

Glad you made it to the Club tonight. Let's yarp.

Most of you know that AnnMarie, Darla and I just spent a couple weeks at undisclosed locations in Southeast Asia. I won't be sharing any details this evening; however, I am going to use that experience as a springboard for tonight's teaching.

1. Appreciate our constitutional freedom of religion.

2. Islam promotes a works-based relationship with god (works righteousness).

What do we need to do for god? Rather than recognizing what God has already done for us in sending Jesus! (John 3:16)

3. Only one way to bridge the gulf between God and man - Jesus! By grace, through faith.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV)

Grace defined - 1) unmerited favor; 2) God working in me doing what I cannot do in and of myself. (Phil 2:13)

- Meaning 1:
We can't work to earn salvation or God's love. God is gracious and merciful! Love is intrinsic to His character. He exudes love. He is love. (I John 4:8).

"And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:6-7 NLT)

It is all about Him and not about us! Humility acknowledges that fact. Salvation is a free gift obtained through placing our faith in Jesus. He paid the price for our sin - a debt He did not owe, that we might have eternal life. We are made Holy through His shed blood and now able to enter God's presence. The veil in the Temple has been torn!

- Meaning 2:
He gives us everything we need to live a godly and victorious life in Christ Jesus.
"By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence." (2 Peter 1:3 NLT)

4. Put on the whole armor of God. (Ephesians 6:11-17)

"A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:10-12 NLT)

5. Pray in the Spirit.

"Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere." (Ephesians 6:18 NLT)

"And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will." (Romans 8:26-27 NLT)

Follow that verse up with 1 John 5:14-15 and you "connect the dots" on just how important your prayer language is and why Satan wants to discourage you from using it.

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him." (1 John 5:14-15 NKJV)

6. We are weak, but He is strong.

 Jesus loves me this I know. 

"And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (II Corinthians 12:9 NKJV)

Have you been struggling? Stop it, look to Jesus, His grace is enough!

Have you been working hard to earn God's love? Do you feel like God is disappointed with you? Stop it, you are never going to get God to love you any more or any less than He already does. His grace is enough!

Satan loves to get us to take our eyes off of Jesus and the truth of His Word. If we lose sight of our identity in Christ, as is clearly declared in His Word, and start trusting our experiences instead of God's promises, like Peter we start sinking.

We have to keep our eyes on Jesus. By grace, through faith, Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. Jesus is more than enough!