



OUR
RESOLUTE
HOPE

In Christ

FRANK FRIEDMANN

Stunned by Grace

It's Beyond Amazing.

*“For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one,
much more those who receive the abundance of grace
and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life
through the One, Jesus Christ.”*

Romans 5:17

Chapter 9 - What Else Happened on the Cross?

I was driving down I-12 in south Louisiana. I tend to stay in the outside lane since I have an old truck. As I looked ahead of me, I watched a duck waddle out of the swamp to the side of the highway. Following close behind was her little brood of ducklings. It quickly became apparent that mama duck wanted to cross the interstate. She waddled to the road but quickly scampered back from the edge when a car whizzed past. Cautiously, she approached again, then another car whizzed past and she flapped back from the edge again. Clearly, mama duck was not going to be denied her desire. She was one tenacious duck!

It was clear to me what was going to happen. Eventually, there would be a gap in traffic and mama duck would lead her family far out onto the interstate. As oncoming traffic raced towards them, there would be no bank to escape to and the entire duck family would be hit and killed.

I pulled over as quickly as I could, waited for a break in traffic and chased the entire duck family back across the road and down into the swamp. I played the part of the hero. I saved the day for the entire duck family! But the ducks had a different perspective. Mama duck was mad—she quacked furiously at me the entire time. I was blocking her goal. The ducklings were peeping like crazy, frightened by my abrupt intrusion into their lives. Neither the mother nor the ducklings understood their desperate situation and they both misinterpreted my intervention.

I share this story with you because this same scenario plays out in the body of Christ. People tend to get angry or afraid when they hear what I'm about to share with you in this chapter, even though it's directly from Father's word.

Please hear me carefully now. My goal is to lead you to safety, just as I sought to lead those little ducks to a place of safety; I want to lead you to Jesus. I want you to understand

how good the good news really is. I want you to come to know Jesus in a way that you may have never known Him before.

Coming to Understand

In 1989, after a lifetime of struggle and shutting my emotions down, I found myself in a counseling office. During one of my sessions, my counselor said to me, “I’d hate to be your kids.” I was astonished and furious. *Did he just say those words to me?*

“Those are fighting words! You’ve talked to me for two or three days and you think you know me? I try with all my heart to be a great dad; I pour myself into my babies!”

“That’s not what I’m talking about,” he replied. “I’m talking about the example you set for them in the way you live your life. You’re like a machine. You’re not a human being. When’s the last time you cried?”

I thought about it and I realized I hadn’t cried in a long time. At that point, God began a supernatural work in my life. He took the lid off and I could no longer control all the nasty feelings that had been bottled up inside me. Out they came and as they did, I felt like I was dying!

During this difficult season of embracing reality, a friend invited me to attend a pastors’ conference. He said it would be good for me. I took his advice and invited my bride to attend with me. Right in the middle of this conference, Janet began to cry.

“What’s the matter?” I asked.

She turned to me, tears streaming down her cheeks. “Don’t you hear what they’re teaching?”

“I teach the same thing they’re teaching!” I said confidently.

“Oh no, you don’t!” she retorted. And through the truths Janet learned at that conference, I began to see tremendous change in her. I couldn’t push her buttons any more—and that bugged me to no end. She’d been set free of me and the ways I often tried to

manipulate her. She was experiencing great freedom but meanwhile, I didn't feel very loved by her. After all, her loving me was tied to how well she bent to my manipulation.

One day I sat her down and told her, "Baby, you don't love me anymore!"

"No, Frank, I love you more than I've ever loved you before. I just don't need you the way I used to need you!" That really hurt to hear, but I had to admit to myself that I was jealous of what she had.

I called those conference people and said, "I think I missed something. Whatever you did to my wife, do to me." I went back for a time of individual counseling with those teachers and Father opened my eyes to the truths I'm going to share with you now.

My life was transformed by what I learned and I've spent the last thirty years sharing this message with anyone who will listen. My hope is that Father will open the eyes of your understanding just like He did for Janet and me.

This is such good news that there's no reason to fear and certainly no reason to get angry. What God has for you in this chapter is not heresy or false doctrine. Jesus Himself said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32). God has this glorious purpose for all His kids, that we would seek the truth and in finding truth, we would experience the freedom that is our birthright in Christ.

Experiencing God

Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, the mind is the key issue in our journey to know and experience God. As Proverbs 23:7 puts it, "As he [a man] thinks within himself, so he is." With that in mind (no pun intended), don't just *read* with me—I want you to *ponder* with me. We must stop as we read to make sure the truth gets into our minds and stays there. To help this process, I encourage you to read out loud, so you not only see *but hear* what God is saying in His word.

