

**Today's Sermon**

**God's Grace Alone**

**Romans 3:24, 5:15-21**

Pastor Phil Layton, GCBC, February 27, 2022

Please turn to Rom 3 again and we continue our series on God's attributes in the book of Romans. My life has been changed by God's attributes, and I pray this series changes yours. Many have been changed by today's subject, the grace of God, and grace needs to continually change us. **Romans 1-3:**

1:17 – Righteousness of God

1:18 – Wrath of God

1:20 – Power of God

2:4 – Kindness of God

3:3 – Faithfulness of God

3:23 – Glory of God

3:24 – Grace of God

*<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ...*

**STORY OF GRACE – BOB PFLIEGER (WITH SONIA'S PERMISSION)**

No ability to save himself, be baptized, good works, grace alone like Lk 23.

Rom 3:23-24 shows us that's all of us, none of us can do anything to save ourselves, no good works, being a good person, today's baptism can't save. Rituals and religion can't justify, only redemption in Christ Jesus as a gift. Whether you can walk or talk or not, we're saved by His grace for His glory

The Reformation (or Reformed) 5 Solas:

Sola Scriptura– Scripture Alone (sole authority, not tradition)

**Sola Gratia– Grace Alone (solo operation, not a joint effort)**

Sola Fide– Faith Alone (received solely through faith, not works)

Solus Christus– Christ Alone (the sole source of salvation, 0% us)

Soli Deo Gloria– Glory to God Alone (from, through, to Him 100%)

Scripture alone: by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, S.D.G.

**God's Grace Alone – today's outline:**

1. The definition of grace
2. The doctrines of grace
3. The duties of grace

**First, the definition of grace.**

Curt Daniel tells the story of hearing a big name pastor illustrate grace by a boy who couldn't pay for all his ice cream.

He says a better illustration is a young man doing hate crimes against the son of the owner, spraying anti-semitic graffiti, throwing a brick through the window, and trying to burn down the ice cream shop. He's guilty, but the owner decides to not only pay bail for the criminal to release him, he pays the entire fine, and not only that, he lavishes kindness on him and gives him free ice cream the rest of his life. Then the owner adopts him. That's grace!

In v. 24 redemption is paying the penalty, not just bail to set free a prisoner, it's paying the fine for crimes against the God who owns us, and redeeming in Bible times was setting free a slave, sometimes so you could adopt him.

Paul says in Eph 1:5: *In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons... to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us...*

[Eph 2 calls it] *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...*<sup>1</sup>

No one can boast or take any credit for any part of it. Even our faith is part of the gift, not from ourselves or anything we could do or choose. It's all of grace so we would praise God's glorious grace He freely gives us in Christ.

It's undeserved kindness, and it's a lavish incomparable riches in kindness.

Annie Johnson Flint said it this way<sup>2</sup> 'out of His infinite riches in Jesus He gives, gives and gives again.' **GRACE=God's Riches At Christ's Expense.**

The payment due, or wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord (6:23). Free to us but it cost Jesus His life

That's how we're declared righteous in v. 24, or '*justified by grace as a gift ...*' NKJV '*justified freely by His grace...*' I like that, because it's an adverb in original: *freely justified*, or declared right with God by redeeming grace.

As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, this isn't 'cheap grace.' Jesus paid a great cost with His precious blood, but for us it's 'all of grace' as Spurgeon said. This isn't like GraceLand in Memphis (pay to get in), heaven's grace land is free.

Turn to Rom 5 to see how Paul defines it in **contrast to Adam's original sin.**

<sup>15</sup> *But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass [Adam from v. 14], much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.*

Paul calls it 'the free gift' again 2x in v. 16 and he says in the next chapter the free gift includes eternal life. Think of someone giving a gift or present to you; if you say

'I won't accept this till I work for it to pay you back and earn this,' you don't get it. That's what religion does, it tries to work its way to pay for it, but heaven is an unearned and *free gift by the grace* of Jesus.

Notice v. 15 ends with grace abounding, but you have to receive that grace.

*17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man[Adam], much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.*

Adam's sin brought death to all in him, in humanity, but all who receive the abundance of grace through faith are in Christ, He's their head, and what He did in His righteous life and death is part of the free gift and life we receive!

*19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous [in other words, by the obedience of Jesus, the many believers are justified]. <sup>20</sup> Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, **grace abounded all the more**, <sup>21</sup> so that, as sin reigned in death, **grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

Grace isn't just a saving power, it's a reigning power, sovereign sustaining grace. It's grace that brought me safe thus far (through many dangers, toils, and snares) and it's grace that leads me home to eternal life. It's all of grace – 'amazing grace' Newton called it, or 'abounding grace' Bunyan called it. We sing 'grace greater than all our sin, marvelous infinite matchless grace.'

