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*He rescued me because He delighted in me. Ps 18:19b*

**THIS MONTH'S MEDITATION SCRIPTURE: *Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight. So that You are justified when You speak, and blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Psalm 51:1-5***

### **Sin, Sin, Sin!!!**

Let's talk about sin. Trouble is, sin is such a wide and varied topic it's difficult to cover in a relatively small piece. I'll give it a shot. Unfortunately, I'm somewhat of an expert.

All sin is basically encompassed in three words: sin, iniquity, and transgressions. *Sin* is most commonly defined as "missing the mark." The mark we miss is God's will, His plan, His purpose. All mankind inherited a sin nature as a result of the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden. Thus, David's statement from Psalm 51, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." This sin nature guarantees us that we will continuously sin without divine intervention. That divine intervention came to mankind in the form of Jesus who was sent by God the Father as a sacrifice in payment of mankind's sins. Without it, we would spend eternity separated from God in the torment of hell. Because of His intervention, being His payment for our sins by laying down His life to be crucified on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, we can walk in newness of life by the power of the Holy Spirit; and knowing that we will spend eternity with God in heaven.

*Iniquity* refers to the sins we commit and continue in without repentance. I suppose it's possible to commit these sins unknowingly, especially for one who does not live a life practicing sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's voice of conviction. Sins continued in without repentance represent a lack of the fear of God.

*Transgressions* are sins we commit with willful intent. In Psalm 19:13, David sings his prayer to God, "Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not rule over me; then I shall be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression."

It doesn't seem like sin is talked about much in the culture of today's modern churches. Those which have focused on being "seeker friendly" have moved away from the basic gospel message of repentance from sin, "for the kingdom of God is at hand." This is all done in an effort to draw in the numbers, and not offend anyone.

Often, Christians spend time trying to be as perfect as possible, perfect meaning as sinless as possible. It seems the emphasis and effort are more on avoiding sin. I spent decades striving for that kind of perfection. But Jesus said to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. To me, that would seem to suggest that the best course for me is to develop a right relationship with Jesus as my King, pursuing intimacy with Him in that way. Knowing and being known.

I finally realized after so long that striving for sinless perfection was futile, because there is no such thing this side of eternity. As swell a guy as I might become, I will always be committing some sin or another whether by commission or omission, knowingly or unknowingly, intentional or unintentional. As I become more maturely conformed to the image of Jesus, there will be less sin in my life, but I will never reach that sinless perfection as long as I'm in this earthly body. Even the apostle Paul, as godly and holy a man as he was, lamented over the challenges of choosing good over sinful evil in his letter to the church in Rome in chapter 7.

And this is where God's grace comes in. The Greek word used most in the New Testament for grace is charis. It means "the divine influence on a heart, and its reflection in a life." To me, this means God's power in my life to do His will. It puts the emphasis and focus on living in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit as opposed to simply doing my best to avoid sin.

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***Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen. Jude 24-25***