

GRATITUDE FOR GOD'S GRACE – EPHESIANS 2:1-10

INTRODUCTION

1. The Bible tells us “All things are yours” if you belong to Christ and to God (**1 Cor. 3:21-23**).
2. Here in our passage Paul speaks of the greatest gift God gives, which is His grace in Christ (**Eph. 2:8-10**).
3. God's grace and blessings are enjoyed by the saints in the past, present, and future.
4. How grateful are we for God's grace?

DISCUSSION

I. THE GRACE OF GOD

- A. Our passage reminds us of the importance of God's grace.
- B. Grace is one of the most important topics in all of Scripture.
- C. Like truth, justice, love, and holiness, grace is part and parcel of God's nature (**Exod. 34:6-7; Ps. 86:15; 116:5; John 1:14-18**).
- D. When most Christians hear the word grace, the definition that most likely springs to mind is that of “unmerited” or “undeserved” favor.
 - i. We can do nothing to earn or deserve God's favor in this life.
 - ii. But the fact that we have all rejected His love by sinning makes it even more true (**Eph. 2:1-3, 5; Rom. 3:23; 6:23**).
- E. Despite our sin and rebellion, God graciously moved to save us and to reconcile us through the death and resurrection of Jesus (**Eph. 2:5-8; Titus 3:3-7**).
- F. God's grace is unmerited, but costly.
- G. And amazingly, God's grace is offered freely to all as a gift (**Eph. 2:5, 8-9**).
- H. His grace is superabundant and available to all who would accept it (**John 3:16; 1:12, 16; Matt. 11:28-30**).
- I. But just because God's grace is freely offered does not mean that it is unconditional.
- J. In Paul's day and even in ours, giving gifts (which is what grace is) was designed to create and nurture relationships.
- K. In Paul's culture, grace obligated the recipient of grace to respond with gratitude, loyalty, and praise to the giver (**1 Cor. 15:57; Rom. 6:17; Eph. 1:6**).
- L. When we reflect on the nature of God's grace, the only proper response is gratitude, loyalty, obedience, and love (**Eph. 2:4-6, 8-10; Gal. 5:6; Titus 2:11-14**).

II. THE GIFTS OF GOD'S GRACE

- A. But perhaps this idea of an expectation of return doesn't sit well with our modern western mindset.
- B. Maybe this sounds transactional to us, like some kind of “quid pro quo” but that isn't the case.
- C. God's gift doesn't make any sense in those terms.
- D. After all, what do sinful humans have to offer a holy, just, eternal God (**Acts 17:24-28; Rom. 5:6-8**)?
- E. What God does for us in Christ is so amazing and wonderful we can do nothing to earn, deserve, or pay Him back.
- F. Think about it.
- G. God's grace brings life, salvation, hope, and reconciliation (**Eph. 2:1-6; Titus 2:11; 1 Pet. 1:3-4**).
 - i. We deserve God's wrath and eternal damnation.
 - ii. But God offers us a way to escape His wrath, He rescues us in Jesus!

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- H. God's grace transforms our identity (**Eph. 2:1-3; 1:5-6; 2:11-22**).
 - i. We were children of wrath, enslaved to sin, under the dominion of Satan and death.
 - ii. But in Christ, God raises us up, and makes us His children, joint heirs with Christ (**1 Cor. 15:10**).
- I. God's grace also transforms us and empowers us to live differently (**Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:11-14; Gal. 5:6**).
 - i. God's grace doesn't leave us where we are.
 - ii. But in Christ, He makes us a new person and equips us to deny ungodliness and to live in peace with Him and others.
 - iii. He is actively working and helping us through His word, His church, His Spirit, His angels (**2 Tim. 3:16-17; Gal. 6; 1 Cor. 5, 12; Heb. 1:14; Rom. 8**).
- J. When we start to understand how great God's grace is and how much He is doing for us in Christ, we cannot help but be grateful.

III. GRATITUDE FOR GOD'S GRACE

- A. Gratitude for God's grace is not just a one-time thing, but as we have seen, it is a way of life.
- B. When we stop being grateful for God's grace we are in danger (**Rom. 1:21-32**).
- C. But if we remember and remind each other about the goodness and the gifts of God's grace, we should be moved with a profound sense of gratitude.
- D. Gratitude can deepen our relationship with God and transform our perspective (**Eph. 2:8; Col. 3:16-17; Phil. 4:6-7**).
 - i. Think about the goodness of our salvation (**2 Cor. 9:14; John 3:16; Eph. 2:8**).
 - ii. Think about how everything we have is by God's grace (**Acts 17:24-28**).
 - iii. We should see each day as a blessing and long for Him and long to please Him.
- E. Gratitude can energize our obedience, service, and love for God (**1 Pet. 4:10; 2 Cor. 5:14-15**).
 - i. Think about where you were without God and where you are with Him (**Eph. 2:1-7; Titus 3:1-3; 2 Pet. 2:22**).
 - ii. Gratitude for God's grace compels us to love Him and serve others as Christ has done for us (**Luke 7:47; 1 Cor. 15:8-10; 9:19-23**).
- F. Gratitude glorifies God who has graciously saved us in Jesus (**Eph. 2:7-10; 2 Cor. 4:15**).
 - i. When we let God's grace transform our hearts and lives, we point others to Him (**Matt. 5:13-16**).
 - ii. When we live a life characterized by gratitude for Jesus, we become witnesses of His grace (**2 Cor. 3:1-3**).
- G. Have you been letting gratitude for God shape your life?

CONCLUSION

1. God's grace in Christ is the greatest gift we can ever have.
2. Through Him we have salvation, transformation, hope, and a new identity (**Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-28**).
3. As Paul said so long ago, by God's grace in Christ we have all things (**1 Cor. 3:21-23**).
4. We should be grateful to God for His incredible gift.
5. And this is not just a feeling but a choice to give thanks and to live in gratitude (**1 Thess. 5:18**).
6. May we reflect on the nature and gifts of God's grace and let it move us to honor and love Him with all our hearts each and every day.