

I. THE GRACE OF GOD

Peter Jeffery: "Grace is the unmerited gift of God to a people who do not deserve it, but who deserve just the opposite. It is God showing goodness to a people who deserve judgment."

1. Therefore Grace is one of the great foundations stones salvation is built upon

A. In fact the message of salvation in Christ is called the "*Gospel of grace*" in Acts 20:24

1). Paul makes it clear we are saved by grace in Ephesians

Eph 2:8-9 (ESV) For *by grace you have been saved* through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁽⁹⁾ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

B. We could say that without grace there could be no gospel and no hope of salvation at all

Transition: But this thought of "Amazing grace" is being lost in today's age

A. Let's investigate why – this is important – we need to think about it

2. Why the thought of amazing grace is being lost in our modern society

A. Because it is so different from how natural man thinks

J.I. Packer. Knowing God: "Modern man is convinced that, despite all his little peccadilloes - drinking, gambling, reckless driving, black and white lies, share practice in trading, dirty reading and what have you - he is at heart a thoroughly good fellow. Then as pagans do, he imagines God as a magnified image of himself, and assumes that God shares his own complacency about himself. The thought of himself as a creature fallen from God's image, a rebel against God's rule, guilty and unclean in God's sight, fit only for God's condemnation, never enters his head."

Thought: That is the result of having no understanding of such things as the holiness of God

A. Modern man lives in a sort of spiritual and moral fairyland - that has no reality as far as divine truth goes

1). He believes he is doing just fine - and God is OK with the way He lives

B. Therefore why bring up this concept of grace and getting what you don't deserve

1). He thinks he does deserve heaven – blessings – God's love

2). Therefore he has no idea what John Newton meant when he wrote

That grace was so amazing because it saved a wretch like him

a). Natural man feels he's not a wretch

Therefore grace is not necessary – therefore grace is not amazing to him

C. Unfortunately - The church has also lost this thought of who they were before they were saved

1). Why grace is so desperately needed for them

2). I fear this is because the pulpit has so soft pedaled sin

That the people in the pews have never seen the ugliness of what they were saved from

3). The result is a loss of wonder over the grace of God

that would still reach out to a rebel like them

D. Add to this - We live in a day that does not believe in punishment of any kind

1). How many times have we heard the complaints of the police

"The courts are treating the criminals as if they were the victims"

2). We have abolished capital punishment

Schools are no longer allowed to discipline unruly children

Parents are told they shouldn't spank their kids

3). Problem: Society takes it for granted God feels the same way

a). Therefore since we aren't so bad anyway – we don't really deserve punishment

b). Since God won't punish us over our little imperfections - then why do I need grace?

c). If you don't believe that God punishes sin – you don't need grace

Point: It is only when a person becomes convinced they are really a sinner

And that they truly are under the wrath and the judgment of God – that He must punish their sin

- A. Only when we see what trouble we're in – how hopelessly lost we really are
Knowing that if God doesn't do something we don't deserve – that we are lost
- B. Only then will grace begin to thrill us and fill us with a sense of wonder and joy
 - 1). Because then we see magnitude of the truth - *by grace our judge has become our Savior*
- C. That is why to the NT writers grace is such an amazing thing
 - 1). They understood who they were – they were corrupt – they were sinful
 - a). They understood that all they had earned was wrath
 - 2). But they had become recipients of grace instead
 - a). They were amazed that God would extend grace to those who were hostile towards Him
To those who looked at Him as an enemy
 - b). And grace thrilled them

Transition: When you begin to understand grace – you'll understand why it is so amazing!

- A. Let's look at some aspects of grace to drive this home
 - 1). I want to quickly look at grace and salvation – to magnify what God has done
 - 2). Then I want to go to a grace saturated passage and unpack it

II. GRACE AND SALVATION

1. Scripture links grace and salvation together in many places

Eph 2:5 (ESV) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

Tt 2:11 (ESV) For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,

Ro 3:24 (ESV) tells us we: are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

- A. Without the grace of God salvation would be impossible
 - 1). Because it would require man to earn acceptance with God
 - 2). But man cannot meet the standard God requires - perfection
 - a). But man is born in sin - dominated by a sin nature and dead to the things of God
 - b). Therefore he naturally continues to do what earns him more and more wrath
 - 1a). NOT what earns him any favor with God at all

2. Without grace man is hopelessly lost

- A. But as you begin to understand grace - you begin to understand how the sinner becomes a child of God
 - 1). You begin to understand how those in the Bible become acceptable to Him
 - a). How Abraham who was living a life of idolatry became the friend of God
 - b). How David so wayward at times is said to be a "man after God's own heart"
 - c). How Peter with all his failure could be given such a prominent position in the church
 - d). How Paul the self-proclaimed chief of sinners - who hated Jesus and everything about Him
 - 1a). Could become the great Apostle that he became
 - 2). It is the same with all of us isn't it

