

Meeting God in Grace

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

The human race has so many problems with the mind. The greatest indictment that God could ever bring upon mankind is found in Isaiah 1:5: “The whole head is sick.” It would be nice to think that it’s not the whole head that’s sick, but just part of it. God, however, properly diagnosed an entire nation—and us—as having the *whole* head sick.

Not only is the whole head sick, but the heart is deceitful and desperately infected (Jeremiah 17:9). To add to that, we live in Satan’s world system. Every problem can be related to some form of mental sickness. So how do you solve problems with people when the One who made them says that their heads are sick? There is only one answer: it is to receive the gift of God’s grace.

The Bible says in Genesis 6:8, “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.” The difference between Noah and the rest of the world at that

time was that he was willing to receive grace apart from works and human ability. Through the constant intake of the word of grace (Acts 20:32) and the filling of the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29), Christians are in the process of having their sick minds healed.

The book of Ephesians has been referred to as the “Alps of the Epistles,” because it reveals how grace reaches into the depths of the ruins of sin and brings us to the pinnacles of love. We must understand that the processes of transformation, victory, hope, and faith all relate to grace.

Chapter One

THE PROVISION OF GRACE

Grace depends upon who God is and what He has done. It is God's method of dealing with man and his sin. God's equation of grace is based upon His divine ability apart from human merit. In God's program of grace, He desires for us to have a heart after Him and to *meet Him in grace*.

Positionally, God *has made* us to be like His Son; experientially, God *is making* us to be like Him; and eternally, we *will be* like Him—perfected in the fulfillment of His ultimate purpose: that we would be just like His Son (1 John 3:1-3).

The processes we go through in the journey of grace teach us to be conformed to the image of the Son through the inner working of God's government in *theantric action*—the Trinity controlling the soul through positive volition toward God's grace provisions. God's provision for every single detail of our lives is always grace. He can never deal with man apart from grace.

Understanding Grace

There are pastors from other churches who are in touch with our ministry frequently. They listen to our tapes and preach from some of our booklets. Though they have preached the Gospel, many have never before understood grace.

So many Christians live in ruptured or disconnected relationships because they do not understand grace. As a pastor, I don't understand it the way I should. When I preach a message on grace, I'm just like a little kid! I feel like I still don't know grace while at the same time I'm enjoying it and applying it. I want grace to teach me to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live quietly and biblically in this present evil world. Grace is the greatest teacher of holiness and practical righteousness for our human experience that we could ever have.

In Titus 2:11, grace has appeared unto all men; but verse 12 teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live through the orientation of the Word of God in a categorical perspective of divine viewpoint.

Grace is always from divine viewpoint—even for the unsaved who go to hell. Though they die *in* their sins (John 8:24), grace paid *for*

all their sins (1 John 2:1-2).

The Genius of God's Grace

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). We were conceived in sin through the genius of God. Before we were born, God imputed sin to us in the brilliance of His grace, foreknowing that we would personally sin. If we had personally sinned without God charging sin to our account first, He never could have imputed righteousness without works.

God is saying, “Because I imputed sin to the human race before they sinned, I can now impute righteousness apart from the works of the law to anyone who will believe” (see Romans 4:6).

Quickened, Raised, and Seated Above

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us...” (Ephesians 2:4). Love through grace found us in a triple state of human depravity: “And you hath he quickened, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye *walked according to the course of this world*, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our

conversation in times past *in the lusts of our flesh*, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2:1-3).

Before we were saved, we were spiritually dead (*helpless*), under the power of Satan (*hopeless*), and living in the government of the old sin nature (*worthless*). Because of this, we were alienated from the life of God, ignorant because we didn’t have Bible doctrine, which is God’s mind. We were proud, arrogant, and deceitful. And that’s the condition grace found us in!

“Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:5-6). As helpless, hopeless, and worthless people, the grace of God *quickened* us together with Christ, *raised* us up together with Christ, and *seated* us together with Christ.

