

Joel R. Patiño

Understanding God's Grace

Intro_

There is a saying, “Everybody wants a job, but no one wants to work.” Of course people want things handed to them, because it is easier that way. There are some who take this same mentality into trying to discern the scriptures. The grace of God is often fantasized about in many congregations. It is often recognized as the panacea for sin. Grace is mentioned and shown throughout the scriptures, but it is not the free path to salvation it is made out to be.

The Doctrine

If there is one thing simply given to us and unmerited, it is the Gospel. The doctrine of Christ is free and available to anyone. The understanding is what we earn with our obedience; *John 15: 7; Jms. 1: 5*. We preach the gospel freely as we’re told to do so for any and every one willing to accept it. The Bible speaks of charity. Charity is not something that is earned, but rather, something that is freely given to us from God. Charity in the scriptures is the preaching of the gospel truth liberally; *Rom. 1: 15; 1 Cor. 9: 18*.

Jesus left us an example of those that withhold “God’s grace” (the Spirit) from others; *Lk. 11: 11-13*. In another account, Paul said; *Rom 12:20* “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.” In short, one that hears the doctrine never forgets it; it will forever trouble his heart.

Works

A common misconception is that grace is a method of obtaining salvation, or knowledge in the scripture without having to do anything other than believe in Jesus Christ. We know that our position and trust in God stems from our obedience to the doctrine. *Jms. 2:14-20; 1Jhn. 3: 21-22*.

James obviously emphasizes the need for works. When we don’t follow the doctrine of Christ, we follow the doctrine of rebellion. Rebellion is the adoption of beliefs or works contrary to the “true” doctrine. This sin is a severe breach against the Blood of the Covenant and a direct insult to the Spirit of Grace. In a nutshell, *Heb. 10:29* describes this rebellion.

But there are other ways of belittling the sacrifice of Christ, such as; those who just don’t want to show up to worship, or don’t want to dress the *Christian* way or what have you. These people would rather follow their carnal lusts and hope that “grace” will somehow save them. Grace is bestowed upon those poor of spirit; *Jas 2:5* “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?”

The Sons of Abraham

As we already said, grace is earned. It is not given for any reason including ancestry; *Matt 3:9*. It doesn’t matter who we are, or where we’re from but only what we do, (*2Cor. 5: 10*). What works do we perform and what sacrifice do we offer unto the Lord? Now the Bible tells us that the initial Grace we received in the form of the Gospel, we did nothing to merit it. But the Bible also teaches that *based on our faithfulness* to the gospel (works), we are entitled to “more” grace; *Jhn. 1: 16*. Therefore, the Christian life is the constant reception of one evidence of God’s *grace* replacing *another*. Anybody can attain the status as a son of Abraham through baptism, but that doesn’t guarantee that one will continue to sustain that relationship with God. That will depend on our status under his grace; that is, whether we remain faithful or unfaithful, (*Jude 1: 4*). There

are certain criteria that one must fulfill in order to qualify for God's favor. First of all, one does *not* have to be morally perfect, but one does have to be God-fearing and a doer of His Will! [John 9: 31](#). Abraham himself was justified "*through works*" so why would we not have to prove our own faith? [James 2:21](#).

Conclusion_

[Rom 5:21](#). The grace of God is powerful, but it is not *completely* free. Notice that grace reigns *through righteousness*. All the demands of God's holiness must be met, and the penalty of the law must also be paid, (and that refers to chastisement), before God can grant eternal life. We obtain it through works by following the NT pattern of worship and lifestyle. Become a part of those who share in the Grace of the Lord in this congregation. Confess and be baptized today!

Ω