

The Four Key Concepts – #2

GRACE

In the last lesson, we looked at the utter hopelessness of mankind and the inability of anyone to save themselves from the guilt of their sin. In this lesson, we're going to look at God's response to that hopelessness – grace. Here are the questions we hope to answer in this lesson:

- What is God's "grace"?
 - What was God's gracious plan of salvation?
 - What is the result of God showing his grace to us?
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WHAT IS GOD'S GRACE?

Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

1 Timothy 2:4 - This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Ezekiel 33:11 – “As surely as I live,” declares the Sovereign LORD, “I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.” (*Note: “Death” here means eternal death in hell.*)

2 Peter 3:9 - He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance...

Deuteronomy 23:5 – “...*the Lord your God loves you.*”

Psalms 136:1-3 - Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. *His love* endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. *His love* endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords: *His love* endures forever.

Ephesians 2:4,5 – But because of *his great love* for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.

1. Does God want anyone to go to hell?
2. According to the underlined portions of those passages, what does God want?
3. According to the italicized portions of those passages, why doesn't God want anyone to go to hell?

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Titus 3:4,5 – But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, *not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.*

Ephesians 2:8 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, *it is the gift of God.*

4. Is this love something that we earned or deserved?
5. According to Ephesians 2:8, what does the Bible call the loving way God treated humanity?

On the basis of the passages we have looked at, which one of the following would you say is the best answer to the question, “WHAT IS GOD’S ‘GRACE’?”

- _____ *God’s grace is the love that we earn when we keep his law.*
- _____ *God’s grace is the justice he shows by punishing the wicked and rewarding the good.*
- _____ *God’s grace is the undeserved love that he gives to all people as a gift.*
- _____ *God’s grace is the love that he shows people when they first love others.*

WHAT WAS GOD’S GRACIOUS PLAN OF SALVATION?

Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that *he gave his one and only Son*, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Ephesians 1:6 - ...to the praise of his glorious grace, which *he has freely given us in the One he loves.*

1 John 4:9,10 - This is how God showed his love among us: *He sent his one and only Son into the world* that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and *sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

Galatians 4:4,5 - But when the time had fully come, *God sent his Son*, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

6. According to the italicized portions of those passages, what did God do, in his love, to save us from our sins?
7. According to the underlined portions of those passages, what was God’s Son going to be for us, in order that we might be saved from our sins?

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God's grace – the undeserved love he has for humankind – is seen most clearly when we look at the way he sent his Son to pay for sins. Let's look more closely at God's Son, Jesus, and at how Jesus paid for our sins. Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are -- yet was *without sin*. (The "high priest" here is a reference to Jesus.)

1 Peter 2:21,22 - To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "*He committed no sin*, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

1 John 3:5 - But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And *in him (IE – Jesus Christ) is no sin*.

Isaiah 7:14 - Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Immanuel means "God is with us.")

1 John 5:5 - Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Colossians 2:9 – In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. ("Deity" means "God.")

8. According to the italicized portions of those verses, what was special about Jesus' life?

9. How is that possible? How was Jesus able to go his entire life without committing even one sin?

When Jesus died on the cross then, something remarkable happened. God performed an exchange. Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - God made him who had no sin *to be sin for us*, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Isaiah 53:5,6 - But he was pierced for our *transgressions*, he was crushed for our *iniquities*; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him *the iniquity of us all*.

1 Peter 3:18 - For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the *unrighteous*, to bring you to God.

Ephesians 1:7 - In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of *sins*, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

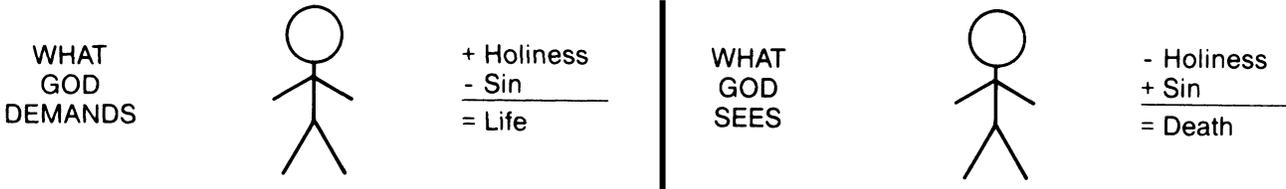
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- 10. We said that on the cross, God performed an exchange. He took something away from us and gave it to Christ. What is it he took away from us? (Look at the italicized portions of those passages.)

