

## INTRODUCTION:

1. As with all things Biblical, there is certainly a great deal of misunderstanding concerning the grace of God.
2. Paul wrote about how the word of truth had been constantly bearing fruit and increasing in the Colossians since the day they heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth. Co 1:5-8.
3. Peter testified to the true grace of God that we might stand firm in it. 1 Pe 5:12.
4. The writer of Hebrews warns, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited" (He 13:8-9).
5. In this and next Sunday morning's sermon we are going to strive to understand the grace of God in truth that we might stand firm in the true grace of God and not be carried away by varied and strange teachings which would not benefit us if we were carried away by them.

## DISCUSSION:

### 1. What is grace or *charis* in the Greek?

- A. Most will say it is unmerited favor and that is right, if not redundant. By definition "favor" is "kindness beyond what is due," i.e. unmerited.
- B. If you give me two weeks pay for two weeks work, you are not being gracious to me. You are giving me what I have earned and what you owe me. Ro 4:4.
- C. If you give me four weeks pay for two weeks work because I am behind in my bills, then you are being gracious to me. You are giving me an extra two weeks pay, not because I have earned it and you owe me, but because you want to help me get through a financial rough spot in my life. Ro 11:6.

### 2. God is gracious.

- A. Father. 2 Ti 1:2. Son. John 1:14. Holy Spirit. He 10:29.
- B. God is willing to forgive all our sin—by definition an act of grace—and graciously meet all our other needs! 1 Ti 1:12-16; Ro 8:31-32.

### 3. Every kindness God has bestowed, is bestowing, and will bestow on us is an act of grace.

- A. Because we have chosen to sin against God, we have earned damnation. Ro 3:23; 6:23A.
- B. No amount of good works can make up for even a single sin. That is why Jesus died on the cross for us. He alone could pay our debt to justice so we could be saved from the consequences of our sins. Ro 6:23B; Ep 2:8-9.
- C. No amount of good works lessens the debt we owe Jesus for saving us from our sins.
  - 1) We have nothing of value to God. He does not need anything from us. Ac 17:24-25. Ex: Ep 3:8.
  - 2) Everything we do have already belongs to God. Job 41:11A; Ro 11:35-36.
  - 3) Anything we can do for God is only what we ought to do given what He has done, is doing, and will do for us. Lk 17:7-10 ("thank" is *charis* in Luke 17:9).
  - 4) Everything God has required, requires, and will require of us is a grace to us—for our benefit, not His.
    - a. With God it is never, "I will do this for you, if you will do this for Me." Rather, it is always, "I will do this for you, if you will do this for you."
      - i. A jobs and true scholarships analogy. Both involve receiving money on the satisfaction of certain conditions. But with the latter we would never say that scholarships recipients earn the money by meeting the conditions. Why? Because benefactors fund scholarships for what they can do for students, not for what students can do for them. They set conditions to help as many students as possible benefit as fully as possible from their gracious bestowal of funds.
      - ii. This explains why salvation is a free gift, but costs us everything. Isa 55:1; Re 22:17; Mt 16:24-25. It is a free gift because God gives it even though we have nothing of divine value to exchange for it, but it costs us everything because God knows it is best for us to give up all we do have in His service.
    - b. With God it is never, "Do your best and my grace will do the rest." Rather, it is always, "Do what my grace requires and I will forgive you and count your faith as righteousness."
      - i. We do not partially bridge the gap between us and God by our works. God must bridge the entire gap. All the steps we must take to be reunited with God are His gracious provisions and are always

a grace of God to us, never a partial payment of our debt to God. Ep 1:7-8A; Ac 18:27; 11:18; Ti 3:5-7; 2 Co 8:7; Ps 4:1; Philippians 1:29; etc.

- ii. The grace of God is not something we only need in those occasional moments we falter after weeks of sinless living. No, it is something we always need because in spite of our best efforts to overcome our sins of ignorance and weakness we still fall short of the glory of God and I am convinced that no one who has begun to understand God's true holiness would ever suggest otherwise.
- iii. The saved must whole-heartedly strive for sinless perfection to remain saved, but none attain this goal in their lifetime. 1 Co 8:2; Ec 7:20. If we are saved we are trying not to sin (1 John 2:1), but "if we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

#### 4. **There are two extremes we must avoid regarding the grace of God.**

- A. First, we must not turn the grace of God into an excuse for licentiousness. Jude 4; Ro 6:1-2, 15-18; He 10:26-29.
- B. Second, we must not think that because we cannot do enough to deserve heaven that we cannot do enough to confidently know that we are going to heaven. 1 Jn 5:13; 2 Th 2:16-17.

#### 5. **Why is God gracious?**

- A. As we have seen, God is not gracious because of who we are or because of what we have done, are doing, or will do.
- B. Rather, God is gracious because:
  - 1) Of who He is. Isaiah 30:18A; Jonah 3:10-4:2; Lk 6:35-36.
  - 2) Of what He has done. Ro 3:23-26.
  - 3) His love is its own reward. God's satisfaction in doing what is best for us does not depend on how we respond to His love, but on His choice to love us regardless of how we respond. Lk 6:35.

#### 6. **To whom is God gracious?**

- A. God is gracious to everyone in some ways. How? 1 Pe 3:7; He 2:9; Ti 2:11-13.
- B. God is gracious to some people more than other people.
  - 1) Who?
    - a. The saved more than the lost. Ro 5:1-2.
    - b. The mature Christian more than the new convert. 1 Pe 1:2B.
    - c. Those who go to heaven more than those who have just served Him on earth. Ep 2:6-7; 1 Pe 1:13.
  - 2) Why? *Because we can ...*
    - a. Receive the grace of God in vain. 2 Co 6:1.
    - b. Fall from grace. Ga 5:4.
    - c. Always enjoy a fuller measure of God's grace. 2 Pe 1:2; 3:18A.

#### 7. **How must we respond to the grace of God? *We must ...***

- A. Acknowledge that we are what we are and do what we do because of it. 1 Co 15:10; Ep 2:8, 10A.
- B. Be humbled by it. Lk 17:10; 1 Pe 5:5.
- C. Receive it in the fullest possible measure. 1 Co 15:10; Ps 84:11-12.
- D. Continue in it and increasingly grow stronger by it. Acts 13:43; 2 Ti 2:1.
- E. Be thankful for it. 1 Co 1:4.
- F. Be content with it. 2 Co 12:7-10.
- G. Glorify God in it. 1 Pe 4:10-11.
- H. Give God our best because of it. 1 Co 15:10; Mal 1:8-9.
- I. Be gracious to other people. Lu 6:27-36.
  - 1) It is not our place as individual Christians to make people pay for their sins, but to do all we can to save people from their sins. Lu 9:51-56; Ro 12:19-21; He 12:15A; 2 Co 4:15.
  - 2) If we are not gracious to other people we dishonor God and He will not be gracious to us. Pr 14:31; 1 Pe 3:8-9; Mt 18:32-35.
  - 3) If we are gracious to other people we will be abundantly blessed. Lk 6:38; Pr 22:11; 19:17; 14:21; Ps 112:5, 9.