Transition: So grace is so important – I could go about this in a lot of ways

- A. But I thought we'd just finish up looking at a passage that is grace saturated
- B. Because this passage is so theologically correct – we will return to it again and again

III. GRACE IN EPHESIANS 1

1. Paul is going to show us the spiritual blessings grace brings

Eph 1:3 (ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

A. Why do I say grace brings these blessings into my life?

1). V. 6 all this happens to the praise of His glorious grace

2). V. 7 all this happens in accordance with the riches of His grace

Transition: Let's see what these blessings in Christ through grace are

A. We are just going to fly over them – I taught Ephesians – each of these was a study in itself

2. Chosen in Him

Eph 1:4 (ESV) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

A. He chose me long before I could do anything to deserve it

3. Adopted by Him

Eph 1:5–6 (ESV) he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁽⁶⁾ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

A. Predestined defined = To determine or to declare beforehand

Question: What is the difference between chosen (v. 4) and predestined (v. 5)

A. Predestined emphasizes the plan of God – Chosen emphasizes the method used

1). God predetermined that you'd be adopted into His family

Then He executed that plan by choosing you

B. What does adoption mean? Paul is borrowing from the Roman laws here

1). When an adult would adopt a child – the laws protected that child

a). They would be brought into the family having full rights – just as natural children

b). The parents legally became responsible for that child's every need

2). God uses this term with precision – to tell us what He has done by grace

a). God says to every believer "I've chosen you to be in my family. I have willfully, joyfully, legally taken on the responsibility of caring for you."

b). I'm amazed at how many ways God tells us this to bring us rest

1a). The picture of the good shepherd – sheep couldn't take care of themselves

But the good shepherd has taken on the responsibility of full care

2a). Providing everything they needed to be healthy and content

Eph 1:6 (ESV) to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

A. I guess – this is what understanding who we were before God rescued us creates

Who we were: Eph 2:1–3 (ESV) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ⁽²⁾ in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ⁽³⁾ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

1). You understand who you were – grace becomes amazing – it creates praise

John Newton: I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be; *but I thank God I am not what I once was*, and I can say with the great Apostle, *'By the grace of God I am what I am.'*

4. Redemption in His blood

Eph 1:7–8 (ESV) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁽⁸⁾ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

A. Redemption = word that comes out of the slave markets of the ancient world

- 1). It means deliverance by the paying of a ransom
- 2). Paul is speaking of the purchasing of a slave by paying their master the required price
- B. That was us – we were helplessly – hopelessly in bondage to sin – unable to free ourselves
 - 1). Unless somebody graciously paid the redemption price to free us we were without hope
 - a). But that is exactly what Jesus Christ came to do
Mt 20:28 (ESV) “...even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to *serve*, and to *give his life as a ransom for many.*”
 - 2). He came to do what we could not do for ourselves pay the price to free us
 - a). To free us from the bondage of sin
 - b). To free us from the bondage of guilt that sin had placed us under
 - 3). Through the riches of God's grace expressed in the death of Christ
 - a). The power of sin was broken – it no longer has a stranglehold in our life
Tt 2:11–12 (ESV) For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ⁽¹²⁾ training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,
 - 1a). The grace that saves us – changes us – gives us the power to live for God
 - b). Why Paul says
Ro 6:15 (ESV) What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!
Why? Ro 6:17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,
 - 1a). We are no longer slaves to sin – we now obey from the heart
 Why? Because grace has changed us – Titus 2:11-12
Thomas Brooks: Saving grace makes a man as willing to leave his lusts as a slave is willing to leave his galley, or a prisoner his dungeon, or a thief his bolts, or a beggar his rags.
 - 4). Through the riches of God's grace expressed in the death of Christ
 - a). The bondage of fear caused by guilt has been broken
Ro 8:1 (ESV) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
Heb 2:14–15 (ESV) Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ⁽¹⁵⁾ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.
 - 1a). We now look at the grave as a servant to take us to be where we want to be
 - 2a). Our greatest enemy is now a friend

5. He made known to us the mystery of His will

Eph 1:9–10 (ESV) making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ⁽¹⁰⁾ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

- A. It is by grace that we understand the Word and the Ways of God
 - 1). This is a ministry of the Holy Spirit to illuminate the truth of God to His children
Thomas Manton: God's mind is revealed in Scripture, but we can see nothing without the spectacles of the Holy Ghost.
- B. By grace He made known to us the mystery of His will
 - 1). That plan that gives us so much hope – the devil is not going to win this thing
 - a). This is all going to end one day and be put under the headship of Christ
 - b). I say with John “Even so come quickly Lord Jesus!”

