

# Living Faithfully in the Riches of God's Grace

*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ...( Ephesians 3:8)*

## **We Are More Than “Okay” (Part 1c)**

Our Standing With God Because of the Father

Ephesians 1:3-6

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*

Thus far from Ephesians 1:3-6 we have considered two great doctrinal truths that are also two great blessings by which our God has blessed us. We have seen **divine election** in verse 4 and **divine predestination** unto adoption in verse 5. This morning we look at the last of these works of God the Father in securing for us salvation in Christ; the great blessing and doctrine of **divine grace**.

### **III. Divine Grace (1:6)**

*to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*

The Lord our God is to be ceaselessly, freely and boldly blessed by we who have been redeemed because He, as we have already noted, He has eternally blessed us; He has gifted us; bestowed upon us the most wondrous of wonders; first in election – His choosing of us before the foundation of the world (v.3-4), then in predestination – His predetermined plan for us (v.5a), next in adoption whereby He legally makes us part of His family (v.5b), and now we read in verse 6 that He has done all this for an express purpose. We read that it is **“to the praise of the glory of His grace!”**

Notice that the objective here was not primarily to the benefit of sinners; although sinners do indeed benefit. The key objective of all that God has done for sinners is to His being blessed; **“to the praise of the glory of His grace!”** The purpose of God in the salvation of poor, doomed, damned, hostile, hell-bent, hell-deserving sinners is that we should be, **“to the praise of the glory of His grace,”** Our lives are moved and motivated by the reality of our salvation to praise; that is to make constant consideration and proclamation of the gloriousness of God's grace.

There are other divine attributes of God revealed in the salvation of sinners by Christ; attributes that are well worth the believers contemplation. I give just some of these for you to consider on your own later. There is the **wisdom of God** devised the plan of redemption. There is the **power of God** which accomplishes the work of regeneration – causing us who were dead to be born again; made alive to the things of God. And there is the **immutability of God** – the unchanging nature of God which brings about the security of our souls. We do well to remember and to share with one another this truth, *that all the attributes; all the things that make our God truly God, are gloriously, marvelously displayed in the salvation of sinners.* But we also need to remember this; it is the **grace of God** that serves as the fountain head – the very source of our salvation. This is why we call grace “amazing”! By God's grace; the justice of God and the mercy of God meet at the cross of Christ and are satisfied. By the grace of God, the wrath of God is cooled and the love of God is fanned into flame by the sacrifice of Christ. By the grace of God, we who were once enemies of God are now called into sweet fellowship with God. Grace is conspicuous throughout the whole work of our salvation.

## Living Faithfully in the Riches of God's Grace

*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ...( Ephesians 3:8)*

- **Grace is seen in the doctrine of election.**

In Romans 11:5 we read, *In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.* Literally this reads, "according to God's choice of grace" or "God's choice [His election] is by virtue of grace."

- **Grace is seen in our redemption.**

In Romans 3:23-24 we read, *23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus...*

- **Grace is the basis of our calling.**

In 2 Timothy 1:9 we read that it is God, *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity...*

### A. What is Grace?

From all of this it would do us well to define what is grace? If we are going to right praise God for the glory of His grace; we must well understand what grace is. We tend to like our short, encapsulated descriptions of grace. We do well to remember that grace is indeed, "the unmerited, the unearned favor or blessing of God." But such a description does not do grace justice.

The grace of God is a constant theme in the Scriptures. But it is in the New Testament where we find its greatest expression; specifically with the coming of Jesus who is said to be "**full of grace and truth**" (John 1:17). The word translated "grace" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *charis*; the idea of *charis* means "favor, blessing, or kindness." In this sense, anyone can extend grace to another; we can be kind and give favors to others. But when the word *grace* is used in connection with God, it takes on a deeper; broader; fuller and more powerful meaning. The grace of God is both an attitude; His desire to favor us; as well as an action; a force by which He favors us. That action most readily seen in the person of Jesus; God's Son, who is "**full of grace and truth.**" The grace of God is His choosing to bless us rather than curse us as our sin deserves. This grace is the benevolence of God to the most undeserving.

