



GRACE-LOVE-TRUTH COURSE.

LESSON 1A: GRACE

LESSON 1A: GRACE

INDEX

1. AMAZING GRACE.

- 1.1 WHAT IS GRACE?
- 1.2 WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE ALONE (Sola Gratia)
- 1.3 IT'S NOT MAINTENANCE BY WORKS
- 1.4 JESUS' GRACE IS OUR RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD
- 1.5 GRACE PREACHING HAS GREAT HISTORICAL ROOTS
- 1.6 SALVATION BY GRACE IS THE FULL PACKAGE OF LIFE NOW
- 1.7 GRACE QUALIFIES
- 1.8 GRACE BLESSES
- 1.9 GRACE OFFENDS

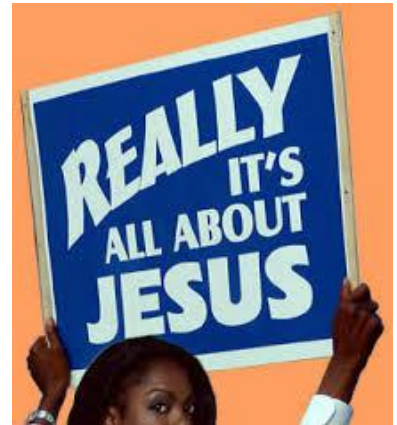
2. ONE GOSPEL

- 2.1 ONE MESSAGE OF GOOD NEWS
- 2.2 THE GOSPEL OF GRACE AND THE KINGDOM
- 2.3 STICK TO THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

3. GROUP EXERCISE

- 3.1 THE PRODIGAL SON

CONCLUSION



1. AMAZING GRACE.

1.1 WHAT IS GRACE?

John 1:14 The Word (Greek: logos) became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Firstly, as hard as it may be to grasp, in Christian terms, grace is not a doctrine or a concept, grace is a person, Jesus Christ. Without Jesus there is no true grace. Jesus is grace personified. There are of course doctrines of grace found in other spiritual disciplines such as the New Age Movement, however true Godly grace and Jesus Christ cannot be separated. As Christians we are called to reveal and promote Jesus Christ and not some intellectual doctrine of grace. Emphasising a doctrine of grace can divide and confuse, but revealing the person of grace, Jesus Christ brings us together as the Body of Christ, his Church.

The first mention of grace in the New Testament is found in John 1:14. The New Testament Greek word for grace is “χάρις” pronounced "charis". Thayer's defines this as that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness and a grace of speech, goodwill, loving-kindness and favour, of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues. The Greek word "charis" is closely related to the foundational word “χαίρω” (chairō), meaning to rejoice, be glad, to rejoice exceedingly, to be well and to thrive.

The first mention of grace in the Old Testament is found in Genesis 6:8, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." The Old Testament Hebrew word for grace is “חֵן” (chen) pronounced "khane" which Strong defines as subjectively meaning; kindness and favour and objectively meaning; beauty, favour, grace, pleasant, precious and well favoured. In the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, the Hebrew word "khane" is translated as the Greek word "charis".

A closer study of Scripture and the practices of Jesus will show that grace is:

Our unearned, unconditional blessing from God.

The free gift of eternal life.

God's goodness to us.

His unconditional, freely given, love for us.

God's empowerment of us by His Spirit.

The fulfilment of God's promises in Christ.

God's riches at Christ expense.

Jesus' fulfilment of Scripture and Law on our behalf.

God's empowering to overcome sin.

Our qualification before God.

Blessing upon blessing.

The expression of God's love.

God's mercy, plus God's adoption of us as His children.

Simply put, grace is God's unmerited, undeserved and unearned favour in Jesus Christ.



1.2 WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE ALONE (Sola Gratia)

Eph 2:4-10 "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do".



This is the great revelation of Jesus Christ, the unique truth of Christianity, the dividing line between us and all other religious. Salvation is by grace alone. There is no other religion or system that offers

such truth or such a one sided good deal, it truly is "good news". Religion per say, is always about works and performance, grace is about relationship God through Jesus Christ.

