

“*SOLA GRATIA*”

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart...But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. (Genesis 6:5,6,8 NKJV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (Ephesians 2:8 NKJV)

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

(Revelation 22:20-21 NKJV)

Today is being celebrated as the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. This is the third of five sermons on the five watchwords of the Reformation *sola Scriptura, sola fide, sola gratia, solus Christus, soli Deo Gloria*. *Sola gratia* is Latin for “grace alone.”

The verses above show the breadth of the work of God’s grace. John Newton describes the work of grace throughout his life in the hymn “Amazing Grace.”-

“’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come;

‘Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.”

In common usage of the word “grace” the concept of “gift” is seen. If we neglect to pay our insurance premium, there is a period of grace given to us before the policy lapses. At meal time when we bow our heads and someone says “grace”, we acknowledge that the food on the table is a gift from God.

There is not a simple, one sentence definition of the way the word grace is used in the Bible. The grace of God is manifested in our life before we are saved, in the process whereby we are saved, and in the rest of our life after we are saved.

In Spanish the word for “Thank you” is pronounced the same as the Latin word “gratia.” Truly we owe God thanksgiving for His grace.

1.) Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart...But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. (Genesis 6:5,6,8 NKJV)

This was before God told Noah that He was sending a flood and for Noah to build an ark. Noah didn't earn grace in the eyes of the Lord because he obeyed God, built the ark, collected his family and animals. He was given grace. This is clearer in the example of Jacob and Esau.

And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. (Romans 9:10-16 NKJV)

God chose to give grace to Jacob and not to Esau before the boys were born. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He deals with us as He did with the patriarchs. Paul tells us in Ephesians that before we were born God chose us to receive His grace.

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, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:3-6 NKJV)

Choosing us in Christ, predestining us to adoption as sons and daughters by Jesus Christ to Himself was according to the good pleasure of His will. He chose us before the foundation of the world.

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of 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 given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

2.) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV)

It is by God's grace that we are saved, that we are born again.

How is it that a person can hear the Gospel time and again in church, or on the television and it makes no impression on them? Then one time they hear it and really hear it. It goes through their mind like a ray of clear light. They know beyond a shadow of a doubt that they are sinners, that God will send sinners to a fiery hell, but that God loves them even while they are sinners. He gave His Son to die on a cross to take upon Himself the punishment they deserve. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" The surprising thing to them is that they do believe. God's grace has made it possible for them to believe in Him, to love Him, to repent of their sins, and ask forgiveness.

No sinner can understand the Gospel, be truly sorry for his/her sins, pray "God be merciful to me a sinner and save me for Jesus' sake." without God in His grace giving her/him a new heart and faith.

Faith is the currency of heaven. If we try to produce faith by our own will and intellect it will be counterfeit. Only faith received from God by His grace is the genuine item.

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (Romans 3:21-24 NKJV)

When we are saved, we are justified, made righteous before God. We could not be justified by our own good works, our own best efforts, by our scrupulous efforts to keep God's Law. It is by God's grace we are saved through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to atone for our sins.

3.) He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (Revelation 22:20-21 NKJV)

These are the last words in the Bible. As we close the Bible and go out into the world, we take with us the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The LORD told Moses, "I know you by name, and you have also found grace in my sight." (Exodus 33:12b). Moses knew that he needed God's grace and mercy daily as he faced the problems of life.

"Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people." (Exodus 33:13 NKJV)

Moses insisted to God that the people needed God's grace as well.

"For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth." (Exodus 33:16 NKJV)

The Psalmist sang of God's grace in our daily walk of faith-

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly. (Psalms 84:11 NKJV)

John reminds us that God gives grace to us time after time.

And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. (John 1:16 NKJV)

Paul gave thanks for the working of grace the Corinthian believers.

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, (1 Corinthians 1:4 NKJV)

Paul also testified about the working of grace in his own life.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. (1 Corinthians 15:10 NKJV)

Before there were sun, moon, and stars, the grace of God chose us to be saved and adopted as His sons and daughters. While we were still sinners, the grace of God sent His Holy Spirit to give us new hearts and saving faith. Now that we are His people, His grace fills us and leads us. "Through many dangers, toils, and snares...And grace will lead [us] home." *From "Amazing Grace" by John Newton with alteration*