

## Grace – Part 2

In the broad context, we are in the Kingdom of God, came through the doorway of salvation to look at the fuel of faith and so on. And now we come to the subject of grace. The first subtopic is the transcendence of grace because everything in our Christian walk is by the grace of God. We'll complete the transcendence of grace today. Last time, just to mention, we looked at creation as the testimony of God given by grace, that He created us in His image as eternal spirit creatures with special gifts and dominion over the rest of the created order here on planet Earth, all by the grace of God. We looked at the revelations of God, the external witness of creation, the internal witness of the conscience; He put eternity in our hearts. He provided miracles as testimony. He upholds all of His creation. He pays attention to us down to numbering the hairs on our head. He gave us the written word, the incarnate word and prophecy all by His grace. The relationship we have with God, even begins with our having choice so the relationship may be of love and not of mechanical robotic slavery. Then we began to look at the forbearance of God where He withholds the expression of His judgment unto wrath on us so that His love expressed through His grace may be manifested upon us as His children. We looked at the restraining grace of God beginning with His forbearance, holding back His own judgment by Himself of us and holding back, restraining Satan just as so vividly testified by the book of Job; and then restraining the evil in the heart of man, all by the grace of God.

Then we moved on last time to at least initiate the discussion of grace to the saints. And we looked at our own salvation as the testimony of that. Because I John 5:1 tells us – Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Now who can merit being born of God...being born again is the experience that we've all shared is all by the grace of God? But it doesn't stop there. Justification, being declared righteous before God is all by the grace of God. But how about sanctification; or more specifically what we call progressive sanctification, or purification? Philippians 2:12-13 – Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God Who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure. So I ask: Can any man deserve to have God willing and working within him? If no man can deserve having this creator God of Genesis 1:1 willing and working within him, then that willing and working is all by the grace of God. These three Scriptures, we all know. Romans 3:23 – For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And Romans 6:23 – The wages of sin is death. All of us have sinned and earned death and death in that sense means spiritual death which carried to its eternity future projection would mean the absence of union with God while experiencing the fullness of the wrath of God which is what Hell itself is, condemned to that eternal state.

Yet for us, Romans 8:1 – There is therefore, now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So we have no condemnation and we get Heaven, experiencing communion with God for eternity future unto oneness with Him. How can all that be? It's all by the grace of God. And not only do we have no condemnation, in the meantime here on planet Earth, we have confident access to God. Ephesians 3:12 – In Whom (speaking of Jesus) we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. Confident access to the creator God of Genesis 1:1. Can you just imagine that? Being a created being, a pot made by that potter, but He's created us for relationship with him and now provided confident access to him. That helped open up my prayer life to know that I could come in confidently. I didn't have to reach a standard of righteousness to come through that open veil into His presence. Colossians 1:27 – Christ in you, the hope of

glory. Do you not know that the Spirit of Christ is within you? So I look at these things the following way. Hope is optimistic expectation. But we don't have just any optimistic expectation; we have the hope of glory. Now glory is one of those words that can be difficult to get a definition around. John Piper, for those who've read him know that he reaches a point of saying just throw up your hands because you're talking about the very Godness of God when you use words like holy and glory. So he says when you get to the root, you can almost regard it as glory as holiness revealed. And holiness is glory concealed; because you're talking about the Godness of God Himself. Another definition of glory is the intrinsic, eternal perfections of God. We have that hope; we have that optimistic expectation of experiencing the Godness of God in all His glory. And it's there by the grace of God.

Beyond hope we have faith. If hope is an optimistic expectation, the Bible thankfully defines faith for us. Hebrews 11:1 – Faith is the assurance of things hoped for. So we don't just have a vague hope of glory, we have assurance of what we hope for, which is called faith. And remember that faith comes as a gift from God, all by the grace of God. I John 5:13 – These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life. So we have optimistic expectation, hope; then we have assurance of that hope. Then we have assurance of our salvation for eternal life with our God and through our God as a result of that faith, all by the grace of God. John 10:27 – My sheep hear My voice. We're the sheep and we can hear the voice of God. Now, who among us can earn hearing the voice of God? It's all by the grace of God that we hear. So how do we hear? John 14:16-17 – And I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper that He may be with you forever, that is the Spirit of truth (speaking of the Holy Spirit). So what does the indwelling Spirit of truth do? He helps us hear the voice of God. John 15:26 – He (the Holy Spirit) will bear witness of Me (Jesus, the Son of God). Well why is that? We have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth who bears witness of the One who is the truth; because Jesus tells us, I am the truth. Remember, we defined truth as what God is and how God views everything else? So using that definition of truth, we can see how these concepts merge. Jesus is God, the Son of God in the trinity; but He is God Himself. So He is God and He came to display for us, to model for us and to teach us how God views all other reality, particularly as that reality is all summed up in Jesus. So the Spirit of truth can bear witness of the truth and the truth is all summed up in Jesus. Now who can earn such a sequence of events working in our lives so that we can hear the truth of God and recognize His voice? It's all by the grace of God.

