Living Loved: The Freedom of God’s Grace

Dr. Andrew Farley on the Finished Work of Jesus, Our New Identity, and The Impossible Teachings of Jesus

Dr. Andrew Farley | Thursday, October 22, 2026 | Host: Donna Leland

Program Summary

Donna Leland welcomes Dr. Andrew Farley of The Grace Message to discuss the finished work of Christ and his book The Impossible Teachings of Jesus. Andrew explains his understanding of complete forgiveness, the believer’s new identity and union with Christ, and why Christian growth is not a project of trying to earn closeness to God. He connects the blood of Jesus and His resurrection to forgiveness and new life, then discusses how grace bears the fruit of the Spirit rather than producing fear-driven legalism. In the second half, Andrew presents his interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount as revealing humanity’s inability to meet God’s perfect standard and the need for the gospel. Donna reflects on the freedom she has found in understanding grace. The interview concludes by inviting listeners to receive Christ’s love and live from their identity in Him.

Key Takeaways

• Andrew emphasizes that forgiveness and union with Christ are gifts of grace rather than rewards for religious activity.

• 1 Corinthians 6:17 is central to his understanding of the believer being one spirit with the Lord.

• Learning and growing in faith are distinct from trying to earn a closer standing with God.

• Andrew connects Christ’s blood with forgiveness and His resurrection with the believer’s new life.

• He teaches that fear and harsh legalism do not produce the fruit of the Spirit.

• Donna describes how grasping the finished work of Christ has affected her own spiritual life and treatment of others.

• Andrew interprets the Sermon on the Mount’s demanding commands as exposing the impossibility of self-earned righteousness.

• His interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount and once-for-all forgiveness reflects his theological perspective; Christians differ in how they interpret and apply these passages.

• Christian obedience is described as a response from a new heart, not a means of purchasing acceptance.

• The interview closes with an invitation to live loved and receive Christ’s grace today.

Scripture References

• 1 Corinthians 6:17

• Romans 6:1–18

• Galatians 2:20

• Ephesians 2:13–18

• Hebrews 10:19–22

• Colossians 3:1–4

• John 15:1–5

• Matthew 5–7

• Matthew 11:28–30

• Galatians 5:22–23

• Ephesians 3:17–19

Quote of the Day

“Will you let Jesus love you today?” — Dr. Andrew Farley

Broadcast Notes

Donna introduces Andrew Farley and his ministry, The Grace Message, then explains how his teaching helped restore her joy. Andrew speaks about the believer’s complete forgiveness, new heart, and oneness with Jesus, citing 1 Corinthians 6:17 and other New Testament passages. He argues that practices such as Bible reading and church participation can foster growth but do not purchase greater union with Christ. He describes the blood and resurrection as two aspects of the gospel: sins removed and new life given. Donna and Andrew contrast resting in grace with fearful or legalistic religious effort, especially in relation to the fruit of the Spirit. Andrew then discusses his book The Impossible Teachings of Jesus, subtitled You Can’t Obey the Sermon on the Mount: And That’s Good News. He interprets Jesus’ intensified commands about anger, lust, and perfection as revealing the inadequacy of self-righteousness and pointing to the need for grace. The program concludes with his encouragement to focus on Christ’s love and new identity. His theological explanations are attributed to him rather than represented as the only Christian interpretation.

❤■ Practical Applications

• Read 1 Corinthians 6:17 and consider what union with Christ means in Andrew’s teaching.

• Thank Jesus specifically for His death and resurrection.

• When I feel driven to earn God’s approval, pause and remember salvation is a gift of grace.

• Ask whether my spiritual habits flow from love or fear.

• Reflect on how a secure identity in Christ could change my treatment of another person.

• Read Matthew 5–7 carefully, noticing both Jesus’ commands and my need for grace.

• Ask the Holy Spirit to grow love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and gentleness in me.

• Speak encouragement to someone who is discouraged by a sense of spiritual inadequacy.

• Explore differing faithful Christian interpretations of a challenging passage with humility.

• Pray Andrew’s question personally: Am I willing to receive Jesus’ love today?