Verse 5 says, “by grace ye *are* (continuous action, according to the present active indicative verb) *saved*” (perfect passive participle—it happened in the past and has permanent results; you received the action of being saved). This means we *were* saved and we *are being* saved.

What more could we ask? We didn't deserve grace, yet Ephesians 2:7 says, "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

No Flesh Can Glory

In grace, God gets all the credit because God does it all on our behalf. 1 Corinthians 1:25-28 tells us the kind of people God can use—the have-nots, the are-nots, the helpless, the hopeless, and the worthless. The only difference between these and the people God cannot use is that the helpless know they are helpless. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

Verses 30 and 31 tell us *why* no flesh can glory in God's presence: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He

that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

While we honor each other, we have to remember that if any man glorieth, he glories in the Lord and not man. People who understand this will never take sides when issues come up between people. Instead, we will manifest the mind of Christ, which is full of grace.

Chapter Two

THE PROCESS OF GRACE

From the moment a person is saved, he is in a “grace process” of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8 speaks of salvation from the positive side, and Ephesians 2:9 speaks of it from the negative side. The positive side is, “For by grace are ye saved through faith....it is the gift of God.” The negative side is, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

“For by grace” in the Greek is *te gar chariti*—a subordinating conjunction (*gar*) and a feminine noun in the dative case of advantage. It can be better translated “for by the grace.”

“Are ye saved” is *este* (present active indicative) *sesomenoi* (perfect passive participle of *sozo*). It is the same construction in the Greek as in Ephesians 2:5 emphasizing our once-and-for-all salvation having permanent, abiding results.

“Through faith” is *dia pisteos*. Here we find an instrumental case meaning that faith is the in-

strument that God uses to save us, while grace is the provision.

There are many internal conspiracies that go on in the hearts of people. The five parts of the soul—the mind, emotions, conscience, self-consciousness, and the volition—conspire against each other. The old sin nature in the soul acts as an instrument to draw the free volition into lust patterns through self-consciousness.

There is one place and one place only where all these problems can be settled: at the Cross. The solution to every problem is meeting truth in Resurrection power at the Cross of Calvary.

Calvary represents the fullness of grace and truth in Jesus Christ. We can think of grace as the husband in a marriage. The man does the initiating. The wife-to-be responds and says “yes.”

Grace initiates the Gospel. Jesus Christ died, shed His blood, paid for our sins, was buried, rose again, and ascended into heaven. Now, grace says, “Okay, I paid it all. Will you believe it?”

The average person will accept grace through the instrument of faith. But do they accept the fact that it’s *all* paid for? Or, do they just say they accept it? This is the difference between those who are just content to be saved from hell and

those who go on into the discipleship of grace.

Disciples of Grace

I believe that when a person is newly saved, their discipleship should not begin with the Gospel of John, though it's a wonderful book to read and study. But my conviction is that the first hundred sessions of teaching and discipleship should be on grace. Begin by teaching Romans 6, 7, and 8. New Christians should get right into the 'grace journey' and an understanding of their position in Christ. They need to hear these truths over and over again: "We are crucified. We are buried. We are risen. We have ascended. We are hid with Christ in God."

Many Christians live in Romans 7 for 80 percent of their lives, because they have never learned Romans 6 in a practical way. They don't understand how to utilize Romans 6 in temptations, trials, projections, or in the details of life. They may understand it theologically and doctrinally, but they don't understand it practically.

Standing in Grace

A pastor must be thorough in teaching grace. I used to think people knew grace, but I discovered that many do not. I'm not talking

about using grace as a license to sin, rather receiving grace to live purely and practically, using rebound when we fail (1 John 1:9).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). Faith is the instrument that gives us peace with God the moment we are saved.

Romans 5:2 says that we are standing in grace: “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” This is the believer’s position. The words “wherein we stand” are a gnomic perfect active indicative in the Greek. Gnostic means timeless. We stand in a timeless condition or state. We are saved and we are standing in grace. We’ll always be standing there.