Let's begin with Romans 6:3. Paul wrote, "Do you not know..." Stop right there. When you read this question, you need to incorporate a bit of not-so-happy amazement into your voice. Paul was really concerned; we could even say shocked. He's saying, "Do you really not know what I'm about to tell you?" In other words, "You ought to know this, but you don't!" One translation even goes so far to ask, "Are you ignorant?" Maybe you're not ignorant of these things, but I sure was!

This little phrase is a signal to us that what we're about to read is the basics, the ABCs, the 2+2=4, the very foundation of our faith. Unfortunately, the church in Rome didn't understand these basics. After almost forty years of ministry, I'm not sure that most Christians today understand them either.

The verse continues, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized..." We've got to stop here as well. I believe this word *baptized* has contributed to a general lack of understanding. When most people read the word *baptism*, the first thing they see in their heads is water. Water baptism is such an integral part of our faith that it's only natural for us to think of water. Unfortunately, that image distracts us from what the Apostle Paul so desperately wanted us to understand.

The Greek word in the text is *baptizo*. It's imperative that we understand what this word actually means. Any Greek concordance will tell you that the essence of the meaning of *baptizo* is "to identify with" or "to immerse into." Let's read this verse again, only we'll substitute "immerse into" in place of *baptized* or *baptism* and see how it changes our understanding.

"Do you not know that all of us who have been *immersed* into Christ Jesus have been *immersed* into His death?" Isn't that incredible? Don't forget, to Paul this is the ABCs, so it's clearly important. But what does that mean? It means that when Jesus died, we died because by faith we are immersed in Him.

Let's read on in verse 4. "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death." The word *therefore* tells us something else happened because we died with Christ. What happened? We were buried with Him. That makes sense, doesn't it? What do you do with dead people? You bury them.

The next two words in verse 4, "so that," are critical to understanding this passage. We died and were buried with Jesus "so that" a glorious purpose could be accomplished in our lives. We were buried with Him "so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." Did you see it? If you didn't, verse 5 will make it clear. "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." There it is! We died with Jesus on the cross, *so that* we could be buried with Him *so that* we could be resurrected with Him.

At the beginning of chapter 8, I asked you what happened on the cross. We agreed that most people would answer, "Jesus died for my sins." Now, Romans 6:6 reveals a second answer to that question, one equally important for us to understand. "Our old self was crucified with Him."

Remember the "theology of in" from chapter 4? When we were *in Adam*, we learned that whatever happened to Adam happened to us because we were "in Adam."

In Adam, we lost the life God had provided for us. That's why we fail to experience and express God in the fullness He intended. That's why we experience death in so many ways. But when we come to Jesus by faith, not only did Jesus die for our sins, but at the moment of faith, God took us out of Adam and put us "in Christ," so that likewise, whatever happened to Jesus happened to us. We have died, been buried, and resurrected in Him.

In Christ

We are in Christ! That's why Paul said in Galatians 2:20 that he had "been crucified with Christ." That's why Colossians 3:3 says that we "have died"—not that we *have to* die, but that we already *have* died. Isn't that glorious?

God took the negative, controlling, manipulating, selfish, arrogant, prideful, envying sinners that we were "in Adam" and executed us "in Christ" on the cross. Then, when Christ was buried, we were buried. When Jesus rose from the dead, we rose from the dead. We have already been resurrected as brand-new creations of God!

I grew up in church. I had to go every week. I was taught about the resurrection, and no matter what church I went to, they always taught us two things. First, Jesus rose from the grave two thousand years ago. Second, by faith in Him, one day I would rise from the grave when Jesus came back for His church. Glorious! But nobody—not one person—ever taught me that I had already been resurrected. No one said I had resurrection life in me right now (Ephesians 1:16–20).

Paul would have said to me, "Frank, do you not know?! Do you not know that in Christ, you have died, been buried, and been resurrected?" Like me, many believers were never taught these truths.

I want you to understand all the New Testament declares about you. I want you to understand completely, not only what has been done *for* you, but also what has been done *to* you, so that you can believe what God says *about* you. That way, in believing, you may experience what you believe and live in the freedom that belongs to you (Galatians 5:1).

Our Sin Nature Is Gone

Since we died with Christ, our sin nature is gone. When somebody says, "I'm struggling with my old nature," they're wrong. They're not struggling with an old nature; that

old nature was crucified with Christ. They're struggling with the power of sin that dwells in their flesh.

