

God's Mercy and Grace

TRINITARIAN GRACE

Ephesians 1:3-14

We worship one God in the trinity, or tri-unity, of his sacred Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and adore each as the God of all grace by whom we are saved.

THE BIBLE CLEARLY TEACHES THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY. I have read numerous, excellent theological works on the trinity; but I have never read anything that states the doctrine more simply and clearly than I John 5:7 - "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." God the Father is God (Rom. 1:7). God the Son is God (Heb. 1:8). God the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). Yet, there is but one God (Deut. 6:4). The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead invisible (John 1:18). The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead revealed (Col. 2:9). The Spirit is all the fulness of the Godhead acting immediately upon the creature (I Cor. 2:9-10). We worship the triune God.

ALL THREE PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD ARE EQUALLY GRACIOUS. This is what Paul shows us in Ephesians 1:3-14. As the three Persons of the Godhead are equal in divinity but distinct in personality, so all three Persons in the Godhead are equal in grace but distinct in the operations of grace. God the Father is the Fountain of Grace (Eph. 1:3-6). God the Son is the Mediator of Grace (Eph. 1:7-12). God the Holy Spirit is the Administrator of Grace (Eph. 1:13-14).

NO DOCTRINE IN THE BIBLE MORE FORCIBLY INSPIRES UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS THAN THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY. Every thought about the triune God should stimulate in us a fervent desire that we may be one even as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are one (John 17:20-22). "Who can think of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as one - one in nature, one in love, one in purpose - and not hope for the day when the intercessory prayer of Christ will be answered in the union of all his followers?" (J. M. Pendleton). Let us earnestly devote ourselves, as the sons and daughters of the triune God, to unity. Ch, that we might be one in purpose, seeking the glory of God, one in labor, serving the cause of Christ, and one in heart, loving one another with pure hearts fervently!

Don Fortner

THE MERCY OF GOD

"O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 136:1). Mercy is an essential attribute of the glorious God of Scripture which He has been pleased to express to a multitude of sinners. If we understand mercy to be God withholding what we justly deserve, then we can easily see the vast extent of His kindness. Someone has said "anything this side of hell is mercy," and how true that is! No wonder the Psalmist declared, "His tender mercies are over all" (Psalm 145:9). Let us briefly look at three aspects of God's mercy:

1. The Motive for God's Mercy. God shows saving mercy to sinful creatures to exalt and glorify Himself. There is not anything a sinner can say, think, or do to merit God's favor. His mercy flows freely; it is unmerited and totally undeserved.
2. The Manner of God's Mercy. The exercise of God's mercy is always regulated by His sovereign will and pleasure. God is not influenced by anything other than that which pleases Him. Therefore He said to Moses, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Exodus 33:19). The Lord is not obligated to show His mercy on you or me. If He does bestow mercy on us and save our sinful souls, all the glory goes to Him, for salvation is a work which only God can perform. If He does not bestow mercy on us, and chooses rather to leave us in our spiritual darkness, this is His privilege. Then we will perish and forevermore suffer His wrath, which we so justly deserve, and His justice will be glorified. The granting of mercy is governed solely by God's free and sovereign pleasure.
3. The Message of God's Mercy. God's mercy is only dispensed in, through, and by the Lord Jesus Christ. Outside of Him, God is a consuming fire set to destroy all workers of iniquity. But because of the personal worth and work of God's Son, the Lord can righteously express tender mercies toward the guilty. The message of God's mercy is that there is forgiveness and eternal life for every sinner who comes to God through Jesus Christ. Christ died for sinners, and all who come seeking mercy from Him, will receive it.

Pastor Jim Byrd

GRACE AND TRUTH CAME BY JESUS CHRIST

Grace and truth are fitly and inseparably joined together. We cannot have grace without truth, nor truth without grace. Those who reject grace, reject truth; and those who reject truth, reject grace. "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). The grace which saves the sinner is not mere pity and sentiment such as we find in the creature. The grace which saves sinners is established on the principles of an honored law and a satisfied justice (Rom. 3:23-26). Grace does not ignore the law nor set aside its requirements. No! It establishes the law (Rom. 3:31). Grace establishes the law because it has a Substitute who perfectly fulfilled the law and endured the death penalty for all who believe, in order that God may be both just and justifier.