The characteristics of salvation by grace are:

It flows from God's great love and mercy. It is based on the kindness of God. It is centred on Jesus Christ and His life imputed to us. It is activated and appropriated by faith; a trust in God's goodness. It is a free gift from a loving heavenly Father. Nothing on our part has, or can, earn this gift. Our good or bad works have no bearing on our salvation and therefore we have nothing we can boast about as nothing we did or didn't do qualified us in any way to be saved. We were created for the purpose of being saved by God's grace so that we can be intimate with our Father and do His will and good works.

1.3 IT'S NOT MAINTENANCE BY WORKS

Rom 11:5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

The big battle in the minds of many believers is that good works still have some part in maintaining our justified, forgiven and saved state. Scripture makes it very clear that this is not so. To add any condition or law to grace is to deny the sufficiency of God's grace and the finished work of the Cross. Grace living is about a total dependence on God's goodness and the empowering of the Holy Spirit. It is not based on our ability or will to do what is right. The good works we now do flow out of the grace we have received, not the other way around. The root of true and Godly works is the grace of Jesus Christ. *We love Him, because He first loved us (1Jn.4:19).*

Act 15:11 No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

Rom 3:23 ...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Rom 4:16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.



1.4 JESUS' GRACE IS OUR RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD

Our right standing or "righteousness" with God is His love gift to us through Jesus Christ. Christ's righteousness has been imputed to all who choose to believe in Him as Lord and Saviour. This is the great exchange that took place on the cross. Jesus' righteousness for our sin. Now we are no longer slaves to sin but we are now slaves to righteousness (Rom.6:18). This will be discussed in more detail in part 5 which is about Righteousness.

1.5 GRACE PREACHING HAS GREAT HISTORICAL ROOTS

The present emphasis on grace is not new. The centrality of Jesus' and His grace is both scriptural and historical. Many great historical preachers and teachers understood the significance and uniqueness of Jesus' grace.

i) Martin Luther (1483-1546). The great German Reformer.

"This grace of God is a very great, strong, mighty and active thing. It does not lie asleep in the soul. Grace hears, leads, drives, draws, changes, works all in man, and lets itself be distinctly felt and experienced. It is hidden, but its works are evident"..... "So Paul in Titus 3:5-7 discards all boasted free will, all human virtue, righteousness, and good works. He concludes that they are all nothing and are wholly perverted, however brilliant and worthy they may appear, and teaches that we must be saved solely by the grace of God, which is effective for all believers who desire it from a correct conception of their own ruin and nothingness." "Yes, dear friend, you must first possess heaven and salvation before you can do good works. Works never merit heaven; heaven is conferred purely of grace." "The delusive doctrine of works blinds the Christian's eyes, perverts a right understanding of faith, and forces him from the way of truth and salvation." "He who does not receive salvation purely through grace, independently of all good works, certainly will never secure it." "Truly, then, we are saved by grace alone, without works or other merit." "Notice John 3:16, all who believe have eternal life. That being true, believers certainly are just and holy without works. Works contribute nothing to justification. It is effected by pure grace richly poured out upon us." "We receive forgiveness and grace at no cost or labour on our part, but not without cost and labour on the part of Christ." "Our salvation must exist, not in our righteousness, but...in Christ's righteousness. ...Let his righteousness and grace, not yours, be your refuge'. (M. Luther, Sola Gratia, sermon on Titus 3)

ii) Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981). Famous Evangelical London preacher .

"It is grace at the beginning, and grace at the end. So that when you and I come to lie upon our death beds, the one thing that should comfort and help and strengthen us there is the thing that helped us in the beginning. Not what we have been, not what we have done, but the Grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Christian life starts with grace, it must continue with grace, it ends with grace. Grace wondrous grace. By the grace of God I am what I am. Yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me."

"We are Christians entirely and solely as the result of the grace of God. Let us remind ourselves once more that 'grace' means unmerited, undeserved favour. It is an action which arises entirely from the gracious character of God. So the fundamental proposition is that salvation is something that comes to us entirely from God's side. What is still more important is this, that it not only comes from God's side, it comes to us in spite of ourselves—'unmerited' favour. In other words, it is not God's response to anything in us. Now there are many people who seem to think that it is—that salvation is God's response to something in us. But the word 'grace' excludes that. It is in spite of us. Salvation is not in any sense God's response to anything in us. It is not something that we in any sense deserve or merit. The whole essence of the teaching at this point, and everywhere in all the New Testament, is that we have no sort or kind of right whatsoever to salvation, that the whole glory of salvation is, that though we deserved nothing but punishment and hell and banishment out of the sight of God to all eternity, yet God, of His own love and grace and wondrous mercy, has granted us this salvation. Now that is the entire meaning of this term 'grace'. Creatures who were spiritually dead are now alive—how has it happened? Can a dead man raise himself? It is impossible. There is only one answer, 'By grace ye are saved'. (God's Way of Reconciliation—An Exposition of Ephesians 2, 1972, p. 130.)

iii) Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), influential English preacher and evangelist.

