

THE
GRACE OF GOD
AND
MAN'S RESPONSE

BY
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SERMONS
VESPER SERVICE

JESUS PAID IT ALL

CHURCHES HAVE SUNG OF GOD'S GRACE THROUGH THE AGES

ALAS AND DID MY SAVIOUR BLEED
AMAZING GRACE
I GAVE MY LIFE FOR THEE
NAILED TO THE CROSS
NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD
ON THE CROSS OF CALVARY
REDEEMED, HOW I LOVE TO PROCLAIM IT
THE OLD RUGGED CROSS
THERE IS A FOUNTAIN FILLED WITH BLOOD
THOUGH YOUR SINS BE AS SCARLET
WASHED IN THE BLOOD
WE SAW THEE NOT
WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS
IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST I GLORY
BENEATH THE CROSS OF JESUS
GRACE ALL SUFFICIENT
GRACE GREATER THAN ALL OUR SINS
HIS GRACE REACHES ME
WONDERFUL GRACE OF JESUS
SALVATION HAS BEEN BROUGHT DOWN
BRING CHRIST YOUR BROKEN LIFE
O LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO
THERE IS A FOUNTAIN FILLED WITH BLOOD
WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF THE CRUCIFIED ONE
LEAD ME TO CALVARY
WONDERFUL GRACE OF JESUS
I'LL LIVE FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR ME
BRING CHRIST YOUR BROKEN LIFE
MY HOPE IS BUILT ON NOTHING LESS THAN JESUS' BLOOD
IN THE HOUR OF TRIAL – JESUS PLEAD FOR ME
TELL ME THE STORY OF JESUS

PART ONE

BEHOLD THE LAMB

Isa. 53:1-12

INTRODUCTION:

1. John 1:29: "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"
2. The Lamb of God Has Its Roots in the Old Testament Sacrificial System.
 - A. There were Four Kinds of Sacrifices:
 - (1) Libations or drink-offerings.
 - (2) Savor or incense offerings.
 - (3) Vegetable or meal-offerings.
 - (4) Animal sacrifices.
 - B. They are broadly classified as bloodless and bloody sacrifices. The animal sacrifices were distinguished as burnt-offering, sin-offering, peace-offering and guilt-offering. Thus it was that on the altar of the temple there was always smoke ascending.
 - (1) Man realized that his guilt required expiation by blood.
 - C. When Adam and Eve sinned, God clothed them with the skin of animals. (Gen. 3:21). To do this, it was necessary that some animal, perhaps a lamb, had to shed its blood to cover their shame. God declared in the Levitical Code that "it is the Blood that makes atonement for one's life. (Lev. 17:11).
 - D. "He was opposed and He was afflicted,
Yet He opened not His mouth;
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So he opened not His mouth."
 - E. Isaac Watts expresses it well:

Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace
Or wash away our stains.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, takes all our sins away,
A sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they."

Note: In the Revelation, Christ is portrayed as the Lamb no less than 29 times.

I. CHRIST IS THE LAMB OF GOD.

- A. 1 Pet. 1:18-21: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."
- B. 1 Pet. 2:21-25: "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth,' who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

II. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST CLEANSSES US FROM SIN.

- A. 1 John 1:5 - 2:1-2: "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

- B. Rev. 5:6-14: "And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.'

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!'

And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever.'

Then the four living creatures said, 'Amen!' And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever."

- C. Heb. 2:9, 14-18: "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. Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."
- D. Heb. 9:24-28: "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another--He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."
- E. Heb. 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

III. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST RECONCILES US TO GOD.

- A. 2 Cor. 5:17-21: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."
- B. Col. 1:21-22: "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and irreproachable in His sight --"
- C. Eph. 2:14-18: "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father."
- D. Heb. 13:11-14: "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach, for here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come."

IV. WE OVERCOME THE WORLD BY THE LAMB'S BLOOD.

- A. Rev. 12:10-12: "Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.'"

- B. Rev. 13:8: "And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

V. WE SING A NEW SONG OF DELIVERANCE.

- A. Rev. 14:1-5: "Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These are redeemed from among men, being first-fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God."

Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in,
When Christ, the mighty maker, died
For man the creature's sin.

VI. THE REDEEMED CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF THE LAMB.

- A. Rev. 7:9-17: "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'

And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.'

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, 'Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?' And I said to him, 'Sir, you know.' So he said to me, 'These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

- B. Rev. 14:13: "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'"
- C. Rev. 17:12-14: "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."
- D. Rev. 19:6-10: "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' And he said to me, 'These are the true sayings of God.' And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'"
- E. Rev. 20:1-6: "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

- F. Rev. 20:11-15: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book

was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

- G. Rev. 21:1-4: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."
- H. Rev. 21:9-14: "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. And her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel; three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."
- I. Rev. 22:1-5: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever."

He who rescues me from danger
Interpose His Precious Blood.

PART TWO

THE GRACE OF GOD

Romans 3:23-25: "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, (being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,) whom God set forth to be a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed."

Romans 5:1-2: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the Glory of God."

Romans 5:15: "But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift (by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.)"

Eph. 2:4-9: "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

DEFINITION: Grace **χάρις** "The New Testament writes use _____ pre-eminently of that kindness by which God bestows favors even upon the ill-deserving and grants to sinners the pardon of their offenses, and bids them accept of eternal salvation through Christ." (Thayer, p. 666).

I. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF BASIC ASSUMPTIONS WHICH MUST UNDERLIE THE IDEA OF GRACE.

- A. The existence of a personal God - omnipotent, omniscience, omnipresent, love.
- B. The universe is a result of divine fiat. "And God said ..."
- C. Man was made in the image of his maker - God.
- D. God made man a free moral agent - He has the capacity to will -
- E. The free act of Adam and Eve's sin separated them from God.
 1. (Mankind still separates himself from his God because of his sins.)
- F. The wages of sin is death.

G. Man does not have the capacity, in and of himself, to save himself.

H. Salvation is a free gift from God in the person of Christ.

II. ALL MEN ARE SINNERS AND NEED TO BE SAVED. THIS IS MAN'S GREATEST NEED.

A. Lewis Sherrill in his book *Guilt and Redemption* says:

“Christians of our own day commonly are trying to use the resources of the Christian gospel and the Christian church without facing the depths of the guilt from which the gospel promises to redeem us.”

B. Goethe could see the great guilt of sin in us when he makes Faust say:

“Two souls, alas! are lodg'd within my breast,
Which struggle there for undivided reign:
One of the world, with obstinate desire,
And closely-cleaving organs, still adheres;
Above the mist, the other doth aspire,
With sacred vehemence, to purer spheres.”

C. The Apostle Paul could feel the guilt of sin.

“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bring me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” (Rom. 7:22-25)

D. Sinful man could not save himself.

“Should my tears forever flow,
Should my zeal no languor know,
This for sin could not atone;
Thou must save and Thou alone.”

III. THIS WONDERFUL GRACE HAS COME THROUGH THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

A. The cross exposes sin in its heinousness and hatefulness.

1. Romans 5:6-11: “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by

His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

B. The blood of Christ made possible seven great things:

1. Redemption: "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19)
2. Justification: "Much more then, having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Rom. 5:9; 3:24; 4:25)
3. Forgiveness: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."
4. Sanctification: "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate." (Heb. 13:12); 10:10-14; 1 John 1:7)
5. Peace. "For it pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell; ... having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. 1:19-20)
6. Access: "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh." (Heb. 10:19-20)
7. Victory. "And they overcame him (Satan) by the flood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they did not love their lives to the death." (Rev. 12:11)

IV. WHAT DOES THE CROSS OF CHRIST MEAN IN THIS WONDERFUL SYSTEM OF GRACE?

- A. Means that God's immutable law has been upheld.
 1. Wages of sin was death - Christ paid the penalty.
- B. Shows the worth that God placed upon mankind.
- C. The sacrifice of Christ shows the great love of God. (John 3:16)

- D. The blood of Christ assures all men of salvation through obedience. (Heb. 5:9)

V. SALVATION COMES AS A FREE GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE AND NOT OF WORKS.

- A. If I ever get to Heaven, it will be by the Grace of God.
- B. (We must continually apply this grace to our lives every day we live, though Christians.)
 - 1. 1 John 1:8-9: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

VI. BY THIS GRACE WE BECOME THE SONS OF GOD.

- A. 1 John 3:1-2: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."
- B. Romans 8:14-16: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."
- C. John 1:12: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."
- D. Galatians 4:4-7: "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father.' Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES ARE OURS THROUGH THIS WONDERFUL GRACE OF GOD.

