

Ephesians 1:3-6 – The Mystery of God’s Grace

- 1) Today’s attribute is the Grace of God
- 2) Exodus 34:6: God presented Himself to Moses as a “Compassionate and gracious God”
- 3) “Compassionate” and “gracious” are paired together ten times in the Old Testament
 - a) “Compassionate” is translated by some as “merciful”
 - b) This helps us understand the subtle difference between “mercy” and “grace”
 - i) “Mercy” involves the withholding of punishment deserved – as in “slow to anger”
 - ii) “Grace” involves the granting of blessings undeserved – as in “abounding in steadfast love”
- 4) In John’s Gospel, “Grace” and “Truth” are paired together twice (1:14 and 17), and also in Colossians 1:6
 - a) Exodus 34:7, Isaiah 57:19-21 (also 48:22), Nahum 1:3: “Truth” reminds us that God does not ignore sin
 - b) Psalm 85:9-10, John 14:6, Romans 3:26, 1 Timothy 2:5: “Grace” reminds us that the only way to peace with God is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, where His faithfulness to God is given to us and in exchange He takes on our sinfulness and fulfills in His death the death our sins deserve
- 5) God exhibits two kinds of grace
 - a) Matthew 5:45 and Acts 14:17: God shows “**common grace**” in this life even those who do not believe
 - b) Romans 11:6, Ephesians 1:6: God shows “**saving grace**” that lasts to eternity to those who surrender themselves to God, trusting only the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and not in any of their own ‘goodness’
- 6) Romans 8:32: God’s grace supplies the believer with all that is needed for eternal life
 - a) The sacrifice of Jesus is sufficient in itself to save us from the penalty of sin
 - b) Romans 8:1-30: God’s love operates in all areas of our lives, even bringing meaning and purpose to our suffering
- 7) Our response to that grace is a work in progress
 - a) Romans 7:21-24, Philippians 3:12-14: In this life, we struggle against sin - sometimes falling, sometimes standing against it
 - b) John 3:1-3, Ephesians 5:27: Our love for God will only be made perfect at our resurrection
- 8) God’s grace accomplishes much in us
 - a) Matthew 6:14-15, 18:23-35; John 13:34; 1 John 4:11: God extends grace to us so we may show grace to others
 - b) Titus 2:11-14: The grace of God also persuades us to reject temptation when it arises in our hearts
 - c) Hebrews 4:14-16: Grace is not intended to be “once and done” but rather a moment-by-moment means to drawing near to God in the face of sin and suffering
- 9) Romans 6:1-2, Galatians 6:7, Titus 2:11-12, Jude 1:4: On the other hand, we abuse the grace of God when we think it gives us the right to do as we please without regard for God or for what it cost Jesus to provide the opportunity for this grace
 - a) This is the theme of all of Romans 6
 - b) This is the danger of teaching that, because of God’s grace, once we “accept Christ” our salvation is secure and cannot be taken from us
 - i) God’s promise of salvation by grace *is* secure
 - ii) Hebrews 12:1-2: But true faith, receiving this promise, will not let the believer be content with sin instead motivating us to actively resist sinning, though at times sins will seem to be winning in us
 - iii) Grace offers the forgiveness we need daily as we maintain the fight against the sin that remains in us