

THE EFFECT OF GOD'S GRACE

I. 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

A. If you were told by your doctor that you had a terminal disease and you had a couple months to live, what would be the effect of such news? But then shortly thereafter you hear of a miracle drug discovery, they give you an injection, and instantly you're cured--what would be the effect of that happening to you?

B. Or what if you were falsely accused and found guilty of a capital offense while visiting a foreign nation and they sentenced you to death. But just before your execution, a stay is ordered by the authorities, and you're set free instead. So what would be the effect of receiving your release and having your life spared?

C. Or what if you were kidnapped by terrorists, taken away to their hidden camp, and pressed into slavery--what would be the effect of such a horrendous event? But then in the midst of your enslavement a rescue team from your home nation invades and sets you free from captivity. What would be the effect of having been set free?

D. 1 Corinthians 15 is a very powerful chapter in the Bible. We rightly call 1 Corinthians 13 *The Love Chapter*. 1 Corinthians 15 can certainly be called *The Resurrection Chapter*. It begins with a reiteration of what the Gospel is, shucked down to the cob. Paul writes to us a treatise on the resurrection, one of the key doctrines of Christianity. But as he validates the hope of resurrection, Paul writes to us about the effect of God's Grace, on him personally, but hopefully on us as well. Our focus this morning is on the effect of this Gospel of Grace, or at least what it should be...

E. 1 Corinthians 15:1-11...

1) **V1-2** "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain." (**Believing in vain, having faith without substance, an acknowledgment of facts that may reside between the ears but not a faith that resides down inside the heart.**)

2) **V3-9** "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas (**Simon Peter**), then to the twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James (**Jesus' unbelieving brother**), then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." (**Many eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ!**)

3) **V10-11** "But by the grace of God (**By the unwarranted, unearned, undeserved, love and favor 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. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed." (**Key phrase: "...and His grace toward me was not in vain."** (**NIV:** "...and His grace to me was not without effect." **NCV:** "...and His grace to me was not wasted." **J.B. Phillips:** "The grace He gave me has not proved a barren gift." **Amplified:** "...and His grace toward me was not [found to be] for nothing (fruitless and without effect)."

F. God's Grace was not in vain or without effect toward Paul and I pray it's not in vain or without effect toward us either! (If grace is without effect, we must ask if we truly have experienced God's grace.)

G. What would've grace looked like if Paul had received it in vain? If such a thing is possible, what would this apostle have been like? For one, he would've remained Saul! He would have remained a religious zealot, a Jewish terrorist, and thousands of Christians would have been driven from their homes, imprisoned or killed! Further, someone else would have written the epistles that became the great doctrines of our faith! Those are just a few things...

H. What if the woman caught in adultery received Jesus' mercy in vain? How many more men would she have cheated with? What if the Samaritan woman at the Sychar well had spurned the Messiah's revelation? How many more husbands would she have had--six or seven? If Jesus had ignored Zacchaeus up in the sycamore tree would he have died a wealthy but hated man, one who'd gained the whole world but lost his soul? If Nicodemus had rejected Jesus' words in John 3:16, would someone else have had the privilege of preparing our Lord's body for burial? If James had not been granted the grace of seeing Jesus after the resurrection would he have entered hell as the skeptical brother who failed to receive the Messiah, his elder brother? What about the Philippian jailer--would he've gone through with suicide, leaving a widow and her kids in disgrace?

I. So of course this question must find its way around to you--has His grace toward you been in vain or without effect or fruitless? Is there Holy Spirit activity stirring deep inside? Is there a fleshing out of actions that are the results of spiritual transformation caused by grace? Are there grace-produced outcomes and evidences?

Regeneration can't lead to further degeneration can it?! Is there such a thing Biblically as a regenerated person who continues to be a degenerate? Heavens No!

J. Ephesians 5:8-11 (Amplified Version) is the Word of the Lord for us today. It tells us the effect grace should have. Take it to heart and take it home today: *"For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of Light [lead the lives of those native-born to the Light]. For the fruit (the effect, the product) of the Light or the Spirit [consists] in every form of kindly goodness, uprightness of heart, and trueness of life. And try to learn [in your experience] what is pleasing to the Lord [let your lives be constant proofs of what is most acceptable to Him]. Take no part in and have no fellowship with the fruitless deeds and enterprises of darkness, but instead [let your lives be so in contrast as to] expose and reprove and convict them."* **(May the Lord enable us by His grace!)**

* Close with Prayer...

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:1-11 \(ESV\)](#)

1 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, **2** and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. **3** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, **4** that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, **5** and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. **6** Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. **7** Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. **8** Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me. **9** For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **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. **11** Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

[Ephesians 5:8-11 \(Amplified\)](#)

8 For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of Light [lead the lives of those native-born to the Light]. **9** For the fruit (the effect, the product) of the Light or the Spirit [consists] in every form of kindly goodness, uprightness of heart, and trueness of life. **10** And try to learn [in your experience] what is pleasing to the Lord [let your lives be constant proofs of what is most acceptable to Him]. **11** Take no part in and have no fellowship with the fruitless deeds and enterprises of darkness, but instead [let your lives be so in contrast as to] expose and reprove and convict them.