- A. "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us

kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Rev. 1:5-6)

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. (Rev. 2:7)

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death. (Rev. 2:10-11)

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To Him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it. (Rev. 2:17)

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations – ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ – as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Rev. 2:26-29)

He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Rev. 3:5-6)

Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more, I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. (Rev. 3:11-12)

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Rev. 3:20-21)

“From Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Rev. 1:5-6)

PART THREE

THE GRACE OF GOD

INTRODUCTION:

GRACE: X'apis Xd p u s

1. Salvation is Freely Given to Undeserving Sinners.
2. God Saves Freely Without Regard for Merit.
3. Since It Cannot Be Claimed as a Right - It Must Be Received as a Gift.
 - a. Titus 2:11-12: "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."
 - (1) Excludes boasting or self-glory.
 - (a) Eph. 1:4: "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

I. GOD DETERMINED TO SAVE MANKIND THROUGH CHRIST BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

- A. 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."
- B. Matt. 13:34-35: "All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 'I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.'"
- C. Rom. 16:25-27: "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to My gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith -- to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."
- D. 1 Cor. 2:7-8: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

- E. Eph. 3:8-10: “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, and to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”
- F. 1 Pet. 1:18-20: “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.
Let the water and the blood
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

II. MANKIND BECAME LOST BECAUSE HE SINNED AND SINS.

- A. Isa. 59:1-2: “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”
- B. Psalm 19:12-14: “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the mediation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.”
- C. Psalm 90:8: “You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.”
- D. Isa. 1:16-18: “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. ‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the Lord, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’”

- b. John 3:17: "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."
 - c. 1 Tim. 1:15: "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."
 - d. Acts 4:12: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
6. The Gospel is For Salvation.
- a. Rom. 11:13-14: "For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh (Jews) and save some of them."
 - b. Rom. 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"
 - c. 1 Tim. 4:16: "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."
 - d. James 5:20: "Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."
 - e. Heb. 2:3: "How shall we escape that we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed by us by those who heard Him."
 - f. Heb. 5:9: "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."
 - g. 1 Cor. 1:18-21: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.' Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it

pleased God through the foolishness (preaching) of the message preached to save those who believe.”

- h. Acts 15:11: “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”
- i. 2 Tim. 3:15: “And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”
- j. 1 Pet. 1:9: “Receiving the end of your faith -- the salvation of your souls.”
- k. Matt. 10:22: “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.”
- l. John 5:24: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”
- m. Eph. 1:13: “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”
- n. 1 Cor. 15:1-4: “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you -- unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”
- o. 1 Thess. 2:2-4: “But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. For our exhortation did not come from deceit or uncleanness, nor was it in guile. But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.”
- p. 2 Cor. 10:16: “To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s sphere of accomplishment.”

- q. 1 Cor. 9:16: "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!"
- r. Mark 1:15-16: "and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.' And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen."

7. Gospel Is To Be Obeyed.

- a. 1 Thess. 2:18: "Therefore we wanted to come to you - even I, Paul, time and again - but Satan hindered us."
- b. Rom. 10:16: "But they had not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our report?'"
- c. 1 Pet. 4:17: "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"
- d. Gal. 1:7: "Which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ."

B. Mankind is Lost. απολέσθαι - Perish.

- 1. Luke 15:4: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"
- 2. 2 Pet. 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."
- 3. 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."
- 4. 2 Cor. 4:3: "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing."

