

## GOD'S GRACE: PARDON PLUS POWER

### I. Ephesians 2:1-10

A. Ephesians 2:1-10 (ESV) should warm your hearts as these verses lead us to the Lord's Table, to the Bread & Cup...

1) **V1-3: 1** *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- (Satan!) 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (NIV: **Objects of God's wrath**) (We were all born sinners, at enmity with God, and bound for eternal damnation...)*

2) **V4-8a: 4** *But God (BUT GOD!), being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, (While we were still sinners, sworn enemies) made us alive together with Christ-- (Because of Jesus' atoning death on the cross and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we were regenerated, born anew, made alive in Christ!) by grace you have been saved-- 6 and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8a For by grace you have been saved through faith. (As the Reformers put it: 'We've been saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone.)'*

3) **V8b-10: 8b** *And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Grace is God's undeserved love, His unmerited favor, that comes with His enabling power. Think pardon + power. Think: clemency + capability. Think: favor + fervency.) 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (The Bread & Cup remind us.)*

B. Mature saints know this: We never graduate from the Gospel. We aren't saved by grace through faith without works and then transformed into His likeness by works without grace. The grace that saved us is the grace that sustains us. We are saved and sanctified--both--by the grace of God. Our works do not sanctify us, our works reveal that sanctification, redemptive transformation, is taking place by grace, the unearned, undeserved, favor of God being worked out inside us by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Let the Bread & Cup remind us of this too! Listen to these affirmations...

1) **John Piper said:** "Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. Grace is the enabling gift of God not to sin. Grace is power, not just pardon."

2) **Charles Spurgeon echoes:** "If He gives you the grace to make you believe, He will give you the grace to live a holy life afterward."

3) **John Newton's Amazing Grace affirms it this way:** "Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; 'Twas grace that brought me safe thus far; and grace will lead me home." (To the Bread & Cup...)

### \* Pray & Officiate Communion...

\* **Philippians 1:2-6 (ESV) takes us home:** **2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3** I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. **6** And I am sure of this, that **He** who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. **(He will do so by grace!)**

### Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

#### Ephesians 2:1-10 (ESV)

**1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- **3** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. **4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- **6** and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7** so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

#### Quote by John Piper

"Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. Grace is the enabling gift of God not to sin. Grace is power, not just pardon."

#### Quote by Charles Spurgeon

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#### Philippians 1:2-6 (ESV)

**2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3** I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. **6** And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

### Bonus Rations for Further Nourishment

What is Grace? - John Piper

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2bz8mnWsbs>

Grace (OT *Khen*, NT *Kharis*) - The Bible Project  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABPVVw\\_aw44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABPVVw_aw44)

The Importance of What We Do in Secret - Derek Thomas - Ligonier Ministries  
<https://www.ligonier.org/blog/importance-what-we-do-secret/>

Before You Tweet Criticism: Six Considerations - John Piper - Desiring God  
<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/before-you-tweet-criticism-six-considerations>

### **Titus 2:11-14 (AMP)**

**11** For the [remarkable, undeserved] grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. **12** It teaches us to reject ungodliness and worldly (immoral) desires, and to live sensible, upright, and godly lives [lives with a purpose that reflect spiritual maturity] in this present age, **13** awaiting and confidently expecting the [fulfillment of our] blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, **14** who [willingly] gave Himself [to be crucified] on our behalf to redeem us and purchase our freedom from all wickedness, and to purify for Himself a chosen and very special people to be His own possession, who are enthusiastic for doing what is good.

### **1 Corinthians 15:10 (ESV)**

**10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

### **2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV)**

**8** And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

### **2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (ESV)**

**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.

### **Romans 8:28-30 (ESV)**

**28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. **29** For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30** And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.

### **2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)**

**18** And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

### **Romans 3:10-18; 23-25a (NLT)**

**10** As the Scriptures say, “No one is righteous--not even one. **11** No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. **12** All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.” **13** “Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are filled with lies.” “Snake venom drips from their lips.” **14** “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” **15** “They rush to commit murder. **16** Destruction and misery always follow them. **17** They don’t know where to find peace.” **18** “They have no fear of God at all.” ...**23** For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. **24** Yet God, in His grace, freely makes us right in His sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty for our sins. **25a** For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed His life, shedding His blood.