A synonym for the word “standing” is “eternally cemented.” If somebody who doesn’t like you put you in cement up to your knees and placed a guard nearby so you couldn’t move while the cement hardened, then it would be safe to say that you were cemented in. Every Christian has been eternally cemented into the grace of God.

Established in Grace

The greatest premise to settle in our hearts is being established in grace *plus nothing*. Hebrews 13:9 says “it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.” “Established” means to be secure. The verb for “established” is a progressive present middle infinitive. The progressive present tense points to continuous or repeated action without any reference as to when the action takes place. The middle voice means the subject receives the benefits of the action of the verb. We receive the benefits of being established in grace: confidence, inner rest, pure convictions from the Word. The indicative mood—an assertion of reality—means that we know we are in the reality of being established in a process of grace.

The Store of Grace

God dispenses the store of grace at His will (Ephesians 2:7; James 4:6). He stores grace in the memory, in the conscience, and in the self-consciousness of the soul. *Grace* is stored—not the law, not the past, not the effects of ruptured relationships.

This is a process that takes place when a Christian goes to Bible college. If in meekness

and humility he comes to be disciplined and taught in God's perfect will, then grace will be stored in his soul—all because he takes advantage of years of experience from teachers who have been established in grace.

Chapter Three

THE PRODUCTION OF GRACE

Someone has said that “the language of the Bible is a language of grace.” If there is no grace, there is no Gospel.

Every doctrine in the Bible has its foundation in the grace of God. Consider the following twenty-one doctrines as an example: *justification* (Romans 3:24); *faith response* (Ephesians 2:8); *salvation* (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8); *predestination* (Ephesians 1:11); *redemption* (1 Corinthians 1:30; Hebrews 9:12); *forgiveness* (Ephesians 4:32; Hebrews 8:12); *adoption* into God’s family (Galatians 4:5); *sanctification* (Hebrews 10:10, 14); *spiritual gifts* (Romans 12:6); *deliverance* (Titus 3:5; Colossians 1:13).

Also, the believer’s *election* is by grace. No one is ever rejected or predestined to go to hell, because it is all grace—something we don’t deserve and didn’t earn (Ephesians 1:1, 6; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5); *inheritance* (1 Peter 3:7); *our*

calling (Galatians 1:15); *suffering* (1 Peter 2:19); *thankfulness* (1 Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 4:6); *repentance*, which is a change of mind and a change of heart that brings about a change of volition, a change of behavior, and a changed life (2 Timothy 2:25).

2 Peter 3:18 speaks of *growing in grace*—realizing that every step in the process of the Christian life is due to grace. You may have gone back ten steps but you went twenty steps forward. You may have gone back eight but you went ahead seventeen. Going back is not defeat; you're just getting ready to go forward more than ever because you are growing in grace.

Even our *obedience* must be founded in grace (Romans 1:5; 6:17); *perseverance*—through grace, not striving (1 Thessalonians 3:5); *overcoming sin* (Romans 6:14; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 12:13; Ephesians 5:26; Colossians 2:12; 1 John 5:4-5).

Effective *witnessing* is always done through grace (Acts 4:33; 11:23). After praying in the upper room, the disciples were all filled with the Holy Spirit; and as they went out to witness of the resurrection of Christ, great grace was upon them all.

Occupational Hazards in Grace

In the midst of life's occupational hazards, God is constantly waiting to be gracious to us (Isaiah 30:18), to show us what grace can do for us. When we, as Christians, enter into the death of occupational hazards in the devil's backyard, we often do not understand that God is waiting to change the situation or to change our hearts by being gracious to us.