"If heaven were by merit, it would never be heaven to me, for if I were in it I should say, 'I am sure I am here by mistake; I am sure this is not my place; I have no claim to it.' But if it be of grace and not of works, then we may walk into heaven with boldness."

iv) Watchman Nee (1903-1972), Chinese evangelist, author and church planter

"Grace means that God does something for me; law means that I do something for God. God has certain holy and righteous demands which he places upon me: that is law. Now if law means that God requires something of me for their fulfilment, then deliverance from law means he no longer requires that from me, but himself provides it." "Man cannot rely on his own merit before God; it would overthrow the Lord's work, as though He had died in vain". "His Grace is sufficient! He has provided everything for you, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ". "We go to Christ for forgiveness & often the law to fight our sins: Foolish Galatians!...The righteous will live by faith."

v) D.L. Moody (1837-1899), prolific American evangelist.

"Grace means undeserved kindness. It is the gift of God to man the moment he sees he is unworthy of God's favour.... Grace isn't a little prayer you chant before receiving a meal. It's a way to live. The Law tells me how crooked I am. Grace comes along to straighten me out."

vi) A.W. Tozer (1897-1963), famous American preacher and author.

"All the infinite attributes of God rejoice together when a man believes in the grace of God and returns home (Luke 15)". "Grace is the goodness of God confronting human demerit". "As mercy is God's goodness confronting human misery and guilt, so grace is his goodness directed toward human debt and demerit". "Abounding sin is the terror of the world, but abounding grace is the hope of mankind". "It is by His grace that God imputes merit where none previously existed and declares no debt to be where one had been before". "The cross is the lightning rod of grace that short-circuits God's wrath to Christ so that only the light of His love remains for believers". "Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines him to bestow benefits on the undeserving". "The grace of God is infinite and beyond our ability to measure. His grace has no beginning and therefore no end".

1.6 SALVATION BY GRACE IS THE FULL PACKAGE OF LIFE NOW

John 10:10 "I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance, to the full, till it overflows"



One of the great misconceptions concerning salvation is that it simply means to be saved from sin and death - to receive eternal life. Jesus' grace earned so much more than that for us. Salvation is much more than just a future heavenly life to come, it is full and abundant life starting now and continuing into eternity. Grace is a continuing daily way of life. The Greek word for "to be saved or salvation" is "σώζω"; sozo. Thayer defines it as, "To save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction, from injury or peril. To save a suffering one from perishing, i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health. To preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save or rescue. To deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment and to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance." "Sozo" is a holistic package of both future eternal life and

the gift of abundant life right now. Grace not only qualifies us for eternal life but also health, wholeness, safety, forgiveness, blessing and victory over evil, today. This is kingdom living - accepting His gifts and learning to live and reign in Christ right here and right now. Grace qualifies us and empowers us in every way for this victorious kingdom life that is a witness to those around us. Grace empowers us in times of trials and suffering, it is a foundation and source of strength.

1.7 GRACE QUALIFIES

Col 1:12 "Giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light."

Many believers constantly feel unworthy and undeserving. This results in spiritual paralysis and passivity. This is one of the biggest indicators of a Law based belief system, or the mixing of Law and grace. Unworthiness stems from the belief that it is our performance or righteousness that qualifies us to be used by God. Deep down we all know that this is a shaky foundation which will always fail. Many of us live with a deep unspoken fear that God will at some stage "take away" or bring about terrible hardship so as to teach them a lesson or punish us because we have fallen short. Many feel guilty when they are blessed they suspect they are undeserving, or it's too good to be true and will soon be lost. This mentality is founded in Old Testament Law (of Moses). The Law always disqualifies us because it always points out our faults. Grace on the other hand qualifies us and points to Jesus as our only qualification. Jesus' grace and His kingdom with us, are unshakable (Heb.12:28) and therefore empowers us and gives us assurance and confidence to receive God's blessings and to minister effectively with spiritual power. Under grace we have confidence as we know that God is there to help us at all times (Heb.4:16).

