

# Grace: More than a feeling

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Well, we've got another sermon request. Topic? Grace! However, we need a little context. Not context of its usage (although we'll get there), but why the desire to discuss the topic has grown over the years. The church has been charged with not preaching on grace. We tend to feel a little defensive, but we may need to consider the accusation for a moment. Is there any truth to it? Can you give me a verse on baptism? Can you quote (or at least know) **Acts 2:38**? What does **1 Peter 3:21** state? Finish the statement, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and . . ." How'd you do? Now, what does **Ephesians 2:8-9** state? Do you only know that one because it's one of those grace passages you have to debate with your "faith only" friend? Could you give me another passage on grace? This may be a little scarier than we'd like to admit - for all of us. The church has, at times, looked over this topic because we were either distracted with other topics that needed correcting OR felt the topic of grace was abused and it possibly became less appealing? I'm not sure. However, I've had to take one on the chin. I've been preaching for a while now and I must admit - I've not talked enough on this topic in the past as I'd like to admit (though I'm hopefully getting better). It's actually pretty funny. When asked to preach on this, I replied that I'd be happy to because it's been little while . . . only to realize I'd just preached on it 3-4 weeks back (but it had a specific angle - haha). So, here we are today. What I've found in my own life and the life of others Christians, is that we're wanting to talk about grace . . . because we're not feeling totally secure in our salvation. I talked about this specific hurdle before at North Collin, so I don't seek to duplicate the sermon, though there will be some points I'd like to reiterate seeing as how we have many new members since that time and you probably don't remember the lesson anyway because you've slept since then. So, let's jump into our study.

I searched how the word is used in the NASB, NKJV and ESV. I was able to look at every passage used (around 135-150 times depending on your translation). Now to be very clear: this approach doesn't mean you're considering all passages pertaining to this topic. For example: Jesus doesn't really use the term (of course, He was more than likely speaking Aramaic, so you'll want to consider that as well). But the term isn't attributed to any of His teachings . . . yet He clearly talked about the grace of God all the time. Having said that, it helps to see when and how the term is used so you can get a well rounded feel of its use.

Technically, the term can be described this way:

- favor, i.e., acts which display one's fondness or compassion for another (Ge 39:20); 2. LN 88.66-88.74 grace, kindness, kindheartedness, compassion, i.e., acts of kindness displaying one's pleasure with an object, which benefit the object of pleasure.
- Others have pointed out how it combines two main ideas: *gift* and *favor*. However, favor and grace is more than a feeling - when God has favor, it's felt, because He acts on your behalf. The Greek term was very common. It was used all the time in a very secular manner, but to the child of God, it's everything and there's nothing secular about it, because of who it's associated with. God uses this term to show His nature, but of course God's nature is known to be gracious because of what He actually does. Here's an example:

**Favor:**

- **Genesis 6:8** But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Noah found favor with God, so God showed His kindness by saving Noah and this was not deserved. Though Noah was considered by God to be righteous and blameless, we know that he wasn't perfect. We know that because the scriptures confirm that no one is righteous (and can even read about an episode where Noah is intoxicated due to drinking wine to the extent that he possibly "blacked out").

- There's many examples of individuals, or Israel as a whole, benefiting from the grace/favor of God. It's important to see them all, but at this time our goal is to understand it's use.
- We can also see how Christians can said to be doing gracious things:
  - **2 Corinthians 8:7** But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.
  - **Colossians 4:6** Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.
- What becomes increasing evident is that there's a thankfulness that should follow grace. A person who has experienced the grace of God should be changed from the inside out. They are to be motivated by the grace of God.
  - **Titus 2:11-13** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
  - I could provide scripture that ties the grace of God in His word, our boldness in preaching the gospel or coming to Him in prayer. His grace is behind our belief, talents, thankfulness, overall faithfulness, strength in trials, comfort, hope and peace.

#### Gift:

- Yes, it's God's gift. Grace is lovely, kind and practical. But it is an unmerited gift from God.
  - We recently discussed how we were justified because of the free gift of grace from God.
  - **Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
  - **Zechariah 12:10** "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.
  - **Romans 4:23-5:2** "But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
  - **Hebrews 2:9** But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

#### Do you have peace?

- **2 Thessalonians 2:16-17** Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.
  - Does that sound like you?
    - **Galatians 6:18** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.
    - **2 Timothy 4:22** The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.
    - **Philemon 25** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
- **1 Timothy 1:12-17** "I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the

foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

- **Psalm 103:** This was written by David who sinned greatly against God. He was guilty of the big "stuff" and the little stuff. Yet, this was His view of God. Did you know that God is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love?"
  - Did you know David said: **Psalm 32:1-2** Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit."
  - Let me just stop and say that what brought David relief was his confession. He did not feel that because of his repentance and confession (which a person of clean spirit will do) earned him forgiveness. He felt relief because he turned to His Father, in humility, who was eager to make things right with David . . . and David knew that.
- **John 3:16-18** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."
- My thoughts: we see His grace everywhere. Yes, ultimately, in the death of His Son. Yet it's being the word, which we study and grow and proclaim. But what if you're studying and proclaim of it isn't what you want it to be? We see it in boldness, but what if you're not always bold. We see it during suffering, but what if you feel like you don't always "suffer well?" We see it in our speech, though our speech isn't what it needs to be. We see it in prayer. Are you satisfied with prayer? His grace is behind our belief, but what if it needs to be strong. We see it in our talents, but maybe you're not using them enough to His glory? We see it behind our thankfulness, yet we struggle with that, don't we. We're not feeling hopeful or comforted. Hope and peace isn't always at the forefront of our minds. We are, overall, feeling like we fall short of faithfulness. I know so many of your struggles, because we talk. You've shared them with me. I know them . . . because I share them and have shared with some of you. Yet in every area that we find weaknesses, we can find strength . . . because in every area of our lives we find the grace of God. There's no area in your life it can't touch. And that should leave us feeling so thankful to God. It should give us peace. Yes, a person who loves God, appreciates God, so we will not seek to take advantage of God's grace, nor would He let us anyway, and so we will seek Him with our whole being. But brethren, **we will fall short, but His love, mercy and grace won't.**
- **Revelation 22:21** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.