

“Grace and Goodness”
Ephesians 2:5-8
(Preached at Trinity, April 6, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verses 1-3** Paul describes our desperate condition as sinful people.
 - We were spiritually dead, unable to know God; unable to reach out to Him.
 - We were engulfed by this present world, walking according to its ways which are under the power and deceptions of Satan.
 - We were bound by the lusts of our flesh always doing those things that the flesh and mind willed to do.
 - We were under God's wrath and condemnation.
2. Being justly condemned we were alienated from God in this life unable to enjoy the blessings of our Creator. We were cut off from the richness of knowing Him experientially. And being under His judgment we were facing an eternity in hell.
3. What could we do to solve this tragic and fearful situation? The answer can be summed up in one word: nothing. Again, Paul has described our condition as walking dead.
 - A. We are born physically alive. We are very much able to experience all of the things of this world. Our mortal flesh immediately falls in love with this world.
 - B. But we are spiritually dead. We are unable to know and experience God. We see Him as an enemy; a threat to our enjoyment of this world. And being dead we are unable to reach out to Him for deliverance. This is because we do not understand the wretchedness of our condition. We do not recognize the glory of God and the greatness of walking with Him. The Gospel is foolishness to us.
4. Humanly speaking there was nothing we could do. But what is hopeless for man is possible with God.

Ephesians 2:4 NAU - "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us"
5. God loves us. He loves us with a particular electing, adopting love. He loves us with a life giving love. But why did God love us? Paul wants us to be clear on this. It is all by grace. In **Verses 5-8** he says it three times.

In **Verse 5** he inserts it as a parenthesis. He is saying that even when we were dead God hated us because of His great love and made us alive together with Christ and then he says, and by the way, it's by God's grace
6. Paul is overwhelmed by God's grace. He wants us to grasp fully the riches of God's grace. Paul speaks of grace often in the Book of Ephesians - 12 times.

In **Chapter 1:6** Paul writes of the "glory of His grace."
In **1:7** he writes of the "riches of His grace."
He says it again in **Chapter 2:7**. But now he ratchets it up a notch: "the surpassing riches of His grace."

 - A. The word for "riches" is πλοῦτος It often refers to material wealth. Here it is referring to something of incredible value.

- B. The word for surpassing is ὑπερβάλλω. We saw it in **Chapter 1**.
Ephesians 1:18-19 NAU - "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. "
- C. Paul is speaking of the infinite wealth of kindness and goodness that God has poured out upon His people – the objects of His grace.
7. Paul is telling us that God wants the surpassing riches of His grace to be displayed in all its glory throughout the countless expanse of eternity – “ages” - αἰών in the plural. This grace has been displayed through God’s infinite goodness.
 The word for kindness in **Verse 7** is the word translated goodness in **Romans 2**
Romans 2:4 KJV - "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
8. God’s redeeming grace is the ultimate demonstration of God’s goodness. He loves to display His goodness. When Moses asked God to show him His glory God’s answer was instructive.
Exodus 33:18-19 NAU - " Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" ¹⁹ And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."
 God’s glory is displayed by displaying the grace of His goodness.
9. It is on the basis of this kindness from God which is by His grace that He has chosen to save us.
Titus 3:3-5 NAU - "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, ⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit"
 ESV – “goodness” - χρηστότης
10. This morning I want to look at God’s gracious goodness as He applies it to our salvation. It is both the goodness of God’s grace and the grace of God’s goodness.
- I. Paul is reminding us that God’s goodness is by grace
- A. God's goodness is undeserved, unmerited. God’s goodness is according to His sovereign mercy – this is the essence of grace.
Ephesians 2:4 NAU - "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us"
1. By sovereign we mean that God is independent in all of His actions. He needs nothing. He is enhanced by nothing.
 2. There is nothing that demands that God demonstrate His goodness upon every human being equally. Everyone upon the earth is not blessed equally
 Some are born into great wealth, some into poverty
 Some are born to good homes with loving parents, others are not.
 Some are born with strong healthy bodies, others are not.
 Some are born into liberty, others into servitude.
 Some are born where the Gospel is openly proclaimed, others are not