Law manifests what is in men--sin!
Grace manifests what is in God--love!
Law demands righteousness from men!
Grace brings righteousness to men!
Law sentences men to death!
Grace brings dead men to life!
Law speaks of what I must do!
Grace tells what Christ has done!
Law gives a knowledge of sin!
Grace puts away sin!

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be."

Pastor Henry Mahan

SALVATION BY GRACE

Salvation is wholly of grace; not only undeserved, but undesired by us, till He is pleased to awaken us to a sense of our need of it. And then we find everything prepared that our wants require, or our wishes conceive; yea, that he has done exceedingly beyond what we could either ask or think. Salvation is wholly of the Lord, and bears those signatures of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, which distinguish all his works from the puny imitations of men. It is every way worthy of Himself, a great, a free, a full, a sure salvation. It is great, whether we consider the objects, miserable and hell-deserving sinners; the end, the restoration of such alienated creatures to his image and favor, to immortal life and happiness; or the means, the incarnation, humiliation,

sufferings, and death of his beloved Son. It is free, without exception of persons, or cases, without any conditions or qualifications, but such as he himself performs in them, and bestows upon them.

John Newton

THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

"The God of all grace," transcends all human thought and conception. He is not the God of some of the grace we enjoy, but of all the grace we have experienced and shall experience, all the way home to glory. This sweeps out of our way all thought of human merit, creature effort, or man's cooperation in the work of salvation. Satan would have us believe that God is gracious only while we are good and the God of Grace to us when we believe, repent, and pray. What a perversion of truth! If God were not gracious, aye, "all grace" to me at all times, hell would certainly be mine. Unbelief, rebelliousness, and prayerlessness are great plagues to me. In the face of all His care and attention to me, I am forgetful and indifferent and unmindful of Him frequently.

Thomas Bradbury

WHERE SIN DID ABOUND, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND (Romans 5:20)

How far we fell in the first Adam, I do not know and cannot tell. I know neither the height of his original righteousness and fellowship with God, nor the depth of his exceeding sinfulness, wretchedness, and separation from God. It seems that we learn of righteousness and sinfulness simultaneously. You can not see more of the one without seeing more of the other, and presently while in this flesh, we know very little of either. I imagine that when we come to "know as we are known," we shall be greatly surprised. But however that may be, I am sure of this: however great our loss in the first Adam, our gain in the last Adam is much, much greater. For "where sin did abound, GRACE did much more abound." GRACE which comes by the last Adam, does not merely make up our terrible loss -- He pays our debt and makes us rich! He gives the old guilty, believing sinner a Divine nature, Divine righteousness, and eternal glory as sons and daughters. He not only takes away sin and the curse from us, but "MUCH MORE!"

GRACE -- THE GREAT LEVELER

Grace links believers in a common brotherhood. Grace makes the rich man give his hand to the poor and confess a heavenly relationship. Grace constrains the intellectual, the learned, the professional to stoop from their dignity to take hold of the ignorant and unlettered and call them brothers. Grace weaves the threads of our separate individualities into one undivided family. Let the gospel be really felt in the heart and it will destroy selfishness, pride, and arrogance. We need only the gospel thoroughly preached to bring about "liberty, equality, and fraternity" in the highest and best sense of these words.

Charles H. Spurgeon

GRACE

People talk of grace as if it were something they could use, and not an influence having a power over them. Grace is something, not which I improve, but which improves me, employs me, and works on me. Let people talk as they will about universal grace -- it is all nonsense. There is no such thing, nor can there be. They may talk correctly of universal blessing, because we see that the natural gifts of God are scattered everywhere, more or less; and men may receive them or reject them.

It is not so, however, with grace. Men cannot take the grace of God and employ it in turning themselves from darkness to light. The light does not come to the darkness and say, "Use me," but the light comes and drives the darkness away. Life does not come to the dead man and say, "Use me to be restored to life." The Spiritual influence does not come to the dry bones and say, "Use this power to clothe yourselves with flesh," but it clothes them with flesh and the work is done.

Grace is a thing which comes and exercises an influence on us.

The sovereign will of God alone
Creates us heirs of grace;

Born in the image of His Son,
A new-created race.