### **Romans 5:6-11 (NLT)**

**6** When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. **7** Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. **8** But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. **9** And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God’s condemnation. **10** For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son. **11** So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

### **Romans 6:1-14 (NLT)**

**1** Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of His wonderful grace? **2** Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? **3** Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined Him in His death? **4** For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. **5** Since we have been united with Him in His death, we will also be raised to life as He was. **6** We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. **7** For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. **8** And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with Him. **9** We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and He will never die again. Death no longer has any power over Him. **10** When He died, He died once to break the power of sin. But now that He lives, He lives for the glory of God. **11** So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. **12** Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. **13** Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. **14** Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God’s grace.

**JUSTICE: When you get what you deserve...**

**MERCY: When you don't get what you deserve...**

**GRACE: When you get what you don't deserve...**

**Quote by Benjamin B. Warfield**

"Grace is free sovereign favor to the ill-deserving."

**Quote by Harry Ironside**

"Grace is the very opposite of merit... Grace is not only undeserved favor, but it is favor, shown to the one who has deserved the very opposite."

**Quote by Frederick Buechner**

"Grace is something you can never get but can only be given. There's no way to earn it or deserve it or bring about anymore than you can deserve the taste of raspberries and cream or earn good looks."

**Quote by J.I. Packer**

"I am graven on the palms of His hands. I am never out of His mind. All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me. I know Him, because He first knew me, and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, One who loves me; and there is no moment when His eye is off me, or His attention distracted for me, and no moment, therefore, when His care falters."

**Quote by Charles Spurgeon**

"Grace puts its hand on the boasting mouth, and shuts it once for all."

**Quote by Jonathan Edwards**

"Grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected."

**Quote by D.L. Moody**

"A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him for the next 6 months, nor can he inhale sufficient air into his lungs with one breath to sustain life for a week to come. We are permitted to draw upon God's store of grace from day to day as we need it."

**Quote by Jerry Bridges**

"Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace."

**Quote by Jerry Bridges**

"Grace expresses two complementary thoughts: God's unmerited favor to us through Christ, and God's divine assistance to us through the Holy Spirit."

**Quote by C.S. Lewis**

“The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us.”

### **The Grace of God, His Unmerited Favor**

When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time, that is a wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award. But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award--yet receives such a gift anyway--that is a good picture of God's unmerited favor. This is what we mean when we talk about the grace of God.

- G.W. Knight, Clip-Art Features for Church Newsletters, p. 53.

### **On Law & Grace**

**(Author Unknown)**

A husband and wife didn't really love each other. The man was very demanding, so much so that he prepared a list of rules and regulations for his wife to follow. He insisted that she read them over every day and obey them to the letter. Among other things, his "do's and don'ts" indicated such details as what time she had to get up in the morning, when his breakfast should be served, and how the housework should be done. After several long years, the husband died. As time passed, the woman fell in love with another man, one who dearly loved her. Soon they were married. This husband did everything he could to make his new wife happy, continually showering her with tokens of his appreciation. One day as he was cleaning house, she found tucked away in a drawer the list of commands her first husband had drawn up for her. As she looked it over, it dawned on her that even though her present husband hadn't given her any kind of list, she was doing everything her first husband's list required anyway. She realized she was so devoted to this man that her deepest desire was to please him out of love, not obligation.

### **It's A Lot Better Pitcher**

During the late 1800s English evangelist Henry Moorhouse made several trips to America to preach. On one of these occasions, he was taking a walk through a poor section of the city when he noticed a small boy coming out of a store with a pitcher of milk. Just then, the boy slipped and fell, breaking the pitcher and spilling the milk all over the sidewalk. Moorhouse rushed to the youngster's side and found him unhurt but terrified. "My mamma'll whip me!" he cried. The preacher suggested that they try to put the pitcher back together, but the pieces of glass would not stay together. The boy kept crying. Finally Moorhouse picked up the youngster and carried him to a nearby store where the preacher purchased a new pitcher. Then he returned to the dairy store and had the pitcher washed and filled with milk. With that done, he carried both the boy and the pitcher home. Putting the youngster down on his front porch, Moorhouse handed him the pitcher and asked, "Now will your mama whip you?" A wide smile spread upon his tear-stained face, "Aw, no sir, 'cause it's lot better pitcher than we had before."

