

GRACE — God's Riches At Christ's Expense

1. Do You Consider Yourself a Fair Person?

- a. We know when something is not fair — especially if it's not fair to us!
- b. Fairness is Important—Giving People What they Deserve—
—and Not giving people what they Don't deserve...
- c. so Most People Apply a FAIRNESS Mentality to Salvation

2. When asked: 'What are your chances of going to heaven?' (Cottrell, Saved by Grace)

- a. One person said, "50-50 the older I get, the more I think my chances will improve."
- b. Another said, "My chances are kinda slim, maybe 50-50...
You have to be more than a nice person, but I'm still in the running!"

- c. An optimist said: "85%! I don't think the entrance exam will be very tough."

3. Many people think Judgement Day will involve something like a balance scale— with SINS on one side—and GOOD DEEDS on the other side.

- a. Then if good deeds outweigh the bad deeds then we "deserve" to go to heaven.

4. The Only Problem is this Concept is FALSE—God's plan doesn't work this way...

Because Just One Sin Outweighs ALL the Good Deeds you've done!

- a. Just One Sin Incurs the Full Penalty of the Law which is Death
- b. And Being a "Good Person" Cannot Atone for a single Sin!
- c. We're going to look at an attribute of God that's not fair! —b/c grace is not fair...

I. THE GRACE OF GOD

WHAT IS THE GRACE OF GOD?

THEOLOGICALLY the term 'GRACE' has three basic connotations in the NT:

- 1) **GIFT**: It can refer to the Gift of Salvation—Saving Grace
- 2) **SYSTEM**: of Salvation—the manner in which God Gives Grace
- 3) **ATTRIBUTE**: It can also refer to The Attribute of God's Nature—God is Gracious

A. GRACE IS AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD FLOWING FROM THE LOVE OF GOD

1. Grace is an attribute of God's Divine Nature... (Psalm 103:8–14)

- a) Since Grace is an Attribute of God's Character—It's not something that only arrived in the NT but was absent from the OT as some think this verse implies (Jn 1:16–17)

2. ADAM AND EVE

a) When Adam and Eve Sinned in the Garden—The Penalty of Sin is Death...

- (1) They Died Spiritually AND Physical Death Entered the World for 1st time.
- (2) They were forced out of the Perfect Garden and Separated from the Tree of Life
- (3) They had to live with the effects of sin and death in a Broken World
 - 1) —A New Emotion: FEAR
 - 2) —A New Realization: NAKEDNESS;
 - 3) —A New Consequence: SEPARATION from God
 - 4) —A New Repercussion: CONDEMNATION from God.

b) But God Showed Grace—

- (1) God Offered Mercy and Blood Atonement for their sin
- (2) by covering them w/ Animal skins because of their nakedness.
- (3) By teaching them Sacrifice for Sin

3. NOAH found grace (Genesis 6:8)

4. MOSES found grace (Ex. 33:17)

5. REMNANT OF ISRAEL (2 Chronicles 30:9)

a) *“for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him.” (2 Chronicles 30:9)*

6. DAVID was anointed King of Israel...

- a) But he Committed Adultery w/ another man’s wife and then had that husband killed
- b) What David did Was Unthinkable, Evil, Revolting...
- c) David went to God with a Broken and Repentant Heart (**Psalm 51:1-3; 7-12**)
- d) God forgave David’s sins and restored that Broke Relationship (**2 Samuel 12:13**)

B. THE GRACE OF GOD IS A GIFT THAT BRINGS JOY

Saving Grace Means Three Things...

1. GRACE MEANS—GIVING

- a) Greek Word Charis — it means “A gift that brings joy”, or “unmerited favor”
- b) *Romans 6:23b “the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

2. GRACE MEANS—FORGIVING

- a) Being forgiven by one who you have offended—is the greatest gift that person can give you
- b) Grace is the most extreme expression of God’s love toward a sinner
- c) It is God’s Desire to Forgive Us (**Psalm 86:5**)

3. GRACE MEANS—GIVING THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT WE DESERVE

- a) As one said it: *“Grace is favor bestowed, when wrath is owed.”*
- b) Grace Cannot Be Understood Apart From God’s Holiness...
- c) God is Holy—and God has a Holy Revulsion to Evil & Sin
- d) God Decided to Pay the Penalty that We Could Not Pay (**Romans 5:8-9**)

4. G.R.A.C.E. → G–God’s R–Riches A–at C–Christ’s E–Expense (Heb 2:9**)**

C. GRACE IS A WAY (SYSTEM / PLAN) THAT GOD SAVES SINNERS

1. Think of Heaven a a Celestial City Enclosed by Gigantic Unscalable Walls

- a) You can see it from afar and your Life is Drawing You Closer to it...
- b) And Let’s say (For Illust. sake) You Can see Two Gates that allow entry

2. Over One Gate You See a Sign: LAW — Over the Other a sign: GRACE

- a) There is a large group of people lined up at each gate, and you’re in one of the lines

3. The LAW Gate is Only Open IF You’ve Obeyed God’s Laws Perfectly and have never sinned

- a) Many are lined up thinking they will enter through the Law Gate...
But This Gate is Forever Closed to Those Who Have Violated it