6. We have obtained an inheritance by grace

Eph 1:11–12 (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ⁽¹²⁾ so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

A. **Inheritance:** kleroo (klay-ro'-o) = Speaks of something future that is absolutely certain

- 1). Something that could not possibly fail to happen
- 2). The Greeks would often speak of it as if it had already occurred (as here)

B. What is this inheritance?

- 1). It includes "Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" V. 3
- 2). It includes every promise God has ever made – that meets every need
"We are promised peace, love, grace, wisdom, eternal life, joy, victory, strength, guidance, power, mercy, forgiveness, righteousness, truth, fellowship with God, spiritual discernment, heaven, eternal riches, glory—those and every other good thing that comes from God."
- 3). It included everything that Christ has been given

Ro 8:17 (ESV) and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and *fellow heirs with Christ...*

- a). What Christ inherits we share in – staggering thought

Heb 1:2 (ESV) but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, *whom he appointed the heir of all things...*

- 1a). Circuit breaker just shut off

Question: How do we obtain this inheritance – Paul shows us God's part and man's part

A. **God's Part 1:** We are inheritors because God chose us to be His child – adopted

Eph 1:4 (ESV) even as he *chose us in him* before the foundation of the world...

Eph 1:5 (ESV) *he predestined us* for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ...

Eph 1:11 (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance, *having been predestined* according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

- 1). Predestined defined remember = To determine or to declare beforehand
- 2). This choice was made before any man or woman was created

B. **God's Part 2:** We are inheritors because of God's power

Eph 1:11 (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

- 1). Does anybody actually think they have the power to get to God on their own
 - a). That the devil wouldn't stop them dead in their tracks!
- 2). Fortunately - God's plan for you to be His child is backed up by His power to make that happen

C. **Man's part:** Believing

Eph 1:12–13 (ESV) so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ⁽¹³⁾ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, *and believed in him*, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

- 1). To become an inheritor, we must believe the Gospel – we must place our faith in Christ
 - a). And those who refuse to do this – will be lost – because they refused
- 2). At the same time we have to be careful we don't turn believing into a work that gives us credit
Eph 2:8–9 (ESV) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; *it is the gift of God*, ⁽⁹⁾ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
 - a). We are saved by grace through faith
Notice what that faith that saves us is – a gift from God
 - b). We must believe - but if God doesn't move by grace we won't

W. E. Best: The sinner, apart from grace, is unable to be willing and unwilling to be able.

- 1a). Salvation must always be thought of in a way you can't boast

Transition: We'll get into all this more as we move along. Let's move to the next blessing grace provides

7. We are secure because of grace

Eph 1:13–14 (ESV) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, *were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ⁽¹⁴⁾ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

- A. Notice what happened at the moment you believed: **You were marked with a seal**
 - 1). Goes back to ancient custom – buyers would come into a market – purchase something
 - a). Could be livestock – lumber...
 - b). They would mark it as theirs – so it could separated out later and transported back
 - 1a). IOW this mark was to indicate that item did not belong to anybody else
 - 2). God has done the same with you – the moment you believed
 - a). You were given the Holy Spirit which were marked you as His
 - 1a). This indicates you do not belong to anybody else = the devil
You are God's possession and nobody else can have you
- B. It says the Holy Spirit is a down payment – a guarantee
 - 1). Guarantee of what? That you will take possession of your inheritance that is being kept for you
 - 2). God doesn't want you doubting if you'll be with Him – what kind of Father would that be?
 - a). Do you really love me – will I be with you – “maybe”
Then I might end up in hell! “Maybe” – wow great father!
- C. There is another classical way they used that word translated “down payment” = arabon
 - 1). It was also used in the Greek for “engagement ring” – I love that!
 - a). There is going to be a wedding in heaven
Re 19:6–7 (ESV) Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁽⁷⁾ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;
 - 1a). That great symbolic ceremony where the bride of Christ – the church
Is united to Christ
 - 2). So the gospel in a sense is a proposal for marriage
 - a). When the sinner accepts by faith – the Holy Spirit is given as an engagement ring
 - b). What does an engagement ring do? It tells the bride I promise this wedding will happen
 - 1a). The Holy Spirit is the promise to us – we will be at that wedding

Transition: That's enough for tonight – we may return to grace next week

CONCLUSION

1. Grace defined

Peter Jeffery: "Grace is the unmerited gift of God to a people who do not deserve it, but who deserve just the opposite. It is God showing goodness to a people who deserve judgment."

- A. We've seen it's God's goodness to those who don't deserve it in every area of our life
 - 1). We saw why we're not amazed by grace – we think we do deserve God's love and blessing
- B. We saw how it links to salvation and our relationship with God
 - 1). We're saved by Grace – chosen by grace – adopted by grace and redeemed by grace
 - 2). We saw that we know God's will by grace
 - 3). We have obtained an inheritance by grace – all that Jesus has been given
 - 4). We saw that we are secure because of grace – Holy Spirit given is a guarantee