



THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ALL OF GRACE

by
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Please open your Bibles to I Corinthians chapter fifteen and verse ten. I would like to preach a message entitled "The Christian Life is all of Grace."

In I Corinthians 15:10, the Bible says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

In Romans 7:14, the Bible says, "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." In Romans 7:21-24, the Bible says, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am..." In I Timothy 1:15, the Bible says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

Paul was conscious of his own sinfulness, and the depravity of his nature, and the unworthiness that he had. In I Corinthians 15:9, the Apostle Paul said, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

Brethren! He persecuted the church of God with religious zeal, and yet he said I am amazed that God has blessed in my life. No wonder the Apostle Paul reveled in the grace of God. He never seemed to get over what God had done for him. Paul loved to talk and write about the grace of God.

We are going to notice three things about this verse: Number one, Paul rejoiced being the object and recipient of God's grace; number two, Paul responds to the grace of God; number three, Paul comes full circle back to the grace of God.

Please notice number one: Paul rejoiced being the object and recipient of God's grace. The Apostle Paul attributes all that he is to the grace of God. In I Corinthians 15:10, the Bible says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

What was Paul saying? He was saying this. Whatever there is that is good about me I owe it all to the grace of God. Now what is grace? Grace is the unmerited favor of God. It is God doing for you what you do not deserve. Whereas mercy which is not the opposite of grace but a companion of grace. Mercy focuses on human need and God's compassion to that response to that need. Grace instead focuses upon man's demerit and God's desire to meet that situation with His own merit.

Though ill deserving, you become recipients of the riches of Christ all of this by grace. In II Corinthians 8:9, the Bible says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

You are the recipients of the grace of God because the Lord Jesus Christ became poor for you. You are the objects of His amazing grace. You ought to be stunned into silence by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul said I am what I am by the grace of God. Listen! Whatever is good and godly about you that are true is by the grace of God. For instance, you are saved by grace. In Ephesians 2:8-9, the Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Today, in this building most of us if not all of us, are saved men and women. If something were to happen to us today, and we were to die most of us if not all of us would wake up on the other side in heaven; and there is not a thing you have ever done for that. Not a merit you have ever held up before God has caused God to give you that grace.

There are countless thousands and millions of people that will die over the next several days and weeks, and months all over this world who have never once heard the gospel of Christ, and you are enjoying the salvation that God has offered you in Christ and it is all by His grace.

Paul says I am saved by His grace. Paul could have said I am gifted by His grace. There are many things in the Bible that talks about the gifts of the child of God. The Bible talks about what you could call natural talents or natural gifts. Then there is the term spiritual gifts, and all of those are bestowed by grace. For instance! In I Corinthians 12:4, the Bible says, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

And that word gifts is the very same word translated in many other places for the word grace. In other words, those gifts of the Spirit are literally graces of the Spirit. So whatever spiritual gifts you have. Do you have the gift of mercy? Do you have the gift of teaching? Do you have the gift of giving? Whatever gifts you may have, that are listed in Scripture those are gifts bestowed by the grace of God. Not because you were intelligent or talented, or deserving of any of those graces of those gifts. They were bestowed by the grace of God.

In I Corinthians 4:7, the Bible says, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast that thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not receive it" That is not talking to you about spiritual gifts.

Not only are you saved by grace but also you are gifted by the grace of God. In James 1:17, the Bible says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Listen! Whatever spiritual gifts or natural talents you have you have them by God's grace. You did not deserve them. You did not work for them. God did not give them to you because He saw in you some special potential. He gave you the graces because He chose to do so for some reason known only to Him. That is grace.

We have noticed number one, Paul rejoiced being the object and recipient of God's grace. But notice number two, Paul responds to the grace of God.

As the object and recipient of God's grace, he sensed a need to respond to that grace. Now wait just a minute. If it is grace, there is nothing you do to earn it, and there is nothing you do to keep it. Right!

If it is of grace, it is all of grace. If it is works, it is not of grace. If it is grace, it is not of works. Paul makes that plain in Romans 11.

So I receive the grace of God by the goodness and grace of God, and I maintain the grace of God by the grace of God. But even though Paul knew there was nothing he could do to earn it, nothing he could do to keep it, he yet sensed a need to respond in some fashion to God's goodness. And that is what he meant when he said and his grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain; but I labored.

Notice several things about that statement. Which was bestowed upon me literally means which was extended to me then he said it was not in vain. The word vain here means empty, [an empty vessel], useless, fruitless, wasted.

What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this. But by the grace of God, I am what I am and this grace, which was extended to me, was not wasted, was not fruitless. But he said, "I labored more abundantly. That simply means he worked to the point of exhaustion. It is the extreme form of work.

Paul said I did not do anything to earn the grace of God. I cannot do anything to maintain the grace of God. I am not on some probation if I do right I get His grace and if I don't do right I don't get His grace. He said I am the object of His grace because it has pleased God in His marvelous grace to make me the object of His grace. But he said that grace that God bestowed upon me was not wasted. It was not fruitless. It accomplished in my life some greater aim.

Paul labored. He gave himself to God. He worked in response to grace. In Ephesians 2:8-10, the Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Listen! By God's unmerited favor, God did for you something you did not deserve. God focused His grace upon you despite your demerit and ill deserving condition.

