

**Are We Preaching “Another” Gospel: A 31-Day Journey toward
Rediscovering the Gospel of the Grace of God**
by C. D. Hildebrand, 24-7-365 Version 2026

Day 3

THE TIME OF OUR VISITATION

Have you been praying for revival? Many believers do. What images does the word “revival” bring to your mind? Do you see non-believers flocking to Christ for salvation and filling up the church to overflowing? Perhaps you superimpose revivals of the past into modern-day settings; sinners falling on their faces repenting of sin and whole cities being won to Jesus. We saw revival as an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in which supernatural manifestations of the presence of God would occur to the right and to the left; healings, signs and wonders, and believers overcome with God’s power as our shadows passed by them.

We were told that we were “the” generation who would finally bring revival! It was inferred that the older generation of Christians was somehow less spiritual, but “we” were the elect of God. It was up to us to finally make revival happen. This talk puffed us up with a sort of prideful hope, but being the “chosen ones,” we accepted the challenge placed before us.

Bringing about revival was one of the main goals in our Christian walk. Our generation fasted, prayed, diligently studied the Bible, held overnight prayer meetings, circled cities, and flew over countries praying for revival. We hit the streets sharing our faith. We made sure our lives were holy so as to proclaim the gospel even further. When that didn’t produce the mega results for which we longed, many of us doubled our efforts.

As time went by, and “revival” didn’t come, we began to see it as a carrot perpetually dangled ahead of us which we could never obtain, no matter how consistently we prayed, how holy we lived, or how diligently we served. It never dawned on us to ask, “Why?” We just kept plowing forward, reaching for that promised prize, not ever noticing the donkeys we’d become.

The problem was that we formulated a picture in our minds of what revival would look like, and we were looking for that image to be realized. If revival had walked up to us one day, shaken our hands, and said, “Hello, I am Revival,” we would have likely not recognized Him and kept on the same futile course.

As you know, this is exactly what happened to the religious leaders when Jesus began to minister. For centuries, the Jews anticipated the coming of the Christ. God sent John the Baptist to prepare them to receive their Messiah, but they rejected John. God confirmed Christ's ministry by sending a dove at His baptism, turning water into wine, through His teachings, which were like no other, by feeding thousands supernaturally, healing the multitudes, raising the dead, and by being raised from the dead; but they rejected Jesus. They rejected their own Messiah even though they so fervently longed for Him.

This is because the Scribes and Pharisees had a different expectation for the revival for which they longed, and Jesus did not fit the picture of the Messiah they anticipated. How could a Nazarene, born under questionable circumstances be the Messiah? Unthinkable! Besides, all the people were flocking to hear *Him*. This caused an understandable jealousy and was seen as a threat. They had labored diligently, lived holy lives, and along came this Jesus who was neither Scribe nor Pharisee, leading the people away from *them*. They were reasonably perturbed. Because of this, they missed the day of their visitation. They not only *missed* Him, their own Messiah, but they saw to it that He was crucified. Then they proceeded to persecute, threaten, and sought to eradicate those who believed in Him all the while convinced they were doing the will of God.

Historically, we see that the religious establishment commonly sought to suppress the truth of the gospel, beginning with the Scribes and Pharisees who persecuted Jesus and the Early Church, followed by the Judaizers in the region of Galatia who tried to muddy the waters by adding law to grace. Over the centuries, constant attempts have been made to modify the gospel, and those who sought to revive the original pure gospel were seen as a menace.

In the latter 1960's and early 1970's, there was a revival among the Baby Boomers. My husband and I were at the tail end of this awakening. It was our joy to proclaim that being a Christian was not the religion many of us had criticized. It wasn't about do's and don'ts. Being a Christian was a *relationship* with Jesus Christ. All of us were glowing with this joy, so happy to know God, to be close to Him, and to sense His love and presence daily in our lives. Over time, though, this relationship we once celebrated morphed into mostly systematic religious practices.

Those who saw this happening spoke up against this fall from grace, but were usually greeted with disdain and dismissed as "antinomian" or "extreme".

It's always easier to ignore someone we have labeled.

It might have been easy for us to miss or dismiss the call for doctrinal purity 20 or 30 years ago, but it seems impossible to me that this could be

accomplished today. Any minister who has not noticed what is happening right now within the body of Christ truly has his head in the sand and his fingers in his ears or lives in a location devoid of communication. **All over the world, voices are rising up, and even though their teachings may vary slightly, we cannot deny the common thread among them—a clear call to return to the pure gospel of God’s amazing grace.**

Grace!

That used to be such a wonderful word among all believers, and yet now it is becoming a controversy—something some are even “sick and tired” of hearing. Imagine that! The grace of God—*disdained* and *controversial!*

Yet was not Jesus, who was “full of grace and truth”, seen as controversial as He lived upon this earth? Was not His name upon the critical lips of the religious leaders and all the people as they maliciously plotted to get rid of Him? After His death and resurrection, the preaching of the cross was considered foolishness and offensive. Who were those who were *most* offended and who shunned, despised, and persecuted the message of the cross? It was the religious establishment.

Brothers and sisters, I implore you to please consider this fact. **We are the religious establishment of our day.** All of those “in ministry” within the Body of Christ could be compared to the Scribes and Pharisees. We’ve studied. We’ve labored. We’ve fasted and prayed and worked to see revival. We’ve lived exemplary lives and wanted nothing more than to please God. Some of us have parents and grandparents who have done the same. We have diligently given ourselves and sacrificed our lives in the service of God and others, often without being appreciated, sometimes even treated with unkindness and cruelty. **Beloved, if we are not the religious establishment, then there isn’t one.** Is it possible that with all of our knowledge and religious pedigree we could miss the very thing for which our hearts have been crying out?