1.8 GRACE BLESSES

John 1:16 (Amp.) "For out of His fullness (abundance) we have all received [all had a share and we were all supplied with] one grace after another and spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing and even favour upon favour and gift [heaped] upon gift".

The Law of Moses blesses and curses based on performance. In contrast the abundant overflowing grace of Jesus bring us blessing upon blessing because it is based on Jesus' performance and righteousness. Under grace our sin and curse were transferred to Jesus on the cross and his righteousness and blessings were transferred to us. It is the great exchanged of the cross. Because of this exchange we are now able to live with the expectation of God's continual blessing. Even when times are hard and suffering is intense, we live in anticipation of the better things soon to come through grace. This is known as "hope".



1.9 GRACE OFFENDS

Galatians 5:11 "Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision (i.e. the Law), why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished."

The cross heralded in the new system in which we are called to live - that of God's grace. Grace is scandalous. It is hard to accept, hard to believe, and hard to receive. Grace shocks us in what it offers as it defies our judgement based on logic. It is truly not of this world, it frightens us with what it has done for "sinners". Grace teaches us that God does for others what we would never do for them. We would save the "not-so-bad", but God starts with prostitutes, thieves, murders etc. and then works downward from there, no one, no matter how bad, is beyond God's grace. Grace is a gift that costs everything to the giver; Jesus, and nothing to the receiver; the "sinner". It is given to those who do not deserve it, barely recognise it, and hardly appreciate it. That is why God alone gets the

glory for our salvation which is by grace alone (Ephesians 2:8). Jesus did all the work necessary for our salvation when he died on the cross, "It is finished!" He cried (Jn.19:30). Grace focuses on Jesus work and performance, not ours, and this truth is offensive to the self righteous and to worldly thinking.

2. ONE GOSPEL

2.1 ONE MESSAGE OF GOOD NEWS

Luke 4:18 Jesus read "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor".

The Greek word for gospel is "εὐαγγέλιον," euaggelion, meaning a good message or good news. We are called to preach and teach the good news of Jesus Christ and His kingdom which is founded on God's grace. The gospel is described in a number of ways in the Scriptures:

The gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20:24)

The gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1)

The gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:3)

The gospel of God (Romans 1:1)

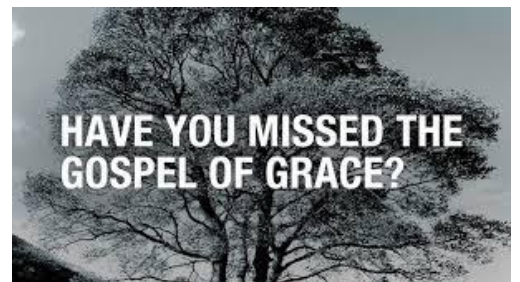
The gospel of peace (Romans 10:15)

Paul's gospel (Romans 2:16)

The gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19)

These designations are merely contextual and definitive. They are all one in the same gospel. This gospel has been progressively revealed by the Holy Spirit since the fall of mankind. It was finally given in its fullness to the Apostle Paul by the ascended and glorified Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:12).

A combined description of the gospel would be that it is "The good news of the God's grace, peace and the kingdom of His Son, Jesus Christ".