'All could never sin erase, [God] must save and save by grace  
Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress, Helpless, look to Thee for grace<sup>3</sup>

Look at ch 11 where Paul says it's freely bestowed on all who believe. We can't give a gift to God to pay for free grace. **11:35** asks "*who has given a gift to him [God] that he might be repaid?*" **v. 6** *But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.* So by definition, grace isn't grace if it's on the basis of works or what we do.

**It's not only unearned, we were unlovely and unworthy sinners to God**

A. W. Pink's *Attributes of God* at the book table has a chapter on God's grace. He points out it's not just undeserved, it's to those who deserve the opposite, 'thoroughly ill-deserving and hell-deserving. It is completely unmerited and unsought, and is altogether unattracted by anything in or from or by the objects upon which it is bestowed...unasked and undesired'

**10:20** quotes God: *Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."* That's why Pink says grace is unasked and unsought, God seeks the sinner.

That's the definition of grace and takes us to

## #2. The doctrines of grace

Look at 11:5 *So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.*

That's the **grace that's not on the basis of works**, or even our willpower, it's **sovereign grace**, based on God's will. God says in Ex 33 *'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious'* (v. 19), Paul quotes from that in Rom 9. Here it's saying there's a remnant of saved Israel, end of v. 5 ... *chosen by grace.*

<sup>7</sup> *What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect [chosen] obtained it, but the rest were hardened...* Some were chosen by grace and obtained God's gift and calling to faith, but the rest were hardened in sin.

In 11:28 Paul uses the word *election* (noun form of chosen), election is by grace, we're chosen by grace, and we're called by grace God won't revoke.

<sup>29</sup> *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.* It's permanent when God calls us into His forever family. Think adoption, God chooses, loves us (that doesn't make us robots, there's real love, like Mattheus who I adopted).

You say 'I called on God, I chose God, that was from me?' <sup>36</sup> *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

Not 'all things except your faith, you get partial credit for that?' All things, including your faith, is from Him, 100% all by His grace and for His glory.

Choosing grace, redeeming grace, calling grace, and eternally secure grace.

Some use the TULIP, this is my version I use for the doctrines of GRACE:

G – God chooses sovereignly	by grace
R – Radically depraved sinners	by grace
A – Actually redeems	by grace
C – Calls effectually	by grace
E – Eternally keeps them	by grace

The Lord says to His followers in Jn 15:16 *'You did not choose me, but I chose you...'* In other words, His choice and love was first, not caused by us or ours, as 1 Jn 4:19 says *'We love Him because He first loved us'* (NKJV).

But look back at Rom 9 and let's just stay in Romans. In Rom 9:15 God *'says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy [another version says 'I will show mercy to anyone I choose' –His choice, look at v. 16] So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy*

God chooses sovereignly by grace or mercy, there's a **2<sup>nd</sup> doctrine of grace:**

Radically depraved sinners in need of grace. This makes sense of the 1<sup>st</sup> one

Go back to ch 3 where we started. Rom 1:28 talks about the sinful debased or *depraved mind* (NASB) and Rom 2:5 talks about our *hard heart*, but I want to just point out the need for grace as it leads up to grace in Rom 3:24:

<sup>11</sup> *no one understands; no one seeks for God...* That's why we need God to seek us, to sovereignly choose and woo us, soften hard hearts, open minds.

*'no one seeks for God'; we need Jesus to seek and save the lost (us)*

Radical or total depravity doesn't mean we're bad as we could be, or radical terrorists, sin is radical in the sense of the root of who we are. On the inside we're totally infected with sin. Sin corrupts our understanding, will, heart.

There's a spiritual deadness inside that comes out in what we think or speak in v. 13: *"Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips."* <sup>14</sup> *"Their mouth is full of curses..."*

Notice the bitterness or badness from the hardness of heart now comes out, the corruptness or deadness of an open grave comes up the throat, then on the tongue, then it moves like poison to the lips, then finally out the mouth!

But it's not just our talk, it's our walk and life. v. 15 mentions the feet and v. 17 talks about what we know and v. 18 our eyes. Sin infects head to toe!

That's our need for grace in v. 24, we're *'justified by his grace as a gift...'*

God chooses the Radically depraved sinner and Actually redeems by grace

v. 24 says grace as a gift is *'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'*

Redemption isn't potential and universal, it's actual and particular, believers are redeemed and unbelievers are the unredeemed. Those who can say 'I'm redeemed by the blood of the Lamb' can also say 'His child forever I am.' The Muslim can't sing 'I'm redeemed.' The moral atheist can't say 'I'm redeemed.' Redemption in v. 24 is given freely only through faith in Christ

*Jesus didn't die to try to save all, He actually redeemed His people*

Redemption isn't just payment, redeeming=set free from slavery to be sons. Rom 8 talks about that only for believers and says the world longs to be free from bondage as we look forward to the future *'redemption of our bodies'* (v. 15, 20-23). It means we'll be *set free of* these earthly bodies. So in 3:24 redemption from sin is being *set free, no longer slaves to sin* like ch 6 says.

