



Exploring God's Love through the Bible: God's Grace!

God's Love as Expressed in Galatians, Ephesians and Colossians

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Initial Text: Gal 2:20

I love this verse as many believers do! It declares:

1. The saved are **identified** with Christ's death. It is as if we died. In other words...
2. His holy sacrifice is laid to our account, therefore we live!
3. Our daily lives, though sinful, can be lived by **faith** in Jesus!
4. Jesus is the Son of God! More than a man or a prophet, He is God!
5. And the Son loves us, and proved His love by what He gave: **Himself!** Oh...

"...to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Eph 3:19-21

As we get further into the Epistles, I'm realizing the impossible task of trying to encapsulate the highest, widest, deepest love in creation in a few sermons. It would take many months!

So I surrender (smile). Today we will look at only a few Texts from three Epistles, without much history, beginning with Galatians.

I trust you will read them all at some point this year, and keep God's overwhelming love in mind as you do! Backing up from our Text a few verses, let's begin to look at God's love from the perspective of God's Grace.

GOD'S GRACE FREES US FROM THE LAW

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Gal 2:16

1. The Law of God is **perfect**, converting the soul! (Ps 19:7), yet it "made nothing perfect" because of the sinfulness of man (Heb 7:19).
2. The Law of God sets standards of absolute **holiness**, and as such, reveals sin. (Rom 3:20, 7:13) Man is hopeless to fully keep God's holy Law (Jam 2:10).
3. Jesus lived a perfect life without sin (Heb 4:15), therefore He kept the Law perfectly.
4. Because every man has sinned and fallen short (Rom 3:23), the only way we can be declared righteous before God is through our perfect Mediator (1 Tim 2:5) and Savior (Titus 2:13)!
5. Because of God's unmerited favor (grace) and Sovereign choosing, those in Christ have been justified apart from the Law...by faith in Jesus!

6. No man or woman can be justified by perfect behavior (keeping the Law). That is a complete impossibility. And disobeying any Law carries the ultimate curse: **Death**. Praise God for Jesus!
7. *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Gal 3:13-14*
8. The Galatians were being taught to keep the *ceremonial* law in addition to trusting in Jesus to be saved. In that, they were abandoning the true Gospel (Gal 1:6-10, 3:1-3). **May we never make the same mistake!**

GOD’S GRACE SAVES US!

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 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.” Eph 2:4-9

1. God looked upon us, His sinful children, with deep love and mercy. Think of how God must feel about sin. How great His love must be!
2. We are made alive by GRACE! We are raised up by GRACE! We sit in heavenly places by GRACE! In the ages to come we’ll be shown exceeding riches and kindness because of His GRACE!
3. Our salvation is holy and precious because its author and captain is holy and precious. It therefore cannot be of ourselves because we are sinners. It is a **gift!**
4. We believe the saved are called to work, but our work DOES NOT SAVE. Jesus saves!

BY GRACE, GOD REVEALS THE GLORY AND MAJESTY OF THE SON!

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” Col 1:15-20

1. Jesus is the “image” of God, revealing the Father to us! Truly, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)*
2. Jesus is the “firstborn.” In Scripture, “firstborn” can mean first by natural birth, first in terms of place or authority or **superiority**. Jesus as the unique Son of God is “the only begotten.” He is before all things eternally and by His power. He is the ruler over all creation. “Firstborn” does not denote that He hasn’t always existed as God the Son, but rather *His deity and unique place in divine purposes*.
3. Jesus is King! There are NO created authorities over Him.
4. Jesus made “all things!” All things were created by Him and for Him! He holds everything together!
5. Jesus is the Head of the Church. It is He who “holds the seven stars” and “walks among the seven golden candle sticks. (Rev 1:9-20)

6. In Jesus, all the fullness of God dwells! This is confirmed one chapter later:

Col 2:8-10 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

7. Jesus makes God's enemies God's friends. He gives the redeemed, and indeed, one day all of creation, peace with the Father by His blood. **What grace to know the Son!**

REMEMBER GOD'S GRACE!

In the church, there are two opposite errors concerning Grace: *Antinomianism* and *Legalism* (or *Phariseesim*). The first error says there are no longer any standards, that the Old Testament has little relevance, and that we can live like we want and just about sin with impunity because of Grace. The second error commands keeping parts of the Old Testament *ceremonial* law (washings, days, feasts, dietary laws), some going as far as to say those who do not keep it aren't saved.

The truth is we are saved by God's Grace and then called to a life of holiness. We obey God's commands out of love and holy fear, but we realize our obedience cannot save us.

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"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouceable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven..." Col 1:21-23

Rejoice in the matchless grace of God! We should **want** to obey God with trembling and love because the Holy Spirit dwells in us! Be comforted however in the knowledge that **we are saved by God's grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ alone!**

Solus Christus, Sola Gratia! Amen!