

- Recap:**
1. The glory of God is paramount – reverential awe – security that the King oversees a perfect Kingdom!
 2. Our Union with Christ enables us to know the Father and His glory
 3. The Holy Spirit draws people to know Christ, keeps them “In Christ” and transforms to be Christ-like. The Spirit **applies** to God’s people what the Father **intends** for His people and what Christ has **accomplished** for God’s People. Not just once but every moment.
- Today:** God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit bring grace to our lives
-

1. Grace of the Triune God redeems the past – our dismal failures as well as our proud successes
-

Grace redeems our dismal failures - Without His grace either our guilt, fear and anguish would crush us, leading to a lack of hope OR we live a life of denial of our guilt, fear and lack of identity, meaning and purpose, which would also lead to a lack of hope.

We are surrounded by conditionality – rather than grace

- I love you **because** (earned)
- I love you **until** (limits)
- I love you **unless** (conditions)

If God was not gracious, genuine hope would be impossible.

We could only trust in our own will-power, our own positive thinking and our own ability. When hope lacks certainty, life becomes hope-less.

Where a lack of knowing grace can lead us.... Two stories

We can lose sight of God’s grace and mercy, falling into the trap that we are good people who earned our salvation with the inevitable resultant sense of failure.

Anything other than grace is a Band aid which may relieve, but cannot cure, wounds.



Jeremiah 8:11 They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.

Paul’s letters all begin with, “Grace to you and peace” or more frequently “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

ALWAYS the same order of words; ALWAYS relating to Jesus who is our only hope. Without grace, peace is conditional and cannot relieve guilt or anxiety

EVERY one of Paul’s letters ends, “Grace BE WITH YOU”

Grace and peace to you as you read this letter; Grace be with you as you stop reading and go on living.



Peter affirms this truth: *“May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 2 Peter 1:2*



Paul, writing to Timothy, links some important truths together: *“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope... Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” 1 Timothy 1:1-2*

What wonderful words: Grace, Mercy, Peace and Hope!

Historical context: Period of “Pax Romana” - Roman Peace.

Peace does not come from authoritarian dominance, nor from regulations - real peace is only found in the grace of God.

Not “peace and grace” – but always “grace and peace.”

A lack of peace is a lack of assurance, security, hope, meaning, purpose and an uncertainty of identity. We cannot find those things in ourselves. Without grace, we have no peace, we have no hope. Unresolved guilt, anger and, despair all cause us to behave irrationally, as those with no hope.

Sin is so deep and so pervasive that only the Triune God can do something about it. The only way that we can get to see that is by the Spirit revealing that truth to us.

Mercy removes the pollution, penalty and power of sin; Grace changes us, renews us...

John Newton: “It was grace that taught by heart to fear; and grace my fears relieved.”

Grace redeems our past “successes” - The CV Paul thought he had:



Philippians 3:4-6 *If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law blameless.*

-
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Israelite - Tribe of Benjamin | • Circumcised on the eighth day |
| • Highly educated and influential | • Hebrew of Hebrews: zealous, faultlessly obedient to all laws |
-

The CV that redeemed Paul realised that he had:

- 1 Corinthians 15:9 “For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God...”
- Ephesians 3:8 “I am less than the least of all God’s people..”
- 1 Timothy 1:15 “I am the worst of sinners...”

Humble dependence and security in grace

2. Grace determines identity, meaning and purpose



1 Corinthians 15:9-10 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.

Paul's Identity:

- A servant of Jesus called to be an apostle by the will of God
- By the grace of God, I am what I am
- An apostle by grace
- Least by grace
- Unworthy by grace
- Redeemed by grace
- Enabled by grace



*Galatians 1:15-16 15 But when **he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace**, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone... (Arabia for three years)*

*1 Timothy 1:13-16 13 ...formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.** 16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.*

God's grace to the "worst of sinners shows that salvation is pure grace!

Grace is directly linked to sovereignty; Grace makes us what we are: Abraham and Sara; Job; Joseph; Deborah; Esther; Paul etc US!

3. Grace enables discipline, commitment, service, effort and excellence

Grace is never in vain...



1 Corinthians 15:10 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

"I worked harder!"

If we know that we are saved, forgiven and have eternal security –then spending our lives in a hammock would be "grace in vain"

Grace does not replace work – but enables it. Grace motivates!

1 Thessalonians 1:2-5: Work of Faith; Labour of Love; Steadfastness of Hope

When we are flooded with grace – we will overflow with effort.

Looks, feels and seems that we're doing it – but dominant grace is enabling



...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13



AUGUSTINE

“For grace is given not because we have done good works, but in order that we may be able to do them.”

4. Grace causes our obedience and enables us to fight sin



1 John 2:1-6...My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. ³ And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵ but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶ whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Context – a warning against deceivers:



1 John 3:6-10 ⁶ **No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.** ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ **Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil,** for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ **No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.** ¹⁰ By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Grace fights sin – if Christ is in us; there is inner conflict for the believer when sin comes in its tempting way.

Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned.

Grace is the enabling gift and power of God not to sin.

Grace is power, not just pardon.

“Living by grace means affirming daily our unworthiness. We are never thankful for what we think we deserve. We are deeply thankful for what we know we don't deserve.” Randy Alcorn