2.2 THE GOSPEL OF GRACE AND THE KINGDOM

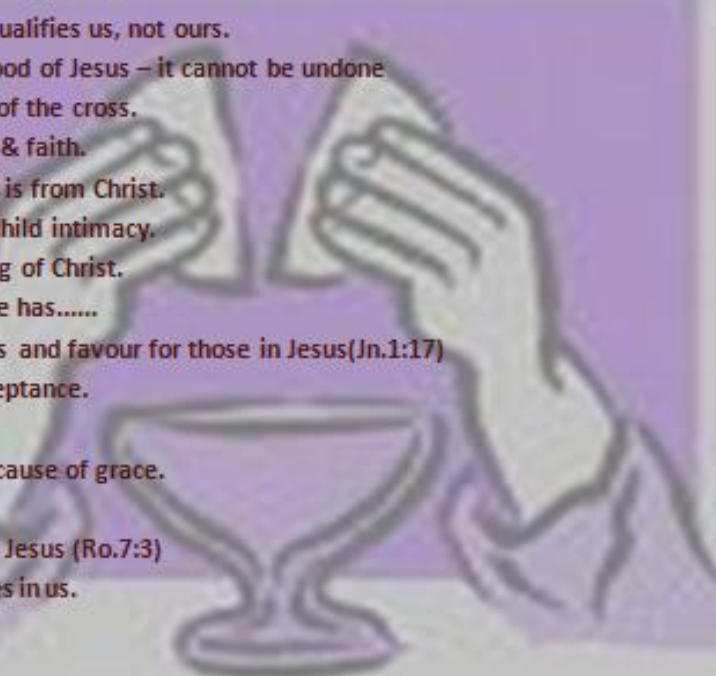
Acts 20:24, "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again."

The unique revelation that the glorified Jesus Christ gave to the Apostle Paul was the link between the kingdom and grace. Paul makes it clear in the above scripture that he was preaching the kingdom of God, but that his unique calling from Jesus calling was to testify to the Gospel of Grace. The revelation and manifestation of the kingdom reign and rule of Jesus Christ, first in the hearts of believers and then in the world, can only fully come about under the system of grace founded in Christ and His finished work on the cross. In a sense grace is the system by which the kingdom is administered. Jesus declared in Matthew 6:33, "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Jesus preached this knowing that His gift of righteousness is the foundation of the gospel of grace (see the part 5 on righteousness) which brings about entrance to, and citizenship in, the kingdom of God. This is the link that in times past has been missed. Many have preached the kingdom but have failed to see the link between the kingdom, righteousness and grace.

Colossians 4:6 states, "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone". Our response to the enquiries of the world is Jesus' grace and that the kingdom of God and grace are inextricably linked.

1. THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

- JESUS focussed – He is Grace
- Jesus' obedience qualifies us, not ours.
- The permanent blood of Jesus – it cannot be undone
- The finished work of the cross.
- Salvation by grace & faith.
- Our Righteousness is from Christ.
- Father & beloved child intimacy.
- Humility & boasting of Christ.
- Resting in Jesus: He has.....
- Continual blessings and favour for those in Jesus(Jn.1:17)
- Unconditional acceptance.
- Love & freedom.
- His good works because of grace.
- Reward & heaven.
- You are married to Jesus (Ro.7:3)
- The Holy Spirit lives in us.
- Peace / Shalom.



2.3 STICK TO THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

Galatians 1:6-7, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ."

Finally it is clear that undermining the gospel of grace is one of the keys schemes of Satan (Eph.6:11) and his false prophets and teachers. Adding Law to grace nullifies grace and denies the effectiveness of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. The Holy Spirit speaking through Paul was well aware of this battle and issue. The reading of Galatians, especially Galatians chapter 1, reveals the intensity of the battle to maintain the purity of the gospel.


Read through the following Scriptures: Galatians 1:1-24, 3:1-14 and reflect on the passion of Paul's defence of the gospel and grace.

3. GROUP EXERCISE


You may be asked to shared this in a group.

3.1 THE PRODIGAL SON

The famous parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 shows the Father's grace towards someone that should have been stoned according to the Law of Moses. But there is also another son in the story. This parable contains some of the most pertinent lessons on grace found in the Scriptures.



Carefully read this parable and comment on what you believe Jesus was trying to teach about the Father's love, acceptance and how to live in grace rather than in religious legalism.



What would you say to the comment "If you are offended by the Fathers response to the prodigal son, then you have misunderstood the gospel".

[illegible]

CONCLUSION

Grace has both Biblical and historical roots. Grace and truth are inseparable and they are found only in the person of Jesus Christ. Grace is the foundation of the good news that Jesus brought to the world and salvation is only by the grace of God.

In the lesson 1B we will see how grace is revealed throughout the Scriptures and in light of grace being the way that God relates to us, how we should read and interpret the Scriptures, so as to reveal Jesus and His grace.