Today's Challenge

For seven days, begin by reading a short passage about God’s grace or love. Thank Jesus for what He has done, then ask: ‘Am I living today as someone loved by Christ, or am I trying to prove myself worthy?’ Choose one response of kindness, peace, or encouragement that grows from gratitude rather than fear. End each day by naming one way you saw God’s grace at work.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the finished work of Jesus Christ. When I become anxious about my standing before You, remind me of the grace You offer and the new life that comes through faith in Your Son. Teach me to grow in understanding without turning prayer, Scripture, or service into ways of earning Your love. Let Your Spirit form genuine kindness, gentleness, peace, and joy in me. Help me read Your Word carefully, receive its correction humbly, and depend on Jesus rather than my own record of achievement. When I struggle with guilt or fear, lead me back to the cross and the hope of the resurrection. Open my heart to the depth of Christ's love, and help me live as someone who is loved. In Jesus' name, Amen.

About Today's Speaker

Dr. Andrew Farley is a pastor, author, and teacher associated with The Grace Message. His ministry emphasizes the finished work of Christ, the believer's identity in Jesus, and living under grace. In this interview he discusses his book The Impossible Teachings of Jesus and his interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount.

About Today's Host

Donna Leland regularly hosts the Thursday edition of Mark & Friends for Great News Media. Through thoughtful conversations with pastors, authors, and ministry guests, she seeks to encourage listeners in their relationship with Jesus and offer practical resources for Christian growth.

Proofread Broadcast Transcript

Welcome to Mark & Friends. I'm your host, Donna Leland, and today we're going to talk to one of my favorite pastors, and I do have to credit him with helping me regain the joy of my salvation. So I'm very excited to be introducing him to you today.

His name is Andrew Farley. He has a ministry called The Grace Message, and he's also an author of many books. He's also releasing his latest book called The Impossible Teachings of Jesus, and we'll be talking about that today.

Thank you so much, Pastor Farley, for joining us on Mark & Friends. Hi, Donna. Great to be with you.

Thanks so much for having me. Yeah, you've been a real instrumental force in my world, just helping me understand who I am in and that just leads to a deeper enjoyment of everything that Jesus came to give us, and you've been on that message, on that point, for so many years now. Yeah, you know, it's a big deal if you know the Bible but don't know the gospel.

That's a problem, and I think there are a lot of Christians, you know, we're saved, we're going to heaven, we know the Bible pretty well, but do we really know the gospel? Meaning, you know, why did Jesus do what he did? Why did he go to that cross? Yeah, we say our sins are forgiven, but five minutes later we're asking God to forgive us. Well, I thought you said your sins are forgiven. I thought you said he remembers them no more.

I thought you said he keeps no record of our wrongs. I mean, that's what scripture says, but we end up asking God for what he's already done sometimes. So, our ministry, The Grace Message, is all about the finished work of Christ and helping Christians see that we believers are under God's grace.

We are totally forgiven, past, present, and future, and on top of that we have a beautiful new heart, a new identity, a new nature. So, this whole thing of how we need to be scared of grace, or watch out for too much grace, or try to balance grace, actually we're saying, no, by grace you have victory over sin. By grace you have a new nature.

By grace you have a new heart, and that's what grace is. Grace is way bigger than we imagine. Let's talk a little bit about the concept of trying to get closer to God.

That phrase, I hear it over and over, and whenever it's being expressed, there's such a sadness. There's such an almost hopelessness in the believer, like, well, I'm trying to get closer to God, as if that's what we're supposed to be doing, and all this energy is going into trying to get close and stay close to God. Talk about that.

Yeah, exactly. So, what the scripture actually teaches is that by grace, as a free gift, when you're saved, when you're born again, something incredible happens, and that is that you are joined to Jesus. Now, think about that.

1 Corinthians 6, 17 says, you're one spirit with the Lord. Now, you can't get any closer than one spirit. I mean, are you kidding me? We could, you know, we could have a thousand quiet times and go to church a million times, and we're not going to get any closer than one spirit with the Lord.

So, what is happening? What are people really talking about? Well, I think they're talking about learning and growing. Yes, we're learning. Yes, we're growing.

There's an adventure to getting our mind renewed, but we're not inching closer to the God of the universe. We have a vine branches relationship with him. It's him and us and us and him.

I mean, Romans 6 says we're united with Christ. Galatians 2 says Christ lives inside of me. And then, you know, Ephesians says we've been made alive together with him.

And Colossians says you're hidden. You're hidden with Christ in God, and Christ is our life. So, all I'm saying is this is what Jesus wanted.

