

Quarter One: God's Love and Justice
Jill Morikone 3—To Be Pleasing to God
Wednesday: Living Stones
January 15, 2025

- **Last Week:** “Covenantal Love”
 - The everlasting love that God has for us – freely offered to all
 - The choice we have to accept or reject that love
- **This Week:** “To Be Pleasing to God”
 - Discovering how to be pleasing to God – through Christ

Memory Text: “The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing” (Zeph 3:17, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** More Valuable Than You Can Imagine (SQ)
 - Luke 15 – the great love of the Father for His wayward son; the response of the older brother
- 2. **Monday:** Rejoicing with Gladness (John D)
 - Zeph 3; Eph 5 – joy in heaven over the lost being redeemed; us, as God's bride
- 3. **Tuesday:** Pleasing God? (Daniel)
 - Multiple Scriptures – how God can take delight in us, as humanity
- 4. **Wednesday:** Living Stones (Jill)
 - Multiple Scriptures - How humanity can bring delight to God's heart, through the work of Christ
- 5. **Thursday:** A Worthy Goal (James)
 - Mark 9 – reaching by faith to be pleasing (in Christ)

Wednesday: Living Stones

Rom 8:1; 5:8; Jer 31:3; 1 Pet 2:4 – 6; Heb 11:6; 13:21; Luke 20:35; 1 Cor 15:51 – 57; 1 John 3:2

- Opening Q from the lesson: “How is it that we, as fallen sinful beings, can be pleasing to a holy God?”
- **7 takeaways on pleasing God: how humans can bring delight to God's heart**
 - Rom 5:8 – “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - God loved me before I loved Him
 - He extended grace toward me before I knew I needed it
 - He died for me before I recognized I was a sinner
 - **Takeaway #1: God makes the first step**
 - Pleasing God originates with God
 - He gave Jesus to reconcile us back to the Father – 2 Cor 5:19 – God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself

- Heb 11:6 – “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”
 - Before we accept Jesus’ death in our behalf, His gift of salvation – we must accept that by faith
 - **Takeaway #2: Accept Him by faith**
 - Pleasing God continues with faith
 - Without faith, it is impossible to please Him. Why?
 - We never accept what we do not believe
 - For us to receive the gift of salvation, the blood of Jesus as forgiveness for my sins – I need to receive that by faith
 - Eph 2:8, 9 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (9) not of works, lest anyone should boast.”
 - Salvation = a gift of God, given because of Jesus’ sacrifice, accepted by faith
- Rom 4:3 – “For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God and it was **accounted** to him for righteousness.’”
 - Accounted – same word translated impute, accounted = Gk, “to reckon, consider” – to credit to my account, not because of what I did but according to what is credited
 - Righteousness by faith
 - We are accounted righteous because of faith in the righteousness of Christ
 - **Takeaway #3: Receive His righteousness by faith**
 - Pleasing God is only possible because of the righteousness of Christ, imputed to me
 - Allow Him to impute His righteousness to your account
 - Does this make us well pleasing to God?
 - 2 Cor 5:21 – “For He made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
 - Double imputation
- Rom 8:1 – “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”
 - Rom 7 battle – flesh & the law
 - Enter the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer
 - 1 Cor 15:57 – “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - **Takeaway #4: Receive the Holy Spirit’s power in your life**
 - Pleasing God requires the work of the Holy Spirit
 - Rom 8:11, 13 – “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (13) For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”
 - The Spirit gives us spiritual power
 - The Spirit enables us to put to death the deeds of the body

- Heb 13:20, 21 – “Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, (24) make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is **well pleasing** in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”
 - Well pleasing = Gk, from 2 words meaning “well / good” and “to please” – meaning “well-pleasing because fully acceptable”
 - How do we become well-pleasing to God?
 - How are we who were dead in trespasses & sins, become acceptable to God?
 - The God who raised Jesus from the dead
 - Who ratified the covenant with us by the blood of Jesus
 - He does the work in me
 - **#5: Give Him access to change your heart**
 - Pleasing God is possible because He’s the One who transforms
 - God’s redeeming work is not just **for** us, but **in** us, as well
 - Phil 2:13 – “for it is God who works in you both to **will** and to **do** for His good pleasure.”
 - Will = desire
 - Do = power
- 1 Pet 2:4 – 6 – “Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, (5) you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (6) Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’”
 - The living Stone = Jesus
 - Rejected & put to death by humans, but resurrected by God
 - Living stones (us, as believers)
 - We receive life through this living Stone, Jesus Christ
 - We are enabled to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God
 - Because of Jesus’ work, as our High Priest
 - **Takeaway #6: Jesus’ mediation enables my service & life to be acceptable to God**
 - Pleasing God is possible only through the high priestly mediation of Christ
- 1 John 3:2 – “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”
 - **Takeaway #7: God’s work is so complete He makes us like Him**
 - Pleasing God is possible because He changes me to become like Christ
 - When Jesus comes again, we shall be like Him in heart & character

7 takeaways on pleasing God: how humans can bring delight to God's heart

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- #3: Receive His righteousness by faith
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- #4: Receive the Holy Spirit's power in your life
 - Pleasing God requires the work of the Holy Spirit
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- #6: Jesus' mediation enables my service & life to be acceptable to God
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