

Barclay- Letters to the Corinthians – 196: “However difficult the idea of a power of evil may be theologically or philosophically, it is one which experience understands only too well. Those who cannot accept the good news of Christ are those who have so given themselves over to the evil of the world that they can no longer hear God’s invitation. It is not that God has abandoned them; they by their own conduct have shut themselves off from Him.”

Most of us would prefer to be or act like we are Unitarian Universalists. Lots of the funerals I either attend or preach have a fairly significant number of Universalists.

Unitarian Universalism (UU) draws from many sources: <http://www.uua.org/beliefs/principles/>

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.
- One of those principles speaks of the importance of a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning." We believe that this search for truth begins as soon as a child can think and continues throughout his or her entire life time. We do our best to support this search, and through religious education we give the information necessary to challenge and encourage each person's path.
  - 1) If everyone, no matter how evil, even those who actually worshiped the devil, gets to go to heaven, what will heaven be like? If there is no need for the transforming love of Christ to give you citizenship in heaven, then heaven will be filled with those who are not transformed. Who wants to go there?
  - 2) Would you want to go to heaven and spend eternity worshiping a god that sent Jesus to suffer and die for absolutely nothing? His death had no bearing on eternity if even those who have never believed in Him get to go to heaven to. I hope you see the dilemma.

**Premise:** Limited grace does not mean God was or is not powerful enough. In other words, limits on grace, does not limit the power of God. It is God’s wisdom, and His application of that wisdom we may not understand.

Scriptures:

- 1) John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. Here we are shown that we participate in God’s grace by choosing for ourselves. Does God not have a right to
- 2) Also in Romans 3:22-25: This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood.
- 3) For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. I Colossians 1:13-23b