

**What is Grace?**  
**“The Truth As We Know It”**  
**11/1/15**

This week I want to look at the great grace of God, and try to understand it more fully. The Hebrew expresses it as graciousness, or kindness or favor or beauty: also-pleasant, & precious. The Greek word is much the same but adds "especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude: - acceptable, benefit, favor, gift, gracious, joy, pleasure, thankworthy.

Grace is the love of God shown to the unlovely; the peace of God given to the restless; It is the unmerited favor of God.

J. Gresham Machen **says**, “The very center and core of the whole Bible is the doctrine of the grace of God.”

The doctrine of “Grace” is the most important concept in the Bible, Christianity, and the world. It is most clearly expressed in the promises of God revealed in Scripture and embodied in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul tells us in Eph 2:6-8, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

What is grace and what are some ways people have defined grace?

B.B. Warfield says, “Grace is the free sovereign favor to the ill-deserving.”

John Stott says, “Grace is love that cares and stoops and rescues.”

Jerry Bridges says, “[Grace] is God reaching downward to people who are in rebellion against Him.”

Paul Zahl says, “Grace is unconditional love toward a person who does not deserve it.”

Grace is most needed and best understood in the midst of sin, suffering, and brokenness. We live in a world of earning, deserving, and merit, and these result in judgment. That is why everyone wants and needs grace. Judgment kills. Only grace makes alive. In Rom 6:1-4 we read, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Grace is - “mercy, not merit.” Grace is the opposite of karma, which is all about getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don’t deserve, and not getting what you do deserve. Christianity teaches that what we deserve is death with no hope of resurrection. Christians live every day by the grace of God. We receive forgiveness according to the riches of God’s grace, and grace drives our sanctification. Paul tells us, “the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live

self-controlled, upright, and godly lives”

Paul tells in Rom 6:12-15 and we quote, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

While everyone desperately needs it, grace is not about us. Grace is fundamentally a word about God: his un-coerced initiative and pervasive, extravagant demonstrations of care and favor. Michael Horton writes, "In grace, God gives nothing less than Himself. Grace, then, is not a third thing or substance mediating between God and sinners, but is Jesus Christ in redeeming action."

It is our Christian identity: "By the grace of God I am what I am." (1 Corinthians 15:10)

Spiritual growth doesn't happen overnight; we "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" Quoting from Titus 2:11-12 we read, "For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly,

righteously, and godly, in this present world;"

Grace transforms our desires, motivations, and behavior. In fact, God's grace grounds and empowers everything in the Christian life. In 2 Peter 1:1-4 the Apostle Peter tells us, .. "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Grace is the basis for: Our standing before God: In Romans 5:1-2 we read, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Grace defines our living: those who receive "the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ," In Romans 5:16-17 we read, "And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though

we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and His gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one Man, Jesus Christ."

Grace is our strength for living: "Be strengthened by the grace that is in Jesus Christ" 2 Timothy 2:1-3 for "it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace." And we read, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ... Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." and in Hebrews 13:9 "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." He is talking about the difference between the Law and Grace.

God's grace gives us our sufficiency: In 2 Corinthians 12:9 we read, ... "My grace is sufficient for you." And in 2 Corinthians 9:8 "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work."

I am reminded of that beautiful familiar song, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see" And Grace, grace, God's grace. Grace that is greater than all my sin.

Listen again next week.

This we do know, The Bible is God's Word, God's word is true, Jesus Christ is God's son, Jesus died to save us from our sin, Without Jesus we are eternally lost. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we might be saved. Atheism is a temporary condition, for every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! Jesus stands ready to save you now, Will you call on Him today?

Until next week, God bless.