

Grace I – Habitual Grace

God has a habit of loving his creation

Outline 1

A. Introduction

- a. Although the word grace is used often in the Bible
- b. There is no real definition there
- c. Instead there are statements like in John 1
 - i. Jesus referred to as being full of grace and truth
 - ii. We have from his fullness received grace upon grace
- d. In John 4:9
 - i. God's ideal is spelled out in this way
 - ii. In this, the love of God was made known among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him
- e. Grace is the perfect ideal
- f. Woman at the well was empty
 - i. Searching for her Ideal
 - ii. Only to be confronted by Jesus
 - iii. He offered himself to her as living water
 - iv. Eternal life
- g. There is nothing you can do to make God love you more or less than he already does
 - i. We are right with God by grace alone
 - ii. No ifs, ands, or buts
- h. Lutherans are hung up on grace
 - i. No apologies
 - ii. We take it seriously
- i. Natural human condition
 - i. There is a price for everything
 - ii. You can't get something for nothing
 - iii. And that is true
 - iv. Christ paid that price
 - v. Romans 5

vi. A terrible imbalance

B. Grace is an invitation to a new/renewed relationship with God

- a. Seen in God's dealings with his people in OT
 - i. Adam and Eve
 - ii. Noah
 - iii. Abraham's call and covenant
 - iv. Promise revealed – Isaac, a land,
- b. Seen in God's dealings with his people throughout history
 - i. God initiates the relationship
 - ii. God is faithful in his promise
 - 1. God called Moses
 - 2. God led Israel through Red Sea and wilderness
 - 3. God raised up judges
 - 4. God gave them a king
 - 5. God sent prophets
- c. In NT times
 - i. God sent his Son
 - ii. Jesus confronted humanity at its worst
 - iii. Jesus modeled gracious invitation
 - iv. God inviting us to take hard look at Jesus
- d. Jesus was always creating relationships of love and acceptance
 - i. He modeled the gracious invitation on the cross
 - ii. "Father forgive them..."
- e. John 10:10

C. Grace is supernatural in nature

- a. God has a habit of loving us
- b. It is not natural
- c. But super natural
- d. Ephesians 2:8-9
- e. Grace is habitual
- f. God can't help himself
- g. It's who he is
- h. Tie a yellow ribbon story

D. Grace is sacrificial in nature

- a. It cost God dearly
 - i. God's Riches At Christ's Expense
- b. In God's view, there is no price too great to pay
- c. In the pearl of great price parable
- d. It is not a message for us to sell all we have to attain God's grace
- e. It is a message of God's grace, his love for us
- f. We are the pearl of great price
- g. God gave everything to have us
- h. He paid with the life of Christ

E. Grace has produced results in my life

- a. Personal testimony –
 - i.
- b. Even perfection gives no more status before God than already have
 - i. No need to go through life with fingers crossed
 - ii. All circumstances in life like chapters being written by God in a book
 - iii. Peace and confidence that God will continue to unfold the story
 - iv. Confidence in knowing how the story will end
 - v. Christ has already written the final chapter

F. Grace will produce results in your life too

- a. God adopts us
 - i. Galatians 4:4
 - ii. We cry "Abba Father"
 - iii. Adopted children are 100% wanted
 - iv. The parent chooses the child
 - v. In Roman law, the natural born son can be disinherited
 - vi. But the adopted son cannot be
- b. New status as saints – God transforms us
- c. Christian life impossible to live without God's grace
 - i. It's not just difficult
 - ii. It's impossible
 - iii. The only way to live life the way God desires

- iv. Is to depend on the grace of God
- d. This weekend is about God's grace
 - i. God told Paul
 - ii. "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in your weakness."
- e. Be assured that Jesus loves you – this I know

G. Conclusion –

- a. God's grace means he gives everything that he demands of us
- b. There is nothing you can do to make God love you any more or less than he already does. Not even perfection.
- c. We are right by God's grace alone
- d. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
- e. God loves you and so do I!

Outline 2

- A. Grace has many definitions and permeates our worship and our life
 - a. In this talk we will explore the meanings and ramifications of this word
 - b. This talk is about God's Ideal – Grace
 - c. Grace – God makes a habit of loving you
- B. In worship
 - a. Invocation – The grace of our Lord
 - b. Sermon – Grace to you and peace...
 - c. Benediction – The Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you...
- C. Where grace begins
 - a. God loves us
 - i. He always has
 - ii. He always will
 - b. History reveals it
 - i. Creation – Adam where are you
 - 1. God seeks his creation
 - ii. Abraham – called by God to father many people

- iii. Prophets – called by God to call his people back to God’s mercy
- iv. Nativity – God’s initiative to reach out to us in love
- c. Scripture gives us pictures
 - i. Symbolism
 - 1. Greek is more philosophical
 - a. A juvenile delinquent is a result of bad parental influence
 - 2. Hebrew speaks in word pictures
 - a. If a mother eats garlic and the father eats onions, the child will not grow smelling of sweet perfume
 - ii. The parable of the Good Shepherd
 - 1. The Shepherd seeks the sheep
 - 2. Often the sheep does not realize he is lost
 - iii. Ezekiel 16
 - 1. Unwanted child is left to die
 - 2. God rescues the child
 - 3. But the child grows to become a prostitute
 - 4. Yet at the end, God forgives her
 - iv. Hosea
 - 1. Marries a woman who becomes a prostitute
 - 2. A divorce ensues
 - 3. Hosea marries her again to restore the relationship
 - v. NT
 - 1. Thief on the cross
 - a. Today you will be with me in paradise
 - 2. Woman caught in adultery
 - a. Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more
 - 3. Samaritan woman at the well
 - a. Drink of the well of eternal life
 - b. The living water of Christ himself

