

Ephesians 2:1-10

Saved by Grace

Grace Abounding Series

Today we are beginning a 5 week series on One of the most important aspects of the Christian Faith
THE GRACE OF GOD!

A) If we are going to be those who are living successfully in New Covenant Christianity – Understanding grace is utmost importance

B) Peter's last words: 2 Peter 3:18 – Grow in Grace

1) Paul admonished young Pastor Timothy – **Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus -**

2) GRACE IS PARAMOUNT

Definition of Grace: Grace = undeserved Favor – unearned favor

A) Mercy is not getting what you do deserve - Grace is getting what you don't deserve. –

The difference between mercy and grace? Mercy gave the prodigal son a second chance. Grace gave him a feast.- Max Lucado

B) Kids – something wrong – Sometimes – I would use the moment Intentional about opportunity to display grace.

C) So I would talk to them as usual about what they did wrong –

1) make sure why they understood it was wrong –

D) They would be expecting an spanking – I would say – Ok lets go get some ice cream –

1) Why? God did for us.

My Favorite Definition of Grace is this one: God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

A) Every blessing, every promise, every good thing comes to us through the treasure house of God – **but at the expense of Jesus**

B) See because God is Holy and just God – Perfect Judge – he can't just overlook sin! –

1) He can't just decide: I am in good mood today – lets go and get ice cream. –

2) That would be Grace and mercy but not justice.

C) Same way: Drunk Driver kills a loved one of yours 1) you would not think it was justice if the Judge – let him off with a warning.

D) **That is not fair – that is not Just –**

1) You expect a Judge to be just – to uphold the law – administer the right punishment.

Because God is a just Judge – Holy and all together righteous

A) He said – I want to show you Grace & mercy – but someone has to pay the debt – take the punishment -

B) MY SON WILL!

C) SO God pours out upon us all of the riches of His love, and of His kindness, and of His goodness.

1) And He does it all at the expense of Christ.

Christ pays the bill. And we get the benefit.

“Grace is free only because the giver himself has borne the cost.” — Philip Yancey,

So God's grace is at the very heart – the very capstone of the Christian faith –

A) Everything revolves around grace!

B) We are saved by grace – we stand in Grace – the Bible talks about manifold trials 1 Peter 1:6–

1) **Manifold = many colors** There is a color and shape for every trial that we face in this life

C) But the Bible also talks about the Manifold grace of God – 1 Peter 4:10

1) There is A color or shape of God's grace to match the color or shape of the trial we are going through.

D) I love the graphic that Shahn our graphics guy used for this series – background of a waterfall.

1) Because when it comes to God's grace – like water flowing from a waterfall –

2) **THERE IS ALWAYS MORE TO FOLLOW.**

E) Ever been to Niagara Falls or seen a picture of the sheer volume of water pouring over the falls – **Never run out**

1) So too with God's grace – the volume is great – GRACE ABOUNDING

TWO GREAT BOOKS –

Today starting point – Grace - Saved by Grace and saved for a purpose.

Ephesians 2:1

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.

We were Dead in trespasses and sins!

A)What does that mean? – Lifeless? – can't choose? NO

B) OT exhortations Keep the Law or – Joshua 24:15

Choose you this day... Serve

1)Dead people can't choose

C)When you trace this idea of deadness through the Bible – Beginning Genesis 1 – Eat ... die

1)But they didn't die right away – Lived long

D)But there was a death that took place – Death to Adam's relationship with God.

1)Sin separated – No more walks – Barrier

E) So Dead = Separated not Lifeless –

Plus the rest of the text doesn't support that idea either

A)Paul said in V.2 to those he called dead... -

Which you once walked – Dead people don't walk either

B)But when you view it as being separated from God – perfect sense.

C)**Walked = Meandered** – window shopper – Going one thing to the next – One person to the next

We meandered through life – with one intent:

A)How can we satisfy the lust and cravings of our flesh.

B)That was our course – our main intent – everyday in some way – How to satisfy fleshly desires

C)The course we were on was orchestrated by Satan – the god of this world - according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air

D)Started in the garden – his temptation of Eve – questioning what God said – doubting

1)Whole ploy – Live a life independent of God!

We were following that course – that took us on a path further and further away from God!

A)The result of that course was – We were setting ourselves up for Punishment – Wrath

B)Rebellion and lawlessness – deserves punishment –1)So we were Destined for Wrath

C)So that was our Condition – our plight our destiny

V.4 But God – the Divine intervention – God stepped into the Madness

A)Made a way for sinners to be saved –Forgiven

B)Whole new Destiny – Future Hope

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.

Now the means through which God did all of that was His Grace!

A)God stepped in and did for us what we could not do for ourselves

B)No amount of human effort or behavior could change the fact that we have all sinned... glory

1)We had all broken God's law

C)So God did for us what we could not do for ourselves – He took the Punishment

1)God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself

D)The Judge who paid the fine!

