

THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE ECONOMY OF GOD, Week 1

The Tremendous Significance of the Grace of God as Revealed in the New Testament

Scripture Reading: John 1:14, 16-17; Heb. 10:29; 1 Pet. 5:10; Eph. 1:5-6; 2:7-8; Rev. 22:21

John 1:14	And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
John 1:16	For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.
John 1:17	For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.
Hebrews 10:29	By how much do you think he will be thought worthy of worse punishment who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and has considered the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing and has insulted the Spirit of grace?
1 Peter 5:10	But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.
Ephesians 1:5	Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
Ephesians 1:6	To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;
Ephesians 2:7	That He might display in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
Ephesians 2:8	For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;
Revelation 22:21	The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

Day 1

Ephesians 2:7	That He might display in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
1 Corinthians 15:10	But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

I. The **grace of God** is a matter of tremendous significance—John 1:14, 16-17; Eph. 2:7; Rev. 22:21:

- A. Grace is the **greatest truth** and the **highest revelation** in God's New Testament economy—John 1:14, 16-17; Heb. 10:29; 1 Cor. 15:10; Phil. 4:23; Rev. 22:21.
- B. If we would understand what the grace of God is as revealed in the New Testament, we need a **clear view of the New Testament as a whole**.

II. According to the New Testament, grace is actually **what God is to us for our enjoyment**—John 1:16-17; 2 Cor. 12:9:

- A. Grace is God not in doctrine but in our experience, for **grace is God in Christ with all that He is for our enjoyment**; this includes **life, strength, comfort, rest, light, righteousness, holiness, power, and the other divine attributes**.
- B. Grace is mainly not the work God does for us; **grace is the Triune God Himself dispensed into our being and experienced by us for our enjoyment**—13:14.
- C. The New Testament is a history of the grace of God as the **incarnation** of the Triune God in His Divine Trinity **processed** and **consummated** and **moving** and **living** in and among the believers—John 1:14, 16-17; Rev. 22:21.

Day 2

2 Corinthians 1:12	For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you.
2 Corinthians 13:14	The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
Hebrews 10:29	By how much do you think he will be thought worthy of worse punishment who...has insulted the Spirit of grace?

III. Grace is the **manifestation of the Triune God** in His embodiment in three aspects—the **Father**, the **Son**, and the **Spirit**—2 Cor. 13:14; Num. 6:22-27; Psalms 36:8-9:

- A. Grace is the **Triune God in His incarnation** to be dispensed into the believers by the Father as the source, by the Son as the element, and by the Spirit as the application—2 Cor. 13:14:
1. The source of grace, the element of grace, and the application of grace are of the **three persons of the Divine Trinity to be our everything**—Matt. 28:19.
 2. In the divine dispensing, grace is called the **grace of God**, the **grace of Christ**, and the **grace of which the Spirit is**—1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:12; 8:1, 9; 9:14; 12:9; 13:14; Heb. 10:29.

Day 3

John 1:14	And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
2 Timothy 4:22	The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

- B. **Grace** is the embodiment of God, who became a God-man with divinity and humanity, passed through **human living, died, resurrected**, and entered into **ascension**; now He is the **life-giving Spirit dwelling in us**—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.
- C. Grace is the Triune God **processed** and **consummated** for us so that we may enjoy Him—John 1:14, 16-17; 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 10:29; 1 Cor. 15:10, 45b; Rev. 22:21.
- D. **Without** being processed, the Triune God **could not** be grace to us—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b:
1. The Father is **embodied** in the Son, the Son is **realized** as the Spirit, and the Spirit **enters** into us as grace for our enjoyment—Heb. 10:29.
 2. The processed and consummated Triune God **dispenses Himself into us to be our portion as grace** so that we may enjoy Him as everything in His Divine Trinity—2 Cor. 13:14.

