



FOUNDATIONS OF GRACE

FACILITATOR: OTHELLO S. METZGER, BTH.,
MDIV



KEY TEXT

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” -Ephesians 2:8-10



Lesson objectives:

At the end of this lesson, the student will be able to understand:

- The definition of grace.
- The difficulties associated with the grace message.
- The demands for grace.
- The dividends of grace.



I. Introduction


“Grace” is the most important concept in the Bible. It is most clearly expressed in the promises of God revealed in Scripture and embodied in Jesus Christ. Grace is the love of God shown to the unlovely; the peace of God given to the restless. It is in essence, the unmerited favor of God.

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 us alive.



A. W. Tozer

Grace is “the good pleasure of God that inclines him to bestow benefits on the undeserving.” This involves two primary elements: 1) God’s goodness or favor or blessings, 2) bestowed on those who do not deserve it. Grace is often defined as “God’s unmerited favor.” This is a simple, yet beautiful way to capture the real essence of grace.



As an example, Adam and Eve received God's grace after they committed the first sin. Because of their sin, Adam and Eve deserved death and eternal separation from God. God justly banished them from the garden and placed a curse upon creation, but He also demonstrated His grace in two stunning ways.

First, He covered the shame of their nakedness by clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins. The sacrifice of these animals to cover mankind is a picture of the ultimate sacrifice, Jesus Christ, the "lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).



Grace Shown Throughout the Old Testament

God's grace isn't just a general grace given to the Israelites—His chosen people. God is radically gracious toward individuals, as well. For example, when the Israelites crossed over the Jordan to conquer the land of Canaan, they first sent out spies to gather information (Josh. 2:1). When they went into Jericho, the spies were hidden by a Canaanite prostitute named Rahab, and as a result, she and her family were saved from the city's destruction. These foreigners whose matriarch was a professional sinner were even given a place among Israel. The narrative continually refers to Rahab as "Rahab the prostitute," as if to reinforce the point that no one is so far gone into sin that they are beyond the reach of God's grace.



Grace is the basis for:


- Our Christian identity: “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Corinthians 1:10)


Our standing before God: “this grace in which we stand.” (Romans 5:2)

- Our behavior: “We behaved in the world ... by the grace of God.” (2 Corinthians 1:12)

• Our living: Those who receive “the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ,” (Romans 5:17) by the “grace of life.” (1 Peter 1:7)

- Our holiness: God “called us to a holy calling ... because of his own purpose and grace.” (2 Timothy 1:9) • O

- 
- Our strength for living: “Be strengthened by the grace that is in Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:1) for “it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace.” (Hebrews 13:9)
 - Our way of speaking: “Let your speech always be gracious.” (Colossians 4:6)
 - Our serving: “serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.” (1 Peter 4:10)
 - Our sufficiency: “My grace is sufficient for you.” (2 Corinthians 12:9) “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.” (2 Corinthians 9:8)
 - Our response to difficulty and suffering: We get “grace to help in time of need,” (Hebrews 4:16) and when “you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace...will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” (1 Peter 1:10)

- 
- Our participation in God's mission: As recipients of grace, we are privileged to serve as agents of grace in the harvest field. Believers receive grace (Acts 11:23), are encouraged to continue in grace (Acts 13:43) and are called to testify to the grace of God (Acts 20:24). Jesus says, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21). God's mission is to the entire world.
 - Our future: God, and his grace, is everlasting. "Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:13)
 - Our hope beyond death: "grace [reigns] through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:21)




II. The definition of grace

In Ephesians 2:8-10, we learn a few critical truths about salvation that will help us define grace. Let us examine them briefly: A. We have been saved; it is an accomplished fact. The Greek word (sozo) "saved" carries the idea of both deliverance and wholeness.

A saved person has already been delivered or rescued from the kingdom of darkness, the curse of the law and the wrath of God. And they have been healed or made whole again. When Jesus cried out, "It is finished," our deliverance and healing became a wonderful spiritual reality. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, not anything we did, accomplished this enormous feat.

B. Salvation is "by grace." The text provides us with insight into the nature of grace; it originates in God, not in man. It offers gifts, not wages. It does not factor in human works or performance as a basis for approval or favor. It leaves absolutely no room for man to take credit for any of its benefits. It produces spiritual transformation. Good works are not its root, but its fruit.



C. Grace works in conjunction with faith. Grace supplies, faith receives. Grace is the hand of God extended to bless. Faith is the hand of man extended to receive. Redemption requires both actions.

