

Unlocking the Meaning and Power of Grace:

Insights into God's Favor

The term "grace" was well known in Greece and Rome. In Greek, the word for grace is "charis," which means something delightful, joyful, or a favor that is not earned. It could be used to describe a birthday present or a special favor done for a neighbor or friend.

When Greeks greeted each other, they used the word "charis" as a way of saying "hi" and expressing their desire for the other person's life to be filled with good things. It represented the best things in life, like favor from the gods, bringing beauty and joy.

What Does Grace Mean to Christians?

When describing God's heart and His gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, "charis" was a perfect word to incorporate into the vocabulary of the church. However, its meaning needed to be expanded to describe the amazing news of what God gives us.

The Bible's definition of grace includes not only a favor we don't deserve but also a gift that is completely opposite to what we deserve. We can never earn God's gifts and favor, and yet He continues to bless us every day. The Bible says He pours out His mercies upon us, which are new every morning. That is grace.

The wisdom of this world is remarkable. People explore the earth and distant space, but there is a realm far beyond measurement—the unfathomable expanse of God's great grace.

Why is God so merciful to us through His grace? We find the answer in verse four: "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us" (Ephesians 2:4). The gift of salvation is based on the greatness of God's love. That's the foundation. God doesn't save us based on our worthiness, goodness, or righteousness because, in our fallen nature, we could never deserve God's mercy. We all come into the world with a fallen nature.

Without God in our lives, we have no redeemable qualities. We were, by nature, children of wrath, as Paul emphasizes in verse two. But God, who is rich in mercy, loved us and showed His great love for us (Ephesians 2:2).

God's Great Love

Paul stresses that it's only because of God's great love that we have been made alive together with Christ. I am thankful for the life we have found in Jesus. Before encountering Him, we were dead. We were lost and in need of a Savior. When people search for something to save them or bring hope and peace, they can find all they need in the fact that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.

God, who is rich in mercy, demonstrated His great love toward us even when we were dead in our trespasses. He made us alive together with Christ by His grace (Ephesians 2:4). God's love for us didn't start when we prayed the sinner's prayer or knelt at the altar. He has always loved us. His love has no beginning and no end because love is His very nature. God is love.

God's love is extended to His enemies, and it was certainly extended to us. Even when we were at our worst, God gave His very best. God's love never ceases, regardless of how wicked or undeserving we may feel. No matter what we have done, where we have been, or who we have hurt, God still loves us with all His heart.

The Bible tells us that God's love has no starting point because He has always loved us. The only way God could stop loving us is if He ceases to exist, which will never happen. His love is eternal, unconditional, sacrificial, and unchangeable. He loved us yesterday, He loves us today, and He will love us in the morning and throughout the day.

Don't Reject God's Grace

Sin is not just a crime against God's law; it is a rejection of God's love. Rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord means rejecting God's greatest gift of love because Jesus is the fullest expression of the Father's heart. Jesus revealed the face and heart of God to us. As Jesus hung on the cross, we asked Him how much our Heavenly Father loves us, and He replied, "This much."

The Greek term "charis," when used as a greeting, carried no power to bring its wishes to fruition. However, when it became part of the Christian vocabulary, empowered by the Holy Spirit, it took on a whole new meaning.

Jesus didn't come into our world just to wish us well or express hope that we would find God's favor someday. He came to work out our salvation by inviting us into a personal relationship with Himself. The cross is where we find God's favor, and it is the only place we need to look. It will guide us through life and into eternity.

The gospel is God's call to rest and rejoice. We receive the free and undeserved gift of salvation through faith. It is God's grace that has called us to inherit eternal life.

There's More to Grace than You Think

As we grow up in church and follow Christ, we may take our salvation for granted and start thinking that we deserve it or have earned it ourselves. But the truth is, we can never work out our salvation on our own.

If you were to ask the average Christian why God saved them by His grace, they might say it was to keep them from going to hell or to avoid judgment. While escaping judgment is part of God's salvation plan, it's not the whole story.

God raised us up and made us sit together in heavenly places with Christ (Ephesians 2:6). He lifted us out of our stuck state and extended His hand to pull us out of death. When God raised us from the dead and made us alive in Christ, His plan wasn't to leave us in the cemetery. Death is not our final resting place.

Jesus said, "Let him go" when He raised Lazarus from the dead, indicating that Lazarus was no longer dead but alive with Jesus' resurrection power. First, God performed the miracle of resurrection in us. We were dead in our sins, and now we are alive. Then He exalted us to a position of honor in the heavenly realm. We are already seated there in Jesus by faith. We are now children of God, and we have an incredible future ahead of us because of Jesus' sacrifice.

Our citizenship, inheritance, and life are in heaven, hidden with Christ in God. There will come a time when we will be changed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye. The trumpet will sound, and it will be a charge, not a retreat. We will rise

and meet the Lord in the air, going to the place where we are already seated in Christ Jesus.

The Best is Yet to Come

Considering the craziness and rejection of God in the world, the trumpet is about to sound, and the church will step out of her grave clothes. Just as I felt peace on the airplane when a well-known evangelist was there, rest assured that God loves you as much as anyone else. God cares about you deeply.

With a trumpet and a shout, we will rise and meet the Lord in the air. We will be with Him forever, dwelling in His house. So, it's wise to come to church today and not take it for granted. Our future is bright, and the best is yet to come because of Jesus' sacrifice.