The Spirit of truth reveals mysteries of God to us. But one of the greatest revelations about the mysteries of God is that there will always be mysteries of God beyond what we have had revealed to us. Because can you imagine a finite created being ever becoming omniscient? If we are worshipping an omniscient being, and we cannot be omniscient ourselves as finite created beings, then there will always be part of the omniscience of God that we don't have directly revealed to us. That's why Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us – the things that are revealed are for us; but the things that are not are for God. And He in His omniscience is the best judge of what to reveal to us and when to reveal it and so on. So our task is to seek and then rest in the holiness of that God and let Him determine the degree of revelation and the time thereof. Ephesians 3:19 – And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. God will always transcend our knowledge of God. That's part of the transcendent majesty of God. Now who can earn a revelation of the transcendent majesty of our holy God? We can't. It's all by the grace of God.

Romans 8:28 – And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. So as born again Christians we love God because He first loved us. We know love by this; that He laid down His life for us, and we are called according to His purposes. Now who can earn having all things work together for good? We can't earn that. That's all by the grace of God.

Even our suffering, remember, works together for good. Recall tribulation/revelation. It reveals me to me. Circumstances don't make the man, remember, they only reveal them to himself. And that's true for us as Christians. It reveals me to me, Christ to me, Christ in me to me, and Christ in me to others who watch and are provoked to say, would you explain to me how you manage to keep your eyes toward Heaven, reflecting the joy, the love, and the peace of God Himself in the midst of the travail that you're enduring. I can't do that. A natural man can't do that. How can you do that? Well then you can explain the reason for the hope that is within you. And that's brought about because of how they see you taking up your cross and embracing the tribulation revelation which includes the revelation of God in you to them.

Suffering also reveals secret sin. It reveals when you're walking by the flesh. It reveals what your faith is in. Is your faith in your health? Is your faith in your wealth? Is your faith in your personality, your expressive ability, oratorical skills, analytical, financial skills? Is your faith in any of that? Because suffering will reveal to you that which you're placing your faith in at its root. As we're convicted of that and then repent of that and confess it, well look what happens. Romans 5:20 (in the King James Version) – But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. As we repent and receive forgiveness, because the wages have been paid for, not because sin is excused, but because Jesus Christ, the Son of God came to Earth and paid the price for all the sins of all men, all by the grace of God. But then as we have that secret sin revealed, we receive a revelation of the grace of God that is bigger than we ever thought it was. Because as long as we operate in the delusion that our sins are small, we will tend to walk out our faith believing we only needed a small amount of grace from a small Savior, reflective of a small love from a small God to cover our small sin. But when you receive the revelation that even after salvation, 99% of your thought life is rooted and grounded in the flesh with self as the basis, and you get that revelation of that secret sin and you receive the revelation but the grace of God had it covered before you knew it existed. That's when the grace of God becomes amazing to you. Then when you repeat that cycle, you learn that God's grace will always transcend your sin. That's part of the revelation of the transcendent majesty of God.

Entering that crescendo of delight about the revelation of your secret sin will always result in joy. Because every sin kept secret limits our revelation of the transcending grace of God that abounds beyond our sin. So if we want to have our knowledge of the grace of God grow, then pray as David prayed. Psalms 19:12 – Cleanse Thou me of secret thoughts. Because who would want to keep a sin secret when keeping it secret restricts the revelation of the grace of God. So such revelation is by the grace of God. The provocation of such prayers is by the grace of God. And those revelations result in joy; because joy, that euphoric condition of the inner man that is dwelling in a revelation of the amazing grace of God. So when you're cleansed of secret sins, grow in the revelation of the grace of God which was always so much bigger than you ever knew. Then you grow in the revelation of that grace and thus, grow in the joy of the Lord. And that ends the sequence so that as you begin with confessing secret sins that have been revealed to

you, the printout at the end is you grow in the joy of the Lord. And that joy of the Lord becomes your strength to take on the next degree of testing and trial.

