

## Meditations on the Grace of God

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • May 25, In the year of our Lord, 2014

### Prelude:

#### I. Where would we be without the grace of God?

A. Ephesians chapter 2 reminds non-Jews of their condition without grace,

**11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ (Eph 2.11–13).**

- a) What is the time to which Paul makes reference in verse 12?
- b) It is the time before conversion, as stated in verses 1–10,

**1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 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, 3 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. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph 2.1–10).**

2. Therefore, without the grace of God, we are
  - a) without Christ,

- b) aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,
  - c) strangers from the covenants of promise,
  - d) having no hope and
  - e) without God in the world.
    - (1) How would you summarize that?
    - (2) I think it is a miserable condition!
- B. Titus chapter 2 shows the doors that grace opens for us,

**11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Tts 2.11–13).**

- 1. Without the grace of God,
  - a) we are without salvation,
  - b) we are without the teaching
    - (1) that we must deny
      - (a) ungodliness and
      - (b) worldly lusts,
    - (2) that we should live
      - (a) soberly,
      - (b) righteously, and
      - (c) godly at the present time;
  - c) we are without
    - (1) the blessed hope of
    - (2) the glorious appearing of
      - (a) our great God and
      - (b) Savior Jesus Christ.

d) What is it like to be without these things?

## II. Knowing our own sinfulness, but

- A. God's favor toward us,
- B. fills our hearts with joy unspeakable.
  - 1. We intensify the meaning of grace
  - 2. when we are aware of
    - a) our own sin and
    - b) the readiness of God's wrath upon that sin.
- C. Romans 3.9, 19–26

## III. What is the grace of God?

- A. How does it help us?
- B. What relation does it have to law, especially the Law of Christ?

### **Persuasion:**

#### I. What Is the Grace of God?

- A. There is more than one
  - 1. definition and application
  - 2. of the word "grace," both
    - a) as we use it and
    - b) as God uses it.
- B. Here are seven ways:
  - 1. Unmerited favor
    - a) Romans chapter 4 explains this beautiful manifestation of God toward us,

**1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not**

**counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness... 16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (Rom 4.1–5, 16).**

2. Extra time granted

- a) Ezra chapter 9 shows that it is also in the Bible,

**8 And now for a little while grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage (Ezra 9.8).**

3. Smoothness of movement

- a) After his dissertation on the revelation of the beauties of God's plan of salvation in the first eleven chapters of Romans, Paul breaks out with this exclamation,

**33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!**

**"For who has known the mind of the LORD?  
Or who has become His counselor?  
Or who has first given to Him  
And it shall be repaid to him?"**

**36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen (Rom 11.33–36).**

4. Charm

- a) Proverbs chapter 1 speaks of this kind of grace,

**9 For they will be a graceful ornament on your head,  
And chains about your neck.  
(Pro 1.9).**

5. Favor because one is an exception
  - a) Noah received this, according to Genesis chapter 6, because he was different than the rest of the world, which was very wicked,

**8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD (Gen 6.8).**

6. Further favor
  - a) This favor was shown by saving Noah in the ark.
  - b) Noah did not earn this favor, but he worked harmoniously with God.
7. Kindness

**“If now I have found favor in your sight...”**

- C. John chapter 1 shows that all seven manifestations of grace are found in Jesus Christ,

**14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” 16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1.14–17).**

1. The very action of leaving the glories of heaven to live in the humilities of earth was grace incomparable,

**9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2Co 8.9).**

2. Ironically, while the grace of God through Jesus means something good and beneficial for us,
  - a) it meant suffering for Him who did not deserve to suffer.
  - b) Yet, He did it anyway, as Hebrews chapter 2 shows,

**9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone (Heb 2.9).**

- (1) Is it possible that the grace of God might require us to suffer
- (2) for the benefit of someone else?

D. Titus chapter 2 explains that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people.

**11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men (Tts 2.11).**

1. When humanity was the epitome of hatred and unloveableness,
  - a) God showed unparalleled kindness.
2. Was this because of acts of righteousness that we were engaging in,
  - a) so much so that God was impressed and
  - b) wanted to do something nice for us?
3. Paul continued in Titus chapter 3,

**3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Tts 3.3–7).**

## **II. Acts 4.33; 1 Peter 4.10; 5.10 – The Manifold Grace of God**

**33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all (Acts 4.33).**

**10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God (1Pe 4.10).**

**10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you (1Pe 5.10).**

- A. How is it that we are stewards of the grace of God?
1. Is He not the One who dispenses it?
  2. What does He expect us to do with it?
  3. What is “great grace”?
- B. In what way is His grace manifold or how is it that He is the God of all grace? Is there more than one form of grace?
1. Remember the seven manifestations.
    - a) Unmerited favor
    - b) Extra time granted
    - c) Smoothness of movement
    - d) Charm
    - e) Favor because one is an exception
    - f) Further favor
    - g) Kindness
  2. It is manifold in its degree.