You are not saved by good works. You do not maintain grace by good works. But because you are the object of His grace, there ought to be a response in your heart, a life of good works.

What is Paul saying? Paul is saying this. I am what I am by the grace of God and that grace was not wasted. I responded in good works. I labored to the point of exhaustion.

In Titus 2:11, the Bible says, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."

What did this grace do? In Titus 2:12, the Bible says, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

The grace of God does not teach you to have a license toward sin. The grace of God does not teach you a loose attitude toward sin. If you have a loose attitude toward sin, it is because you are yielding to your flesh. The grace of God has never taught you to be loose toward sins. It teaches you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. And it is replaced to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. That is grace. He does that by His grace. And purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

What is the Bible saying? The Bible is saying this. God has redeemed you to make you uniquely His people. Here it is zealous of good works. You start out with grace in verse 11, and you end up with works in verse 14. Praise the Lord!

In Titus 3:8, the Bible says, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works..."

You are not saved by works. You are saved by the grace of God. You are justified by the grace of God. But your response to His grace ought to be good works. Your response to His grace ought to be labor.

Don't you see? You are called by God's grace. In II Timothy 1:9, the Bible says, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

My friend, God has a plan for you. God has a plan for your life and that tailor made plan was engineered by God as an act of His grace.

By the way, by His grace you can accomplish whatever plan He has for you. So Paul said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am."

Brethren! You deserve hell. You deserve judgment. You deserve the fierce anger of God's wrath and if God let that fall upon you, you would have to admit that God

was only doing what was just. Instead, you stand in salvation, with the gifts of the Spirit, and walking in the will of God all by grace. Don't ever forget that. But by the grace of God, I am what I am. As a child of God, you ought to rejoice in the amazing grace of God.

In II Corinthians 9:8, the Bible says, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

Paul was simply saying this. I am what I am by the grace of God. That grace has caused me to labor. That grace was not wasted. I have responded by a life of service.

Let me ask you something. Is God's grace that He has lavished upon you has it been lavished in vain?

You say, preacher! What do you mean by that? There is nothing wrong with the grace of God. I understand that. But has God saved you by His grace, gifted you by His grace, and called you by His grace and it is turning out empty?

Listen! The reason that God saved you is not because you deserve it. But He saved you to make it possible that you could in turn glorify Him in this life and the world to come.

So let me ask you something else. Are you living for the glory of God? Is God being glorified by your family and by your friends and your workmates because of your influence and because of your lifestyle?

This wonderful grace has not been wasted on you because you have responded to His grace. The end result being that you have been able to glorify God.

In Ephesians 1:5-7, the Bible says, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

You are supposed to be a testimony and a trophy of the grace of God.

We have noticed number one, Paul rejoiced being the object and recipient of God's grace; and number two, Paul responds to the grace of God; but notice number three, Paul comes full circle back to the grace of God.

I Corinthians 15:10, Paul said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon 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."

Paul attributes all that he is to the grace of God. Then he responds to the grace of God. Now he comes back to it. Notice the last part of the verse he said, "...I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

I am what I am by the grace of God. I have responded to that grace. And even that response, even that labor is the result of the overriding grace of God. It all comes back to the place he started.

Paul stood by God's grace. He did what he did those exhausted labors, and he did them by the grace of God.

Whatever you accomplish for God, in this life, it has to be done by the grace of God in your lives. If you are going to be a good father, it is going to be by the grace of God. If you are going to be a good husband, it is going to be by the grace of God. If you are going to be a good Sunday school teacher, it is going to be by the grace of God. If you are going to be a good Christian, it is going to be by the grace of God. If you are going to be a good prayer warrior, it is going to be by the grace of God. If you are going to be a good soul-winner, it is going to be by the grace of God. It is going to be because of the enabling grace of God. It is of His grace that He uses any of us. It is of His grace that anything is accomplished through us.

In Hebrews 12:28, the writer of Hebrews says, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

In Galatians 2:20, The Bible says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Paul said what I do, I do by the grace of God. God gives me His wonderful grace. If you are teaching a Sunday school class, you need to say dear God give me your grace. You are trying to do right at home and govern your home properly, you need to say Lord help me do it by your grace.

Are you wrestling with some sin habit that has defeated you repeatedly; you are struggling with that sin. What you need to do is say Lord by thy grace give me the victory.

When a Christian appeals to the raw grace of God that moves the heart of God because when you recognize that God does what He does by grace you have no grounds to brag or praise yourself or honour yourself. You have got to say whatever I am, I am by the grace of God. And whatever you do by the response to that grace of God, you do it by the grace of God.

It is grace at the beginning, it is grace in the middle, and it is grace at the end. Grace! Grace! Grace! That is the Christian life. The Christian life is all of grace.

In Colossians 1:29, the Bible says, "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

Paul says I work in response to His working in me. God works in me, and I work out of His working in me.

I Corinthians 15:10, the Bible says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

I am what I am, and His grace that was bestowed upon me was not in vain [was not wasted] but I labored to the point of exhaustion more abundantly than they all did: yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil. Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8.

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead. John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13.

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith. Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone (813) 760-4028.

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