Not everyone is redeemed, only those who receive grace by faith in Christ.

<sup>25</sup> *whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.*

Propitiation = removal of wrath. But see 2:5, 1:18, John 3:36, etc.

Look at Rom 4:17: *as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.* Only God can call effectually (effects what it calls for), dead to life ('Lazarus come forth')

*4<sup>th</sup> doctrine of grace: Called Effectually by grace*

Amazing grace saved a wretch like me, I was blind but now I see, He called to existence spiritual sight that didn't exist before, so I now see and believe.

Rom 6:13 says believers are 'those who have been brought from death to life ...' Eph 2:5 'when we were dead in our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.' In other words that's what it means to be saved by grace: God gives life to the spiritually dead as He calls them. We respond because of His regenerating life-giving grace.

The hard heart from Rom 2 becomes a new heart that finds Him irresistible

*6:17: you who were once slaves to sin become obedient from the heart*

Kevin DeYoung's book *Grace Defined and Defended* explains it this way:

'Think about peas (and I promise, I won't make you think about them for long). Most sane, high-functioning children do not like peas. The only way to get peas into a squirmy child is to forcibly hold the child still, pry open the lower jaw, and ram those green spheres of squirry-ness into the face. "You're going to eat every last one of those peas if I have to pin you to the floor. And you'll like it!" That is *not* what we mean by irresistible grace. God does not save us by forcing grace upon us against our will (or by obliterating the will). Instead, he renews, changes, and transforms our will. So—if you permit the analogy to get a bit strange—now that our will is infused with a new property [our new tastebuds and senses can taste and see they're good, DeYoung says] I told you this was a miracle. God doesn't shove the vegetables of grace down our throats. He changes our wills so that now ... we want to take in the sweet forgiveness he provides for us.'<sup>4</sup>

This is a persuading heart-changing miracle. He woos and wins our heart. Look at Rom 8 for more about the sweet truth of God's calling effectually and **Eternally keeping us by grace.**<sup>30</sup> *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.* All He calls and justifies make it to glory, all of grace. End of v. 32 says He will graciously give us all things. And v. 35-39 say His grace keeps us in God's love to the end, nothing can separate us.

We'll study more next time, and questions, but finally:

### **#3. the Duties of Grace**

#### **1st duty of grace: Be humbled by grace**

– Look at 12:3 *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought ...*

God gives grace to the humble and if you understand how freely He gives grace it should keep you humble. We're saved by grace through a faith that is not of ourselves, but faith is part of the gift of God, so no one may boast.

If these doctrines of grace are hard to understand, join the club and let that humble you. Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought in your conversion (what you did). Think what He did, but for the grace of God ...

#### **2nd duty of grace: Exercise your gifts to serve others**

**12:6** Having **gifts** that differ according to the **grace given to us**, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> if **service**, in our serving; the one who **teaches**, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> the one who **exhorts**, in his exhortation; the one who **contributes**, in **generosity**; the one who **leads**, with **zeal**; the one who **does acts of mercy**, with **cheerfulness**... [v. 10] Love one another with brotherly affection. [v. 13] **Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality** [grace to you flows through you. Pray, end of v.12]

### 3<sup>rd</sup> duty of grace: Live your new life in Christ

Go to **ch 6**. In ch 6 Paul says for those in Christ, sin does remain but it must no longer reign. We live not by the power of the law but under grace. Sin is no longer our slave master, we're to die to that old life. That's the big idea of ch 6. Look at **6:1** *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that **grace may abound**? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life.***

This takes us to baptism that we're about to witness. 3 believers are about to give testimony to that spiritual reality in their life. They've died to their old life they once lived and don't want to live in sin anymore. This baptistry is like a big casket, and they'll walk into it and lie down in it just like Christ died and was laid in a grave. They're identifying with His death for their sin and the water symbolizes the washing away of their sin when they believed.

Just like Christ was raised from the dead, these 3 believers will be raised up to the glory of the Father. They'll look different, even as the water washes over them and changes their appearance. They'll walk up the steps and out of the baptistry to symbolize their commitment to walk in newness of life.

They'll put on white robes, like His righteousness that covers us. 'His robes for mine, O wonderful exchange!' Let's celebrate these pictures of grace!

<sup>1</sup> 1:5-8, 2:7-9 NIV.

<sup>2</sup> Annie Johnson Flint, hymn "He Giveth More Grace."

<sup>3</sup> August Toplady, "Rock of Ages."

<sup>4</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *Grace Defined and Defended* (Crossway, 2019), 79.