

The Power of Grace

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2 Corinthians 12:8-10 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

- I. Satan has managed to deceive almost the whole world about the meaning of one of the most important words pertaining to God and his dealings with man.

Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

- A. If grace is such an important part of salvation and sanctification we must understand what it is and how it operates, or we risk our very soul's eternity.
- B. Grace has come to mean to most people simply God's acquiescence to man's sin.
 - 1. Since man is a hopeless sinner, God has had to abandon any plans of saving him from his sin, and transforming his life, until he gets him to heaven.
 - 2. Grace, to most people, simply means God's favor and patience with us because we obviously cannot be freed from the power of sin.
 - 3. A common phrase now is "covered by grace" even though there is no such idea in the Bible anywhere.
- C. Grace has replaced the blood of Christ as the atonement for sin and this is a most grave error.
- D. It is very easy to study the Word of God and find the true meaning of the grace of God.

- II. The whole Creation is made up of forces.

- A. In the physical universe there are powers that affect and change the movements, and the direction in which things move.
- B. Everything that simply exists has some measure of power or force.
 - 1. Mass and gravity
 - 2. Its appearance, its smell, its other attributes that affect the senses.
 - 3. Its ability to inflict harm, or to give comfort or pleasure.
- C. In the spiritual realm there are also powers at work that affect and change the movement and direction of the souls of men.
 - 1. These are the powers that are at war for control of the universe, and God's throne.
 - 2. These powers are what affect life on this earth more than any of the physical forces at work.
- D. Yet most people spend their life and their strength battling against the physical powers while ignoring the spiritual powers that are assailing them and their loved ones, and others.

1. Almost everyone, even those who seem to be spiritually-minded, deal with spiritual problems with physical forces.
2. This is why the battle is lost.

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

- E. People ignore the spiritual forces that are at work in their own lives, and finally succumb to them because they do not resist them with spiritual force.
- F. People ignore the spiritual forces at work in their children and are completely ignorant of what is going on, and they lose their children from the church nursery.
- G. So it is a question of forces, as to what will become of each of us.
- H. Universal powers contend for supremacy and the issues of eternal life or eternal death are the result of the conflict.
- I. The issue of each life from birth is the forces from everywhere that are working to gain supremacy in that soul.
- J. Eternal death or life being the moral victory or defeat, nothing that touches and influences, nothing that may help or hurt the soul in this great conflict of its destiny, can seem indifferent to us.
 - 1. We should be diligent about everything that has any power to influence, to hurt, or to help – in our own battle, and in the battles being fought by others under our care or oversight.
- K. There is the power of darkness, the power of sin, the power of temptation, the power of deceit, the power of lust.
- L. But there is also the power of Christ, the power of his resurrection, the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of the Word of God.

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

- M. The power available for us exceeds the powers of darkness and evil as much as the powers of the heavens exceed the strength of a man.
- III. The powers that we need to be interested in, seeking out, and learning about are the powers that will deliver us from the powers of evil and death, and bring us to eternal life.
 - A. These “powers” are spoken of at least 156 times in the New Testament.
 - 1. Besides the words strength, might, and strong, and other words referring to the powers available to us in this battle for the souls of men, including our own.
 - B. We must be knowledgeable of the power that is available to us, and we must be able to rely on that power to resist the evil influences, and the dark powers that assail our minds and our hearts every day we live in this sin-cursed world.
 - 1. The power whereby God works in nature is simply called power.
 - 2. The power by which God works in the souls of people is called grace.
 - C. It is possible to have much knowledge, but no grace.
 - 1. Grace is not learned or earned.
 - 2. Grace only comes when we yield to God and self is diminished.
 - 3. Grace can only operate in our life when we are decreasing and God is increasing.
 - 4. The measure of grace we experience is directly according to how little of “me” and how much of God my life amounts to.

5. The only way we can bring anyone else under the influence of God's grace is by example, which is always the strongest influence.
- D. Grace is POWER – not simply a feeling of kindness or favor God has toward us.

Acts 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Ephesians 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

"Grace is a force in the spiritual order, not simply God's unmerited kindness in the abstract, but such kindness in action as a movement of His Spirit within the soul, resulting from the Incarnation, and imparting to the will and the affections a new capacity of obedience and of love." –Bright

"Grace is not simply kindly feeling on the part of God, but a positive boon conferred on man. Grace is a real and active force: it is the power that worketh in us, illuminating the intellect, warming the heart, strengthening the will of redeemed humanity. It is the might of the everlasting Spirit,..." – Liddon

Favorable influence of God; divine influence or the influence of the spirit, in renewing the heart and restraining from sin. – Webster

Graciousness, of manner or act, especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life. - Strong's

- E. Grace is the means of obtaining all the power of God on our life, and on our side against the evil.
 1. It is the work and the presence of the Holy Ghost living in us.
 2. It is that power in us that keeps directing us to God and to truth in such a way that we are drawn closer to Him and farther from sin and the world around us.
 3. It is grace that makes this become a reality:

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

- IV. The power of grace cannot be real and active in our life until we are weak.
 - A. We must be diminished before God can increase in our life.
 - B. HIS strength is made perfect in OUR weakness.
 - C. It MUST be this way – there cannot be two God's, there can only be One.
 1. We must abdicate the throne of our mind, our heart, our life, and surrender all we are and all we hope to ever be to God's control.
 - D. Most of us are too stubborn and too blind to do this willingly until we are brought very low by circumstances of life.
 1. Although most of us are very critical of the rich young man who turned away from Jesus because he loved his riches, we are just like him.
 - E. We cannot know of the grace of God in its power until we are completely submitted to God and get ourselves out of his way.
 - F. Most of the time, this happens through suffering, extreme hardship, and crisis or calamity in our life.

- G. God told Paul that his grace was sufficient for him.
 - 1. No matter the powers that come against you, God will supply the power to resist, if the grace of God is real in your life.
- H. There is no power in the universe, physical or spiritual, which is greater than the grace of God in the life of a true child of God.

[Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.](#)

[1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.](#)

- I. So the grace of God is not an abstract idea or feeling, but is real, practical power to live for God, and to overcome evil in this present, evil world.
- J. Grace is that real power that stills the soul in the storms and calamities of life, and in sickness and death.
- K. It is that power that turns our feet to the paths of righteousness when all the powers of hell are assailing us to back away and turn aside.
- L. Thank God for his grace!