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## Schedule of Services

### Sunday

Classes . . . . . 9:30 am  
Worship . . . . . 10:30 am  
Evening . . . . . 6:00 pm

### Wednesday

Classes . . . . . 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

# Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

July 12, 2009

## Cheap grace

by David King

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Rom. 6:1-2).

There are few Bible topics that are more misunderstood than the subject of God's grace. The prevailing view among believers is that God's mercy is a kind of perpetual get-out-of-jail-free card with no strings attached. The result of this kind of thinking is a careless attitude toward obedience and sin. People have come to believe that nobody is perfect so why bother — God's grace is going to cover it anyway. It's as though God's grace offers a license to sin, and almost any sin can be excused. Carried to its conclusion, this idea will "turn the grace of our God into lewdness" (Jude 4).

To be sure, God's grace is a powerful cleansing agent. Paul earlier described God's grace as capable of forgiving any and all transgressions that the human race can commit. "Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Rom. 5:20). It is impossible for any human to place himself so far from God that God's grace cannot reach him, if he desires to avail himself of that offer. But the modern notion of a cheap grace that covers all sins and makes no demands in return is a gross distortion of the Biblical model.

In our opening text, Paul's lead question gets to the core of the matter: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" That is, does God's grace allow us to keep on sinning without penalty? His response is swift and sure: "Certainly not!" In our conversion, he

explains, we have "died to sin"; that is, we have declared sin to be our mortal enemy, and have committed ourselves to purging it from our lives. "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin . . . do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin" (v. 11-12). We will not always be successful in doing so; but that does not release us from the obligation to **try**.

The logic here is not hard to grasp. Grace was certainly not cheap to God. It cost Him the best He had — His own Son — to make it available to us. What message do we send God when we treat His sacrifice with such brazen indifference? If sin cost God such a terrible price, doesn't it make sense that He expects us to be equally committed to the struggle? Sin is our common enemy, and God wants us to share the sacrifice in the battle to defeat it.

God knows that we are weak and imperfect, and that the struggle against sin is not easy. And He is quite willing to forgive even the most egregious errors time and again. What He is looking for is two things: first, a heart-felt desire to change, a true hatred of sin that drives improvements ("reckon yourselves to be dead to sin"); and second, a pattern of positive change in our life that indicates we are making progress in the fight ("do not let sin reign"). We are winning the battle — with God's help.

God's grace is indeed a wonderful blessing to mankind. But it is a gift that should not be treated lightly. He has extended that grace to help us overcome sin, not to excuse it. The least we can do is cooperate in the fight.