Charles H. Spurgeon

FREE INDEED

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Someone said, "We are most free when we are most His, and we never stand so straight as when we bow to Him." The greatest freedom any person can enjoy is to be the Lord's servant. To know and to submit to His sovereignty, to love and to receive His covenant mercies, to believe and rest in His blood and righteousness, to have and to walk in His precious promises, to trust and to accept His divine providence and His will for me, to lay hold of, and to rejoice in, His good hope through grace is to be free indeed! God is true! All things are of Him, through Him, in Him, and for His glory. All things are given to the Son of God, and all things are revealed to us by Him. Christ is the truth! To know Him is to know the truth, to be in Him is to be in the truth, to have Him is to have the truth, to walk in Him is to walk in the truth and to be SET FREE -- free from the errors and fables of men, free from the traditions and ceremonies of religion, free from rituals and superstitions, free from the curse of the law, free to come boldly to the throne of grace in Christ and find mercy and grace!

Pastor Henry Mahan

THE BEST FRIEND YOU CAN HAVE

The best friend you can have on this earth is one who will tell you the truth; one who will not help make you comfortable in a refuge of lies; one who speaks the truth to you in love; one who will continue to do so though you may not appreciate his doing so. May I be such a friend that the blood of others be not on my hands.

Donnie Bell

PURE AND FREE GRACE

Everyone likes purity. They also like free things. If you are someone who enjoys pure and free things, listen carefully, and I will tell you of the purest, freest thing I know of.

The Grace of God, it is PURE and FREE! What do I mean? That God's grace is born in the heart of God Himself, that it is given to sinners in Christ Jesus without condition. God's Grace is like Himself - eternal. There is never any reason found in the recipient of it. It comes unasked, unsought, and undeserved. If it is ever deserved it is not grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

To show us how pure and free the Grace of God is, the scriptures tell us it was given to God's elect on purpose and before the world began. Listen, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Timothy 1:9). How free, how pure is the Grace of God in Christ? "But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace..." (Galatians 1:15).

What do I mean that Grace is Free? First, that there are no conditions required by God. If there were that, then it would not be grace. If you had to meet some condition before God would give you his grace it would be a debt he owed you for meeting the condition, and then it would cease to be grace.

I can hear the freewill work monger say, "You must repent and believe before you can be saved!" That is true - but what the scriptures teaches is that repentance and faith are the gifts of God's grace. They are the results of the new birth; life must precede any spiritual acts. Christ has "ascended up on high, led captivity captive (all that held sinner's captive, sin and death) and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:7-8).

God requires perfection and we, as sinners cannot give it. God is just - he cannot lower his requirements. How then can he give his grace and salvation to imperfect sinners? By Christ, who was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." God's justice demands death for sin, "He made Him to be sin for us" (God demands righteousness from sinners), "that we might be made the righteousness of God IN HIM" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Because of the doing and dying of Jesus Christ, God can justly give us repentance and faith through Him.

Christ as a sinless perfect man met all the conditions required by God. He gave us grace in Christ on purpose before the world began; it was not according to

our works. If it was given us before the world began and on purpose, what did we have to do with it? "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). If you boast of any work before God, you fly in the face of God, the work of Christ, and God's holy word. If you are saved by anything YOU DO, then you "frustrate the grace of God, and Christ is dead in vain" (Galatians 2:21). Salvation is "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:4-6). Folks read your Bibles.

Donald Bell

Divine grace is the sovereign and saving favor of God exercised in the bestowment of blessings upon those who have no merit in them and for which no compensation is demanded from them. Nay, more; it is the favor of God shown to those who not only have no positive desserts of their own, but who are thoroughly ill-deserving and hell-deserving. It is completely unmerited and unsought, and is altogether unattracted by anything in or from or by the objects upon which it is bestowed. Grace can neither be bought, earned, nor won by the creature. If it could be, it would cease to be grace. When a thing is said to be of "grace" we mean that the recipient has no claim upon it, that it was in nowise due him. It comes to him as pure charity, and, at first, unasked and undesired.

Arthur Pink

The apostle said, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The grace of God and love for Christ throbs in a man's pulse; it looks out of his eyes; it lights up his countenance; it bows his head; it bends his knee; it opens his hand; it curbs his tongue; it humbles his heart; it orders his steps; it gives him a hearing ear, a forgiving spirit, and a lasting peace. Who, but God, can accomplish such a work? We are indeed His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works!

Henry Mahan

TRUE REPENTANCE

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

(Zech. 12:10)

I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be; but I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, "by the grace of God I am what I am."

