

ROMANS
Lesson 157– January 4, 2015

Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
a Christian Church
Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...a worldwide Christian Church based in Mesa, AZ...my name is Pastor Rory Clark.

Do you take advantage of God's grace? It's a great question because the question has a wonderfully paradoxical double meaning. In other words, the question provides a beautiful contradiction. To take advantage, on the one hand, means...

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF (Meaning 1)

To use someone or something that is favorable to your success for positive gain

A golf tee is a great example of something you can take advantage of. The golf tee allows you to elevate the golf ball to a more favorable position before you hit it. With this meaning of the definition "take advantage," you can easily conclude that God wants us to use Him that way. He wants us to use Him to put ourselves in a more favorable position. For example, He wants all mankind to "take advantage" of His offer of salvation...Second Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 9 says...

2PE 3:9

The Lord is not slow about (keeping) His promise (of salvation), as some count slowness (as some accuse Him of), but (instead, the Lord) is patient toward you (all mankind), not wishing for any to perish (in the Lake of Fire) but for all to come to repentance (a change of mind about believing in the Lord Jesus Christ).

It is God the Father's wish and it is God the Father's will that everyone take advantage of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation by means of grace, rather than trying to work for salvation. God the Father wants us to make use of the Lord Jesus Christ's work at the Cross on our behalf because it is

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favorable to our success for the positive gain of eternal life.

To take advantage, on the other hand, means...

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF (Meaning 2)

To exploit...to use someone or something for selfish ends

For example, quite often, when they know someone else is paying the bill, people will order a meal in a restaurant that they would not order if they were paying. The funny thing is, they think the person who is paying doesn't notice their excess. The question you have to ask yourself in that situation is, "Would you ever want anyone to feel exploited by your actions?" If your answer is "no," then you would adjust your meal order accordingly. You would order with the care that you'd use if you were paying. I've seen people order an outrageous amount of food when they knew someone else is paying, only to eat a bite or two of the food. That drives the payers crazy, and they always notice. Often, this form of "taking advantage" comes off as ingratitude.

As we begin our study of Romans Chapter 6, you'll get to answer, in your own souls, this great question with the double meaning, "Do you take advantage of God's grace?" Do you make good use of God's grace, or do you exploit God's grace for selfish ends?

Welcome to a place where you can get insight and perspective on your relationship with the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, through the study of His Word.

MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ

Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

You Don't Have to Beg

As God prepares our souls for learning, let's hear June Murphy worship our Lord in song. The opening song is YOU DON'T HAVE TO BEG.

OPENING PRAYER

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Let us pray...

We're grateful Heavenly Father for the privilege of studying the absolute truth...the Word of God...

Let this be the Happy New Year when You make the truth of the Word of God resonate loudly within our souls, Father...let this be the Happy New Year when You help us to know the value, in our own souls, of complete obedience to You and Your Word as the only course of action worth taking...let this be the Happy New Year when You help us decide to be all that You intended for us to be...

Help us to take advantage of You in the way You want us to, and to stop using You, Your Word and Your enabling power to promote the selfish ends of the kingdom of death...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...
Amen.

TODAY'S STUDY

Do You Take Advantage of Grace?

Turn in your bibles to Romans Chapter 6...Paul starts this chapter of his letter to the Romans with an important question...

ROM 6:1

Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

It's a great question, which we will begin to investigate after a few announcements...

BARAH MINISTRIES ANNOUNCEMENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The Next Lord's Supper Celebration

NEXT WEEK!

January 11, 2015

Like

BARAH MINISTRIES

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on
Facebook

We're building an online community...over twenty-six hundred people, waiting to be influenced, have joined us on Facebook. Get your friends to join our Facebook community today!

Happy Birthday!
Deanna Perkosky
January 2

THE OFFERING
Deacon Denny Goodall

Let's take the offering. This is the time when you get to make a sacrifice on behalf of all the people around the world that can't afford to pay to study the Word of God. Your generous contributions make it possible for them to learn about the Lord Jesus Christ free of charge via the internet or through face-to-face teaching.

Let's remember to give with the motivation suggested in Scripture

2CO 9:7

Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful (grace oriented) giver.

Let's welcome up Deacon Denny Goodall.

THE OFFERING
Deacon Denny Goodall

Barah Ministries Financial Policy

Even though we are sanctioned by God to charge for the many things we provide so you can worship God, we choose not to exercise our right. Therefore no price appears on any material from Barah Ministries so that anyone who desires biblical teaching may have it free of charge.

Barah Ministries Financial Policy

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Even though the materials we provide are free of charge, they are not free of cost. We appreciate it when the Word of God motivates you to give financial support so as to provide biblical teaching, both for yourself and for others. Please be generous in your support of God’s work through this ministry.