The Word of God tells us that "grace" - is the undeserved influence and intervention of the Lord in our lives if we be saved. This grace is necessary "**because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight**" (Romans 3:20). And so, God grants us His saving intervention; for until God intervenes in a person's life; he cannot be saved. We read in Romans 3:21-22, "**But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested . . . the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.**" Here is God's influencing sinners by giving them the person and merits of Christ – which no one deserves; so that they might be saved if they believe that He came and gave Himself for them.

Grace also results in our sanctification; our becoming more like Christ, by what we call the "means of grace." The means of grace are those things, like prayer or reading the Bible, which God uses to influence our lives that we might better live for Him. Let's see this by turning over to Acts 20:32. In Acts 20:32 we find Paul speaking of the "word of His grace" – we read there, **And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you**

---

## Living Faithfully in the Riches of God's Grace

*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ...( Ephesians 3:8)*

**the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.** Put another way, it is the word of God that builds us up (in the faith) and gives us an inheritance among those who are sanctified. If you want to be sanctified, we need to be invested in the Word of God; which is also the “word of His grace.

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 9:8 where we will see that grace is not just an attitude; but also a power; a power that God uses to save people as well as a power God gives to His people that they might do good deeds. We read in 2 Corinthians 9:8, **“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed...”** So grace is not only a motivation; but also that which moves. In God, grace describes His act of giving man that which man does not deserve so that He might be saved. Thus, everything about our salvation is “of grace.” Our election, our predestination; our adoption, our redemption, our forgiveness, our being sealed with the Spirit of God until the day of full redemption; it is all of grace. Three times in Ephesians 1 (vs. 6, 12 and 14) Paul points us to the glory of God's grace in our salvation; or what we might call, “saving grace.”

The phrase “saving grace” fits nicely with the concept of our worth being found only in Christ. In other words, Jesus is the “redeeming factor” that makes us acceptable before God. According to Romans 3:10-11, there is nothing in us that will commend us to God. According to Isaiah 64:6, because all of our righteousness and good works are like a “filthy garment” – a bloody cloth in His sight – making us unacceptable to Him, how can we not ask along with Jesus' disciples the question found in Luke 18:26, **“Then who can be saved?”** Do you remember how Jesus replied? He said in Luke 18:27, **“The things that are impossible with people are possible with God.”** This is the grace of God!

The Bible tells us that through faith in Christ; as we believe that He lived a perfect life (a life that was completely acceptable to God) and that His death was substitutionary, that is, “in the place of” or “on the behalf of” His sheep – those who hear His voice (John 10:11); we will be saved. Therefore, the grace that is spoken of here in our text reminds us that work of God in our lives that makes us acceptable to Him; that work culminating in Christ. It is through the work of Christ alone on the cross that saves us – nothing of our own merit for once you introduce even the slightest effort or work; grace is no longer grace; but a wage; something earned. When Paul speaks in Ephesians 1:6 that our election, our predestination, our adoption and indeed all of what is necessary for salvation, we are reminded that it is Jesus alone who makes anyone us acceptable to God. Jesus alone is our worth in God's sight.

Beloved, “saving grace” is a grace that saves, and the only grace that can save anybody is the grace which is applied to the soul through faith in the person and work of Christ. Thus Paul says in Ephesians 2:8, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God...”** Salvation is either all of God's grace or it is it is not. Let me give you an example. A student takes a test. One of the questions has five segments to it; four of which the student clearly got wrong. The teacher marks the question off. Upon receiving the test, the student looks at the question he got wrong; sees his error, but notices he did have that one part correct. So he goes to the teacher and points out the part of the question he got right and says, “Would you be gracious and give partial credit for this part I did right?” The teacher says, “Yes, I will give you partial credit.” The student is grateful. Did the teacher show grace? Not technically. Technically, the student did earn that partial credit; he demonstrated he did something right. In

---

## Living Faithfully in the Riches of God's Grace

*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ...( Ephesians 3:8)*

other words, that credit was due him. True grace would be giving a student credit on something for which he was clearly wrong on; for something for which he deserved nothing.