D. Grace continues

- a. God’s gift, his life, we call it Grace
- b. Definition

- i. Undeserved love and favor of God
 - 1. Though gratuity comes from the same root word as grace
 - 2. We think that a gratuity is deserved
 - 3. But grace is not
- ii. We deserve death
 - 1. Very much like Barabbas
 - 2. He was the one who deserved death
 - 3. The guilty one goes free
 - 4. The innocent one dies
- iii. It is not earned
 - 1. God gives you everything
 - 2. And we can do nothing to earn it
 - 3. It is free
- iv. It is supernatural
 - 1. Love for the unlovely
 - 2. Love for the unloving
 - 3. Love for the undeserving
 - 4. Love that is unending
- v. God reconciling us to himself
 - 1. A pearl of great price
 - 2. You can't sell your soul to obtain it
 - 3. Jesus already did
 - 4. The treasure is ours
 - 5. The treasure is us
 - 6. It makes us holy
- vi. It is our unmerited assistance for
 - 1. Regeneration
 - 2. Sanctification
 - 3. Spiritual nutrition

E. Response to grace

- a. Accept it humbly – as Mary did
 - i. What if Mary had said, “Thanks but no thanks”
- b. Not imitate the life of Christ from the outside

- i. But share in Christ's gift from the inside out
 - ii. You can't see it or touch it
 - iii. But it makes all the difference
- c. New relationship with us as we are
 - i. Not asked to change to receive it
 - ii. But transformed because of it
 - iii. Mary Magdalene and Nicodemus were not asked to change
 - 1. Jesus promised to transform them
 - iv. Grace does not replace our human nature
 - v. It transforms our nature
 - vi. So now we experience
 - 1. A new purpose
 - 2. A new power
 - 3. And a new peace in him
- d. Through grace we become part of the community of the people of God
 - i. A grace-full community we call the church
 - ii. Adopted into his family through baptism

F. Conclusion

- a. The gift is free
- b. The invitation is extended to us just as it was to the apostles
- c. The answer we make to God is up to each one of us
- d. What will it be?
- e. Will you reject it?
- f. Or will you embrace it?

Outline 3

A. Introduction

- a. Although the word grace is used often in the Bible
- b. There is no real definition there
- c. Instead there are statements like in John 1
 - i. Jesus referred to as being full of grace and truth
 - ii. We have from his fullness received grace upon grace
- d. In John 4:9

- i. God's ideal is spelled out in this way
- ii. In this, the love of God was made known among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him

B. This weekend is about grace

- a. John 4:8 – God is love
- b. God's love and God's grace are identical
- c. Grace is not something God does
- d. Grace is not something God chooses to do
- e. Grace is something God is
- f. Grace is God's uncontrollable habit of loving us

C. The nature of grace

- a. Seen in God's dealings with his people in the OT – Adam and Eve
 - i. Their rejection of God's grace
 - ii. And his promise of restoration
- b. An urgent question – What is grace?
 - i. Essence, character, nature, heart and very being of God
 - ii. Undeserved
 - 1. Nothing we should or can do to earn it
 - iii. Unusual – unnatural
 - 1. Like the prodigal son
 - iv. Unstoppable
 - 1. Father forgive them...
 - v. Unending
 - 1. As far as the east is from the west
 - 2. Jeremiah 1:4-5 – Before you were formed in the womb, I knew you
 - 3. It lasts beyond the grave
 - 4. John 11:16 – one gift after another
- c. God's greatest grace – John 3:16
- d. Why does God love us in spite of everything?
 - i. Ephesians 1:4 – God chose us in Christ Jesus before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight
 - ii. If God knew we would blow it, why did he create us anyway?

1. I can love a stuffed dog, but it can't love me
2. A living dog can be loved and can return love
3. A living dog can bring lots of pain, but we risk the pain
4. For the reward of the love
5. God risks the pain of fatherhood
6. As he anticipates the joy of our loving response
7. That is grace

e. Grace is God's habit

- i. Of loving his creation
- ii. Of loving you
- iii. Isaiah 30:15-18
- iv. Isaiah 43:25

D. The three R's

a. Revelation

- i. God gives us these gifts
 1. To reveal his love for us
 2. Whether we ask for them or not
 3. Whether we appreciate them or not
 4. Whether we say thank you or not
- ii. Nature and creation
- iii. King David
 1. God chooses losers
- iv. Solomon

b. Rudiments

- i. God takes the initiative
- ii. God shepherds us
 1. He has always looked for, called and tended his sheep
- iii. God sets us apart – makes us holy
 1. Jeremiah 1:4-5 – I set you apart
- iv. Nothing separates us – Romans 8:39

c. Results

- i. Grace restores us to our created state
 1. And God saw that it was good

- ii. God forgives
- iii. God made us alive
 - 1. Ephesians 2:4
- iv. God gives us faith
- v. Grace is a habit with God
 - 1. John 10:17-18
 - 2. No one takes it from me, I lay down my life of my own accord
 - 3. God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit
 - a. Provides for our earthly life
 - b. Gives us the gift of eternal life through Christ
 - c. Empowers us to embrace the gift of grace

E. Conclusion

- a. First I made you
- b. Then I lost you
- c. Now I've bought you back and paid the price of my life
- d. You are twice mine
- e. This is grace
- f. Grace is the perfect ideal
- g. God loves you and so do I!