Nothing in my hand I bring
Helpless to Thy cross I cling
Naked came to Thee for dress,
Helpless come to Thee for grace,
Vile I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

IV. THE GRACE OF GOD COMES THROUGH CHRIST.

- A. 2 Cor. 5:18-19: "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."
- B. John 1:7, 14-17: "This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. . . . 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. 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.' And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."
- C. 1 Pet. 1:18-19: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
- D. 1 Pet. 2:24: "Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed."
- E. Rom. 5:16-21: "And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

- F. Rom. 3:21-31: "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God who is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God has passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Where is boasting then. It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

- G. 1 John 2:2: "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."
- H. Titus 3:4-7: "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 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, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."
- I. 1 John 3:16: "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."
- J. Titus 2:14-15: "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 works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you."
- K. 2 Cor. 5:21: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."
- L. Heb. 2:9: "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. 10:14: "By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

- M. Rom. 16:25-26: "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith -- to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."
- N. Eph. 1:6-8: "To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence."
- O. 2 Cor. 5:14: "For the love of Christ constrains us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;"
- P. Rom. 5:11: "And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."
- Q. 1 John 4:10: "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
- R. Heb. 2:17: "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."
- S. John 1:29, 36: "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! . . . And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'"
- T. Rev. 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood."
- U. John 1:11-12: "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."
- V. 1 Cor. 6:20: "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."
- W. 2 Pet. 2:1: "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction."

- X. 1 Cor. 6:11: "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."
- Y. Isa. 53:10-12: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

My hope is built on nothing less
 Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
 But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

V. SALVATION IS BY GRACE AND NOT BY WORKS.

- A. Gal. 3:21: "Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law."
- B. Rom. 11:6: "And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work."
- C. Acts. 15:11: "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."
- D. Rom. 3:24: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."
- E. Eph. 2:4-9: "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."
- F. 1 Cor. 6:20: "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

- G. Rom. 5:8: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- H. 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."
- I. Rom. 5:1-2: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
- J. Gal. 2:9, 21: "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. . . . I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."
- K. Gal. 5:4: "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

God hath not promised skies always blue,
 Flowers-strewn pathways all our skies through.
 God hath not promised sun without rain;
 Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.
 God hath not promised we shall not know
 Toil and temptation, trouble and woe.

He hath not told us we shall not bear
 Many a burden, many a care.
But God hath promised strength for the day,
 Rest for the labor, light for the way,
 Grace for the trials, help from above,
 Unfainting sympathy, undying love.

Author Unknown

VI. GRACE IS NOT IRRESISTIBLE.

- A. Sinful Man Can Refuse God's Grace.
- B. Salvation Has been Purchased by Christ.
 - 1. Man must freely accept it.
- C. God Will Not Force Grace On Anyone.
 - 1. John Calvin believed that:

- a. God chose some to receive grace.
- b. Some not to receive grace.
 - (1) God even fixed the number.
 - (i) Before the foundation of the world.
- c. Those given grace could not be lost.
- d. Those not receiving it were forever lost.

D. Man Must Obey God.

- 1. Rom. 6:17-18: "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."
- 2. Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

The best things are nearest:
 Breath in our nostrils,
 Light in your eyes,
 Flowers at your feet,
 Duties at your hand,
 The path of God just before you.
 Robert Louis Stevenson

VII. MAN CANNOT GO TO HEAVEN WITHOUT GOOD WORKS.

A. These are Good Deeds - Motivated by Love - For the Lost - And Appreciation for Our Own Salvation.

- 1. 1 Cor. 9:16: "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!"
- 2. 1 Cor. 15:10: (Labored) "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
- 3. Phil. 2:12-13: "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation (this involves obedience to God's commands) with fear and trembling; for

it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

4. Titus 2:11-12: “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.”

a. Can A Man Be Saved Without These?

5. Eph. 2:10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”
6. 2 Cor. 9:8: “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance for every good work.”
7. John 14:15: “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”
8. Titus 2:14-15: “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 works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”
9. 2 Cor. 8:6-7: “So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. But as you abound in everything -- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us -- see that you abound in this grace also.”
10. Heb. 12:28: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

GRACE AND PEACE

When I stand before the throne,
Dressed in beauty not my own:
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinning heart:
Then, Lord, shall I fully know -
Not till then - how much I owe!

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
To reach out for another is to risk involvement.
To place your ideas, your dreams before the
crowd is to risk their loss.

