

All Of Grace

Galatians 1:3-5

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,
4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this
present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom
be glory forever and ever.”

Last week as we began our study of the Book of Galatians, we were able to take a long look at the Apostle Paul and how he felt about his divine calling into the ministry. He told us that he was called into the service of God "... not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father..." Paul also let us know that if God does the calling, then God is the One that we must seek to please with our ministry.

The book of Galatians was written, not to one church, but to several churches that Paul and Barnabas had visited on Paul's first missionary journey to what is now known as southern Turkey. Galatians contains only six chapters, but they are jammed full of some very important doctrines and practical truths. No one can fully understand the relationship between Law and Grace, faith and works, Israel and the Church, without knowing the teaching of the grace of God as set forth in this and the Book of Romans.

The key word of this epistle is "grace," and the fruit of grace is "peace." In verse 4 we have the foundation for the grace of God extended to helpless sinners. This grace comes from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

In verses 4-5 we have four things said about the "grace" of God: **We see the channel of God's grace.** It is Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins.

We see the purpose of God's grace. It is to deliver us from this present evil world.

We see the source of God's grace. It is the sovereign will and purpose of God "according to the will of God and our Father."

Finally, we have the reason for God's grace. It is to bring glory only to God forever and ever.

It is humanly impossible to adequately define the grace of God. Many attempts have been made, but all have fallen miserably short of fully describing it. Someone has said, "Grace is the unmerited favor of a holy God toward wholly sinful, ruined sinners." Another said, "Grace is everything for nothing." While all of this is true, it merely scratches the surface. Grace lifts the lowest sinner to the highest place in Heaven. But all of this is not because of anything in the sinner, but all of it surges from the heart of a loving God. Notice that grace excludes all human effort, works, righteousness or goodness. Grace is exclusively the work of God. Add so much as one grain of works, merit or human righteousness or effort, and it ceases to be grace.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8-10 that we are saved by grace, "... through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Grace excludes all human effort. Salvation is all of the Lord. Listen to God's definition of grace in 2 Timothy 1:9, as He speaks of the work of Christ, "Who has 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."

Can you find any human effort or contribution in that verse? It is all God's work. He saved us, He called us, He purposed to save us by His grace, and He settled it before we were born. In fact, Ephesians 1:4 tells us that He "chose us before the foundation of the world." In other words, this "grace" of salvation was given to us "in Christ Jesus" before the world began. He settled it all before we were born, so we wouldn't be able to get our hands on it and ruin it all.

False legalistic teachers had taught the Galatian Christians that salvation was grace, "plus" works. They were told that they were saved by *grace*, but then their ultimate salvation depended upon their behavior, their *works*, and their *keeping the law*. This error was the occasion for Paul writing this epistle, to show that we are *saved* by grace, *kept* by grace, and *will finally be presented faultless in His sight* by grace! **To add even a tiny little speck of works to grace spoils it all.** How do I know that? Because we have been told in Romans 11:6, "And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it is of works, then it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work."

Look once more at verses 3-4, "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who *gave himself for our sins*, that he might deliver us." **These words are inexhaustible.** We are all familiar with John 3:16 where we are told, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

But in these verses we are able to see that Jesus gave himself. His sacrifice was voluntary! He offered Himself to die in the place of sinners.

Listen, this verse does *not* say, "He gave Himself for *sinner*," but rather it says, "He gave Himself for *our sins*." **Human words fail completely to convey the depth of the meaning of the expression.** When the Bible says, "He gave Himself for *our sins*." It suggests a *trade*, an *exchange*. **Jesus Christ offers Himself in exchange for our sins.** That is how much He wants to save us! He loves the sinner so much that He will pay any price the Father demands. **The price is the penalty of the Law.** God is a holy God and cannot condone sin. It must be put away before He can accept the sinner. **But God is also a just God, and for sin to be put away, the penalty must be exacted.** But the penalty was *eternal death*. Man could not pay it. It would take him an eternity in Hell to make satisfaction to a broken law.

And here the Savior steps in. The Law said the sinner is cursed, damned, condemned and must die the eternal death. But Christ offers to save that sinner. **But the Law must be satisfied, before God can do so.** A loving God cannot violate His justice. He cannot ignore His Word that says, "the soul that sins shall die." **How than can it be done?** Jesus said, "I will take man's sin and make it my responsibility. I will bear its penalty, I will take the sinner's place." That is the meaning of our verse when we are told; He "gave Himself for *our sins*." When Jesus offered to take our place, God transferred to Him our sin!

While we cannot understand this, the Scriptures are plain in 1 Peter 2:24, where we are told that Christ, "... bore our sins in his own body on the tree." The Prophet Isaiah, writing hundreds of years before, says in Isaiah 53:5-6, "...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities... (and the)...Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

In order to redeem us from sin the Lord must take *our sin* and pay *its penalty*. But Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:21 goes still deeper and says, "For He made Him who knew no sin *to be sin* for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." What a tremendous revelation that is! **Christ became sin (not a sinner) for us.** When Jesus took our sin upon Himself, God forsook Him, for God cannot look upon sin. When God looked upon Jesus He saw *sin* - our sin - and God condemned Jesus to die. **God cursed Him.** I realize that it is difficult to believe that Jesus, when He took our place and became sin for us, became a cursed thing in God's sight, in so much that it caused God to turn away from Him. **But that is the awful revelation of the Bible.** He was made sin for us.

I want to take the next few minutes to share a truth with you that will require some thought. And that is the fact that it was in His *body* that Jesus bore our sin. The *Spirit* of Christ remained unaffected by sin. **His soul also remained pure from our sin.** When God laid our sin on Jesus it had to do only with His *body*. And because of that sin which He bore in His body, He must *die* the death. **He must die physically.** But an offering must be presented to atone for the sin He

had taken upon Himself. He could not offer His body as an atonement, for in that body He bore *our sin*, and God cannot accept sin in payment for sin. Here indeed is a real problem.

The Bible gives us the answer. Since the *spirit* of Jesus was unaffected by our sin, He could therefore offer His sinless perfect spirit as an offering for the sin He bore *in* His *body*. God demands an offering to take away sin. And that offering must satisfy the penalty of sin in full. And so Jesus offered to God His *spirit* in payment for our sins, which He bore in His body on the tree. That is why He cried in Matthew 27:50, “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.”

He bore ours sins in His *body* on the tree, but He presented His undefiled *spirit* as the offering for our sins. This truth is seen in Isaiah 53:10, “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You (speaking of the Father) make His life an offering for sin, He shall see His seed.” The Greek word for “*life*” here is translated “*soul*” in the King James Version. That is the meaning of Galatians 1:4, “Who gave *himself* for our sins.” This is the same as saying “He gave His spirit.” The *spirit* is the real person. The body is but the temple for the spirit - the medium, or seat, of our emotions is the soul. The spirit is the real you. When a person dies, only the body dies, the *spirit* and the *soul* live on. Jesus gave His body in death, but offered His spirit (Himself) as offering for sin. And it was accepted and ratified by His resurrection from the dead. The *resurrection* is God's stamp of approval on the work of Christ, and His spirit returned from *Sheol* to enter His glorified, sinless body as the proof that not one sin was left unpaid. Therefore, Jesus’ statement “It was finished” is absolutely true.

And because it is *finished*, and He paid it all, it is all of *grace*. Nothing can be added to it. It must *simply be accepted*, for *the Lord will not share His glory with another*. *Salvation* is receiving this *free gift* by *faith* without any claim of our own, but *the grace of God*.