According to Romans 7:15–24, indwelling sin is something that is in us, but it isn't us. It's kind of like having a splinter. The splinter is in us, but it's not us, and it can fester and cause all sorts of problems. That's how it is with the power of sin. It dwells in us, but it is not us, and oh how the power of sin can cause us problems! It entices us to live like we used to live. It beckons us to live contrary to who we are in Christ. But Paul has some more really good news for us in that sixth chapter of Romans.

Freedom from Sin

When we died on the cross, we died to the power of sin, and when we were resurrected in Christ, we were made alive to God (Romans 6:11–14). Before you became a believer, you had no choice but to sin. It was as natural and inevitable as breathing.

One young man told me about his struggle with pornography. He described the temptation as a crushing weight and shared how he'd fight and hold out for as long as he could, but inside he knew his failure was inevitable. For this young fellow, sin was an unassailable monster and he felt powerless against it. Then he learned the message of the new covenant. He learned that his old nature died with Christ. He learned that the temptation did not come from himself. It originated, not in the darkness of his sinful self, but from indwelling sin. He learned that even when he did fail, he was no less loved or accepted by his Father. He learned that he was free from the law of pornography.

You might think that this guy would take what he'd learned and indulge in his temptation without reservation, but that's not what happened. His life turned around. The shame and guilt that used to hound him mercilessly dissipated. The temptation that felt like a two-ton angry gorilla sitting on his chest shriveled. He said it became "more like an annoying chihuahua."

When you discover that you died with Christ on the cross, you have the potential to experience unbelievable freedom from sin. However, that freedom is not automatic.

There's a key to laying hold of that freedom and Paul states it clearly in Romans 6:11, "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin" (NKJV). You have to *believe* that you have died to sin. You have to *believe* that you are a brand new person. You have to *believe* that sin is no longer your master and that it has no power over you anymore.

This is no easy task, let me assure you. Our feelings and our circumstances and what we have been previously taught are going to scream that we are not loved, that we are not righteous, that we do have a sin nature. When you choose to believe these truths, you will very likely be doing so in direct opposition to what you feel. In fact, your feelings may be so contrary to these truths that you have to grit your teeth in a tenacious determination and choose to believe the truth. Again, you have to *believe* that sin is no longer your master and that it has no power over you anymore.

When you sin now, it's not because the temptation is too strong. It's not because you are weak. It's not because the enemy is too powerful. When you sin, it's because you believe the lies of the enemy. You are choosing to sin. Ouch!

I trust you've embraced how imperative it is for us to understand what this passage is saying. You do not have two natures! You did not receive a new nature on top of the old one. Your old nature died with Christ. It's been buried once and for all! This is the good news that Paul so desperately wanted us to know. As he writes later in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "in Christ... old things have passed away... all things have become new" (NKJV). We are so new that 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us in Christ, we have "become the righteousness of God" (NKJV).

We have been made righteous for a very clear, specific, noble purpose. The Righteous One of the Universe longs to live within us and now He can! This, my friend, is what we are

supposed to know! That is what Romans 5:17 says is “the gift of righteousness” that God has given to us! Now that is really good news!

It Is Finished

Regardless of how we feel, you and I possess the gift of righteousness, given to us by God. He calls it a “gift” because it can never be earned. Jesus said on the cross that “it is finished” (John 19:30). Do you know what *it is finished* means in the Greek word *tetelestai*? It means “it is finished.” It means nothing more could be done to make us righteous.

All that’s left is for us to receive this gift of our righteousness—to take God at His word and embrace what He declares about us. We are righteous in Christ! Do you believe that? God did for us what we could never do for ourselves. In the death and resurrection of Jesus, He transformed us from sinners to saints. He took us out of death and brought us into life.

Years ago, I was teaching this glorious news at a conference when I was approached by an older, distinguished-looking fellow who seemed very disturbed. Not only that, but he clearly had no problem voicing his concern. “Frank,” he said, in a gravelly voice, “I’ve got a real problem with what you were teaching today.”

“Well,” I answered, “I’d like to point out that your issue was not with what I taught but with what our Father’s word teaches. So, what’s your problem?”

“I can’t say I’m the righteousness of God.”

“Why not?” I asked him. “God says you are.”

“Well,” he confessed, “because I know how I live.”

I said to him, “My friend, I want you to remember that when the Bible says you are righteous, it’s not talking about your behavior or how you live. It’s talking about your identity, who you are in Christ! God Himself is the One Who says you’re the righteousness of

God. Your argument is with Him!” I continued on, “I know it’s a struggle to believe that the likes of us can be made righteous, but I have a bigger struggle than that!”