When we enjoy God and participate in Him, that is grace. I say again that **grace is God in the Son for our enjoyment**. Grace is God, not in doctrine, but in our experience. **When you experience God as your strength, life, comfort, rest, power, righteousness, and holiness, that is grace**. Christ declares the Father God in the way of enjoyment, day by day affording us a portion of the enjoyment of God.

The more we enjoy God, the more we know Him. The only way to know a certain food is by eating it. Although you may tell me that a particular food is delicious, I cannot know it for myself unless I taste it. When I partake of that food, it is declared to me by my enjoyment of it. Now I know it, but still I cannot explain it to you. If you want to know it, you also must eat it. Thus, **God is declared to us by our tasting of Him**. We need to taste God. We need to enjoy God as our grace, for this is the way in which Christ declares God to us. This matter transcends our utterance. **We do have the enjoyment, but it is difficult to tell people about it.** Suppose you have tasted a cake and you say, "This cake is delicious." If I were to ask you to tell me how delicious it is, you would have to reply, "I can't tell you. You have to taste it for yourself." **We need to taste God**. Christ came with the fullness of God's grace. We need to enjoy His presence and remain with Him. Then we shall participate in what God is. In this way God is declared to us, and we come to realize Him. (*Life-Study of John, chapter 3*)

Day 4

Ephesians 1:6	To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved.
Matthew 3:17	And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.

IV. Our God and Father has “graced us in the Beloved”—Eph. 1:6b:

- A. For God to **grace** us means that **He has put us into the position of grace** so that we may be the object of His grace and favor, that is, that we may enjoy all that God is to us—v. 6b:
 - 1. Because we are in the position of grace and are **the object of grace**, **God is pleased with us**.
 - 2. God’s delight is in us, we are happy in Him, and eventually, there is **mutual enjoyment**; we enjoy Him, and He enjoys us.
- B. The **Beloved** is **God’s beloved Son**, in whom He **delights**—Matt. 3:17; 17:5:
 - 1. In the Beloved we have been graced, **made the object of God’s favor and pleasure**—Eph. 1:6b.
 - 2. As such an object, we enjoy God, and God enjoys us in His grace in His Beloved, who is His delight; **in His Beloved we too become His delight**—Matt. 3:17; 17:5.

Finally, 1:6 says that God has graced us in the Beloved. Here Paul does not say “in Christ” or “in Him”; he says “in the Beloved.” The **Beloved is God’s beloved Son in whom He delights**. We have seen that for God to grace us is to make us an object in whom He delights. This is altogether a pleasure to God. **In Christ we have been blessed by God with every blessing. In the Beloved we were graced, made the object of God’s favor and pleasure.** As such an object we enjoy God, and God enjoys us in His grace in His Beloved, who is His delight. **In His Beloved we also become His delight.**

God delights in the Beloved, and He delights also in us. The phrase “in the Beloved” conveys the full delight, satisfaction, and enjoyment God the Father has in us **because we have been made the object of His grace and delight**. In this sense we should all appreciate ourselves and even esteem ourselves highly because **we are the object of God’s delight**. You should say, “Because God delights in me, I appreciate myself. I even esteem myself highly because I have been positioned in grace and made the object of God’s grace.” We should have such a view about ourselves, not according to our natural state, but according to the fact that we have been chosen, predestinated, regenerated, and graced. **God delights in us, not in ourselves, but in His Beloved.** (*Life-Study of Ephesians, chapter 5*)

Day 5

Ephesians 2:4-5	But God, being rich in mercy,...made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).
Ephesians 2:8	For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.
John 1:17	For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.

V. In Ephesians 2:8 Paul says, “By grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; **it is the gift of God**”:

- A. Grace is God dispensed into us; therefore, to be saved by grace means to be **saved by having the processed Triune God dispensed into us**.
- B. Ephesians reveals that saving grace is God Himself in Christ **wrought into our being**; hence, to be saved by grace actually means **to be saved by the dispensing of the Triune God into us**.
- C. When the processed Triune God is dispensed into us, He becomes **saving grace to us in our experience**—2 Cor. 13:14.

