

Grace by Stephen Moore

To appreciate the grace of God we must have a correct perspective and understanding of who and what we are before a holy and righteous God.

Romans 5:6-11, Ephesians 2:1-3

All religions and all people can be placed into one of two categories. Firstly there are those religions and people who are trying to earn God's favour and salvation by their own efforts and works. Secondly there are those who realise that they can't earn God's favour because they are sinners and they receive God's free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Grace is "undeserved favour" and this concept is completely foreign in this world as people believe that you only "get what you deserve." God's grace does not condone or excuse sin but it does offer the sinner salvation.

- *God is Gracious – Fact!*

Grace is the major theme of the Bible. Right from the beginning man is continually rejecting God and God is continually offering man a way to be accepted. The reason God offers the hand of friendship out to man is because God is Gracious

- *God is Gracious – Evidence!*

Jonah

The Assyrians were blood thirsty enemies of Israel and it was prophesied by Amos that they would eventually conquer Israel so it was for these reasons that Jonah an Israelite hated them. They were the last people Jonah wanted God to be gracious with. Whenever God asked Jonah to go and preach repentance to them Jonah ran off in the opposite direction. Eventually God worked it out that Jonah would go and preach to them and when he did the Assyrians repented.

Jonah 4:2

When it was all over Jonah said to God, "I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity."

Saul

Acts 7:54-8:3; 9:1-6; 1Timothy 1:14

Saul was an enemy of Jesus Christ to the extent that he sanctioned and supported the killing of many Christians. He imprisoned Christians and dedicated his life to stopping the spread of Christianity and the preaching of the gospel. Whilst Saul travelled to Damascus to take Christians to Jerusalem and imprison them the ascended Lord Jesus in His grace left His throne in Heaven to meet with Saul and save Him. This is God's grace in action and later when Saul who became Paul retold his story he explained, "The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly."

God is gracious but not because of who we are or what we do but because of who He is!

- *Four types of Grace*

1) Common Grace

Matthew 5:45, Acts 14:17; 17:26, James 1:17

Jesus commands us to love our enemies and God is the perfect example for us to follow as He shows “common grace” to all by causing the sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sending the rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Everything we enjoy is evidence of God’s grace such as our life, our food, and our joy etc. Even the opportunity to read or hear the word of God is evidence of His grace.

2) Saving Grace

John 1:17, Romans 5:12-21, Ephesians 2:8-9

The Lord Jesus Christ brought more grace in addition to common grace known as “saving grace.” The two most influential men in history are Adam and Jesus Christ and both of them have affected every one of us whether or not we believe in them or whether or not we have even heard of them. Adam is our common ancestor and he brought sin and death into this world and because we are all sons of Adam we too are sinners. Adam’s sin brought condemnation (Rom 5:15) but in contrast the Lord Jesus Christ brought justification. Condemnation declares us guilty before God whereas justification declares us innocent before God.

We can be declared innocent and righteous before God because Jesus died for our sins on the cross in our place and rose again to provide us with justification and salvation. If we receive this saving grace through faith in Jesus Christ we will be given eternal life (Rom 5:18) and we will be made righteous (Rom 5:19).

If we accept this saving grace it is further evidence of God’s grace because He gives us the ability to exercise faith. If we reject this saving grace it is further evidence of God’s grace because He gives us the freedom to make a choice. It’s all about God’s grace.

3) Serving Grace

Romans 6:14, Ephesians 3:7-9, Titus 2:11-12

Our lives as followers of Jesus should bring glory to Him by our holiness and our service. We no longer live under the law but under grace so when we fail we can get up and go again. In the past the law condemned us and made us ineffective but grace allows us to go forward for Jesus. Grace does not excuse sin but it is a motivation for us to live godly lives.

Anything we do for Jesus Christ is done by God’s grace. God transforms us and gives us the ability and the gifting to serve Him and to serve the people of this world. Paul was a servant by God’s grace and he preached to the Gentiles by God’s grace.

4) Future Grace

Jonah 2:8, Ephesians 2:7, 2Thessalonians 2:16

God’s immensity means that His grace has no end and followers of Jesus will experience and learn more about God’s grace through Jesus Christ for all eternity.

All of us have experienced Common Grace but by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone we can experience Saving Grace, Serving Grace and Future Grace! Do not forsake the grace of God that is yours but acknowledge God’s grace in your life today.