

Mercy and Grace

What is Grace?

Many have tried to define what Grace means and in my almost 20 years of being born again I have not felt that anything I have heard completely reveals the fullness of what Grace is.

In scripture the word Grace is used in multiple ways and in different circumstances.

In Ester the term is used to reveal honorable conduct and acquired favor.

In Psalms it is used as receiving beauty and anointing.

As I looked at the scriptures I found Grace was much deeper than the “unmerited Favor” that most preachers assign to it.

So I did what any good bible scholar would do and looked up what the Hebrew meaning of Grace was.

In Hebrew: Grace derives it’s depth from three thoughts combined into one.

It means: joined to God through His seed Jesus Christ who is sown into our hearts, producing divine worship onto Him!

Christ in us! That is the root of Grace that grows and matures and brings forth divine worship through our lives!

Now that we know what Grace is, we can then understand what Grace is not.

Grace is not the allowance of sin.

It brings forth forgiveness and reveals a patience God has for us knowing that we are weak, and struggle in our flesh to do what is right but it does not mean we can sin without repentance.

If anything, now that we know Grace is Christ in us Grace should bring out a deep conviction of sin. A conviction that reveals the connection we now have with God that detests sin and its work in our lives.

Zechariah 12:10

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

Too many preachers these days give out the idea that because of Grace we don’t have to worry about our sin any longer. They focus more on the assumption that Jesus has covered all our sins so we can have salvation and tolerate sin at the same time. But that is not true Grace.

The most common story in the Bible that is used to show Grace is the example of the woman caught in adultery.

John 8:11

And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

This example is more about God’s mercy than it is about God’s grace. Now that the woman is aware of Christ, his presence begins the work of Grace in her life by giving her the strength to “sin no more!”

Romans 6:1, 2

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

1 John 1:6

⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

If a person is not willing to turn from their sin, Grace is not yet taken root in their lives.

When did the work of Grace Begin?

The work of Grace did not begin when Jesus died on the cross; it began when Adam and Eve first sinned.

In that moment God planned to provide His son as the propitiation of the penalty of sin. He was to become the payment, the balancing action that produces freedom from sin.

The Cross was culmination of God greatness and Christ’s love to pour out on us Grace.

Romans 5:17

For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Knowing that we were fighting a losing war with our sin, God made a way for us to enter into his Grace, by providing Jesus as the Gateway to salvation and forgiveness of our sin.

The threshold of that Gateway into Grace is Faith!

If we want the work of Grace in our lives to begin, we must enter into it by receiving the truth that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Light.

Romans 3:23-25

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

This is why those who walked by Faith before Christ came in the flesh and died will still inherit eternal life.

They believed that God had a plan and because of His divine Love and desire to Forgive He would provide for them a way to be with Him forever.

Romans 5:1-6

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Grace is the fullness of God's love and his unrelenting desire to connect with us in the midst of our compromised ability to do any thing on our own that is good or worthy of His glory.

God knew that we could not do it on our own we needed help to overcome our natural desire to sin.

The Purpose of Grace Today

1John 1:7-9

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Grace is at work today more than ever in us and in our world.

Romans 5:20, 21

...where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

As sin increases Grace increases. Not to justify our sin but to transform us into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

As we place our faith in Christ, a seed of Grace is planted into our hearts that brings salvation and freedom from our sin.

Romans 6:14

For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

As that seed of faith grows it breaks the power of sin over our lives.

We begin to find out we do not have the desire to sin like we used to.

Romans 6:20-23

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

By turning our hearts towards God and His word Faith and Grace grow and begin to produce great victory in our life.

It takes submission to Him and a willingness to turn away from our own selfish desires though. It is an easy thing to say, but a hard thing to follow through with.

Paul knew this well in his struggles with sin.

Romans 7:19

¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Paul struggled in his flesh to do what he knew was right. He wanted to be good but his own sinful nature produced only what was evil.

This is Grace! That God could and will produce good through us even though we have a tendency to produce evil.

Romans 7:24, 25

²⁴ What a wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

You see we cannot work our way to heaven only through God's Son Jesus Christ can we enter in to eternal life.

And this is Grace once again, growing and changing us into the image of Christ here on this earth when we set our minds on Him!

Romans 8 talks of this work in us.

When we set our minds on Christ we are working in his Grace and we are being changed from Glory to Glory.

When we receive God's seed into our hearts we begin to produce fruit for God's glory and also find victory over our sinful tendencies.

This does not mean we are free from struggles or temptations but we have the strength we need to overcome!

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.