



"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

A Controversial Newsletter "The Printed Voice of Summit Theological Seminary"

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Vol. 25 No. 2

April 2012

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UNDERSTANDING THE GRACE OF GOD

(Printed in the Christian Guest's Fall 1982 Edition)

Grace is a word that is coined today to mean something that it does not ever mean in Scripture. It has come to mean, "license". It is thought to imply "freedom from restraint" or "no holds barred", to one's personal desires. This is an unfortunate twist to the beautiful Biblical concept.

Grace is really a two-sided coin. To neglect to flip the coin, is to fail to see all of its beauty. One side of the coin is "forgiveness from sin"; the other side of the coin is "deliverance from sin".

God's grace both redeems us from the guilt and the power of sin. God's grace not only "covers", but it "controls" the sin in our life. It not only "remits" the guilt, but it "restrains" sin from ruling over us. Obviously, these concepts are much different from "license" or freedom to do as we wish."

Imagine a criminal being brought before a judge and being found guilty of a crime. However, the judge graciously says, "I'm going to suspend the sentence, even though you do not deserve it."

Does this mean that the man has the freedom to repeat the crime? Of course not! The judge graciously showed mercy, not license. Obviously, his grace could be mistaken for "license" by the ignorant, but it was bestowed to prompt redemption of the man, not repetition of the sin.

Picture a man who, as an employee, failed at his job. The foreman confronts him with his unsatisfactory work. The foreman shows him the flaws in his workmanship. Instead of firing him, he gives him another chance.

Was this grace a license to repeat the poor quality of workmanship? No, but rather an opportunity to make a change and make the product good.

Suppose a soldier was caught asleep on guard duty. He is worthy of death. The captain, in grace, forgives him. Is this license to sleep the next

night in which he is on guard duty? No, he has merely been shown mercy that he may make a better soldier.

Obviously, if the criminal willfully steals again, or the employee willfully makes an inferior product, or the soldier takes a pillow on guard duty with him, there has been no change or repentance.

The judge, who continues to always forgive the criminal, becomes as guilty as the criminal.

The foreman becomes an incapable manager and would deserve being replaced because of his poor quality control.

The captain, who would tolerate the willful sleeper, becomes a friend of the enemy and deserves to be court marshaled himself.

Is God an unjust judge? Is God a partner to those who sin against Him? Can God be accused of being on the devil's side? The answer is an emphatic "No!" However, those who preach that grace is "license", makes God guilty of these charges.

God's grace covers our sin by what Jesus did on Calvary.

In our illustrations, we speak of grace as a man. If the Biblical concepts of grace were used, the judge would fulfill the sentence for the criminal.

Biblical grace would have the foreman going in on his own time and making the products right. Biblical grace would be the captain taking the punishment and being shot for the sleeping private.

God sent His only Son, so justice could be done and mercy could be shown. He is not content to be the "justifier" of men. He Himself must be just.

Listen to **Romans 3:24-26**: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare. I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him, which believeth in Jesus."

Grace then forgives us of our sin. It forgives our cursing, our murder, our adultery, our divorce, our lying. But this is only one side of grace. Biblical grace goes further than removing the guilt. It will empower us not to repeat it. We will not again willfully curse, murder, commit adultery, divorce our mate, or lie.

God's grace will provide a way of escape. God's grace will make us over-comers. We are "freed from sin", not "freed to sin". God's grace will make it possible to obey Him. The criminal "that stole will steal no more, but rather labor, working with his own hands the things which are good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (**Ephesians 4:28**)

God's grace will take an Onesimus, who was unprofitable as a worker for Philemon, and empower him to be profitable to Paul.

The soldier who lacked self-discipline is empowered to "watch and be sober". God's grace not only forgave us of our sin, but sent His Spirit into our lives to help us share, to successfully labor, and to be alert against the enemy.

It is time we realize that God's grace is not license. There is no forgiveness without repentance. There is no grace shown to a Christian who willfully sins, neglects his stewardship, or sleeps on duty, except that God will chasten him to bring him to repentance. If this chastening is despised and one does not become a partaker of His Holiness, he will not see God. In fact, we are told that we will fail of the grace of God.

"See then that ye refuse not Him that speaketh from Heaven." (See **Hebrews 12:5, 10, 14, 15, 25**)

We are therefore told that we must not continue in sin that grace may abound (**Romans 6:1**).

It is possible to receive the grace of God in vain. (**II Corinthians 6:1**).

We are cautioned against doing despite to the Spirit of grace by willful disobedience (**Hebrews 10:29**).

It is possible to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness and deny Him who redeems us (**Jude 5**).

Grace then is not license. It is freedom from the guilt of our sin, when we fall. The Christian falls into sin. He does not lay down in it.

A man had two sons. He sent the younger to get the cows and bring them up to the barn. The boy went after them, but his mind got sidetracked as he zigzagged his way through every mud hole he came to. He literally looked for the mud holes, thus failing to bring up the cows.

So the older son was sent. He avoided the mud holes

and went out of his way to sidestep them, because he was ready for a big date. Even though he was careful where he stepped, he still spoiled his shoeshine.

That's the difference between the Christian and the worldling.

Paul wrote Titus about the grace of God. Notice carefully what is revealed here about grace.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (**Titus 2: 11-14**)

Now what does the grace of God that bringeth salvation do?

- × **First:** It teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. And on the contrary, it teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.
- × **Second:** It redeems us from all iniquity and purifies for God a peculiar people who are boiling over with good works.
- × **Third:** It looks for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Grace doesn't remove responsibility to be obedient to God. The Grace of God merely helps us:

- × Learn of Jesus (It teaches us to deny ungodliness).
- × Live for Jesus (Living soberly, righteously, and zealously).
- × Look for Jesus (He is our God and Savior, who gave Himself for us).

Grace then is not a "sin permit". It is true freedom.

Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." But on the other hand, He said, "If you continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (See **John 8:31-36**)

Are you His disciple? Are you truly free? If so, may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.