**20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 5.20–21).**

**8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph 3.8).**

**12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, 13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained**

**mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life (1Ti 1.12–16).**

C. There is *all* grace for the Christian or manifold grace because

1. the grace of God saves us initially, and
2. helps us after becoming Christians.
  - a) His grace gives gifts—Romans 12.6ff.
  - b) His grace goes with us—(Greeting of most epistles).
  - c) His grace moves us to give—2 Corinthians 8.1, 2.
  - d) His grace helps us materially—2 Corinthians 9.8.
    - (1) The existence of life itself.
    - (2) We depend upon *God's* system of nature.
  - e) His grace makes us sufficient—2 Corinthians 12.9.
  - f) His grace helps our spirit—Galatians 6.18.
  - g) His grace makes us strong—2 Timothy 2.1.
  - h) His grace is timely—Hebrews 4.16; James 4.6.
  - i) His grace makes us stable—Hebrews 13.9.
  - j) His grace has an ultimate expression—1 Peter 1.13.
  - k) His grace allows us to grow—2 Peter 3.18.

### **III. The Grace of God Causes Us to Keep the Law of Christ**

A. Without grace we are not motivated to obey the Lord,

1. therefore, Ezekiel 36 shows God promising to give us what we need,

**26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I**



**will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them (Eze 36.26–27).**

2. The Old Testament shows that perfect obedience is impossible.
  - a) Yet, the Old Testament also shows that God will not do it all,

**2 And the LORD said to Joshua. “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor” (Jos 6.2).**

- (1) Who gave Jericho into the hands of Israel?
- (2) Did Israel have to go up and take the city?

3. Grace tells us that what we do matters,
  - a) although alone, we are insufficient.
  - b) Obedience is receiving graciously what God gives.

B. If we fail to follow Jesus, we fall from grace,

**4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace (Gal 5.4).**

C. Acts 13 shows that Paul and Barnabas urged the brethren to do something.

1. What was it?

**43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God (Acts 13.43).**

- a) Why did Paul have to plead with the brethren
  - b) to continue in the grace of God?
2. Ephesians 2 teaches that we are saved by grace but not by grace alone,

**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God (Eph 2.8).**

- a) What else is involved?
  - (1) If by grace alone, everyone will be saved.
  - (2) But all will not be saved.
    - (a) We must respond to grace by trusting Jesus
    - (b) that His way is right, for
      - i) without His grace
      - ii) we do not have the opportunity to believe (Acts 18.27).
- 3. Second Corinthians 6 implies that we can receive the grace of God
  - a) in vain.
  - b) How can we receive it in vain?

**1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain (2Co 6.1).**

D. Grace is greater than law—Romans 6.14.

**14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace (Rom 6.14).**

- 1. Grace does not exclude being “under law to Christ” (1Co 9.21).
  - a) Grace takes care of the sin.
  - b) Under the protection of grace,
    - (1) law is something we are obligated to obey.
    - (2) Our protector is grace, not law.
- 2. Grace brings us to law, for
  - a) without grace there would have been no law delivered,

**Remove from me the way of lying,  
And grant me Your law graciously.  
(Psa 119.29).**

- b) The law of God tells us of grace, but
  - (1) grace gives the law.
    - (a) Grace saves in accordance with
    - (b) our faithful obedience that is outlined by law.
- 3. God saves us by His grace when we obey Him.
  - a) Was marching around Jericho sufficient to bring down the walls?
  - b) Yet, God did not bring down the walls until Israel marched.
- 4. Law is the instrument through which grace operates.
  - a) Therefore, Paul says we are under grace and not law.
  - b) Law is not the basis, grace is.
    - (1) We trust grace, not law;
    - (2) we trust God's grace that it has given the right law.
- E. Some pervert grace.
  - 1. They teach that obedience is not necessary because of grace.
  - 2. But consider Romans 1.5.
  - 3. They use His grace to excuse sin—Jude 4.
  - 4. Grace must be in the truth.
    - a) Colossians 1.6
    - b) 1 Peter 5.12

### **Exhortation:**

#### **I. God Says Here Is the Gift of Salvation.**

- A. "Come to me," He says
- B. "and you can have it."

#### **II. Any Excuse For Refusing**

- A. can be refuted,
- B. even as grace took care of Moses.