To love is to risk not being loved in return.
To live is to risk dying.
To hope is to risk despair.
To try is to risk failure.

VIII. AND GRACE WILL LEAD ME HOME.

- A. 1 Thess. 4:13-14: "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus."
- B. Rev. 14:13: "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'"
- C. John 14:1-2: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."
- D. Rev. 21:4: "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."
- E. Rev. 22:5: "And there shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever."

Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

PART FOUR

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

The words of John Newton's great hymn about grace are known to millions of people, secular people as well as churchgoers. But theologian and popular author J. I. Packer is certainly right when he notes, in *Knowing God*, that for most of our contemporaries "amazing grace" is no longer amazing. It is "boring grace" instead.

(How can that be? How can a theme that has thrilled people for centuries be thought boring?) If you talk to church people about next year's operating budget, you will find them interested. You can interest them in social programs or building a new addition to the educational wing. You can talk to them about the latest baseball scores or Wall Street or national politics. But try to discuss the grace of God and you will discover that they are suddenly in a field of discourse quite beyond their capacities. They will not contradict you. They will listen. But they have nothing to contribute. Often you will be met only with blank stares.

What could have caused such indifference, particularly among churchgoers? Packer believes it is a failure to understand and "feel in one's heart" four great truths that the meaning of grace presupposes:

1. The sin of man.

Modern people are complacent about their grim spiritual condition. They assume that God is also. The thought that man is a fallen creature in rebellion against God's rightful rule never enters their heads. It did for John Newton, of course, which is why he spoke of himself as "a wretch" who was "lost" and spiritually "blind."

2. The judgment of God.

Most of our contemporaries have lost appreciation for all cause-and-effect links, especially in moral areas. So the idea of a final judgment of God at the end of human history at which sin is punished seems quite fantastic to them.

3. The spiritual inability of man.

Our culture has taught us that for man "all things are possible." We are the masters of our own fate, the captains of our own ship. So the idea that we need the grace of God in order to get right with God, since we cannot save ourselves, seems . . . well, it just seems wrong, frankly. We assume that it will always be possible for us to mend our relationships with God.

4. The sovereign freedom of God.

In this day of multiple human “rights,” we also assume that God owes us something, salvation or at least a chance at salvation. But Packer rightly notes that God does not owe us anything. He shows favor to many—that is what this study is about – but He does not need to. The freedom of God to give or withhold favor is the very essence of what grace is about.

Few things, I believe, are more greatly needed in today’s nearly moribund church than to recover an appreciation for God’s grace, which is why I have written this study.

Amazing grace really is amazing. It is the most amazing thing in this vast universe, more amazing even than neutrons and neutrinos, quarks and quasars, and black holes, each with its own baffling wonders and surprises. But like all familiar things, grace has lost its ability to enthrall most people. Instead, as theologian J. I. Packer has said, amazing grace has become “boring grace” for many persons.

Great God of wonders! All thy ways
Are worthy of thyself—divine:
And the bright glories of thy grace
Among thine other wonders shine;
Who is a pardoning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

Though grace is shown to the wicked, they do not
learn righteousness, even in a land of uprightness they go
on doing evil and regard not the majesty of the LORD.

Isaiah 26:10

A number of years ago, a New York rabbi named Harold S. Kushner made a splash in the publishing world with a book entitled *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. It was on the *New York Times* best-seller list for months. The thesis of the book was that bad things happen to good people because God is not omnipotent and things simply get away from Him. At the end of the book, Kushner advises us to forgive God and, like him, just try to get on with life and do the best we can.

How different from what the Bible teaches!

The loss of a job should teach us of the uncertainty of everything in life and of the need to seek our only true or lasting security in God. The loss of a family member should remind you of eternity and of the need to prepare for it. That is why we often read words from Psalm 90 at funeral services:

The length of our days is seventy years –
or eighty, if we have the strength;
yet their span is but trouble and sorrow,

for they quickly pass, and we fly away . . .
Teach us to number our days aright,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (Ps. 90:10,12)

The loss of good things should turn you from the rampant materialism that surrounds you and remind you that "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions," as Jesus said. (Luke 12:15).

