

Wednesday, June 1, 2011 - The Grace of God Demands

If men are saved, they are saved by the grace of God (**Tit. 2:11; Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 15:11; and many other scriptures**). No one is, or can be, saved by meritorious works (**Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 11:6; et al.**). But this truth does not mean that men are saved only by grace (on the part of God) without any works at all (on the part of men). If grace were the only consideration, then all men would be saved (**Tit. 2:11**). Yet, Jesus made clear that “few” would be saved, in contrast to the “many” who would be lost (**Matt. 7:21-23**). While God offers, through His grace, salvation of all men (**Tit. 2:11; John 3:16; Heb. 2:9**), this offer is not unconditional! God offers salvation to all men, but He conditions that offer with the contingency that men, by faith, lovingly obey the requirements which are set out in God’s word. Even though men are saved by the grace of God, and not by any meritorious works, it is still the case that Jesus taught that it is those who do the will of God who enter the kingdom of God (**Matt. 7:21-23**). The writer of Hebrews made clear that Christ (by whom the grace of God is offered to men, **John 3:16**) is the author of eternal salvation not to those who say, “I am saved by the grace of God, so there is nothing for me to do,” but to those who obey him (**Heb. 5:8-9**).

Next week, we will discuss a few of the many things that God’s grace provides for us. These include

- Jesus
 - **Romans 5:8 - While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**
- Forgiveness of sins
 - Peter, Paul, etc
- Strength for living
 - **Phil. 3:13 - Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead**

Is this grace given freely to all men? Is the mere fact that I’m alive, created by God, automatically bestow upon me the grace, which is spoken of in the scriptures? What do the scriptures teach?

- **Titus 2:11 – For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men**
 - Salvation is not promised to all men but all men can have the opportunity at salvation!
- **John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life**
- **Mark 16:15-16 – Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned**
 - Jesus who has all authority (**Matthew 28:18**) has laid down the conditions that men and women must accept to receive the benefits of the blood of Jesus, thus become partakers of the grace of God.
- **2 Tim. 1:9 - ...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began...**
 - Salvation by grace is the great theme of the New Testament. Paul explains the grace faith system in Romans and Ephesians. God’s great plan was worked out before the world was created. It is a part of God's eternal plan.

❖ *What does the grace of God demand?*

1. Love of God’s truth

1.1. Jesus teaches us that God’s word is truth.

1.1.1. **John 17:17 - Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.**

- 1.2. Love of truth motivates man to comply with God's commands
 - 1.2.1. **John 14:15 - If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments**
- 1.3. **Romans 10:17 - So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God**
- 1.4. **John 8:31-32 - Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**
- 1.5. God's truth is the only thing that provides salvation for us.
 - 1.5.1. To get mad at it or ignore what it teaches is to defy God
2. **Knowledge of the truth** – To love it we must have a knowledge of it
 - 2.1. Christ knew God's will
 - 2.1.1. **Luke 2:40 - And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him**
 - 2.1.2. **Verse 42 - Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?**
 - 2.2. We are informed that the grace of God instructs men how to live
 - 2.2.1. **Titus 2:11-14 – For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good work**
 - 2.2.2. He (Jesus) who is grace personified taught men to live by the truths of the gospel.
 - 2.3. Paul connects knowledge of the truth with the grace of God.
 - 2.3.1. **Acts 20:24, 32 – But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God... And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build [you] up, and to give [you] the inheritance among all them that are sanctified**
 - 2.4. Paul establishes a necessary union between the grace of God and knowledge of the truth. In fact, so important was this to Paul that he warned against departing from the gospel
 - 2.4.1. **Col. 1:5-6 – because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth**
 - 2.5. **Gal. 1:6-9 - I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.**
3. **Faith and obedience to that faith**
 - 3.1. **Hebrew 11:6 - But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him**
 - 3.2. **Eph. 2:8 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God**
 - 3.2.1. Paul affirms that the brethren had been saved by grace, and that the grace had saved them through their faith.
 - 3.3. There can be no faith without grace, for grace brought us salvation and instruction.
 - 3.3.1. Faith comes by hearing God's word (**Rom. 10:17**), and if the grace of God had not made possible the revelation of his will, man could not respond in faith, for there would have been no word from God to believe.

- 3.4. Our faith in Christ enables us to act on God's promises and to receive the salvation of our souls.
- 3.4.1. **Gal. 2:16 - Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.**
- 3.5. We refer to "free moral agency" of man. This principle is true.
- 3.5.1. Joshua admonished the Jews long ago to "choose you this day whom you will serve" (**Josh 24:15**).
- 3.5.2. Jesus advised that the majority of the human race would make the wrong choice (**Matt. 7:13**)
- 3.6. Peter admonished and exhorted those Jews on the day of Pentecost to "save yourself from this untoward generation" (**Acts 2:40**).
- 3.6.1. There was a choice to be made, but this choice had to be made on the basis of their faith (**vs. 37**), and their willingness to obey the will of God (**vs. 41**).
- 3.7. We cannot be saved without the grace of God, but to receive that grace one must show in his life the "**obedience of faith**"
- 3.7.1. Jeremiah said, "**O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.**" (**Jer. 10:23**)
- 3.7.2. This principle is as true today as it was then.
- 3.7.3. To contemplate that man can name his own terms of admission into the glories of heaven is absurd.
4. Until one accepts grace on the terms on which God offers it, he has no promise of salvation.
- 4.1. The only way sinful man can avail himself of that grace is to accept it by an active faith (**Eph. 2:8**).
- 4.2. We demonstrate faith in and acceptance of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ by dying to sin, being buried into his death, and being raised to walk in newness of life (**Rom. 6:1-5**).
- 4.3. When we do this we have obeyed the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation (**Rom. 1:16**) and thus accepted God's grace on his terms.
- If men are saved, they are saved by the grace of God. How can I enjoy this salvation by grace?
 - The Bible says that it is by faith (**Eph. 2:8, 9**). What kind of faith?
 - An obedient and humble faith that willingly submits to the ordinances required of me by God.
 - It is a faith that worketh by love (**Gal. 5:6**).
 - Faith coupled with works of obedience is necessary for me to be justified by his grace (**Jas. 2:24**).
 - It is not by works of my own righteousness that I am saved (**Titus 3:5**) but I cannot be saved and accepted by God without working his righteousness (**Acts 10:34, 35**).
 - Even after I have done all that God asked me to do, I still don't deserve to be saved (**Lk. 17:10**).
 - Yet, I cannot be saved without obedience (**Heb. 5:8, 9**).
 - I must remind myself that my salvation is not deserved because I obey, yet my salvation is not possible if I do not obey.

Let us all be sure that we are following His Will, not what we wish His will was. Our salvation depends on it!