

Zion's River—Discipleship

Spiritual DNA

Session 3—God's Radical Love, Part 2

May 30th, 2023

1 Quick Review

- The Importance of Spiritual DNA
- The Core DNA of Zion's River
 - The "Gospel of the Kingdom" is always the message.
 - God's love is always the answer.
 - God's Spirit is always the path.
 - Heaven is always a *now* reality.
- Where does the Spiritual DNA course fit-in with your growth and partnership at Zion's River?
- Last week, I introduced you to the radical love of God.
 - God loves you. Jesus died for you. By His blood, you are justified and reconciled back to the Father. All before you even recognized your need for Jesus.

2 Personal Testimony: Does this sound familiar to you?

- When I discovered what Jesus did for me, I was humbled, broken, overwhelmed and elated all at the same time.
- But quickly, after I was saved and started growing in the Church, I learned that there was an actual formula that got me saved and this formula keeps me in God's good graces and favor.
 - Prayer, Repentance, Holy Living, etc.
 - The real question in my walk with the Lord became: "If you are a Christian, and truly born-again, THEN..."
- It was natural for a new law to come into effect under the Gospel of the Kingdom.
 - Under the new covenant, I still had to appease God. I still had to earn His favor. I felt guilty all the time. I could never measure up.
 - The result: I constantly thought, "Why did Jesus have to come and die for me if forgiveness of my new sins still required me to appease God through prayer, sorrow-filled repentance and holy living.
 - Is the only real difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant the blood of Jesus replacing the blood of animals?
- We all face this dilemma in every area of life.

3 The Message of Law v. God's Grace

- The Gospel stands in contrast to the Law.
 - **John 1:16–17 (ESV)** — ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
 - The Law manages our sin.
 - Grace and truth brings us near to Christ.

- The Law breeds wrath.
 - **Romans 4:13–16 (ESV)** — **13** For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. **14** For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. **15** For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. **16** That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all...
 - Law says you're under wrath and deserve death.
 - The Law points out sin while it continues to condemn those under it.
 - Jesus fulfilled the Law so that the Law could no longer be used against you!
 - Every promise of God depends on faith so that He gets ALL the glory.

- The power of God does not flow from our lifestyle but from our faith.
 - **Romans 1:16–17 (ESV)** — **16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."
 - Faith points to relationship...I can act married or be married.

- Law keeps us from true righteousness while grace compels us to move by faith into the purposes and plans of God.
 - **Romans 4:3–5 (ESV)** — **3** For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." **4** Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. **5** And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness...
 - Just by believing God (and His heart for me), we increase our righteousness through His grace and love.

- Law says your outside. Grace says you're a Son/Daughter!
 - **John 1:12–13 (ESV)** — **12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
 - Jesus' blood did more than erase the penalty of sin; it revealed the fullness of the Father's love by restoring our true "Garden" identity through our believing Him.

- Supernatural favor is given to faith alone!
 - **Galatians 3:1–6 (ESV)** — **1** O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. **2** Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? **3** Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? **4** Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? **5** Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— **6** just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?
 - Now that we’ve been made new, the same temptation still exists with us as it did with Adam.
 - We want law so that I can condemn and control others, while acquitting myself.

- Jesus action at the cross was not for the Father, but for you and me.
 - The Father did not need to be taught to forgive us.

- 4 **So, if it’s ALL grace, why behave differently?**
 - Grace is not withheld from anyone; we simply choose life by walking in faith under grace.
 - **Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)** — **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
 - “Good works” is meant to be the fruit of our lives, not our duty.

 - **Romans 6:1–4 (ESV)** — **1** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? **3** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
 - Death and resurrection are made real by believing God.

 - The Father has given us a new way to walk under His grace and love.
 - **Romans 8:14–15 (ESV)** — **14** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”
 - In our next two sessions, we’ll be unpacking this more completely.
 - The opening of the Bible is the same as its closing—a garden scene—where we walk in His presence without fear!
 - In between the bookends of world history, God is constantly working to lead you into LIFE.

5 The Real Question is: "Am I choosing life or death?"

- The power of Satan IS the fear of death.
 - **Hebrews 2:14–15 (ESV) — 14** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.
 - Jesus' promise of life, both now and forever, breaks the grip of the enemy.

- The curse of the Fall was death.
 - **Genesis 2:16–17 (ESV) — 16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."
 - **Genesis 3:22–24 (ESV) — 22** Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" **23** therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. **24** He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

- God has always offered a simple choice—life in His presence or death without His presence.
 - **Deuteronomy 30:19–20 (ESV) — 19** I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life, that you and your offspring may live, **20** loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

- Life is simply the product of believing in God's love for me.
 - **John 11:25–26 (ESV) — 25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, **26** and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

6 The love and grace of God produces in us a very different view of others.

- When we see people, do you see what Jesus saw?
 - **Matthew 9:35–38 (ESV) — 35** And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. **36** When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. **37** Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; **38** therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

- It's always a matter of heart more than outward appearance.