

BRIEF PERSPECTIVE ON THE GRACE OF GOD

The illustration by RC Sproul on how callous human have become with respect to grace struck a chord with me.

Professor RC Sproul's class of 250 students were given three assignments due at the end of September, October and November, with the instructions that an 'F' grade will be given immediately unless there were extenuating circumstances.

When the first deadline came, 25 students came with fear and trembling to ask for an extension. Exercising grace, the Professor gave the students 3 days concession. The second deadline came and this time 50 concerned students did not hand in their assignments on time. They reasoned that they had plenty of other assignments and mid-term exams to contend with. Furthermore, it was homecoming week. Again, the Professor relented and gave them the same 3 days concession.

You could guess what happened next. One hundred students strolled in nonchalantly on the day of the third deadline, fully expecting to be given a 3 days extension. They were in for a shock!

Students who did not have their assignment were immediately given an 'F'. When one of the students protested that it was not fair, his grade from the second assignment was downgraded to 'F' since he handed that assignment late as well. After that, no one protested about the grade.

This episode highlighted the wrong belief the students had that they deserve a second chance.

Grace, by definition, is something undeserved.

Similarly, the forgiveness of our sins in Jesus is totally undeserved.

We deserved death since we were sinning with impunity. (Eph 2:1)

We deserved the wrath of God because it was in our nature to sin (Eph 2:3)

It is in this dark and hopeless backdrop that God's grace in our lives must be seen.

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WARMING UP

1. Share an instance where you experienced God's deliverance in your life.
2. What is your response to Paul's lament 'I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.'?

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Eph 2:1-3 - Spiritually dead (our past)

3. What does a spiritually dead life look like (verse 1)?
4. We were by nature deserving of wrath..(verse 3). Was it a problem of what we did or who we were?

Read Eph 2:4-9 - Justified or Justified and being sanctified

5. Even when we were God's enemies, what was God's attitude towards us?
6. What is the spiritual reality for us who have been made alive in Christ (verse 6)?
7. Following on the thought from Question 3, was it simply a matter of forgiveness of our sins or we need a new nature?
8. The opportunity to nail our sinful and bent nature to the Cross, and given a divine nature that is able not to sin. What is your response to this divine exchange?

Read Eph 2:10 - What our lives should look like

9. What are the good works that we should be doing?

MOVING FORWARD

This model of reflection has helped me immensely hear God better and trust that it will do the same for you.

What's happening in my (our) life (lives)? What is God saying about what's happening in my(our) life(lives)? What am(are) I(we) doing about what God has said?

LIFE TOGETHER

Grace of God in the lives of the individuals flow into the lives of the community.

The redeemed sinner is assimilated into the redeemed community and the redeemed community get involved in God's redemptive plan.

Pray that every single worshipper in BCEC receive understanding in the grace of God.

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These notes are primarily for the Into the Passage portion, and are to be used just as guidelines or commentary notes. Most of them are my own thoughts, so take that with a grain of salt. Let the Word of God lead you to truth, not these notes.

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Eph 2:1-3 - Spiritually dead (our past)

3. What does a spiritually dead life look like (verse 1)?

Our desires and thoughts were ungodly and we had no qualms about fulfilling all the cravings of our flesh, with absolutely no thought for God.

4. We were by nature deserving of wrath..(verse 3). Was it a problem of what we did or who we were?

We had a sinful nature and sinning came naturally.

Read Eph 2:4-9 - Justified or Justified and being sanctified

5. Even when we were God's enemies, what was God's attitude towards us?

Great love, merciful, gracious, kindness. That was God's response to mankind who were committing cosmic treason.

6. What is the spiritual reality for us who have been made alive in Christ (verse 6)?

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

The raising up implied that we died - our sinful nature must first be crucified with Christ at the cross. Seated with Him means there is fellowship with the risen Lord.

7. Following on the thought from Question 3, was it simply a matter of forgiveness of our sins or we need a new nature?

We were given a divine nature through the Holy Spirit (John 3:5)

While we still live in this physical body, we must contend with old fleshly nature. We are only fully liberated from this old nature when we die physically.

So, we must choose to live according to the Spirit (the divine nature). And living this new life is not burdensome at all

8. The opportunity to nail our sinful and bent nature to the Cross, and given a divine nature that is able not to sin. What is your response to this divine exchange?

Read Eph 2:10 - What our lives should look like

9. What are the good works that we should be doing?

The new life we live are to be lived led by the Holy Spirit. The good works we are to do are the works that He leads us to do.