This is what he prayed for in John 14, 15, 16, 17. You look at that power packed passage where Jesus is praying that we would be one and that we would have the same oneness that he has with the Father. I mean, that's what he prayed for.

That's what we got. His prayer was answered, and now we have the gift, the free gift of oneness. So, I guess I would say to that person listening right now, if you've been trying to get closer to God, you know, more quiet times, more memory verses, more small groups, more church activity, more this, more that, thinking, oh, if I could just rid myself of more sin, then eventually I would be able to inch closer to God like other people enjoy him.

I just want to tell you, don't wait. Don't wait and don't hesitate to believe this truth that you get to be one with Christ, joined to Jesus for free. It is by faith.

It is not works. It is by faith. It's a free gift.

Everything you ever wanted with God is absolutely free because Jesus paid for it, and I'm not talking about heaven. I'm talking about now being united and one spirit with Jesus. And I think it goes back, doesn't it, Andrew, to what did the blood accomplish? And you have brought that to my awareness, so that I just so appreciate what Jesus did for me on the cross because it worked, and it was once for all, for all time, for all people, which is me.

So, you know, just to take his blood at face value, it was to get me close to God. So it worked, right? Yeah, exactly. So there's two reasons that we are this united and this close to Jesus, and the first reason, you got it.

I mean, it's the blood. We're brought near by the blood. Ephesians 2, it says you were far off, but you've been brought near by the blood of Christ.

And then Hebrews 10, it says we can have confidence to enter God's presence by Jesus's blood. We can have assurance. Then in Colossians 1, it says God made peace through the blood of Christ's cross.

And, oh my goodness, even Peter says it. He says Christ suffered once to bring you to God. So I guess I would say, did Christ suffer? Yes.

Did it work? Yes. Why did he do it? To bring you to God. Why did he shed his blood? To bring you near.

So are we going to act like the blood didn't work? Or does God do everything perfectly? Like that's really what we're saying. When God does something, he does it perfectly. When he forgives you, it's perfect forgiveness.

When he frees you from the condemnation of the law, it's perfect freedom. When he makes you a new creation, it's a perfect new creation. And when he draws you near and makes you one, it means that you're perfectly one with him.

You have a perfect union. So it's high time the church decide, did God do it perfectly on the cross? And then you say, well, what was that second thing? What's that second event that brings me near to God? Well, it's the resurrection. It's the blood and the resurrection.

So the blood takes away the sin problem. Now, you know, God's not up in heaven acting like an accountant. He doesn't have out a clipboard counting your sins.

He says he has no record of them. He's destroyed the movie reel. There is no movie of your sins.

But then the resurrection steps in and says, well, wait a minute, look what I've done too, because this is the other half of the gospel. You're raised with Christ. You're seated with Christ.

You have his life in you and you're in him. So between the blood and the resurrection, oh my goodness, the gospel is better than you ever imagined. And everything you wanted, all that intimacy, all that closeness, all that oneness that Jesus has with the father.

I mean, I can't even hardly say it. I can't believe it's true, but we get it. We get it at no cost because it cost Jesus everything.

And just to be able to say, I am close, I am close. That's not an arrogant statement. And so it doesn't make me puffed up and proud because I know I got into that position by the grace of God, but it really causes me to rest, relax and get on with the business of what he wants me to be doing.

And that's enjoying him and then sharing Christ Jesus with other people. So that whole concept of being close and being right with God here in the moment, not because of what I've done, but because what he's done has just, it just causes ministry and life to take on a whole new sheen. Yeah.

You know, I mean, I've often been saying here lately that scaring Christians is not real ministry. Scaring Christians is not good ministry. That's not what Paul, Peter, James, John did.

They weren't interested in scaring the body of Christ, but there's a lot of Christians that are living in fear today. And I think we got to recognize the Holy Spirit is our comforter. And Jesus said, you know, my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

And you're going to find rest for your soul. So that has to be real. I mean, Jesus is not lying to us or portraying the gospel poorly.

Clearly he's telling us the end goal here. The end goal is that it would be easy and light. But then, you know, a lot of religious voices out there are actually throwing stones at that.

They will say, well, you can't say that. That's easy. That's easy believism.

And I think if Jesus were in ministry today on planet earth, with us for 33 years nowadays, he might say, well, easy believism. Are you kidding? That's exactly what I'm telling you. It's going to be easy and light.

