

Sermon  Snapshots



GRACE

D E F I N E D

FALSE CONCEPTS OF GRACE

Ephesians 2:8-10 clearly teaches that we are saved “by grace” – *and precious few would deny that fact*. In this text, “grace” is God’s part, and “faith” is man’s part. But even though man has a part, he does NOT “earn” his salvation! However, many continue have FALSE CONCEPTS of grace. Therefore, it would be wise for us to study these false ideas, followed by the true concept.

Grace is dispensed by the church’s “priesthood”

- This idea is rooted in *Catholicism* and its “seven sacraments” (channels of grace)
- E.g., baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, matrimony, holy orders, anointing sick
- *Only* the “officially sanctioned priesthood” (*institution*) may bestow such grace
- Truth: Christ is the *only* channel (way, Jn.14:6); and *all* saints are priests (1Pt.2:5, 9)

Grace is an “enabling power” for the depraved

- This idea is rooted in *Calvinism* via “total depravity” and “irresistible grace” (zap)
- I.e., since Eden, we’re so depraved that we *can’t* respond – *unless God zaps us!*
- This concept *minimizes, ignores, or denies* free will and personal responsibility
- Truth: sin is *not* inherited *or* transferred (Ez.18:20); and man *can* choose (Rv.22:17)

Grace is when God “ignores” or “tolerates” sin

- In contrast to denominational dogma, this idea “hits closer to home” – *i.e. our brethren!*
- But if God simply ignored sin, there’d be no sin-problem for anyone to worry about!
- This, in turn, would make ANY “plan of salvation” (including Jesus’ death!) *unnecessary*
- Truth: God *never* ignores, tolerates, or allows ANY sin! (Rm.6:1-2, 15-16; Jude 4)

Grace is like a “sunscreen” to cover my weakness

- This is another popular idea among those who do not understand what “grace” is
- Like a sunscreen, we just rub it (grace) in where we’re vulnerable (weaknesses, etc.)
- Some use it for *all* sin; others for just *certain* sins (e.g., ignorance or weakness)
- Truth: Grace does NOT “protect” those who refuse to accept the truth! (Ga.1:6-7)

These are just a few misconceptions that many religious people have about God’s grace. But be sure to finish this study! The next page will discuss what Paul Harvey used to call “*The REST of the Story!*” Let’s take a look at “The Biblical Concept of Grace.”



THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF GRACE

Romans 3:21-26 teaches that we are “justified freely by *His grace*” – which comes “*through* the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (v.24-25a). This gets at the heart of what it means to be saved by grace – *for grace comes through the redemptive death of Christ!* This snapshot will conclude our study about “grace” by carefully considering everything that is involved in the grace of God.

First, we should *define* the word “grace”

- With respect to salvation, “grace” describes God’s ATTITUDE toward sinful man
- Hence, “grace” is His goodwill, or favor toward us – *in spite of our many sins!*
- Some use the words, “unmerited favor,” *because we can’t earn grace!* (Ep.2:8-9)
- *But there is a “doing” which earns nothing;* it is simply our “duty” (Lk.17:10)

By His grace, God conceived of the plan

- God has “saved us” and “called us...with a holy calling” (2Tim.1:9-10)
- This salvation and calling was “not according to our works” (i.e., unmerited)
- Instead, it was accomplished by God’s “purpose and grace” (God’s favor)
- His grace was given “in Christ Jesus BEFORE time began,” but revealed NOW

By His grace, God provided the sacrifice

- Sin is our problem; and we must either *pay the penalty -- or be forgiven* (Rm.6:23)
- But to extend forgiveness, *life must be given up*; blood must be shed (Hb.9:22)
- Christ gave His sinless life on behalf of sinful men (cf. 2Cor.8:9; and Hb.2:9)
- Hence, God not only conceived the plan, He carried it out! *Now, we must be told...*

By His grace, God provided instruction

- Paul considered his preaching as a part of God’s “grace” (Ep.3:8; cf. Tit.2:11-14)
- God’s grace “teaches” us to deny *ungodliness and worldly lusts* (avoiding sin)
- God’s grace “teaches” us to live *soberly, righteously, and godly* (being faithful)
- God’s grace “teaches” us to anticipate *the return of our Savior, who gave Himself!*

A false charge: “We never preach about grace”

- When I preach about *sin*, I am preaching the NEED of grace!
- When I preach about *Christ*, I am preaching the MEANS of grace!
- When I preach about *conditions*, I am preaching the ACCESS to grace!
- When I preach about *faithfulness*, I am preaching how to REMAIN in grace!

THIS is what the Bible truly teaches about grace! Let us accept what God has revealed. Most importantly, let us accept His gracious offer to save us in Christ!



-LANNY SMITH

Fishers Church of Christ

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