(The loss of peace, whether personal or political, should cause you to seek "peace with God" through the work of Jesus Christ.)

(The contrast between the Old Testament emphasis on law and the New Testament emphasis on grace can be seen at least in part by the frequency with which the word *grace* is used in each Testament.)

In the New International Version, there are only eight occurrences of the word *grace* in the Old Testament, none terribly significant. But there are 128 uses of *grace* in the NIV's New Testament translation. Moreover, they occur in key passages and with multiple usage. Romans 5 is one example. The word is used seven times in that chapter. *Grace* is also used extensively in Ephesians 2. It occurs four times in the Greek text of John 1.

Most striking of all are the doxologies. There are thirty that use the word *grace*, doxologies such as: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 1:7); "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you." (Rom. 16:20); "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Cor. 13:14); "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen." (Phil. 4:23); "Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." (1 Tim. 1:2); and "Grace be with you." (2 Tim. 4:22).

There are other Old Testament words for *grace*, of course.

The word *gracious* is found thirty-nine times in the Old Testament (NIV), seven times as an exact or near repetition of Exodus 34:6 ("The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.") Those words are repeated more or less in Nehemiah 9:17, Psalms 86:15, 103:8, and 145:8, Joel 2:13, and Jonah 4:2. But even these texts do not add up to the force *grace* seems to have when it breaks forth freshly with the coming of Jesus Christ.

In the same way, *favor* is used ninety-eight times in the Old Testament. But many of these are of human favor only, and the double use of the word has the effect of weakening it even when it is applied to God.

So there really is a difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament at this point, and John is not overstating the matter when he writes of *grace coming in a special way with Jesus Christ.*

We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth....From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another.

In John 1:14, John announces the Incarnation, and at once grace is prominent: "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." It would seem from that statement that, according to John, the glory of Jesus was seen first in His own personal graciousness.

But if you think carefully, you can probably also think of people who have been gracious to you. Perhaps a friend, a marriage partner, or your parents were gracious people. Instead of treating you as you deserved, these people have treated you as you want to be treated. They have overlooked your failures and have instead been kind and helpful.

Well, Jesus was like that. In fact, He was like all these gracious people rolled into one, and then He surpassed even that. He was never cross, never selfish, never impatient with people who had problems, never superior or judgmental. He never told people, "It serves you right" or, "I hope you get what's coming to you" or, "That's your problem" or, "Don't bother me about it." He never disassociated himself from anyone, as if some types or classes of people were below him. Indeed, He moved easily among both the high and the low, and He was so much at home with the lower classes that His enemies used it to attack Him, saying that He was a "drunkard" and a "friend of sinners." People liked Jesus. They found Him gracious.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will - to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Ephesians 1:3-8

Ephesians stresses the sovereignty of God in salvation and the eternal sweep of God's plan, by which believers are lifted from the depth of sin's depravity and curse to the heights of eternal joy and communion with God - by God's grace. That is what we have in chapters 1 and 2. Like 1 and 2 Corinthians and the pastoral letters, Ephesians deals with the church. But even more than those very practical letters, Ephesians shows how the church came into being, explains how it is to function, and gives guidelines for those important relationships in which the nature of the new humanity can be seen and by which it must grow.

Most Christians are aware of Paul's teaching about grace in chapter 2. In fact, many have probably memorized Ephesians 1:8-9: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." We will be looking at those verses in the next chapter. It is interesting, however, though not so widely recognized, that the word *grace* is used the same number of times and has an equally important place in chapter 1.

What is the difference between Ephesians chapters 1 and 2, since both are about salvation? The difference is that in chapter 1 Paul is looking at the matter from God's point of view, showing that we are saved because of what God willed. The verses that deal with God's sovereign grace in salvation, Ephesians 1:3-14, are one long sentence in Greek, possibly the longest sentence in the New Testament. One commentator calls them "a magnificent gateway to the epistle, another "a golden chain of many links." John Stott gives them a temporal outline, speaking of the past blessing of election (vv. 4-6), the present blessing of adoption (vv. 7-8), and the future blessing of unification (vv. 9-10), followed by a section on the "scope" of these blessings. Others, such as E. K. Simpson and D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, merely list the doctrines: focusing on such words as *election, adoption, redemption, forgiveness of sins, wisdom, unification in Christ, and the Holy Spirit.*

A Trinitarian outline is most helpful. Paul is saying that the blessings listed come from *God the Father* as a result of His electing choice, become ours in *Jesus Christ* by His work of redemption, and are applied to us by the *Holy Spirit* through what theologians term effectual calling. This is due to sovereign grace, since God is the subject of nearly every verb.