And then if you believe in me, you will not perish, but have everlasting life. So it's believism and it's easy. Amen.

And whenever we're really resting and trusting in him, the Holy Spirit has access to our mind, will, emotions. And that's what I've noticed that behavior begins to change. Depression lifts, you know, that guilty feeling that just hangs over us like a cloud for really no reason from the past.

And maybe even just concerned, maybe we did something we didn't even know we did. That just lifts and you can just begin to enjoy everything he came to give us. Yeah.

Yeah. When you look at the fruit of the spirit, Donna, I mean, it's coming from a person who is enjoying themselves. I mean, just if we, if we hit the pause button, so to speak in our minds and just reflect on, you know, the fruit of the spirit being love and gentleness and kindness and peace.

I mean, look at all of that. That is soft. You can't wake up and as a legalist, you can't wake up and crank out love and crank out peace and crank out gentleness.

It's not going to come from some sort of strict religiosity, but a person who, as you said, I mean, they're, they're enjoying God. They're relaxing with God. They know who they are.

They know they're a loved child. They know they have a father that will never desert them, never leave them. They know the gospel.

They know they're one with Jesus. Well, what happens is that relaxes you. It puts you in a place of enjoying your relationship with God.

And next thing you know, look at you, you're oozing gentleness and you're oozing kindness and you're oozing peace and love. And, you know, I like to say a believer who really understands God's grace, they're going to bear more fruit accidentally than a legalist will all day. That's a great point.

That is so true. You know, as a legalist, I was harsh. I was exacting.

I was, you know, always condemning myself. Therefore, my attitude toward others was also judgmental and condemning. But when I really began to rest in the finished work, I just let everybody off the hook.

I left myself off the hook. And that didn't mean I began committing records of sin. It actually meant the opposite, that now I could allow the Holy Spirit to work within.

We're talking with Dr. Andrew Farley and he has just written a new book. It's called The Impossible Teachings of Jesus. And I've been enjoying some of your messages because this is the information you give to your congregation in Dallas and Lubbock before the rest of the world gets it.

So I've been previewing it, thankfully, over your ministry. And what are The Impossible Teachings of Jesus, Andrew? Yeah, well, the subtitle of this book is You Can't Obey the Sermon on the Mount. And that's good news.

Now, why would I say you can't obey the Sermon on the Mount? I mean, Jesus, of course, delivered that sermon. It's the most famous sermon in human history. So why would he say what he said? And how could I claim that it's impossible? Well, you don't have to spend more than 60 seconds in the Sermon on the Mount to discover why it's impossible.

I mean, first Jesus starts out and he says, none of the law is gone away, not a jot nor a tittle. And then he says, if you ever get ticked off at anybody, if you're ever angry, it's the same as killing them. It's murder.

And then if you look at somebody with lust, well, looking is the same as sleeping with them. And so here's your solution, Jesus says, well, maybe you ought to just cut off your hand and pluck out your eye. And then he sums it up by saying, be perfect, be perfect like God.

Now, my guess is everybody listening to us right now, Donna, they have their eyes in their sockets and they haven't chopped off their hands. And none of us are anywhere near being perfect like God. So that's what I mean by the impossible teachings of Jesus.

And then you have to ask, well, Lord, why would you do this? Why would you preach a sermon like this? And, you know, I think his answer comes at the end of the sermon when he says, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened. What he's doing there is good evangelism. I mean, he's got the Jews all around him, including the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and they're all puffed up with pride and they think they're good law keepers.

And, and Jesus says, you think you're a good law keeper? Well, let me show you the true standard. I mean, the law says, don't murder. And I congratulate you.

You haven't killed anybody today. Bravo. But I got to tell you, if you've been ticked off, if you've had a bad temper, it's the same, it's the same as murder, right? So he's taken the bar, he's ramping it up.

And then he even says, let people slap you, let people beat you up, turn the other cheek, give money. Here's one that seems like we Christians don't obey. Give money to everyone who asks of you without hesitation.

So, so whether it's hide your fasting and hide your praying and hide your giving and let everybody beat you up and cut off body parts and oh my goodness, nobody makes it out of this sermon alive. And that's the whole point. Jesus is showing us we can't do it.

We can't reach the standard. We all fall short. And that's why we're going to have to seek and find knock and the door will be opened.

