

“By God’s Grace” – part 1

Life Vision Statement

January 7, 2024

DAY 1: What is grace?

1. All of Paul’s epistles and both of Peter’s epistles begin with the same theme.

Romans 1:7 To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. All of Paul’s epistles end with the same theme.

Romans 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

3. The predominant New Testament theme is grace.

4. What is grace? Grace has several different nuances of meaning:

- a. Undeserved favor, more than just acceptance!
- b. God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense (G.R.A.C.E.)
- c. God establishes a covenant with us that He will not break.
- d. God is for us.

5. Old Testament words for grace are *hen* and *hesed*. *Hen* carries the idea of favor that is undeserved. *Hesed* is usually translated lovingkindness or mercy. Most of the time this is associated with God’s covenant that He makes with people.

*Jeremiah 31:3 “I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore, with lovingkindness (*hesed*) have I drawn you.”*

Deuteronomy 7:12 “The Lord your God shall keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers.”

6. The predominant word for grace in the New Testament is *charis*. It has a strong joy component to it. It is true that God’s show favor to us, but He does so joyfully!

Ephesians 2:7 ...the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

7. Grace is how anyone gets saved.

Ephesians 2:8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—⁹ not from works, so that no one can boast.

8. What strikes you about grace?

DAY 2: Grace: God is for us!

1. God is for us.

Romans 8:31 If God is for us, who can be against us?

- a. He is for us even though we were against Him, and sometimes act against Him!
- b. He is for us, not just in theory, but in action.
- c. He is for us even when our sin abounds!

Romans 5:20 Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

2. When we deal with guilt and shame, it is easy to mope, “hang our head in shame,” and beat ourselves up. We need never do any of that!!! Why?

Grace trumps brokenness.

3. The New Testament overwhelmingly associates grace with Jesus Christ, either directly or by implication, as the executor of God’s grace!

Romans 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

John 1:17 Grace ... came by Jesus Christ.

4. It is the incarnate Son of God that God puts into effect His being for us.

- a. He is for us,
- b. He reconciles us to Himself,
- c. He brings us over to His side to be for Him.

5. Thus, we can say that Jesus Christ means grace and grace means Jesus Christ.

6. The birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrate not just that God is gracious, but are acts of graciousness!

7. What strikes you from today’s writing?

DAY 3: Grace is given freely!

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

1. Grace is the gift with no strings attached!
2. God is not obligated to give us grace or be gracious.
3. What we deserved was punishment. We were sinners, and are sinners irretrievably and inexcusably. God *should* be against us.
4. He should have sent a judge and destroyer. Instead He came to save us by letting Him be judged and destroyed because of our sin!
5. Grace came by turning to man by undertaking the responsibility for the enmity against Him.
6. Grace would be impossible without Jesus having satisfied the holiness of God in His obedient self-offering.
7. God's grace takes upon Himself the responsibility for our past, our present and our future!

Colossians 2:6 As therefore you received Christ Jesus, so live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8. Western Christianity affirms we are saved by grace, but tends to make our growth in Christ about our effort. While we are not to be passive in our growth, our growth still depends on God's grace moving forward!

We got into the faith by grace.

We go in the faith by grace.

9. What strikes you about today's writing?

DAY 4: Grace defines me.

1. Our secular culture makes a great deal about identity. Here are some of the incessant drumbeats you hear. “Our identity is:

- a. Our desires,
- b. Our sexual desires,
- c. Our feelings.
- d. Our sexual desires met,
- e. Our race,
- f. Our gender,
- g. Our heritage.

2. In my generation, the baby-boomers, we were told that our identity had to do with our:

- a. Income,
- b. Possessions,
- c. Professional status,
- d. Economic status,
- e. Career success,
- f. Retiring early,
- g. Epic vacations,
- h. What you drove, what you wore, where you lived,
- i. House size.

3. All of them combined are not big enough to satisfy the human heart.

*1 Corinthians 15:10 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, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*

4. Grace is the great identifier of every Christian. That runs deeper than any status, accomplishment, award, heritage, background, or anything else!!!

5. Grace continues to identify you, no matter your circumstances, bank account, what others think of you, or even what you think of you!!

What strikes you from today’s writing?

DAY 5: You made the team!

1. When I was growing up, we had tryouts to see if we could make the team. We were nervous, hoping to do our best and get selected to be on the team. There was exhilaration when the coach called out the names of the fellows who made the team!

2. Then came several months of practices before the games started. Everyone worked hard to impress the coaches. Why? We all wanted to be starters, to be FIRST teamers.

3. In the Christian life, ALL of God's people "made the team" WITHOUT tryouts! And all of God's people are considered FIRST teamers by our head coach, God the Father!

4. Not only are we all first-teamers, but God hand-made what He wants each of us to do!

*Ephesians 2:8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—⁹ not from works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which **God prepared ahead of time** for us to do.*

5. In Ephesians 4, Paul tells us that each of us has a role to play in moving God's kingdom forward. You have a role to play!

*Ephesians 4:7 Now **grace** was given to **each one of us** according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

*Ephesians 4:11 And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip **the saints for the work of ministry**, to build up the body of Christ...*

6. The word "saints" does not mean "excelling" Christians. "Saints" is the New Testament word for every Christian. It means, "the set apart people," set apart by God to do the work of ministry!

a. You matter!

b. You "qualified"!

c. You "made the team"

7. What strikes you from today's writing?