He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestinated us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will - to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. (Eph. 1:4-6).

There are a lot of ideas in those verses, including such important ones as holiness, adoption, and the love of the Father for the Son.

Following the Trinitarian pattern of this chapter, we come next to the doctrine of redemption. What God has done through Jesus Christ is to redeem His elect or chosen people (vv. 7-10). Redemption involves all three persons of the Godhead: (1) God the Father, who planned it; (2) God the Son, who accomplished it; and (3) God the Spirit, who applies it to God's people. But redemption is chiefly associated with Jesus, who is specifically called our Redeemer.

The reason for this is that redemption is a commercial term meaning ("to buy in the marketplace so that the object or person purchased might be freed from it,") and Jesus did this for us by dying in our place. To carry the illustration out, we are pictured as slaves to sin, unable to free ourselves from sin's bondage and the world's grasp. Instead of freeing us, the world merely gambles for our souls. It offers everything that is its currency: fame, sex, pleasure, power, wealth. For

these things, millions sell their eternal souls and are perishing. But Jesus enters the marketplace as our Redeemer. Jesus bids the price of His blood, and God says, "Sold to Jesus for the price of His blood." There is no higher bid than that, and so we become His forever.

The apostle Peter wrote, "It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. . . . in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:48).

The second chapter of Ephesians contains one of the best known passages in the Bible, and rightly so. It contains the best news that any woman or man can ever hear. With the exception of John 3:16 and possibly Psalm 23, it is probably the Bible passage that has been most memorized by Christians. John wrote, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (3:16). Paul, in Ephesians 2:8-9, said the same thing though in more theological language: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast."

Paul wrote the fifth chapter of Romans (to teach those who have been justified by God through faith in Jesus Christ that they are secure in their salvation). We have already seen several ways he has done this. He has spoken of the "peace" that has been made between God and ourselves by the work of Christ, our mystical union with Christ, and the different way you and I are able to regard suffering because of our knowledge of what God is doing with us.

Paul spoke of "the hope of the glory of God." By this term, he meant our glorification, our ultimate destiny as believers. So the phrase is an anticipation of the statement in Romans 8:30: "And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified." Justification leads to glorification because if God has justified us, He will also glorify us.

Here are two important points about glorification:

First, this glorious culmination of our salvation by God is certain. In our day, hope is a weak word. The dictionary defines it pretty well with the words: "desire with expectation of obtaining what is desired," "trust," "reliance." But in common speech we usually mean much less than this. We speak of "hoping against hope" or "hoping for the best," which means we are not really very hopeful.

This is not what hope means in the Bible. In the Bible, hope is a certainty, and the only reason it is called hope rather than certainty is that we do not possess the thing that is hoped for yet, though we will. Here are some examples of how hope is used.

Acts 2:26-27 – “My body . . . will live in hope, because You will not abandon me to the grave.”

1 Corinthians 13:13 – “These three remain: faith, hope and love.”

2 Corinthians 1:7 – “Our hope for you is firm.”

Colossians 1:27 – “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Titus 1:2 – “Hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.”

Titus 2:13 – “We wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Hebrews 6:19-20 – “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters in inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.”

1 Peter 1:3 – “God . . . has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

In each of those passages, hope is a certain thing. For even though we do not possess the hoped-for thing yet, we are certain of it since it has been won for us by Christ and has been promised to us by God, “Who does not lie.” Clearly, those who have been justified are to look forward to their final and full glorification with confidence.

The second and last point is this. In 1 John 3:2-3, the apostle is speaking of the return of Jesus Christ and of the fact that when He appears, we shall be like Him. He calls this our “hope.”

You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. (Galatians 5:4).