3. Yet God's goodness is being demonstrated to all
- B. Yet, God has blessed all of humanity with His goodness.
1. God has chosen to demonstrate His mercy through His goodness.
The sun came up today because of God's goodness and mercy. Our food and water is by God's goodness.
Matthew 5:44-45 NAU - "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous."
 2. God has blessed us with rich things to enjoy.
 - a. God's design in the display of His goodness is to lead us to bow before Him in submission and love.
 - b. Instead, most people worship the good things instead of the giver of all good things. We become lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.
 3. God has displayed His goodness upon His elect people particularly. Paul is saying here that one of God's purposes in our salvation is that He display His goodness throughout eternity.
In **Verse 8** Paul tells us again it is all of grace, a glorious unmerited gift from God to His chosen and beloved people.
 4. No man deserves God's goodness. We only deserve His judgment—His wrath. But God has chosen to bless a multitude with His wondrous grace. This is the great comfort of God's people
Psalms 23:6 KJV – "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."
 5. This should silence every complaint, every murmur, every discontent

II. God has demonstrated His goodness as a glorious display of His glory.
Our salvation is a grand display of the glory of His goodness.

- A. God does all things for Himself
1. God is independent, self-sufficient. He is in need of nothing. For all the endless ages in eternity past God was fully satisfied with Himself
 2. God created all things to display Himself
Colossians 1:16 NAU - "For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him."
 3. This is one aspect of what it means that God does all things for His own glory
Psalms 148:13 NAU - "For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven."
Isaiah 6:3 NAU - "And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."
 4. All of creation reflects God's glory.

- B. God's redemptive purpose is the greatest demonstration of God's glory
1. What is the chief purpose and intent of our salvation? It is the glory of God. The Day of Judgment will display the fullness of His majesty.
 - a. Even the wicked display God's glory
Proverbs 16:4 NAU - "The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil."
 - b. Paul plainly teaches this in **Romans 9**
Romans 9:17 KJV - " For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."
 - c. As the wicked are judged and condemned God's justice will be demonstrated, His holiness will be vindicated.
 - d. God will be glorified in the wicked. Jesus will show forth His glorious reign as all of His enemies will be made His footstool and every knee will bow before Him.
 2. But the greatest display of God's glory will be in the elect. This is Paul's meaning in **Verse 7** - "so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."
For endless ages we will shine forth as a spectacle of God's glory.
- C. Our lives presently display the glory of God's goodness
1. Paul says in **Verses 5-6** that we *have* been made alive and we *have* been raised up to walk in holiness.
Romans 6:3-4 KJV - " Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴
Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 2. But we will display the "surpassing riches of His grace in goodness" throughout the ages to come as Christ returns in power and we are raised and glorified.
For the endless expanse of eternity we will serve to show forth the amazing grace of His goodness towards us in Christ Jesus
- D. The fullness of the Godhead will be glorified
1. The Father will be glorified in His kindness. He chose us that might be holy and that He might adopt us as His own children
Ephesians 1:4-5 NAU - "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will"

2. The Son left His place in glory to come to deliver His dear people. Notice how often Christ is lifted up in Paul's letter to the Ephesians
Ephesians 1:7 NAU - "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace"
 Notice **Verse 7** again.
Ephesians 2:7 NAU - "so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."
3. And the Holy Spirit will be glorified in His glorious work in the Redeemed.
Ephesians 1:13-14 NAU - "having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory."

Conclusion:

1. God's goodness towards humanity, even towards the wicked is a wonderful display of grace. Man's duty is to praise God because of His goodness.
 Every man should fall on his face before God because of His goodness.
Psalm 107:8 – "Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!"
2. Man's stubborn rebellion in the face of God's goodness condemns him.
Romans 2:4-5 NAU - " Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? ⁵ But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God"
Romans 1:21-22 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools"
3. Do you exalt and praise God for His goodness? Does His goodness amaze you? Do you recognize His goodness is according to mercy – we deserve nothing from Him.
 May we bow continually before Him and praise Him.