What about the love of God? Who among us deserves the love of God? Remember love is a passion for oneness. This creator God is love and He has a passion for oneness with us. He's delighted that we're saved; but He's not satisfied. He's not satisfied because you still have a part of your unrenewed mind that's exalting itself against the knowledge of God. So He can't be satisfied because His relationship with you has not been consummated unto oneness. And that's why he is so insistent on disciplining those whom He loves; because if they retain something that is anti-God, preventing coming into oneness with God, His love is not fulfilled and how can this God Who is love, be satisfied until His love for you is fulfilled? His love is unconditional. He sets it upon you. You don't have to jump a certain height to earn it. Romans 8:38-39 – For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. He didn't just set His love upon you; He set it upon you and has an attitude that He will allow nothing to separate you from His love. So imagine that! That no created thing can separate you from the love of the only uncreated thing in all of existence. That sovereign holy God Who created the Heavens and the Earth loves you so much that he's not satisfied until He's one with you and He will never, ever, ever allow any created thing to separate you from His love...all unmerited, all by the grace of God.

Love always manifests as grace. So how much did Jesus love us? This is review for some of us; but listen closely because it's one of the most stupendous revelations in the Bible. He loves us as much as God loves Himself. John 15:9, Jesus is saying – Just as the Father has loved Me, the Son, I have also loved you. So naturally He says, I love you as much as the Father loves Me, the Son of God. So we have to ask ourselves the question: How much does the Father love the Son? John 10:30 – The Father and I are one. Because we worship our one God, expressed as three persons; so how can one member of the Trinity love another member of the Trinity less than that first member of the Trinity loves Himself? Because it is our one God. So I ask, can the Father love the Son less than He loves Himself? Not if they're one; He cannot. So the Father can't love the Son less than He loves Himself; because the Father and Son are one. Jesus loves us as much as the Father loves Him. So when you look at how that prints out, it prints out that the Father loves us as much as He loves the Son which is as much as He loves Himself. The Son loves us as much as the Father loves Him which is as much as the Father loves Himself. So the printout on those different little equations is that God loves us as much as He loves Himself. So when people say, if God would just do this or that, then I would know He loves me, are asking that which can't be answered; because God has already told us in His Word that He loves us as much as He loves Himself. John 17:23, Jesus praying to the Father says – that the world may know that You the Father sent Me, the Son and did love them even as You love Me. Imagine that! That's just hard to accept on an emotional basis, that God loves us as much as He loves Himself.

Well who can earn not only being loved, but being loved in a way that's totally unearned; and being loved with the love that will allow nothing to separate you from it? And being loved with a love which can't be satisfied until He's one with you and be loved with a love as much as God loves Himself? What more can you ask for from God, you see? And it's all by the grace of God. So as saints, we have passed from being creations of God to being children of God. I John 3:1 –

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God. And we're not just called children of God, the verse continues...and such we are. So who can merit being a child of this holy God, the only uncreated thing in all of existence, the only self-determined thing in all of existence, the only thing which has its meaning and value intrinsic within Himself? Everything else has its meaning and value set by this holy creator God of Genesis 1:1 and we're children of that holy God? Oh, all by the grace of God.

How about armor, gifts, and fruits? Ephesians 6:13-17 describes the armor of God available to us: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God. Who can earn all of those aspects of God Himself? We are given the armor all by the grace of God. I Corinthians 12:8-10 lists the gifts of the Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, other miracles, prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, discernment of spirits. Who can earn these gifts of the Holy Spirit? By definition even, a gift is unearned and unpurchased. But we have them as gifts of the Holy Spirit of God. Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, patience, and self control. But who can earn the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God because the fruit that are being described represent what God Himself looks like. Because the Holy Spirit is not going to bear fruit in your life that is different from what God is. That's part of our growing and being transformed into Christlikeness; because that's what God is. So who can earn having the fruit of God Himself born in your life to reflect the very essences of God Himself? It's all by the grace of God.

Mediation and intercession. Romans 8:26 – For we do not know how to pray as we should; but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. That's the second Scripture that opened up my prayer life; because every prayer felt inadequate. Because compared to the prayers of God, every prayer is inadequate. But thank God, this God, through His grace didn't let it stop there. God Himself in the person of the Holy Spirit takes my inappropriate, inadequate, weak, feeble prayers and converts them into perfect missiles to the heart of the Father God, interceding for us in a way that's just unimaginable because none of us know how to pray as we should. I don't care who it is; if it's missionary, if it's pastor, if it's priest, the Bible says none of us know how to pray as we should. But do we worry and thus, not pray? No. Because by the grace of God we have the Holy Spirit interceding for us to take imperfect prayers and convert them into perfect prayers before our Holy God. Hebrews 7:25 – Since He Jesus always lives to make intercession for them. And now, we are part of that “them.” Can you imagine that...that the Son of God always lives to make intercession for us? To stand in the gap between the way things are and the way things ought to be? Imagine that! I Timothy 2:5 – For there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. One mediator, the Son of God. Imagine that! All by the grace of God. Nobody can earn such mediation by God Himself. Nobody can earn such intercession by God Himself; intercession by the Son and the Holy Spirit. It's all by the grace of God.