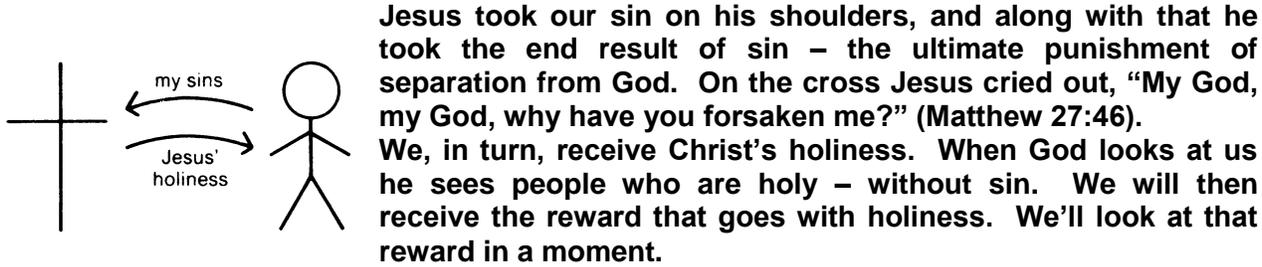
- 11. In the second half of this exchange, God took something from Christ and gave it to humankind. What? (Look at the underlined portions of those passages.)

- 12. Why was God willing to do this? (Look at the end of Ephesians 1:7.)

Remember in the last lesson we diagrammed what God demands in our lives and what he sees in our lives. It looked like this.



But now we've seen that Christ's life met those demands of God's Law. He never sinned in thought, speech, or action. But in this gracious exchange, God gives us credit for Christ's holy life. And he gives Christ credit for our sinful life. Therefore, on the cross, we see Christ getting punished for sins. You could diagram this gracious exchange like this.



We should look at one more thing about God's gracious plan of salvation. We need to know why it is we can be certain that Jesus paid for ALL sin. Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

- Romans 6:23** – The wages of sin is death.

- Matthew 28:5** - The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; *he has risen*, just as he said.

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Luke 24:37 – (After Jesus death and resurrection) – [The disciples] were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. [Jesus] said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

Romans 4:25 - He was delivered over to death for our sins and *was raised to life* for our justification.

“JUSTIFICATION” – A legal term which means “to declare ‘not guilty’ (of sins)”

1 Corinthians 15:17 - If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

- 13. Think back to last week. What did we say was one of the major consequences of sin? (Look at Romans 6:23 on the previous page.)
- 14. What then proves that Jesus defeated sin? (Look at the italicized portions of those verses.)
- 15. According to 1 Corinthians 15, is this an important doctrine of the Bible?

On the basis of all the passages we have looked at in this section of our Bible study, how would you answer that question, “WHAT WAS GOD’S GRACIOUS PLAN OF SALVATION?” (Please include the exchange that was made on the cross and the proof that our sins are completely paid for.)

WHAT IS THE RESULT OF GOD SHOWING HIS GRACE TO US?

Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

Romans 8:1 – Therefore, there is now no *condemnation* for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Timothy 1:9,10 - This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed *death* and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Hebrews 2:14,15 - Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death -- that is, *the devil* -- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their *fear of death*.

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Titus 3:5-7 – [God] saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Romans 5:17 - For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:6 – And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

16. According to the italicized portions of those verses, can you name three things we no longer need to fear?
17. Through God's grace, what do we get to look forward to? (Look at the underlined portions of those passages.)
18. Do our good works play any part in our salvation? (Look at Romans 11:6.)

On the basis of these passages, how would you answer that question, "WHAT IS THE RESULT OF GOD SHOWING HIS GRACE TO US?"

God's grace is that undeserved love he showed to all humankind. It moved him to send his Son Jesus to pay for all the sins of all people. But, unfortunately, not all people receive the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection. Why do some receive eternal life and not others? That is the focus of our next key concept – FAITH.

Ephesians 2:6-8 - And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the 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...**

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TAKING IT DEEPER...

- A. Agree or Disagree – God loves all good people.
 - B. Agree or Disagree – Some people are more deserving of God’s grace than others.
 - C. Agree or Disagree – Jesus loved us by living a sinless life.
 - D. Agree or Disagree – Jesus main job was to show us how to live a God-pleasing life.
 - E. Agree or Disagree – Jesus could have saved himself by coming down on the cross.
 - F. Agree or Disagree – The virgin birth proves Jesus was the Son of God.
 - G. Agree or Disagree – Our Savior had to be both true man and true God.
 - H. Agree or Disagree – God shows love and offers forgiveness to those in whom he sees some merit.
 - I. What do you think? When Jesus was on the cross, did he deserve to die?
 - J. What do you think? If Jesus paid for all sins, do I have free license to go out and commit whatever sins I want?
 - K. What do you think? Wouldn’t Jesus’ death only pay for the sins that had been committed before his death? Are all the sins that were committed AFTER Jesus death still paid for? What about the sins I will likely commit tomorrow, and the next day, and 25 years from now?
 - L. What do you think? The Bible calls our salvation by grace “a gift.” Imagine you were given a birthday present, but then the person who gave it to you told you that if you wanted to keep it, you had to wash their car. Would that really be a gift?
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