

## Adult Sunday School Class

**Objective:** Increase understanding of the Christian fundamentals Paul is reviewing with Timothy.

**Opening Prayer:** Father, I thank you that you hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for your special anointing on this lesson plan and the time that we will spend together studying your word. Bless both speaker and listener. Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome you as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

**Read:** II Timothy 2

Q – What does the word grace mean?

- Typically most Christians would say “unmerited favor” or getting what we don't deserve.
- In terms of salvation we would say the unmerited favor of God.
- Who forgives all our sins and accepts us into His family.
- Paul describes the extent of His forgiveness as removing the hand writing from the note against us.
- David describes the scope of His forgiveness in Psalms 103, “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us”.
- Although the stains of our sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow.

Q – Is “unmerited favor” the complete definition of the term grace or does it have a broader definition?

- It's a very good general definition and I like it a lot.
- However the term grace as used in scripture does have broader implications in many places.
- One definition I read while preparing said grace really means the power and presence of God.
  - While I don't accept that statement as a complete substitute definition for the word grace.
  - I like it as an addition as It does compliment our general definition very well in most places.

Q – How do you test a definition to determine it's accuracy or applicability?- By substituting it into the sentence to validate it for completeness and accuracy.

Q – Let's try the substitution method to validate our commonly used definition and to see if you believe the terms power and presence of God compliments it usage. What are some of your favorite scriptures where the term grace is used?

- Ephesians 2:8
  - For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9) not by works, so that no one can boast.
  - For it is by the **power, presence and unmerited favor** of God you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.
- John 1:14
  - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of **grace** and truth.
  - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of His **power, presence, unmerited favor** and truth.
- I Timothy 5:28
  - The **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
  - The **power, presence and unmerited favor** of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Q – Who can give me examples of the **power, presence and unmerited favor of God** in their life?

- Salvation and eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord is one of the best examples we have.

- As I look back over the last 70 years of my life I can recognize the hand of God steering me in the direction of safety and success.
- I say 70 years because I committed my life to Christ when I was about 12 years old.
- Now before you believe I grew up as a “goody two shoes” please know, that is far from the truth.
- I wondered around working out my salvation with the help or the Spirit of God and marvel at the grace, mercy, forgiveness and countless “2<sup>nd</sup> chances” that He extended to me.
- Most of the guy's I hung around with in HS wound up with criminal records.
- “There but for the grace of God go I”.
- My wife tells the story of her reaction the moment she first saw me in her home church.
  - She turned to her girlfriend and said “that's the guy I'm going to marry”.
  - My mother in-law had the same premonition and said something similar to my father in-law.
  - As you might guess, at that point in my life I had no clue.
  - But looking back the picture is very clear to both of us, It was the hand of Almighty God.
- Prior to being interviewed for my first job in Kingston I had a dream in which I saw a building.
- I thought it very unusual, I didn't recognize it and typically don't take notice of things like that.
- When I got to Kingston for the interview I recognized the plant lobby as that same building.
- When looking for a church home in Kingston we felt led to drive to each church parking lot and waited on the Spirit of God for direction.
- We believe with all our hearts, God has placed us here and won't leave until He releases us.
- I teach SS because I believe we are called to do so.
- BTW, I have been asked to teach in all but one church we've attended since the early 60's.
- As I look back I can see that at critical points in my life, God's presence has been there to help me see the alternatives clearly and to steer me toward making right choices.
- Committing our lives to him, choosing a marriage partner, career decisions, geographic locations, He has been our partner thru it all.
- Q - What's your story about the grace of God?

Q – How do you know if something or someone is reliable?

- By testing or subjecting it to a trial, either personally or by the witness of a known and reliable source.
- Someone who's judgment you trust or if considering a product perhaps;
  - Consumer's Report.
  - Underwriter's laboratory.

Q – What was Paul attempting to prepare Timothy for? - The job of a pastor or church leader.

Q – Is Paul stating or implying that any man Timothy considers to be reliable is also qualified to teach the gospel to others? - I don't believe so.