That's why we're going to need the cross, the resurrection. We're going to need God's grace. We're going to need the gospel.

So when we understand the sermon on the Mount properly, there's a huge portion of it smack dab in the middle of it that is meant to show us it's impossible and we can't do it. No, it's portrayed as being possible on so many levels and in so many messages that I've heard. I mean, you know, blessed are the poor in spirit.

That's a beautiful piece of scripture because it's true. And he was trying to help them understand the kingdom. Right.

And I love that. Be perfect as you know, I am perfect. Your heavenly father is perfect.

I think, Andrew, what he was telling us is we can be perfected when we have the Holy Spirit. That's really the perfection he wants for us. And we can't earn it.

It has to be given. And once we do have his Holy Spirit, that's what he wants for us. Now, you know, our behavior, that's going to take a lifetime, isn't it, to change? Yeah.

And I think, you know, back then you got to realize these people listening to this sermon, this sermon on the mount. I mean, they didn't have a new heart. They didn't have a new spirit.

They didn't have God's spirit living in them. They weren't born again. They didn't even know what that meant.

So, you know, what his deeper message is, is this, hey, your problem is greater than your eye. Your problem is greater than your hand. You could pluck out your eye.

You could cut off your hand, but you got a bigger problem. You are never, ever going to be perfect like God. It's a heart problem.

It's not an eye problem or a hand problem. It's a heart issue. And so that heart is going to have to be dealt with.

And that, you know, that's what's so beautiful about the true gospel. The gospel says, well, when you come to Christ, you're crucified, buried and raised. You become a new creation.

And Romans 6 even talks about that new heart that we needed. It says you've become obedient from the heart. So I love obedience.

I know you do too. We're talking about obedience from a different angle. It's not legalistic obedience.

It's not rule-based obedience, but it's discovering that you have an obedient heart that loves Jesus. And that's Romans 6, 17, this obedient heart. And then the other piece of that is Ephesians 6, 24.

It says you have an undying love for Jesus. I just adore that verse. I mean, to recognize you have an obedient heart and an undying love for Christ, that just does away with a whole lot of worry.

I can live under grace. I can live forgiven. I can live free and I can trust the new heart that God gave me.

Will you let Jesus love you today? That's my question for those listening. I think about Paul's words. I mean, Paul talks about how wide and deep and long and high is the love of Christ.

And then he talks about how you'll be filled to the measure of the fullness of God. If you just comprehend the love of Christ. So is that your goal? Is that your agenda? Will you live loved? Will you let Jesus love you? Will you ask the Father, show me your love? I mean, we're trying so hard to love other people and forgive other people and be a good person all the time.

And I think that's the wrong focus. The right focus is when we actually fixate, we fix our eyes on Jesus and we say, show me your love, reveal to me your heart for me. You live in me for a reason.

What are you doing in there? What do you feel about me? What do you think of me? What's my identity in you? Teach me this union. How can I live knowing that I'm bonded and fused to you every day, all day long, 24 seven without interruption. That's beautiful.

We're talking with Dr. Andrew Farley. He is the author of his latest book from Zondervan, The Impossible Teachings of Jesus. Andrew, if someone wanted to contact you, how can they get ahold of you? Yeah, well, you can find me on our website at andrewfarley.org. That's andrewfarley.org. And my email as well.

Feel free to reach out and email me anytime at andrewfarley.org. Super easy to remember. Andrew at andrewfarley.org. All of these program notes will also be made available to our listeners as well. Thanks again, Andrew, for being a part of Mark & Friends.

Oh, my pleasure. Thank you. So glad you dear listener were able to join us here on Mark & Friends.

Now coming up tomorrow, it's the Bible study. And that's when a group of our listeners join us here in the studios on Mason Street in Springfield and are able to enjoy the ministry of Pastor Mark Johnson. Mark Burns as well, giving insight and people just joining in and sharing and celebrating what the Word of God has to say.

So that's coming up tomorrow, 7.32 a.m. and p.m. and then 8.32 a.m. and p.m. for our great Indiana listeners. Thanks again for being a part of Mark & Friends. We're a listener supported Christian radio station.

And thank you so much for all of your level of support, your prayer, your giving and telling others they can hear the good news of Jesus Christ right here on Great News Media. I'm your host, Donna Leland. Hope you have a great day.