OFFERING VERSE

JOH 15:4

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

OFFERING SONG

All Who Are Thirsty

TODAY’S STUDY

Do You Take Advantage of Grace?

Let’s begin our study of Romans Chapter 6 by reading the chapter together. There are twenty-three verses in the chapter, and it can be divided into three sections. But before we do any of the dividing, we need to lay some groundwork that begins by simply reading the chapter and knowing what the chapter addresses.

<Read Romans, Chapter 6, Verses 1 to 23>

Romans Chapter 6

The first question I asked you regarding this chapter is, “Do you take advantage of grace?” It was the opening question of this lesson and we distinguished the two meanings of “take advantage” ... do you use God’s grace as freedom, using it for positive gain, or do you use God’s grace for selfish ends, exploiting it in a way God never intended? These are your two choices. But let’s forget about God for a moment...let’s focus on you.

Now as we focus on you, of course, it’s time to take out your “I feel so guilty” rubber hose. Keep it handy so that as you make the assessment of which way you “take advantage” of God, the smart way or the selfish way, when you find yourself in the wrong place, you can beat the heck out of yourself. Why? Because that is what bible study intends right? Bible study

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exposes you to the truth, and when you find out that you are not living the truth, you beat yourself up to feel better about yourself, right? You punish yourself, right? You seek to redeem yourself, right? That’s what God intended, right? NOT! But that certainly is a use of your freedom. Would you say that using your freedom to beat yourself up is “taking (proper) advantage” of grace? Hardly. Beating yourself up for your mistakes is a selfish, self-centered, arrogant and pointless activity. And as a friend of mine would say, “Don’t be schtopid!” It’s funny to me how we hold it against others when they criticize us, but we never hold it against ourselves when we are critical of self. We should!

I can remember my first quarter in college at Northwestern University. I had just graduated from St. Ignatius College Prep in Chicago, one of the most academically demanding schools in the world. It was operated like the Gestapo, the name of the German secret police during the Nazi regime, a group notorious for tyrannical, dictatorial, oppressive, and suppressive methods of operation. At St. Ignatius, you dare not miss class! The Gestapo of Jesuit priests were watching! There was no freedom. There was no independent thought. You went to class or you went to JUG, an after school detention program that made you regret every bad decision you ever made. It was a program designed to induce guilt, and it worked. It took me years to recover. ☺

Then on to Northwestern University, another of the most academically demanding schools in the world, more demanding than St. Ignatius, but with a new twist. Freedom. There was no one to wake me up...no one to demand that I go to class...no one to send me to JUG if I missed class...no one to get me to think about my actions. So what did I do? I began “cutting classes.” One problem, however...I wasn’t only at one of the most academically demanding schools in the world...I was in the pre-med curriculum at one of the most academically demanding schools in the world...I was on the quarter system at one of the most academically demanding schools in the world, which means I was learning a semester’s worth of work in ten weeks instead of sixteen weeks. It was not a wise time to “take advantage” of my freedom in the wrong way.

Aspiring college students need to listen up! What kind of person are you when no one is looking? How will you choose to “take advantage” of your freedom when you go to college? To cut classes? To sleep in? To not

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study? As a friend of mine would say, “Don’t be schtoopid!” As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul exhorts us in Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verse 1...

EPH 4:1

Therefore I (Paul), the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called...

In this verse, Paul is asking us in different way, “Do you take advantage of grace?” Do you walk in a manner worthy of the grace and the freedom you have been given? It’s a question worth considering. Take a five-minute break.

BREAK

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Welcome back! Do you take advantage of God’s grace? First of all, what is grace?

GRACE

A free gift given to all mankind by the Creator, expressed by His actions of extending mercy, loving-kindness, salvation, and divine assets to His Creatures...a divine thought process that underlies God’s entire viewpoint of unconditional love for His Creatures...a dimension of divine thought in which God meets human indifference and human rebellion with an inexhaustible capacity to forgive and to bless.

Why did we need God’s grace? We can reflect a bit on the last passage we studied in Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 12 to 21. If you remember, all of us are born “In Adam” ... all of us were born in a state of sin, and Adam’s sin is the reason...and as a result all of us are condemned from birth...before we ever committed a sin of our own...and the result is that we are all spiritually dead from the point of physical birth.

As you can imagine, all of us are oblivious of our condition at physical birth. Babies don’t come to earth thinking, “Boy, I’m glad I am alive, but too bad I am ‘in Adam’ and condemned to the Lake of Fire!” Since God put us in this condition, it’s His responsibility to let us know we are in this condition and if He is fair, to do something about it. In grace, the Lord gave us something to take advantage of...a status called “In Christ” ... at the Cross, the Lord Jesus Christ paid for Adam’s sin with His blood so that all creatures could

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“take advantage” of His death by obtaining righteousness and eternal life as a free grace gift. We studied this in Romans Chapter 5.