Q – Is he saying anyone qualified to teach should be considered reliable? - No.

Q – How would you express the thoughts that Paul is making to Timothy in the first two verses of this chapter?

- Be an expert or thoroughly familiar with the grace of God.
- Be thoroughly familiar with the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses.
- In essence, the details of the gospel Paul was preaching.
- Entrust this gospel to both:
  - Reliable men.
  - Reliable men with the ability to teach.

Q – Why is Paul being so specific in his instructions to Timothy? - He is passing on the things he has learned, (sometimes the hard way), to Timothy because he wants him to succeed.

Q – Why is it so important for a minister of the gospel to be expert in the grace of God?

- Because the grace of God is the very foundation of the gospel.
- While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- He who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us, so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God.
- The scripture describes the father seeing the prodigal while he is still a far way off, running to meet him and welcoming him back into the family.
- In his dying moments, the thief on the cross uttered “remember me”, he said enough and Jesus did.
- The depth of the love and grace of God is almost beyond human comprehension.

Q – What is Paul's advice about difficult times, like the one he was currently experiencing? - Be a good soldier.

Q – How might we provide the same advice in the current vernacular? - Don't whine and complain about your circumstances.

Q – How would you describe this period of Paul's life? - Extremely difficult, trouble on every hand.

Q – What word does scripture use to describe periods of “trouble on every hand”? - Tribulation.

Q – Are periods of tribulation reserved for those in pivotal positions of spiritual leadership?

- No, I don't know what the criteria is for individuals selected for periods of tribulation.
- However my observation is, at times they fall on the just and the unjust, people in positions of leadership and those of common assignment.

Q – What is Paul saying in verse 7? - 7) Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

Q – Now, can you tell me in your own words what Paul was instructing Timothy to do?

- He was in essence saying, think long and hard about what I'm saying.
- Meditate on these concepts and the Spirit of God will reveal their application to your heart, life and the personal situations you encounter.
- They will become a part of your gospel that will guide your life and can be shared effectively with others.

Q – Let's try to apply Paul's advice to our own lives. I want you to think about the following scriptures for a few moments and allow the Spirit of God to give you the insight necessary to apply them to your current situations.

- Psalms 46:1) God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2) Therefore we will not fear.....
- Hebrews 13:5) Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” 6) So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

Q – What does the word refuge mean?

- It means a place where you can hide or abide in safety.
- A place of protection or shelter, as from danger or hardship.
- A source of help, relief, or comfort in times of trouble.

Q – What do you believe I mean when I say to my children “I'm here to help in whatever situation you may find yourself”?

- It means exactly what I said.
- I'll provide insight, labor, money, tools or whatever I can to help them deal with the issues at hand.

Q – What does it mean to have God as your refuge and strength in your current situation?

- I spoke with my brother who had metastatic melanoma while preparing this lesson plan in 2013.

- The cancer had spread throughout his entire body.
- He “spilled” a statement of faith that I'd like to share with you.
- When speaking about his (RN) wife's reaction to his situation he said “she is so stressed out and loosing so much weight the doctors can't seem to get it under control”.
- She is suffering terribly because of fear and the resulting anxieties.
- Now this is his indirect statement of faith, “I'm doing OK but she wants to tell God what to do and how to do it”, then he laughed.
- His subtle statement of faith is, **“I'm OK with the way God is handling my situation”**.
- Now let me assure you his situation was not good and he was fully aware of the diminishing odds for his recovery. Incidentally, he died a few months later.
- He had been receiving, “state of the art”, treatments at UCLA for the past 8 months.
- The first two treatment options had failed, the tumors are growing and the doctors told him they would soon have significant negative impacts on his quality of life.
- Now my brother was not a model of Christian virtues or behaviors. Far from it!
- On the contrary, most of his values and behaviors point in the opposite direction.
- In fairness, one could rationalize that after 8 months of failures by the medical profession he was now resigned to his fate but I know his background and I'm hearing something very different.
- In spite of his circumstance, he had a quiet confidence in the providence and sovereignty of God.
- When you and I have a confidence like that we're living and acting in faith.