[Film Clips & Other Links](#)

"Living Waters" - Keith & Kristyn Getty

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

"Healing in Your Hands" - Christy Nockels

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sG94EKGDCU>

"The Lord's My Shepherd" - Stuart Townend

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN4tPkX0MG0>

"It Is Well With My Soul" - Audrey Assad

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5o9mP2V0>

[Bonus Stuff](#)

[Matthew 3:7-12 \(ESV\)](#)

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **8** Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. **9** And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. **10** Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **11** "I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. **12** His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

Luke 7:36-50 (NLT)

36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. **37** When a certain immoral woman from that city heard He was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. **38** Then she knelt behind Him at His feet, weeping. Her tears fell on His feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing His feet and putting perfume on them. **39** When the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this Man were a prophet, He would know what kind of woman is touching Him. She's a sinner!" **40** Then Jesus answered his thoughts. "Simon," He said to the Pharisee, "I have something to say to you." "Go ahead, Teacher," Simon replied. **41** Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people--500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. **42** But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?" **43** Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt." "That's right," Jesus said. **44** Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer Me water to wash the dust from My feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. **45** You didn't greet Me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing My feet. **46** You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint My head, but she has anointed My feet with rare perfume. **47** "I tell you, her sins--and they are many--have been forgiven, so she has shown Me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." **48** Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." **49** The men at the table said among themselves, "Who is this Man, that He goes around forgiving sins?" **50** And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Theological Note on 1 Corinthians 15:9-10

The Life Application Study Bible

9 For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church. 10 But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out His special favor on me--and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by His grace. - 1 Corinthians 9-10 (NLT)

15:9, 10: As a zealous Pharisee, Paul had been an enemy of the Christian church--even to the point of capturing and persecuting believers (see Acts 9-1-3). Thus, he felt unworthy to be called an apostle of Christ. Though undoubtedly the most influential of the apostles, Paul was deeply humble. He knew that he had worked hard and accomplished much but only because God had poured kindness and grace upon him. True humility is not convincing yourself that you are worthless but recognizing God's work in you. It is having God's perspective on who you are and acknowledging His grace in developing your abilities.

15:10: Paul wrote of working harder than the other apostles. This was not an arrogant boast, because he knew that his power came from God and that it really didn't matter who worked hardest. Because of his prominent position as a Pharisee, Paul's conversion made him the object of even greater persecution than the other apostles; thus, he had to work harder to preach the same message.

- Theological Note on 1 Corinthians 15:9-10, *The Life Application Study Bible*, Tyndale, P. 2553.

Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon

"If He gives you the grace to make you believe, He will give you the grace to live a holy life afterward."

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 John Newton

"I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I hope to be. But still, I am not what I used to be. And by the grace of God, I am what I am."

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."

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 H. Spurgeon

"The grace that does not make a man better than others is a worthless counterfeit. Christ saves His people, not IN their sins, but FROM their sins. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

Quote by William Tyndale

"By grace I understand the favor of God, and also the gifts and working of His Spirit in us; as love, kindness, patience, obedience, mercifulness, despising of worldly things, peace, concord, and such like."

Quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ."

Quote by Tim Keller

"If a person has grasped the meaning of God's grace in his heart, he will do justice. If he doesn't live justly, then he may say with his lips that he is grateful for God's grace, but in his heart he is far from Him. If he doesn't care about the poor, it reveals that at best he doesn't understand the grace he has experienced, and at worst he has not really encountered the saving mercy of God. Grace should make you just."

Quote by Mike Mazzalongo

You know, I can always tell the difference between those people who have been educated in the doctrine of grace and those who have truly experienced the power of God's grace in their lives... Those who have been indoctrinated know the church traditions and can spout the Christian lingo, but there's no "fire in the belly." They don't volunteer, they don't try to know or help others and they are not usually generous when it comes to giving. They think that Christianity is about coming to church on Sundays. They do not realize that attending worship is not serving the Lord; worship and Bible study are times when the Lord is serving us through His word and Spirit...Those who have truly been impacted by God's grace, on the other hand show it by their desire to serve, work, give and sacrifice. These brethren may not say much but their work and their contribution say it all, to the world, to the Church and to the Lord. Jesus said that those who are forgiven little, love little and those who are forgiven much, love much (Luke 7:47).

- Mike Mazzalongo, Sermon Series titled, "Grace for Beginners." To see more, go to: <https://bibletalk.tv/the-impact-of-grace>

Quote by Jerry Bridges

"Most of us probably entertain either of these attitudes on different days. On a good day (as we perceive it), we tend toward self-righteous Pharisaism. On a not-so-good day, we allow ourselves to wallow in a sense of failure and guilt. Either way we've moved away from the gospel of God's grace, trying to relate to God directly on the basis of our performance rather than through Christ."

- Jerry Bridges, *Holiness Day by Day: Transformational Thoughts for Your Spiritual Journey*.

Quote by George Whitefield

"I was honored today with having a few stones, dirt, rotten eggs, and pieces of a dead cat thrown at me."