In salvation, the only merit we have is not our own; it is fully and only the work of Christ. We must be extremely careful here – for it is easy to think that by our faith we have contributed in some, even if it be small way to our salvation. We know that Bible teaches us that Christ's merits must be "applied" to us by faith, and it seems to us that our faith is coming from us. But we must never forget what the Word of God declares. In Romans 3:10-12 it is clear that not one of us seeks after God and again, Ephesians 2:8 says, **"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that (that faith) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."** In Hebrews 12:2 Jesus is called the **"author and perfecter"** of our faith. In other words, the very faith we have to believe and receive the grace of God is yet another gift from God. This is the amazing grace of God and why Paul declares that all of this is **"to the praise of the glory of His grace!"**

If you are born of God, then you are to rejoice in the facts that you are justified [declared righteous in God's sight], that you are pardoned [forgiven of sins against God], that you are adopted [made a blessed child of God], that you are accepted [received as most loved] and that you are blessed of God according to the riches of His grace toward us in Christ Jesus. Indeed we are more than okay – we are wealthy beyond measure. The believer who dwells on such things will respond with a life that increasingly blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – that finds less time for worrying and fretting because he lives in light of the riches he has in Christ.

Beloved, there is a golden thread of grace running through the whole of the believer's history. Beginning with his election before the foundation of the world to his admission into eternal glory in heaven – through it all is grace. Without this grace there is no salvation. Without this grace there is no eternal life. Without this grace there is no hope; no future; no joy. When Paul says that salvation is **"to the praise of the glory of His grace!"** we are reminded that there is no point in the history of a believer whereby he can stand up and say, "I did that - this part of my salvation was my own work. I have this by my own merit." Every blessing we receive from God, in this lifetime, or in eternity itself, has come to us through the channel of the free and sovereign grace of realized in the person and work of Christ.

There is not even an inkling of boasting on the part of the believer for all boasting is excluded from a person's salvation because all human merit is excluded. In the language of the Church, in description of what we do, the word "merit" is anathema – it is a curse word. It is to be banished from our speech concerning ourselves forever. The only "merit" of which we can ever speak is the merit of Christ; **"to the praise of the glory of His grace!"**

### **B. What is the glory of grace?**

Let me speak to you now of this "glory" – **"the glory of His grace."** The word "glory" speaks of that which is most highly praised or honored. In the Old Testament, the word "glory" speaks of that which is weighty, heavy, and intense; extremely overwhelming. The salvation of our souls is the glory of His grace! – it is a weighty thing to be considered. Why? It is grace that makes the dead alive, gives sight to the spiritually blind, and makes the dumb able to shout and sing for joy. It is grace that pardons the guilty, justifies the ungodly, sets the prisoners free from their chains. It is the grace of God that reveals the holiness of God to unholy sinners. Grace lifts up the poor out of the dust, and the beggar out of his poverty; setting him up as a prince, even a prince among

---

## Living Faithfully in the Riches of God's Grace

*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ...( Ephesians 3:8)*

God's people. It is grace that applies immortal dignity to the most degraded and depraved. It is grace that strengthens the weak, gives the feeble a firm foundation, and upholds the faint of heart. It is grace that protects the tempted, revives the suffering, and restores the broken-hearted. It is grace that bestows upon poor vile worms such as sinners the privilege of communion – a common union - with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It is grace that brings a myriad of millions of those who were once poor wretched sinners to the indescribable glory, and makes them more glorious than the holy angels of God. This is the weight of grace and why we are to see all of this as ***“to the praise of the glory of His grace.”***

Notice it is first said here in verse six, not simply to the praise of His grace but rather ***“to the praise of the glory of His grace.”*** It is as if Paul is wishing to convey to us the idea that the glory of God – glory that can even be seen by considering the heavens (Psalm 19:1-2) is made even more glorious in this revealing of the riches of His grace in Christ experienced in salvation – in the election of God; the predestination of God; the adoption of God; in the redemption of God. Oh what weight! What glory! What grace! Beloved, our salvation, which is planned, purchased, performed, preserved and perfected by God is always and only ***“to the praise of the glory of His grace.”*** It would seem the psalmist understood this truth when in Psalm 115:1 he declared – ***“Not to us, O Lord, not to us, But to Your name give glory Because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth.”***