Q – What thoughts are being transmitting about the situations in our lives?

Q – Are we taking advantage of His available peace and refuge?

Q – Are we allowing His Spirit to control our thoughts and plans?

Q – Are we able to take full advantage of His “ever present help”?

Q – Or are anxieties frequently controlling our thoughts and actions?

Q – What does God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help, mean in our world?

Q – Why did Paul say he was enduring this difficult period of his life? - Verse 10) Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

Q – Who are the elect? - All those who have or will accept Christ as their personal savior.

Q – Which of the elements of his “trust worthy” saying say the most to your heart?

- The last one speaks the loudest to my heart.
- His nature is unchangeable,
- He is the same yesterday, today and forever!
  - If we died with him, we will also live with him.
  - If we endure, we will also reign with him.
  - If we disown him, he will also disown us.
  - If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

Q – When he says if we endure, we'll also reign with him, is he talking about this life or heaven? - Yes :-))

Q – What point is Paul making about words in verse 14? Isn't it important to know the correct and exact meaning of words?

- It is but I believe his point is, allow God to be God.
- Don't put Him into a box based on your understanding of specific scriptures, the concept of faith and their applicability to a given circumstances.
- Allow me to give you some examples from scriptures where we believe we completely understand the words.
- We also believe we have at least as much faith as the man who said, “help now my unbelief”.
- However we still can't fully explain specific outcomes.

- Jesus said “have faith in God” not in your doctrine or understanding of His word and nature.
- Let's build a case for faith and healing and then test it with a scriptural example.
  - By His stripes we were healed, emphasis past tense.
  - He healed all who came to Him.
  - Your faith has made you whole.
  - He could there do no mighty works because of their unbelief
  - Whatever you ask for in prayer believe you receive it and you'll have it.

- Q – Given our understanding of these scriptures, wasn't God obligated to heal Paul of his thorn in the flesh?
- If we could be completely honest in our answer, we'd say yes.
  - However given it's the Apostle Paul we're talking about and since we have Luke's scriptural explanation of the situation, we believe it's OK for God to have a higher purpose in His response to Paul's prayer of faith.
  - Could it be that God has a higher purpose in our situations?
  - I believe Paul is saying, let's not split hairs or quarrel about words to try to provide nice clean doctrinal answers to all the issues of life.
  - God is Sovereign, He can do as He pleases.
  - Furthermore, I personally believe, He is always acting in our best interests.

- Statement** – I don't want to digress into areas of doctrinal dispute but allow me to restate this one principal.
- All good false doctrines contain some elements of truth.
  - Don't swallow doctrines just because they contain something that you know to be true.
  - Challenge all doctrines, regardless of their source, against the full council of God's word and His unchanging nature.

Q – Is Paul's admonition to be a “workman without need to be ashamed” directed toward those in full time ministry or to all believers? - Yes :-))

Q – With that statement in mind and the companion scripture of “do all as unto the Lord” what's the answer to the following questions? If we were doing something as unto the Lord would it be:

- Punctual or tardy?
- An above or below average contribution?
- Loyal or disloyal in nature?
- Supportive of others or independent and perhaps rebellious?
- Fair and honest or deceptive?
- Trustworthy, a person of integrity or insidious behaviors?
- An effort that would attempt to win the support of others or just role over them if necessary?
- One of submitting to others, as appropriate, or insisting on doing things your way?

Q – What are the points Paul is making in verse 19?

- God is not mocked, He knows those who belong to Him.
- Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.

Q – His point in verse 21 is? - If a man cleanses himself from sin or wicked thoughts and behaviors, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Q – What is characteristic of those who call on the name of the Lord? - Righteousness, faith, love and peace.

Q – God's servant must be? - Kind, gentle, not resentful, and able to teach.

Q – How did he describe the effects of the trap of the devil? - It causes people to become captive to the devil and do his will.