With these thoughts in mind, let us define grace. One very common definition of grace is "unmerited favor." Another is, "God's riches at Christ's expense." Both definitions are good, but incomplete. Grace is also ability, God's ability. Grace as God's supernatural ability, unlimited favor and unmerited resources made available to undeserving people through faith in Jesus Christ. Grace offers not just pardon from sin, but power over sin. It is not just God's willingness to overlook sins; it is God's power to overcome sin and everything connected to it, including the curse.



Grace definition continue

Grace is “God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.”

This definition highlights the uniqueness of saving grace, which includes the gifts of salvation, faith, spiritual gifts, and the ongoing grace to run the race given to us. These are all gifts from God and so they are part of what his grace is. They are also given because of the sacrifice of Christ (“at Christ’s expense”).




Grace comes from God

What makes grace grace is because it starts “from God,” freely, without being merited or earned.


“From God” this phrase is rich with meaning.

- Grace is the overflow of God’s total self-sufficiency
- He has no deficiencies that we could remedy by our works
- Grace is the overflow of God’s free goodness, power and wisdom
- He is self-existent (complete source and sustainer and owner of all in the universe)




When goodness come from Him, it comes freely. It can come no other way. Therefore all his goodness is grace.

When we say “God is a God of grace,” we are only saying God is God-that He is the infinite, all-sufficient God.




For grace to be grace it must be a gift. Louis Berkhof in his Systematic Theology captures the same idea when he says, “Grace is the free bestowal of kindness on one who has no claim to it.” What he is clearly articulating is grace is given to those who deserve unending wrath and suffering.



Jerry Bridges in his book “The Discipline of Grace” said, when we focus on our performance, we forget the meaning of grace: God’s unmerited favor to those who deserve only His wrath.


A Pharisee-type believers unconsciously think they have earned God’s blessing through their behavior.

Guilt-laden believers are quite sure they have forfeited God’s blessing through their lack of discipline or their disobedience.



They both have forgotten the meaning of Grace because they have moved away from the gospel and have slipped into a **PERFORMANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

Grace is call Grace not because it is given freely by God, but it is called grace because we deserve exactly its opposite



Grace is God's gift to us that is continually transforming us into the fullness of us in His image. God has given us permission through the sacrifice of His Son to come boldly and approach His throne and seek His grace.


“Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”
(Hebrew 4:16)



Stop calling yourself “old sinner”

Referring to yourself as “old sinner saved by grace” only cause you to contradict scriptures. It is possible to be “an old sinner” or you can be “saved by grace,” but it is not possible to be both at the same time.

“Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:15-17)



“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Stop defining yourself by what you look like outwardly and start seeing yourself as you are in Christ Jesus.


You're New, Clean, forgiven, and Righteous.

If you sin that doesn't make you an old sinner but a saint who has some growing up to do. You are a child of God who needs to discover how much God loves you and the exceeding great power that works in you.




II. The difficulties with grace.

“For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” -I Corinthians 1:22-24




“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? What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid (Romans 6:1, 15).

“And why not say, ‘Let us do evil that good may come,’ as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just” (Romans 3:8).





“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other Gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.” -Galatians 1:6-9



A. The Jews, who looked to their ability to keep the law for favor and blessings from God, found the message of grace to be a stumbling block. The notion that one could be righteous in God's sight and find favor with Him apart from the law contradicted everything they had learned. The Greeks, who placed their faith in wisdom and knowledge, considered the message of grace pure foolishness.

B. Paul was charged with giving people a license to sin. Religious people, understanding the importance of holy living and the propensities of the unregenerate heart, feared that without the threat of punishment that the law imposes, people will choose to make sin a way of life. They felt that to teach that God was no longer imputing sin to the account of those who sin, but was offering wholesale forgiveness to sinners instead, was tantamount to encouraging people to sin.

- 
- Jews seeks after Signs
 - They asked Jesus to show them a sign
 - The message of Jesus came as a surprise to the disciples and the very outsiders




They were surprised when he speaks about the cross and his death. That was the message of grace simplified.

The Greeks call it foolishness, the Jews stumble (the idea that the Messiah was a convicted felon was an offense to them) and that was the message of Paul and the church.

The Jews wanted a sign like what their forefathers saw in the wilderness with Moses. Manna falling from the sky, the ten plagues on the Egyptians, the parting of the Red Sea and drowning of the Egyptians.


People are only interested in power, healing and wisdom.



The Greek expected Paul to teach them about wisdom through Philosophy. Paul told them a simple story about the message of the cross.

The Jews never knew themselves as sinners. They never care about their RELATIONSHIP with God. They felt that they just need a little help.

Our relationship with God cannot be good when we do not understand and accept the message of the CROSS which is a clear manifestation of Grace.




The message of Grace is annoying and stumbling. The Cross which demonstrates God's grace to is offensive to some.