John Newton

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

(1 Col. 6:9-11)

For such were the some of you. The case was just so with you as you have heard; you had such a wicked heart, you lived such a wicked life, and it would have been most just with God for ever to have cast you off; but He has had mercy upon; He hath made His glorious grace appear in your everlasting salvation. You had no love to God; But yet He exercised unspeakable love to you. You have contemned (or scorned) God, and set light by Him; but so great a value has God's grace set on you and your happiness that you have been redeemed at the price of the blood of His own Son. You chose to be with Satan in his service; but yet God hath made you a joint heir with Christ of His glory. You were ungrateful for past mercies; yet God not only continued those mercies, but bestowed unspeakably greater mercies upon you. You refused to hear when God called; yet God has manifested the infiniteness of that mercy in the exercises of it towards you. You have rejected Christ, and set Him at nought; and yet He is become your Saviour. You have neglected your own salvation; but God has not neglected it. You have destroyed yourself; but yet in

God has been your help. God has magnified His free grace towards you, and not to others: because He has chosen you, and it hath pleased Him to set His love upon you.

Jonathan Edwards

As a Sovereign (God) says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Could the veil which hides the heavenly country from our view be drawn aside, and we by faith behold the redeemed and angelic hosts there, we should see the redeemed nearest the throne. Mercy brought and placed them there. But the elect angels know nothing of mercy, while they rejoice in His goodness through Jesus Christ. Yes, that same Jesus Who suffered, bled and died for elect vessels of mercy is the Lord of the angels — the Upholder of the angels — the Commander of the angels, and these wait His commands and are obedient to the voice of His word. But they enjoy not the sweets of redeeming mercy. Why not? Because they have never been miserable. Why have they never been miserable? Because they have never sinned. Why have they never sinned? Because sovereign goodness kept them from sinning. Sinners of the mortal race have been singled out to enjoy the riches of saving and sustaining mercy. According to His purpose they are brought to know themselves sinners before Him — to experience the burden, plague, and power of sin — to know and feel everyone his own sore, and his own grief, and the plague of his own heart, and open up this misery to a merciful God, and find mercy in full and frank forgiveness and gracious acceptance by love, blood, and power.

Thomas Bradbury

When I consider how the goodness of God is abused by the greatest part of mankind, I cannot but be of his mind that said, The greatest miracle in the world is God's patience and bounty to an ungrateful world. If a prince hath an enemy got into one of his towns, he doth not send them in provision, but lays close siege to the place, and doth what he can to starve them. But the great God, that could wink all His enemies into destruction, bears with them, and is at daily cost to maintain them. Well may He command us to bless them that curse us, who Himself does good to the evil and unthankful. But think not, sinners, that you shall escape; thus, God's mill goes slow, but grinds small; the more admirable His patience and bounty now is, the more dreadful and unsupportable will that fury be which ariseth out of His abused goodness.

Nothing is smoother than the sea, yet when stirred into a tempest, nothing rageth more. Nothing is so sweet as the patience and goodness of God, and nothing is so terrible as His wrath when it takes fire.

William Gurnall

GROWING IN GRACE

Peter says "grow in grace." I realize if I have eternal life I will grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. What does growth in grace actually mean?

Growth in grace is always connected to a growth in the knowledge of the Christ. Growth in grace has something to do with growth in my knowledge of the doctrine of grace. Paul described a growth in Ephesians 4:14 as being "no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." Growth in grace has something to do with a growth in seeing my need of God's grace. After having walked with Christ for what seems to me a long time, I am now more aware of my own need of free and sovereign grace than I ever have been before. Growth in grace has something to do with one growing in graciousness. Wherever there is life, there is growth. If someone has professed to know Christ and has continued in that profession without growth, it is without doubt a false profession. For one to say they believe in grace and yet act just like a big baby is a contradiction. God's grace makes a man or woman truly gracious. If there is no growth in grace, there is no grace.

Remember, growth comes from eating. A poor diet results in stunted growth. It is a steady diet of feeding on Christ and Him crucified that causes growth. Oh, for grace to grow in grace!

Pastor Todd Nibert

WE LIVE IF HE LIVES

If God hides our sin or lessens it, He is faulty; if He leaves it still upon us, we die. He must then take our iniquity to Himself, make it His own, and so deliver us; for thus having taken the sin upon Himself, as lawfully He may and lovingly He does, it follows that we live if He lives; and who can desire more?