“What’s that?” he asked, eyes wide.

“How could the perfect Son of God ever become sin? Don’t you see? If the living God can become sin, I have to believe that it’s no big deal at all for Him to make our little piddly backsides righteous!”

He pondered my words for a moment and said, “I never thought of that.”

My friend, it’s time for us to start thinking like that. It’s time for us to start thinking the way God thinks when it comes to who we are now that we’ve been placed “in Christ” by faith.

What to expect inside *Stunned By Grace*

Introduction: The Danger of Miscommunication

PART 1: “For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one”

Chapter 1 — Did God Lie?

Chapter 2 — Back to Basics

Chapter 3 — Who Are You?

Chapter 4 — What Happened to Us?

Chapter 5 — A Case of Mistaken Identity

Chapter 6 — Running on Batteries

PART 2: “Receive ... the gift of righteousness”

Chapter 7 — Thinking the Way God Thinks

Chapter 8 — Forgiven of All

Chapter 9 — What Else Happened on the Cross?

Chapter 10 — It’s Not Too Good to Be True!

PART 3: “Receive the abundance of grace”

Chapter 11 — We Traded Receiving for Achieving

Chapter 12 — The Real Purpose of the Law

Chapter 13 — The Perversion of the Law

Chapter 14 — We Are Free from the Law

Chapter 15 — Why the Law Will Never Work

PART 4: “Reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ”

Chapter 16 — Finding Our True Source of Life

Chapter 17 — We Live the Way Jesus Did

Chapter 18 — Give Yourself Some Grace

Epilogue: A Parable of Bondage and Freedom

What people are saying about *Stunned By Grace*

“In his frank (pun intended!) and down-to-earth manner, Frank Friedmann shares the practical gospel of God’s grace in Jesus Christ. Learned through the trials of pastoral ministry, and decades of itinerant preaching and teaching, Frank realized the futility of ordinary religion and the stunning reality of the dynamic of God’s grace. He hopes that many more Christians will be ‘stunned by grace’ as the Spirit of God speaks to their hearts through this latest book.”

— **Jim Fowler**

Founder and President of Christ in You Ministries

“When I read the manuscript the first words that came spontaneously to me were ‘simple yet profound’. I began my search after an understanding of grace when I was a teenager and I am now 81, but as I read these pages, I found insights that excited me and truth that brought tears of joy and gratitude to my heart. The chapters on the impossibility of Law and Grace existing together are priceless and conclusive. If anyone is in a fog of confusion concerning the message of grace, then this book will clear the fog and set out a crystal, clear path into the full experience of this glorious life of rest. If you have been on the path for nearly 70 years, fasten your seat belts for you will find truths here that will make this message fresh and real in your life today. Thank you, Frank, for releasing this gift to the world.”

— **Malcolm Smith**

Author and teacher

Unconditional Love Ministries

“Frank has written a clear, biblical book on the Person of grace, Jesus Christ. I can’t think of a more needed message for weary and burdened people everywhere and a better writer than Frank Friedmann to help people discover the freedom they have in Christ.”

— **Zach Maldonado**

Author of *Perfect and Forgiven* and *The Cross Worked*

Speaker and pastor at Church Without Religion

“Frank Friedman’s writing is like an intense summer rain of graceful refreshment doused in the Father’s love. *Stunned by Grace* presents the ultimate freedom—freedom from ourselves. Frank’s words winsomely delighted my heart and mind as I was reminded of the source of all joy, peace, life, and rest!”

— **Tracy Levinson**

Best-selling author of *Unashamed - Candid Conversations about Dating, Love, Nakedness, & Faith*

“With keen insight, Frank Friedmann explains how to live the kind of Christian life you’ve always wanted. Through his use of clear Biblical explanations, real-life examples, and his own personal journey, you will be encouraged to step into a life of grace which is not only informational, but most importantly, transformational. I highly recommend his book. Reading it could be a life-changing decision for you!”

— **Mark Maulding**

Best-selling author of *God’s Best-Kept Secret* and founder of Grace Life International



The Grace of God should stun us and overwhelm us.

It should make us leap for joy to proclaim the awe and wonder of the goodness of God. In the person and work of Jesus Christ, we are not only going to heaven, but are supposed to be experiencing heaven right now. But what if our experience isn't lining up with the promises of God? Is it possible that we've only begun to scratch the surface of His amazing Grace?

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