

## **GOD'S LOVE #3 – "GRACE"**

### **Summary**

- The more we celebrate and live in God's love, the more we will glorify God – which is the purpose for which we have been made.
- God's love means he is our friend: dying for our sins; making us full partners in mission; silent but ready presence; he actually likes us.

### **Understanding "Grace"**

- ***"Grace is any expression of love that is given to a needy person without that person earning it."***
- Jesus' stories of grace: The "good Samaritan"; The father of the "prodigal" (wasteful) son who runs and hugs him before apologies.
- Jesus' practice of grace: Woman caught in adultery - Leviticus 20:10 should require stoning, but Jesus: "Go and sin no more."
- What grace is not: Let's say you love someone ("compassionately acting in their best interest) – Why? What is your motivation? Because they've already loved you? . . . are lovable? . . . will be appreciative? . . . met certain conditions? Or.... *do you love someone because they simply need your love? That's God's grace!*
- Pastor Donald Barnhouse - "Love that goes upward is worship; love that goes outward is affection; love that stoops is grace."
  - ▶ *2 Corinthians 9:8 "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."*

### **What Needs Does God's Grace Meet?**

#### **1. Salvation from the consequences of sin.**

- ▶ Ephesians 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith..." ▶ Romans 3:24 "...all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."
- *God's grace gives us forgiveness, the promise of eternal life, acceptance, and a restored relationship with God.*

#### **2. Power to live for God.**

- ▶ 2 Corinthians 12:9 "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." ▶ Titus 2:11-12 "The grace of God...teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives..." ▶ Romans 12:6 "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us." *Grace enables us to overcome sin, weakness, and serve God.*

### **What Must We Do to Get God's Grace?**

- Grace is both unconditional and conditional – but both are unearned.
  - **Conditional** - It requires a particular attitude of our hearts to receive. ▶ Ephesians 2:8-9 "...by grace...through faith" ▶ Eph.

6:24 "Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love." ▶ Hebrews 12:14-15 "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." ▶ James 4:6 "God...gives grace to the humble."

→ **Unconditional** – All people are pursued by God's love.

- ▶ **Summary:** *Hebrews 4:15-16 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*
- God's grace may be free in that we don't earn it, but it's not free in that there are no conditions (a humble and loving heart).

### **Implications to Living in God's Grace**

1. *Living in God's grace means I will tie God's pleasure of me to my humble, loving, needy faith – and not my performance or my rule obedience.*
  - "Grace doesn't diminish God's desire for our holiness but clarifies the process. Righteousness doesn't produce relationship. Relationship produces righteousness." (Jacobsen - "He Loves Me")
2. *Living in God's grace means I will delight in my neediness – because neediness is a prerequisite to knowing the fullness of God's love.*
  - ▶ *Romans 5:20 "But where sin increased, grace increased all the more."* Grace is this powerful force of God that is looking for weak and needy people who say, "I need you. I'm broken. I can't do it myself. I surrender. I give up control. Crucify my pride. Love me in your way - with your methods and with your timing."
3. *Living in God's grace means I am freed from the controlling opinions and expectations of others – because God loves me as I am.*
  - ▶ *1 Corinthians 15:10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect."* When God says we are valuable, no perfectionist boss, no nagging spouse, no critical parent, no oppressive government, no screaming coach, no opinionated church member, can tell us otherwise!
4. *Living in God's grace means I will, by loving faith, expect him to empower me when I face temptations and sins and trials in my life.*

To receive the grace of God is to seek God with all our hearts. It's to place ourselves in environments in which God can minister his empowering grace to us – like humble prayer, like reading Scripture, like attending church, like gathering in a small group of Christ-disciples, like a worship song sung with a sincere heart, like silence and quietness that allows God to break us and speak to us, like Christian literature, like seeking out wise counsel. These aren't works – they're expressions of faith.
5. *Living in God's grace means I will respond to the sins and weaknesses of others in the same gracious way God responds to mine.*

Be slow to give consequences, and quick to give grace – to understand, accept, forgive, draw near to, and empower others.