Men are annoyed by the Grace message because they perceived themselves better than others. The Jews saw themselves righteous and they always condemn the publicans. The Greeks see themselves as people of wisdom and they call others barbarians and ignoramus.

Matthew 23:14

Luke 18:9-14


Colossian 3:11



C. The influence of the Judaizers, those who defamed the message of grace as Paul preached it, promoted a watered-down mixture of grace and law that nearly destroyed the Galatian Church.

D. The radical preaching of the Gospel, the message of grace alone (apart from works) meets similar opposition today. Fearing that God's grace is not sufficient, that the fear of judgment must be present or men will see no reason to resist temptation, many insist on maintaining a mixture of grace with an element of law.

To preach grace without making demands of men and requiring human self-effort and sacrifice is considered “cheap” grace.




E. Paul responded immediately and uncompromisingly to this error, even going as far as pronouncing a curse on any minister that diluted the Gospel by introducing even a little bit of legalism into the message. Just a little leaven, Paul warned, would be enough to leaven the whole lump




III. The demand for grace.

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (Ephesians 2:1-5).

“The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law” (1 Corinthians 15:56).



“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:19-22, 24).




“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them...Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore, the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:10, 21-26).



Reasons for grace

A. Unredeemed human beings do not just commit acts of sin; they are dead in trespasses and sin. Sin is imbedded in their nature and they are powerless to change themselves. They are children of wrath.

B. The law cannot justify sinners because they cannot keep it perfectly. It can only shine the light on their sinfulness and awaken in them great shame and condemnation. In fact, the more they try to keep the law, the stronger sin gets and the more frustrated they become (Romans 7). Consequently, the law cannot bless; it can only curse those who fail at trying to obey the commandments perfectly.



D. Man's hopeless human condition demands grace because only by not taking into account their works can sinners be justified and declared righteous in God's sight. Only by not requiring any work or effort on the part of "dead" men can they be made alive. Thus, salvation from beginning to end is God's work.

E. Even as the law cannot justify sinners, neither can it sanctify saints. Once it brings a man to Christ, it has done all it can do. Jesus alone sanctifies (1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; Ephesians 5:26). He sanctifies the saints by offering His blood for them, imparting His Spirit-Life and cleansing their minds and emotions with His word.

F. God does not require His saints to add anything to what His Son has done for them in order to receive everything He died for them to have. They have nothing they can add and nothing more is needed. It is finished and we are complete in Him. Man's part is simply to repent of self-effort (dead works) and to believe the Gospel—the good news of substitution and identification. Not I, but Christ! Christ in my place



G. These truths are captured in the Grace Equation:

Jesus + Nothing = Everything

Jesus + Anything = Nothing

D.L. Moody was confronted by a man who said, “I want to take 30 seconds to tell you something it took me 40 years to learn.”


- I can do nothing to earn my salvation.
- God never asked me to do anything to earn my salvation.
- God has done everything necessary for my salvation. His grace is sufficient.



IV. The dividends of grace


A. Better promises: Grace establishes a better covenant based on better promises than the law-based Old Covenant. They are better because under the Old Covenant, the promises depended on man's performance. In the New Covenant, the promises depend on Jesus' performance. They are, therefore, sure.

“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises...For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 8:6, 12).




B. Imputed righteousness: Grace puts the ungodly in right standing with God. It declares sinners fully justified in God's sight apart from any works they do or do not do. This righteousness does not increase, or decrease based on how well we perform. Righteousness is given by promise, not by performance, through the cross of Christ, and is received simply by believing. Since it is Christ's righteousness, it is perfect, needing nothing from us to complete it.


Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin..." (Romans 4:6-8).



C. Wholesale forgiveness: When a person receives the gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ, grace offers forgiveness for all sins, past, present and future, once for all time. Because of Jesus' blood sacrifice, God is merciful to our unrighteousness and does not remember our sins and iniquities any longer. Individual sins are not charged to the believer's account because they have all been charged to Jesus, who has been condemned and punished already. To charge them again to the believer's account when they are committed would dishonor the sacrifice of Jesus and discredit the claim of Hebrews that He put away sin once for all by the offering of His blood. It would make His sacrifice no better than that of goats which could not settle the sin issue once for all, either.



“By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His foot stool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:10-14).



D. Supernatural supply: Law requires sinners to produce what they do not have. This always leads to failure, frustration and more death. Grace, on the other hand, supplies sinners with what they lack. This leads to faith, fruitfulness and more life. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” -Ephesians 1:3-7



What makes grace delightful and superior to law-based religion is that righteousness, sanctification, life and victory are gifts. Grace does not demand that we achieve any of these things. It only invites us to receive. Under grace, we are expected to be receivers, not achievers!