Where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:20-21).

The last two verses of Romans 5 are among the truly great verses of the Bible. In the midst of a book in which every sentence is great, Romans 5:20-21 stands out like a brilliant beacon on a dark night. The dark background is sin and its horrible proliferation in the world. But the beacon flashes brightly.

This is the climax of a passage that contains a greater concentration of the word *grace* than any other similar passage in the Bible. Romans 5:20 was a favorite text of John Bunyan, best known as the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*. That book reflects Bunyan's deep spiritual experience, but the details of his life are spelled out best in his classic devotional autobiography, *Grace A bounding to the Chief of Sinners*. The title is taken from our passage, which said, in the King James Version that Bunyan used, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," and from 1 Timothy 1:15, where Paul refers to himself as the "chief" of sinners (KJV).

Bunyan was born in 1628 of poor parents. His father was a traveling tinker, that is, a mender of pots and pans, and Bunyan practiced this trade for a time, so that he became known as "the tinker of Bedford." He had little education. In his youth, he was profligate. In time he became troubled by an acute sense of sin. He wrote of himself that in those days it seemed as if the sun that was shining in the heavens begrudged him its light and as if the very stones in the street and the tiles on the houses had turned against him. He felt that he was abhorred by them and was not fit to live among them or benefit from them, because he had "sinned against the Savior."

God saved Bunyan and gave him great peace, and the title of his book is his testimony to what he discovered. He discovered that, no matter how great his sin was, the grace of God proved greater.

This verb does not have to do with numbers so much as with "excess." However, lest we miss the point, Paul adds the prefix *hyper* (we could say "super"), which gives the word a sense of "super excess" or "super abundance."

Most people probably know the text best in the King James Version, the version known to John Bunyan. It uses the idea of "abundance" for both parts of the comparison: "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The New American and the Revised Standard Bibles do better by using *increase* for the first part and *abound* for the second: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."

But how about this? The New English Bible says, "Where sin was thus multiplied, grace immeasurably exceeded it."

Or this? J. B. Phillips paraphrases the verse, saying, "Though sin is shown to be wide and deep, thank God His grace is wider and deeper still."

Near the end of his life, Paul wrote to his young co-worker Timothy:

'Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly [here he uses a combination of the two words found in Romans 5:20, the first of the two verbs plus the emphasizing prefix *hyper*, which is part of the second], along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the

worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life. (1 Tim. 1:13-16).

(Today most people have very little awareness of their sin, which shows how desperate their condition has become). But perhaps you are one who, like John Bunyan, is aware of it. You may consider yourself to have forfeited all hope of salvation by some sinful action that rises up before you like a great concrete dam against grace.

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? . . . Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Romans 6:1-2, 14

Before we died to sin and were made alive to God, we were slaves of our sinful natures. Sin was ruining us. But even when we could see that clearly and acknowledge it, which was not often, we were still unable to do anything about it. We said, "I've got to stop drinking, it's killing me." Or, "I am going to ruin my reputation if I don't stop these sexual indulgences." Or, "I've got to get control of my temper," or "curb my spending," or whatever. But we were unable to do it. And even if we did get control of some important area of our life, perhaps with the help of a good therapist or friends or a supportive family, the general downward drift was unchanged. We really were *non posse non peccare* ("not able not to sin"), as Saint Augustine described it.

Being made alive to God, we discover that we are now freed from that destructive bondage. We still sin, but not always and not as often. And we know that we do not have to. We are now *posse non peccare* ("able not to sin"). We can achieve a real victory.

4. We are pressing forward to a sure destiny and new goals.

Before we were not, We were trapped by the world and by its time-bound, evil horizons. Being saved, we know that we are now destined for an eternity of fellowship and bliss with God. We have not reached it yet. We are not perfect. But we echo within what Paul said, describing his new life in Christ to the Philippians:

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:12-14).

We can no longer be satisfied with this world's weak offerings.

To be sure, the world never did really satisfy us. The world, which is finite, can never adequately fill beings who are made with an infinite capacity for fellowship with and enjoyment of God. We *thought* the world and its values were satisfying. We expected to be filled.

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. (2 Tim. 2:1-2).