The Bible reveals four occupational hazards of the grace life. The first one is *failing* the grace of God (Hebrews 12:15a). This means failing to appropriate grace—failing to receive and give it. The believer who fails grace is out of fellowship with God. He has negative signals toward Bible doctrine. There is a vacuum in his soul caused by religion, legalism, false doctrine, or preoccupation with the details of life. Finally, a root of bitterness springs up in his soul and he uses his tongue to defile those around him.

The second occupational hazard is found in Galatians 5:4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; *ye are fallen from grace.*" This verse has been misinterpreted and abused. The believer is standing in grace positionally. That has already been es-

tablished as a divine premise in the precept of revelation of the Finished Work. Falling from grace simply means that though a Christian is standing in grace, he falls from using it operationally. The believers referred to in Galatians 5:4 went back into the legalism of Judaism.

2 Corinthians 6:1 reveals the third occupational hazard of grace, "...receive not the grace of God *in vain*."

I could say to someone, "You know, God really loves you."

And the response might be, "No, I don't know that. I don't feel a thing."

Then I could say, "God wants to be gracious towards you."

Again the response might be, "I can't see it."

What is this person doing? They are receiving the grace of God in vain, and they don't have a ministry of stewardship under grace.

The fourth occupational hazard is abusing the grace of God in *antinomianism*—professing to know God but in our works denying Him (Titus 1:16). Grace is not antinomianism; grace is having a provision in the process of growth. There are also those who turn the grace of God into *lasciviousness*—a life without restraints (Jude 4).

Space to Rebound

Ephesians 2:10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

This verse is dealing with the production of the Christian life. “That we should walk” is *hina en autois peripatesomen* (an aorist active subjunctive of *peripateo*). This is one of my favorite forms of the aorist tense. The aorist tense is sometimes expressed by a solid straight line, but this aorist tense is expressed by a dotted line. In His foreknowledge, God saw that we would have isolated times when we would not walk in divine good so He gave us space to rebound.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We confess our sin and then isolate it.

Some people say, “I get projections that I’m a homosexual.” Or, “I get projections that I’m a lustful person.” What is happening to these people? They don’t understand that grace is so powerful that they can rebound and isolate the identification with those sins. And as they isolate the sin (Philippians 3:13), they forget it and

press forward. When we isolate sin and refuse to accept it, then it's out of our life forever! But if we don't isolate it, then it's possible for a person to rebound but still sublimate because of a root that remains in the subconscious mind.

Therefore, it is imperative that we isolate every sin and press forward, never identifying with it again. And if we don't identify with it, then we won't think about it or relate to it.

We must relate to the purity of God's grace, God's new creation, God's nature in us, and God's call on our lives. We must relate to being saints, as special people who are beloved of God. And in our thoughts, we must relate to who we are in Christ, not to who we are in Adam.

Keep saying to yourself, "I'm not in Adam; I'm in Christ." As we isolate the past and press forward, growing in the grace of God, then God's grace will purify us unto Jesus Christ as a people zealous for divine good (Titus 2:14).

CONCLUSION

God's grace is sufficient for the believer, in every detail of life (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul boldly said in 2 Corinthians 9:8, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

We possess grace as a source of all blessings. While people of all ages have had the opportunity to receive the provision of God's grace, there has never been a greater time to be alive than in this present age—the dispensation of the grace of God (Ephesians 3:2). In this age, grace is multiplied to the humble believer (1 Peter 1:2). God gives grace to the lowly (Proverbs 3:34b).

There is never a place where we cannot find grace if we will just come to the throne of grace to receive it. In Jeremiah 31:2, a remnant in Israel "found grace in the wilderness" and God caused them to rest.

In Proverbs 1:9; 3:22, and 4:9, grace has an

esthetic quality of charm and beauty for the *head* (the mind) and the *neck* (speaking of the will). God said He would pour out the spirit of grace upon the house of David.

Grace is not just a subject that we preach on; it is the premise for *all* subjects! From Genesis to Revelation, God's plan for man is grace: grace to be saved, grace to grow, grace to be changed, and grace to be perfected in eternity!