- b) Every Human Being Lives Under a Law Code Revealed by God
- c) Paul called it *“the law of sin and death.” (Rom 8:2)*
The Law of Sin and Death states—IF YOU SIN—YOU DIE
- d) It is the Law that was in place Since the Garden of Eden
“the wages of sin is death...” (Rom 6:23)

4. But There is Another Gate—the GRACE Gate

- a) This Gate is Open to People Who Humble Themselves before God Who then Lifts Them Up.
- b) Those in this Line Realize They’re Sins Have Blocked Them from the LAW Gate and so they cast themselves before the Throne a Plead for Mercy
- c) The Grace Gate is Open Because of Jesus **(Romans 6:23)**

5. You Can See These Two Gates in a Parable...

- a) Notice How Two People Trying to Approach God From These Two Gates...
A Pharisee and a Tax Collector **(Luke 18:9–14)**
- b) Two People—Two Gates—Two Approaches to God
- c) The LAW Gate is Closed Unless You Have Perfectly Kept the Law and Never Sinned
- d) The GRACE Gate is Open if You Humble Yourself in Loving Obedience

II. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR US

A. WE ALL NEED GRACE

- 1. So Many Misunderstand this universal truth—**
 - a) they think they’re a “good person” who doesn’t need grace
 - b) They’re Good Enough the Way they Are!
- 2. “The one spiritual disease is thinking that one is quite well.”**
(G.K. Chesterton)
- 3. ALL Have sinned against God and We Cannot Atone for Your Own Sins...**
 - a) The Moralist Thinks He’s a Good Person—He Doesn’t Need the Blood of Jesus
 - b) The Intellectual Has All the Answers—He doesn’t Need the Blood of Jesus
 - c) The Religious Person Does All the Right Things—Why Would He Need Grace?
- 4. All Have Sinned and All Need Grace! We Cannot Atone For Our Own Sin**

B. THE AMAZING GRACE OF GOD CAME AT A TERRIBLE COST

- 1. Grace is a Free Gift—But it Cost a Terrible Price (Eph 1:7)**
 - a) Jesus Paid the Debt We Owed in Full by His Blood...
 - b) Jesus didn’t just offer some of His blood—He Gave it All!
 - c) Jesus Gave it All to Pay it All For Our Sins
- 2. Which is Why There’s No Other Way to the Father Except Through Jesus!**
 - a) Jesus is the Only Way to the Father—the Only Way to be Saved...
 - b) but what about My Way? And All the Other Ways?

- c) But We Want to Save Ourselves—through Science and Technology,
Or Psychology or worldly philosophies so we can feel good about saving ourself!
- d) All the Religions of the World, All the Philosophies, All the World Views and Belief
Systems... There is Not Grace There
- e) Grace is ONLY Found in Christ and No Where Else!

3. Grace is Offered Freely—But It Was Purchased at a Terrible Cost

Which is Why it Cannot Be Earned—but has some conditions

- a) We Must Be IN CHRIST to Enter This Grace Gate! (**Rom 8:1 > Gal 3:26-27**)
- b) We Must STAY in Christ to Enter this Grace Gate!

We Live for God Now—not for Sin (**Romans 6:1-4**)

C. IS IT POSSIBLE TO FALL FROM GRACE?

- 1. The Bible Says Yes—It is Possible to Fall From Grace (Galatians 5:4)**
- 2. Maybe The Easiest Way to Fall from Grace is to Think You Don't Need it!**
- 3. And Another Way is To Not Use It—Like the PARABLE of the
UNMERCIFUL SERVANT... (Matthew 18:21–35)**

*“He who cannot forgive another breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself.”
(George Herbert)*

CONCLUSION:

A. FOR 12 HOURS groups like Gun's and Roses have blasted the crowd through banks of speakers

1. It is Whimbley Stadium full of fans already high on booze and dope. The crowd yells for more and the bands keep playing to the crowd.
2. Backstage is a young woman named Jessye Norman, who is talking to Bill Moyers about the song “Amazing Grace.”
3. The Hymn was written by John Newton, a cruel Slave Trader who called out to God in the middle of a Storm that he thought would kill him and everyone on board.
4. His life was changed and he renounced slavery and became a Christian. But he never forgot that God had “saved a wretch like me.”
5. The Bands have left the stage and a single circle of light follows her on the stage.
6. She is an African-American Young Woman who walks onto the stage with no band, no instruments, just Jessye in front of a rowdy rock crowd.
7. Some are yelling for More Guns and Roses. The Scene is getting ugly.
8. Alone, a cappella, Jessye Norman begins to sing very slowly...
9. “Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, Was Blind but now I see.”
10. Something remarkable happened that night. 70,000 rowdy fans fall silent before her song of grace.
11. By the time she has reached the 2nd verse, several thousand voices are singing along, digging far back in almost forgotten memories, for words they heard long ago.

12. Later she confessed that she had no idea what power descended on Wembley Stadium that night. But isn't it obvious that the world is hungry and thirsty for grace.

13. When grace descends, the world falls silent. (Phillip Yancey)

B. Grace is Amazing Because it's Not Fair

**G.R.A.C.E. — It is God's Riches At Christ's Expense
(Ephesians 2:4–5)**