God did that with us – He choose to pour His favor upon us even though we didn't deserve it

A)But His favor – what at the expense of Jesus – His favor didn't come without a COST.

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.

Not saved by works – but grace through faith

A)Nothing you can do! – FINISHED

B)ALL GOD – he did the work – we receive the blessing! – **NO BOASTING IN HEAVEN**

C)We embrace Grace – through faith

Grace presents salvation, faith lays hold of salvation.

A)Faith is to the spirit what hands are to the body.

B) If you're going to receive a gift, **how are you going to receive it?**

1) Well generally speaking you're going to extend your hand and receive it.

C) The giver places it in your hands!

Now if someone saw you reach out your hand and said – wow you really did a lot to except that gift

A)You would look at them like they were crazy

B)I didn't do anything –SO TOO with Salvation **Grace reached out to me I received it**

C)So Faith is just a response to the good news of God

D)NOTE: **Now because salvation is a gift, it can be refused.**

E)the Scripture tells us that the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, not just some men. 1)But then why aren't all men saved?

F) Because all men have not extended that hand of faith to receive the gift of God.

1)Rejected the gift that God has set on the door step of their hearts

Think of it this way - You could receive a check in the mail for ten million dollars.

A) But you could still live in absolute poverty, even though you had in your possession that check

B) Until You deposit that check, it is not of any practical value to you.

1)You can look at it. Marvel over the amount. Frame it for all to see!

C)But until YOU deposit it in the bank it doesn't do YOU a bit of good.

Well salvation is available at the doorstep of the heart every human being.

A)But you see, until a man reaches out with the hand of faith and says, *"I'll take that to be mine,"*

B)that salvation does not avail him anything.

C) And that is one of the saddest things in the entire world to think **that the grace of God bringing salvation has appeared to everyone,**

1)But yet so few people have embraced it. So few people have taken the gift that God has extended.

D)You today?

So we are saved by grace through faith – not or works

A)But here is what God also wants us to understand is that true faith is a faith that works.

B)Faith has evidence – James in his epistles talks about this.

C)True Faith is lived out in Action –

D)NOW We are no longer working or serving to EARN God's favor

1)But we do so knowing we have God's favor in Christ – Recipients of Grace – WE RESPOND

And this is what Paul hits on in V.10 –

A)**Saved by grace through faith** – but saved for a purpose.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

B)In other words - Not just praise God I am saved – I am going to heaven. – I am set

C) God gives those who are redeemed this incredible title and description – WORKMANSHIP

WORKMANSHIP = POEMA – POEM
ANY WORK OF ART – MASTERPIECE

Here is what is really interesting – When God says of you that you are His workmanship.

A) What makes us His workmanship is **not** the fact that He made our bodies and fashioned us physically

B) In other words God is not talking **Human Anatomy** – when he calls us his Masterpiece.

1) Even though the Bible does say we are fearfully and wonderfully made –

C) **Study of Human anatomy is amazing** – The great design – Great Designer –

1) But that is not what Paul has in mind when He says we are God's Master piece

You are His workmanship – because of redemption – Created IN CHRIST

A) **IN CHRIST** is the key phrase there.

B) Before Christ – In your Sin – State- Embrace God's salvation his grace through faith

1) **IN CHRIST** – Covered in his righteousness

C) That is what makes you His Masterpiece

THE Christian is God's greatest Creation!
ONLY We are called his MASTERPIECE!

A) How did he make the world – planets – the galaxies ?

B) Spoke the World into existence – HEAVENS DECLARE..... TRUE – SUNSETS

C) But **This world is not called His masterpiece!**

1) But we are! – WHY?

What did it take to make a Christian?

A) Jesus left heaven – Cross – Resurrection

B) Museum Tour - GALAXIES / Animals
Sea life-colors –

C) Finally - **The Cross – the Christian – Jesus came**

JESUS PAID THE PRICE!

SO PAUL DECLARES – WE ARE HIS WORKSMANSHIP – MASTERPIECE...making!

A) Think of a work of Art – Painting, Song, Poem

B) Art is often times the Expression of the Artist

1) Sad = **Sad song – Achy Breaky**

Sad – Poem – Dark Painting

C) Happy – Happy Song

D) The Art is the expression of the Artist!

E) God is an Artist – **WE GET TO BE AN EXPRESSION OF WHO – HE IS – HOW?**

Created for Good Works which He prepared before hand that we should walk in them.

A) He made you for a purpose – To be a living breathing expression of who he is to the world

B) What is that supposed to look like?

Who throughout the history of humanity was the best expression of God? – Easy Jesus

A) The writer of Hebrews said – in times past God spoke through the prophets

B) Last days – spoken through His Son!