So how did the Lord Jesus Christ make His creatures aware that they needed His grace? Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 20...He made us all aware of our need by giving us the Law...

ROM 5:20

The Law came in (alongside of sin) so that the transgression (of the law...the acts of law breaking) would increase (abundantly); BUT where sin increased (abundantly), grace abounded all the more...

Since you're in the first few days of the New Year, it's the perfect time for a reminder of the weakness of your human power. This is the time when 95% of the world's population makes New Year's resolutions. "This year, it's going to be different. This year I'm going to be different." No you're not! You're going to be worse. So typically, within the first few hours of the New Year, we have broken every resolution we made.

The Law has a similar function. God gave us the Law. All of us have broken it. It's called sin. When we sin, we break God's law. We are all guilty of breaking God's law, and there is no way to wriggle off the hook of our guilt. The Law came in to let us all know that we are doomed.

Do you take advantage of God's grace? If you are a lawbreaker, if you are guilty and you know it, there is no choice but to hope for leniency...there is no choice but to hope for grace. You have probably experienced this if you drive. You speed. You get caught. You are guilty. You deserve a ticket. But as the police officer approaches the car, you're hoping the officer will overlook the offense. You're wondering what you can say or do to get the officer to give you grace.

With God, you can't get off the hook. You are a lawbreaker, and you are guilty. Instead of cutting us off...God gave us grace, treating us as if we are innocent, even though we weren't. First Timothy, Chapter 1, Verse 16...

1TI 1:16

Yet for this reason I (Paul) found mercy, so that in me as the foremost sinner, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

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God offered His grace to be taken advantage of...the Lord offered His grace to Israel as a nation...the Lord offered His grace to the Jews as a race...the Lord offered His grace to the Gentiles as a race...the Lord offered His grace to all of us as individuals...Romans, Chapter 3, Verses 23 to 25...

ROM 3:23

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God the Father...

ROM 3:24

...being justified as a gift by means of the Father's grace through the redemption which comes from being in union with Christ Jesus...

ROM 3:25

...whom God the Father displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate God the Father's righteousness, because in the forbearance of God the Father, He passed over the sins previously committed...

Grace. God the Father's grace toward lawbreakers was best demonstrated by His granting of grace to the apostle Paul, the one who has taken best advantage of God's grace...First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verses 8 to 10...

1CO 15:8

...and last of all, as a courtesy to one untimely born (me, Paul), the resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ, appeared to me also.

1CO 15:9

For I (Paul) am the least of the apostles, and (I am) not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1CO 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them (the other apostles), yet not I (doing the labor), but the grace of God with me (did the work).

God flooded us lawbreakers with grace. Why? Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 21...

ROM 5:21

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...(the Lord provided grace abundantly in the presence of sin) so that, as sin reigned (as king) in death (“in Adam”), even so (by means of His) grace (we believers) would reign (as king) through righteousness (“in Christ”) to eternal life (the resurrection life) through our union with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do you take advantage of God’s grace? Christianity is a lifestyle of freedom. You can act independently from God. The real question this lesson begs is, “What is the proper use of the gift of freedom?” And at the start of Romans Chapter 6, Paul is addressing the subject for those who think using God’s grace for selfish ends is smart to do. Romans, Chapter 6, Verses 1 and 2...

ROM 6:1-2

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

So do you take advantage of God’s grace, meaning...

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF (Meaning 1)

To use someone or something that is favorable to your success for positive gain

...or do you take advantage of God’s grace, meaning...

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF (Meaning 2)

To exploit...to use someone or something for selfish ends

The bible is clear about the best choice in Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verses 1 to 3...

EPH 4:1

Therefore I (Paul), the prisoner of the Lord (out of slavery to sin, into slavery to Christ), implore you to walk (to create a lifestyle) in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called...

EPH 4:2

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...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in unconditional love...

EPH 4:3

...being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We are not to take grace for granted. Instead God wants us to learn the proper use of freedom.

The Promises of the Lord Jesus Christ

When God makes a promise...
it's a guarantee!

ACT 16:31

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes."

JOH 14:6

Jesus said to doubting Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through believing in Me."

JOH 3:36

He who believes in the Son has eternal life (the ZOE life); but he who does not obey the (command to believe in the) Son will not see (the Zoe) life, but instead the wrath of God the Father abides on him."

CLOSING SONG

Calling You to Freedom

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

THANKS - INTERCESSION - PETITION

And we pray that You continue to shape the messages from this pulpit that are an accurate reflection of Your unconditional love, Your glorious Person, Your lucid thinking, Your impeccable work, and Your magnificent essence...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit, in Christ's name, Amen.

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Thanks for coming...for watching...for listening!

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