### C. What is grace freely bestowed?

Now then, there is one more phrase we need to deal with, found at the end of verse six where we read, ...***which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*** There are two ways in which we might understand this. First, let me point out to you that Paul is being exceedingly repetitive. As we noted, the word for “grace” is *charis* in the Greek. The word “freely bestowed” is built off this same word. It is the verb form of *“charis” – echaritosen.* In other words, we are to praise the Lord for the greatness, the weightiness of His grace; and this grace has been graciously, greatly, and abundantly poured out upon us! The phrase ***“freely bestowed”*** means to make someone highly favored; to confer upon a person the highest of blessings. I say this is a repetitive statement because the word “grace” as we have seen, already implies God's free and sovereign blessings; and then, to make sure we get the idea, Paul reminds us that our salvation is all of grace; freely bestowed; granted, given to us in the person of God's most Beloved Son, Jesus Christ; the one who is full of grace and truth. God has, in the person and through the work of Christ; once and for all favored those who He has chosen, predestined and adopted as His own.

But there is a second understanding of this last phrase, fleshed out for us in the translation of the KJV where we read, ***“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”*** Through His great, boundless, infinite, free, and eternal grace, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ***“hath made us accepted in the Beloved!”*** It is as if Paul has taken us to a summit; a mountaintop and is calling us to take in the view. Behold the gracious work of your Heavenly Father who has chosen us in Christ; who has predestinated us to glory in Christ; who has adopted us in Christ; and now has accepted in Christ as eternally one with Him, forever united to Him! We are not only blessed; not only graced; but by God's grace, we are forever accepted by God in Christ.

---

## Living Faithfully in the Riches of God's Grace

*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ...( Ephesians 3:8)*

In our text, we have not even yet considered one of the gracious works of God the Son or God the Holy Spirit. We have yet to contemplate our redemption by Christ, or our calling by the Holy Spirit. So certain, so sure is the eternal plan of God for our salvation that even before speaking of redemption; we are told we are accepted in Christ! In the eternal counsel of God, we are regarded as holy in Christ even before we became unholy by Adam's fall into sin. In God's plan, we were counted as justified, declared righteous even before one act of unrighteousness had been committed. Being freely accepted in Christ, we were regarded as the sons of God before we were made the sons of Adam. This is amazing grace; a grace that declares us accepted in the Beloved as a work of God our Father, even before the world was. This is not to say that the work of Christ and of the Spirit in time was unnecessary; it is just that in the eternal counsel and plan of God; all of Ephesians 1:3-14 is a done deal. Again, all of this then is ***"to the praise of the glory of His grace!"***

As you leave this place this morning; will you not stand in awe of God's grace? Will you not beg your soul to bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has done all for you; if you have received Christ? For in the Beloved we are forever united with Christ; members of His body with Him as our Head. In other words, we are forever inseparable from Christ! Beloved, the God of Glory, our heavenly Father, receives us and looks upon us in Christ with absolute, perpetual delight and satisfaction!

Being accepted in the Beloved; being the recipients of freely bestowed grace by virtue of union with Christ is a constantly theme of the New Testament. The Body of Christ so connected to our Head, who is Christ, that we are regarded as one. We are the bride, and Jesus the bridegroom. We are the branches, and Jesus is the Vine. Even as it is said in Hebrews that Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchizedek met him, we learn there that in a similar, yet grander way, is every believer chosen in Christ, blessed with every spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; and all by the grace of God. In Christ have been freed, converted, justified, and accepted. And it is all due to this graciously given union God has given us with Christ.

There is nothing on this side of heaven that ought to bring more sense of blessedness and assurance than our oneness with Christ brought to us by the grace of God. Spurgeon said, *"To know and feel that our interests are mutual, our bonds indissoluble and our lives united, is indeed to dip our morsel in the golden dish of heaven."* And all of this is all of grace. Do you praise God for such grace? Is it known to others that your salvation is ***"to the praise of the glory of His grace?"*** May the words of our mouth and the meditation of our hearts be found in a constant state of praising our God for the glory of His grace!

*Soli Deo Gloria*

---

**Copyright © 2015 Edward K. Godfrey.** *This message is the sole property of the copyright holder and may be copied only in its entirety for circulation freely without charge. All copies of this message must contain the above copyright notice. This message may not be copied in part (except for small quotations used with citation of source), edited, revised, copied for resale or incorporated in any commercial publications, recordings, broadcasts, performances, displays or other products offered for sale, without the written permission of the copyright holder. Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to Edward K. Godfrey, Pastor, Hope Community Bible Church, 1001 W. Walnut Suite 5a, Rogers, AR 72756.*