Well what about titles that apply to us as Christians? His saints. Romans 12:1, we're told to be living sacrifices. We don't much like that one. II Corinthians 6:16 – You are the temple of the living God. II Corinthians 3:2-3 – You are a letter of Christ. I Peter 2:9 – You're a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. II Corinthians 4:7 – We have this treasure of the gospel of Jesus Christ as earthen vessels. II Corinthians 5:20 – We are ambassadors for Christ. Matthew 5:13 – You're the salt of the Earth. Matthew 5:14 – You're

the light of the world. Romans 8:37 (King James Version) – In all these things, we're more than conquerors. Romans 8:17 (King James Version) – And if children then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. That's an impressive list of titles and descriptions of who we are in Christ. Has any man ever earned any of those titles and descriptions? Well, if not, then they're all by the grace of God.

To what purpose? To the purposes of Jesus Christ that I succinctly summarized. Luke 19:10 – For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. John 10:10 – I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. I John 3:8 – The Son of God appeared for this purpose that He might destroy the works of the devil. So listen to this. We are children of God, born of God, heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ. And He told us, remember, in the Word of God the Son said the Father has given all things to Him; the Father withholds no things from Him. So whatever Jesus Christ has from the Father, we have through Jesus Christ. Imagine that! We're living epistles, living sacrifices, earthen vessels that contain the treasure, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, ambassadors for Christ, salt of the Earth, lights of the world, more than conquerors, temples of God, a people of God, a chosen race, all for the purposes of God on planet Earth to seek and to save that which was lost, to usher in the abundant life, and thereby to destroy the works of the devil; because the works of the devil remember are to keep unbelievers from believing and to keep believers from accessing the abundant life. Imagine that! All by the grace of God. To that we have to say as Paul said in II Corinthians 2:16 – Who is adequate for these things? And that freed me to teach when I read that Scripture; because I didn't have to be adequate; because who is adequate? Paul himself penned the words, who is adequate for these things? Well I don't think I will become adequate. But then we answer as Paul wrote in II Corinthians 3:5 – Our adequacy is from God. How? By the grace of God. So called to teach; because I'm adequate? No, because the adequacy is of God all by His grace. And then we'll know when we look at all those titles and descriptions and the callings of God that are without repentance and know that our role in fulfilling the purposes of God Himself on planet Earth is all by the grace of God.

Every spiritual blessing; all of these items that I've reviewed up to this point under the common grace of God, and under the grace of God to the saints represent blessings and most represent spiritual blessings. We don't know all the spiritual blessings of God because He is transcendent. But one thing that we do know about the spiritual blessings of God, whatever they are, we have all of them whether we know it or not. Ephesians 1:3 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places— meaning in the spirit realm. So we have every spiritual blessing even if we don't understand in our finite created being status what all those blessings might be. But we have them. Imagine that! All by the grace of God.

So why did God create the heavens and the earth? Why did God create man? Why did God allow man to fail? Why did God provide redemption to us through His Son Jesus Christ? Well, one reason is as follows: Because had God done none of those things, then a major part of the essence of God Himself and the character of God Himself would have remained forever unknown. Well, what character trait or essence is that? Ephesians 2:1-8 tells us that though we were children of wrath...but God. Well why is the "but God" in there? We get the benefit of salvation and all I've been talking about that we gain through Jesus Christ. But God... in order

that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. So you, as small as you perceive yourself to be before your creator God, are a trophy of the grace of God. You are the revelation of the grace of God, not just for today, not just for tomorrow, but for the ages to come. That's one thing I believe into which the angels long to look as we're told in I Peter 1:12. The angels dwelled in the presence of God Himself; but they could not know the grace of God except by looking at what God is...holy, holy, holy; other than, sovereign and transcendent, looking at what He is, then looking at what we were, children of wrath, fallen human beings, hostile to God, in opposition to God, refusing God, rejecting God...but God. They look at what He is and look at what we were...but God. And that becomes the testimony for the ages to come of the grace of God. And the angels themselves have to...how could you not explode in singing holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; including holy (other than) is the grace of God. When they look at what He is and what we were, but what God did in the face of that, that's the very definition of the transcendent grace of God. It is other than. That's why His grace is sufficient. If God's grace is sufficient for that, what would His grace be insufficient for? It is always sufficient because it is always transcendent. So may we never nullify the grace of God by basing our relationship with God on our own accomplishments, our own willpower, our own achievements, our own anything because all of that will simply nullify the grace of God that is amazing. We swim in a sea of it, common grace and specific grace to the saints. That's why no man should boast except of Jesus Christ and Him crucified which is the culmination of the revelation of the grace of God for the ages to come. Imagine that!

So my time is up and I thank you for listening.