C) Remember what John declared about Jesus John 1:14 **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**

John says were able to see His glory the glory of God's heart and character – nature

A) It was on full display in the person of Jesus – We beheld his glory – Full of grace and truth

B) Perfect blending of Grace and truth!

1) Saw it throughout his life – His heart for the mistreated – the needy the abused

C) His condemnation of the religious oppressors – the hypocrites –

1) **Grace and truth on display.**

But the greatest expression of His grace and truth was on display at Calvary!

A) Truth – Wages of sin is death – If God is just and holy – can't just wink at sin

B) There is a price that has to be paid for sin!

1) Sin needs to be punished

C) The Son of God on the cross – is the answer to the truth – Justice WAS served.

BUT Grace is equally on display!

A) Jesus elected to leave heaven – become a man – to go to the Cross.

B) Truth is the price was paid.

C) Grace is – Now there is forgiveness – hope and restoration and blessing – Inheritance

1) God's Riches to us – at Christ expense

So for you and I to be living breathing expressions of God in this world –

A) Seek His wisdom – His Spirit empowering to model that balance – Grace and truth

B) Think for a minute about what that looks like.

C) Truth without grace breeds self-righteousness and legalism. **Grace without truth breeds deception and moral compromise.**

Read you this quote: Article – Interesting Grace and truth

A) Grace people are pleasant to be around.

B) They don't ruffle any feathers. They cut us a lot of slack. They're easy going.

1) They accept us for who we are. They don't make demands. They are always welcoming.

C) But without truth, grace isn't really grace, it's just being accepting and nice.

D) Those who only show grace often demand nothing from others and get nothing in return.

1) They accept us for who we are, but they never help us become who we should be.

And then there are truth people. Truth people are easy to admire. They have convictions/principles.

A) They believe in right and wrong. They set standards.

B) They speak out against injustice, oppression, and evil.

1) But without grace, telling the truth can become an excuse for belligerence.

C) Truth people without grace are loyal to their cause, but we wonder if they are really loyal to us.

D) They want to change us and make us better, but they don't allow for mistakes.

1) They are quick to cast judgment on others.

E) They make difficult decisions, but they also make life difficult for others and for themselves.

1) They can be slow to forgive. They inspire us with their courage, but turn us off with their intimidation.

If you are a grace person you are most concerned about being loved.

A) If you are a truth person you are most concerned about being right even it means being unloved.

B) Both have their dangers.

C) Something is wrong if everyone hates you, and something is probably just as wrong if everyone loves you.

Jesus was the perfect balance of both grace and truth – not afraid to speak the truth.

A) But did it in a manner – Full of grace and love – even the worst sinners – knew He cared

B) The Worst of society loved to be around him!

1) Grace and truth in Jesus was contagious

C) Should be the same in US! – His Workmanship

1) What He is wanting to produce in us

Example: Abortion: Truth: The Bible is clear – a human is created at conception -

A) So Abortion is a Sin - Murder – it is wrong –
No getting around that Biblically –

B) **But also - Grace** – If you have had an abortion – there is forgiveness available –

1) Blood of Jesus cleanses from all Sin

C) So God doesn't hold that over your head – forgiven and forgotten

1) No condemnation In Christ Jesus

D) Not only that – but you can look forward to be reunited with that Baby in Heaven

1) Grace and truth on display.

E) Not going to downplay the truth – but we have to speak the truth in love

As believers we should stand for righteousness and live righteously in this world

A) But NOT do so in a condemning way to the world around us that is bent on unrighteousness

B) THE WORLD NEEDS TO not just know what we are against – they need to know what we are for.

C) What are we For? PEOPLE

Grace and truth are lived out and clearly seen when we have a willingness to sit down with people

A) To be willing to dialogue with someone- hear their story.

B) Not just rattle off a list of Bible truths – but show Compassion – Jesus showed compassion

C) Great definition of Compassion – is to enter into someone else's world and feel their pain

D) That is what Jesus did.

So you are willing to sit down with that homosexual co-worker and hear their story.

A) Their story is going to surprise you.

B) Might start with feelings they had when they were in elementary school – didn't know how to process

1) Might involve abuse by a member of the opposite sex – made them repel – that sex

C) It is a Willingness to hear their story – love them – sympathize with the struggle

D) Share the truth of God's word in love – Jesus loves them died for them –

1) We all have baggage when we come to Christ – but his heart is to make us Right and new

E) Willingness – Walk through that with You.

Grace sympathizes with sin – we realize – we are all sinners – All delivered from something

A) True Grace also refuses to be accepting of sin

B) Because we know the power of the truth of the gospel to TRANSFORM

C) So we are His workmanship – Living breathing expressions of Jesus to a world – who needs Him

D) That expression will be seen the clearest as we through the help of his grace and spirit

1) Model – Grace and truth

Saved by Grace through faith – You embraced?

Saved for a Purpose – His workmanship