Speaking of faith, Ephesians 2:8 also says, “*This not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.*” Faith is not of our works, nor of our endeavor or strife; **it is of God’s gift that no one should boast**. Faith is not of ourselves. Although we believe, the faith with which we believe **does not originate with us**. In ourselves, we do not have any faith. However, at the time we **repented and made confession** to God in the name of the Lord Jesus, **the believing ability was put into us**. Before we were saved, we were utterly unable to believe. But on the day we were saved, faith was imparted to us, and we believed. Others may ask how we can believe in Jesus Christ when we have never seen Him. Although we have not seen Him, we cannot help believing in Him. **This faith is not of ourselves; it is part of the grace transmitted into us.**

If there is a beautiful diamond in front of you, you will spontaneously appreciate it. This appreciation does not originate with you, but with the diamond. In a sense, your appreciation is the diamond itself. You certainly would not have the same appreciation for a piece of clay. A diamond is worthy of appreciation; clay is not. Likewise, the reason we do not put our faith in Socrates or Confucius is that they are not believable. But because **Christ is absolutely believable, we put our faith in Him**. Our faith in Christ **does not come out of us**; rather, **it comes out of Him. When we see Christ, faith is imparted to us**. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to say that faith is Christ. This is like saying that holiness, love, righteousness, patience, and endurance are Christ. (*Life-Study of Ephesians, chapter 21*)

Day 6

Ephesians 1:5-6 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved.

Ephesians 2:7 That He might display in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

VI. God has predestinated us unto sonship to “the **praise of the glory of His grace**”—Eph. 1:5-6a:

- A. Glory is God expressed (Exo. 40:34); the **glory of His grace indicates that God’s grace**, which is Himself as our enjoyment, expresses Him.
- B. God’s predestinating us unto sonship is for the **praise of His expression in His grace**, that is, for the praise of the glory of His grace—Eph. 1:5-6a.

VII. God will “display in the ages to come the **surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus**”—2:7:

- A. In His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus, God has saved us by His grace; **it is in such kindness that the grace of God is given to us**—v. 7; Rom. 2:4.
- B. The riches of God’s grace are the **riches of God Himself dispensed into us** for our experience and enjoyment; the **riches of God’s grace surpass every limit**.
- C. In the ages to come—in the millennium and eternity—**God will display the surpassing riches of His grace to the whole universe**—Eph. 2:7.

The Lord Jesus, God incarnate, is also full of reality. The word reality can also be translated as “truth” or “genuineness.” In the universe only **God is genuine**; everything else is fake. Furthermore, **only God is real**; everything else is vanity. A parent may love his child very much and may treat his child as a treasure. However, if his child dies, his treasure will be gone and no longer real. If a child grows up without any incident but devotes all his heart and time to his career and family, this will also be a situation of vanity. This is the case with matters involving living persons, and it is even more the case with lifeless, material things. Heaven and earth will pass away, not to mention the few possessions that we may have. **In the universe only God is eternal, and hence, only God is real. When we obtain God, we obtain grace, and when we touch God, we touch reality, genuineness.** In other words, when we obtain God, we obtain grace; when we touch God, we touch reality.

On one end, **grace is the flowing out of love**, and on the other end, **love is the source of grace**. When God comes forth to be obtained by us, He is grace, and when we touch God to enjoy Him, we experience Him as love. Reality and light are in the same principle. **When God comes forth for us to touch, He is truth, reality.** When we fellowship with God and touch God in reality, we experience Him as light. Light expressed is reality. When we touch reality, we touch something genuine and real. Then when we fellowship with God and touch God in reality, we feel that we are in the light. When we obtain grace and enjoy God, we experience love; when we contact God as reality, we touch light. **When God comes to us, we obtain Him as grace and touch Him as reality.** As grace and in reality, we enjoy God as love and touch Him as light. “The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us...full of grace and reality” (John 1:14). This verse shows that **through the Word we can receive God as grace and touch God as reality.** (*Life and Building in the Gospel of John, chapter 10*)