- Source Unknown

## **What Is Grace?**

by R.C. Sproul

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-grace/>

A number of decades ago at the Ligonier Valley Study Center, we sent out a Thanksgiving card with this simple statement: *“The essence of theology is grace; the essence of Christian ethics is gratitude.”* In all the debates about our role versus God’s role in sanctification--our growth in holiness--we’d stay on the right track if we’d remember this grace-gratitude dynamic. The more we understand how kind God has been to us and the more we are overcome by His mercy, the more we are inclined to love Him and to serve Him.

Yet we can’t get the grace-gratitude dynamic right if we aren’t clear on what grace means. What is grace? The catechisms many of us learned as children give us the answer: “Grace is the unmerited favor of God.” The first thing that we understand about grace is what it’s not--it’s not something we merit. In fact, if that is all we ever understand about grace, I’m sure God will rejoice that we know His grace is unmerited. So, here’s our working definition of grace--it is *unmerit*.

Paul’s epistle to the Romans sheds light on what we mean when we say that grace is unmerit. In 1:18–3:20, the Apostle explains that on the final day, for the first time in our lives, we will be judged in total perfection, in total fairness, in absolute righteousness. Thus, every mouth will be stopped when we stand before the tribunal of God. This should provoke fear in the hearts of fallen people, as condemnation is the only possible sentence for sinful men and women: *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (3:23).

But those who trust in Christ Jesus have hope, for if we are in Him by faith, we have been *“justified freely by His grace.”* Note that justification is accomplished not by obligation, but freely through grace on account of the redemption purchased by Jesus alone. There’s no room for boasting, for we are justified not by our works but by grace alone through faith alone. Paul goes on to cite Abraham as the preeminent example of one who was justified by faith alone and therefore free from God’s sentence of condemnation. If the basis for Abraham’s salvation, his justification, was something that Abraham did—some good deed, some meritorious service that he performed, some obligation that he performed--if it were on the basis of works, Paul says, he would have had something about which to boast. But Abraham had no such merit. All he had was faith, and that faith itself was a gift: *“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”* (4:3; see [Eph. 2:8–10](#)).

[Romans 4:4–8](#) is a key passage here:

Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom

God counts righteousness apart from works: *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”*

That’s grace. Paul couldn’t say it any other way. To him who works, it’s debt; if you merit something, it means that someone is obligated to pay you. If I hire you as an employee and promise to pay you one hundred dollars if you work eight hours, I must pay you for working the eight hours. I’m not doing you a favor or giving you grace. You’ve earned your pay. You’ve fulfilled the contract, and I’m morally obliged to give you your wages.

With respect to the Lord, we are debtors who cannot pay. That’s why the Bible speaks of redemption in economic language--we were bought with a price ([1 Cor. 6:20](#)). Only someone else--Christ--can pay our debt. That’s grace. It’s not our good works that secure our rescue but only the works of Christ. It’s His merit, not ours. We don’t merit anything. He grants us His merit by grace, and we receive it only by faith. The essence of grace is its voluntary free bestowal. As soon as it’s a requirement, it’s no longer grace.

Grace should never cease to amaze us. God has an absolute, pure, holy standard of justice. That’s why we cling with all our might to the merit of Jesus Christ. He alone has the merit to satisfy the demands of God’s justice, and He gives it freely to us. We haven’t merited it. There’s nothing in us that elicits the Lord’s favor that leads to our justification. It’s pure grace.

And the more we understand what God has done for us as sinners, the more willing we are to do whatever He requires. The great teachers of the church say the first point of genuine sanctification is an increasing awareness of our own sinfulness. With that comes, at the same time, an increasing awareness of God’s grace. And with that, again, increasing love and increasing willingness to obey Him.

When we truly understand grace--when we see that God only owes us wrath but has provided Christ’s merit to cover our demerit--then everything changes. The Christian motivation for ethics is not merely to obey some abstract law or a list of rules; rather, our response is provoked by gratitude. Jesus understood that when He said, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”* If I may have the liberty to paraphrase: *“Keep My commandments not because you want to be just, but because you love Me.”* A true understanding of grace--of God’s unmerited favor--always provokes a life of gratitude and obedience.

- R.C. Sproul, Ligonier Ministries, First published in *Tabletalk Magazine*, March 1, 2015.