

Way In is Way On - Galatians 2:15-3:6

Tim Miller, Gateway Fellowship, April 26, 2015

Fred Beuchner on Grace: After centuries of handling and mishandling, most religious words have become so shopworn nobody's much interested anymore. Not so with grace, for some reason. Mysteriously, even derivatives like gracious and graceful still have some of the bloom left.

Grace is something you can never get but only be given. There's no way to earn it or deserve it or bring it about any more than you can deserve the taste of raspberries and cream or earn good looks or bring about your own birth.

A good sleep is grace and so are good dreams. Most tears are grace. The smell of rain is grace. Somebody loving you is grace. Loving somebody is grace. Have you ever tried to love somebody?

A crucial eccentricity of the Christian faith is the assertion that people are saved by grace.

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The grace of God means something like: 'Here is your life. You might never have been, but you are, because the party wouldn't have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. Nothing can ever separate us. It's for you I created the universe. I love you.'

There's only one catch. Like any other gift, the gift of grace can be yours only if you'll reach out and take it.

Maybe being able to reach out and take it is a gift too.

Series theme: Jesus has done far more for us than we know. We believe a little of what Jesus has done. We hold to a partial Gospel. This has led to an at best partial vibrancy. The way to experience what God has done is to exercise faith in it. To exercise faith in it we must first know about it.

Debts: We're like people who were massively in debt but God cut us a check for 17 trillion dollars. The check is not of much value for people who don't know about it. We have to receive it. Sign it. Deposit it. And then withdraw what we need not just to pay off debts but to live from now on. God didn't just pay off our debts. He gave us a brand new life and everything we need to live it well. But we often live like God merely paid off our debts but then left us the rest to us. Sometimes we don't even live like he did that.

1 Cor 2:12 God sent us the Holy Spirit so that we can understand the wonderful things God has freely given us.

This means that there's a lot there to unpack.

- How many believers know they are dead to sin? **Rom 6:2**
- How many believers know that they are dead to the law? **Rom 7:4**
- How many know that they have divine authority to usher in the Kingdom of God? **Matt 10:1**
- How many believers know that they have already been given fullness in Jesus? **Col 2:9-10**
- How many believers know that no one can snatch them out of the Father's grasp? **Jn 10:28-29**
- How many believers know that they have become the righteousness of God because they are in Christ? **2 Cor 5:21**
- How many believers know that they are God's own rich and glorious inheritance? **Eph 1:18**
- How many know that they are God's children? **1 Jn 3:1**
- How many know that they have complete and total access to the Father's presence? **Eph 2:18**
- How many know that they have access to the baptism of the Holy Spirit? **Luke 3:16**
- How many know that they can get wisdom for whatever they face? **James 1:5**
- How many know we have the mind of Christ to know God's own thoughts? **1 Cor 2:12**
- How many know that we hear his voice? **John 10:27**
- How many KNOW that they have eternal life? **1 John 5:13**

We could keep going with this list for a very very long time without repeating ourselves. But all of these graces and so many more are included in what I call "the finished work of Christ." We usually call it "the Gospel." So there is more to the gospel than most of us know.

Gal 2:17 - When Jews embraced Jesus and no longer strictly followed dietary laws etc. it led other legalistic Jews think that Jesus led them into sin. Of course He never would. But when they only have **two categories of thought - either Rebellion or Religion**, and you leave the

world of Religion behind, what do you expect them to think? They think rebellion. They think you're into **sin**. But you're not. There's a third way. We'll see what it is in a moment.

Gal 2:17 From the view of Paul's opponents, eating with Gentile "sinners" constituted violating OT Laws and was sin. Doing so because of Jesus was taken to mean that faith in Jesus had led them into sin.

Gal 2:18 From Paul's viewpoint withdrawing from fellowship with Gentiles violated the finished work and clear message of the Gospel and was outright hypocrisy...sin.

Gal 2:19 Furthermore, the law actually provokes sin, exposes sin, but it does not cure it. The only way to obey God is to die to the law and relate to Christ instead.

Galatians 2:20 And Apples. It's like Tree Grafting - there's a "father tree" and then there's all the grafted ones. Natural trees don't make good fruit. Each apple has a number of seeds and each seed in that apple will produce a tree whose fruit is different, and only a very very small percentage of apple trees will produce what we call "table apples." Most of them are sour apples. So what they do is they find a tree whose fruit is of unparalleled quality and flavor, let's say Granny Smith, McIntosh, Golden Delicious, Gala - whatever - and every - literally every apple you've ever eaten of those ones I named came from one original tree which was then grafted onto others. Crazy, right? **Well, that's what God with us.** There's only one faithful life. Jesus. And that one faithful life has been grafted onto billions of lives. We have HIS NATURE.

---Grace Quotes---

Ian Thomas - The Difference Between Law and Gospel: There are a few things quite so boring as being religious, but there is nothing quite so exciting as being a Christian! Most folks have never discovered **the difference between the one and the other**, so that there are those who sincerely try to live a life they do not have, substituting religion for God, Christianity for Christ, and their own noble endeavors for the energy, joy, and power of the Holy Spirit. In the absence of reality, they can only grasp at ritual... They are lamps without oil, cars without gas, and pens without ink, baffled at their own impotence in the absence of all that alone can make man functional; for man was so engineered by God that the presence of the Creator within the creature is indispensable to his humanity. Christ gave Himself for us to give Himself to us! His presence puts God back into the man! He came that we might have life – God's life!"

Paul Ellis - Downed Diver: A few weeks ago I heard a story about a **Navy Search and Rescue swimmer** who went to the aid of a downed aviator. The aviator began to flail and flounder making the situation dangerous for both himself and his would-be rescuer. The rescue swimmer responded by diving down deeper into the water to get away and to wait for the aviator to give up struggling. In other words, he withdrew from the scene until the aviator exhausted himself.

This is exactly how it is with us and Jesus. We are saved by trusting in him, and we must do nothing to help. Trying to help only makes things worse and leaves us exhausted. And yet, we try. Ever since Adam took up sewing to hide his sin, it has been the nature of the flesh to take control and try and fix things.

***Flesh:* "I can save myself from drowning."**

This is why we should thank God for the magnificent law which reveals the hopelessness of our situation:

***Law:* "But you're in the middle of the ocean! You can't swim that far."**

And then thank him even more for good news of his grace that saves us:

***Grace:* "Jesus the Savior is here. Stop struggling and submit to his righteousness."**

Martin Luther - Knowing Christ in His Sweetness: Did the Law ever love me? Did the Law ever sacrifice itself for me? Did the Law ever die for me? On the contrary, it accuses me, it frightens me, it drives me crazy. Somebody else saved me from the Law, from sin and death unto eternal life. That Somebody is the Son of God, to whom be praise and glory forever.

Hence, Christ is no Moses, no tyrant, no lawgiver, but the Giver of grace, the Savior, full of mercy. In short, He is no less than infinite mercy and ineffable goodness, bountifully giving Himself for us. Visualize Christ in these His true colors.

I do not say that it is easy! Even in the present diffusion of the Gospel light, I have much trouble to see Christ as Paul portrays Him. So deeply has the diseased opinion that Christ is a lawgiver sunk into my bones. You younger men are a good deal better off than we who are old. You have never become infected with the nefarious errors on which I suckled all my youth,

until at the mention of the name of Christ I shivered with fear. You, I say, who are young may learn to know Christ in all His sweetness.

For Christ is Joy and Sweetness to a broken heart. Christ is a Lover of poor sinners, and such a Lover that He gave Himself for us. Now if this is true, and it is true, then are we never justified by our own righteousness.