Grace! God’s amazing grace!

One little word, yet so powerful! **Are we missing it by dismissing it?** Do we seek to “balance” it with other things, such as law or works thus nullifying its power? Do we give it a polite nod for a few weeks of sermons and then move on to what we consider “deeper” truths? Are some of us even guilty of trying to snuff it out?

It is extremely important to know whether or not we are unknowingly fighting against the true gospel of God’s grace.

The problem with any deception is that those believing it are deceived and don’t know it. Could it be that we, the church, are *deceived*?

We know that Saul fought against the church in the extreme, not only trying to persuade people that this new sect was certainly not of God, but by delivering its followers to be put to death! Why would he do this? Was he an evil, murderous person? No. It was because Saul truly believed that

this new sect was a threat to *God* Himself. He felt he was doing God's will by persecuting these traitors who dared to say that righteousness came only through believing in this Jesus and not by obedience to the law of Moses, which he deeply believed in and so diligently followed. Imagine his rage. Faith in a fake Messiah! Faith in His cross! Faith in His resurrection! It offended him to the very core of his existence. Yet, we know, that Saul was unknowingly deceived.

Does this sound at all familiar? Could it even happen today—that God would send messengers to declare again the message of the cross and we would actually fight against it—against Christ Himself? Doing so would be even worse than the Scribes and Pharisees because we are born again. Shall we now persecute our own brothers and sisters in Christ? Would we really despise His grace?

Grace! God's unlimited and unmerited favor!

Perhaps if we saw it as "error" we would feel it is the *responsible* thing to do to argue against it theologically as did the Judaizers in the early church. So, the Sunday morning sermons would begin to confront this "new" theology by giving a more "balanced" approach to grace.¹ Thinking that people are being "deceived" by such teachings and attempting to isolate and silence those teaching grace, we might even label them as "antinomians" or "grace extremists" or sideline what God is doing among us as simply a "Christian fad".

Is the *grace* of God a *fad*? Is it?

What if that isn't effective? What if this so-called "hyper-grace" doctrine keeps "spreading like a *cancer*"? How far would we go to extinguish it? Would we move from these somewhat civilized responses to something more cynical? Would we ask those teaching it to "find a place of worship more in line with their beliefs"—in essence, throwing them out of the "synagogue"? Would we begin to make false accusations based on half-truths against these voices in order to defame them and thus shut them up? Would we warn people to "be careful" with whom they "associate" after we've given these "grace extremists" the left foot of fellowship? Would we cast aspersions on their character behind their backs? Would we even resort to violence?

My brothers and sisters, these things are already happening.

This is a very important question that deserves our sincerest consideration. What if the church—what if *we*—are actually fighting against the very revival we've been asking God to send? What if *this* is the day of our visitation? Will we refuse to hear as did the Scribes and Pharisees?

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Can grace be "balanced"? As our daughter, Joella, puts it, "Grace cannot be balanced. Grace is entirely unbalanced—in our favor."

Will we, as Saul did, persecute the church of God even Christ Himself?

The multitudes were flocking to Jesus. They were *hearing* what He had to say. The Scribes and Pharisees were not pleased. They were endeavoring to undermine His message—attempting to catch Him in His words, finding fault according to the law. Imagine healing someone on the Sabbath day or claiming to forgive sins without a sacrifice!

People by the thousands are beginning to return to the pure message of the gospel of the grace of God, delighted and overjoyed to rediscover that God really loves them and that what He did in Christ is more wonderful, more amazing, more marvelous than they ever realized and as beautiful as they once hoped and believed. They are breaking free from a religious system that has kept them bound under a myriad of laws and expectations and are beginning to enjoy their relationship with God once again. Yet, not everyone is sharing in their delight. What is being revealed to them is being met with skepticism, even opposition, by others. Just as with Jesus and with every other reformation, the most resistant to authentic revival has been the religious establishment.

When I say “authentic” revival I am referring to the exact meaning of the word itself—to bring *back* to life something that used to be alive, but now is dead or dying. Take a drowning victim, for example. When the lifeguard gives CPR, he is attempting to “revive” the person. The church *does* need to be revived, but not in the way we traditionally think of it. While one of the eventual outcomes of authentic revival is the forsaking of sin, forsaking sin does not bring revival. **At its core, true revival has to do with restoring life.** In order for the church to experience this much needed resuscitation it must once again receive the pure message of God’s grace. Thus, authentic revival is what it’s always been—a call to return to the pure gospel of the grace of God which rejects the notion that something more than faith in His grace is required in order to be saved and live the Christian life.

Reading these words can be disorienting, even irritating, **but is it not worth our sincerest consideration in light of our church history?** What if the church *today* is in error as it has been repeatedly over the centuries? Shouldn’t we want to *know*? Isn’t it worth a moment or two of our time and serious consideration? Isn’t the truth the point? Of course, we want the truth. David and I longed for truth with all of our hearts and sought to love God and please Him in every word and deed. We thought we *were* teaching the truth. We were giving our lives to bring Him glory, doing everything we knew to serve Him. We thought we were doing what was right or we would not have been doing it at all.

Regrettably, we were *wrong*. In all of our zealous love for God, my husband and I missed the core message of the gospel, that not only are we saved by God’s grace alone through faith in Christ alone, but that when Jesus said, “It is finished,” He meant it.