

THE POWER OF GRACE – WES MARTIN

I. GRACE ACCORDING TO TITUS

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, godly in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. (Tit. 2:11-13)

A. The teachings of grace according to Titus chapter 2:

1. God's grace brings salvation. (Eph. 2:5)
2. God's grace empowers us to deny ungodly and worldly lusts. (Rom. 6:12, Gal. 5:16)
3. God's grace teaches us to live soberly (alerted, watchful, serious). (Lk. 21:36)
4. God's grace teaches us to live righteously and godly. (Rom. 6:13)
5. God's grace inspires us to look forward to the day of Christ's return. (Mt. 24:32-33)

B. To receive grace is to receive God's **power** to resist sin, **insight** into His heart and ways, **desire** for God and righteousness and **authority** in ministry.

II. GOD'S GRACE & MERCY

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us... (Tit. 3:4-5)

- A. Grace is receiving what we do not deserve, whereas mercy is not receiving what we deserve.
- B. Grace is what sent Jesus to the cross. Mercy is what did not send us to the cross. Grace released the love and righteousness of God to undeserving souls. Mercy spared us from receiving the blows of God's wrath toward our sin. Grace is the unmerited favor of God. Mercy is the unmerited forgiveness of God.
- C. Faith is required to believe that God has forgiven us not according to our works but according to His Word. We are to live in faith that God is merciful, kind and good in the core of who He is.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life... (Ps. 23:6)

III. GRACE AND THE LOVE OF GOD

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. (Mk. 12:30)

- A. It's important that we approach the subject of grace through the lens of the 1st commandment. God's grace is for the purpose of love; that we would know His love for us and that we would respond with love for Him.
- B. The Lord created us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We distort God's grace when we do not interpret it through the lens of the 1st commandment.
- C. Jesus defined loving God in terms of a spirit of obedience. The Spirit's ministry is to empower us to obey Jesus' commandments that He comprehensively set forth in the Sermon on the Mount.
If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶And I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever. (Jn. 14:15-16)
- D. This commandment calls us to aim WITH OUR ALL. We're ALL in. This dramatically changes our life experience when a believer sets their heart to do this. Grace empowers us to do so.
But you shall receive power (grace) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto Me...(Acts 1:8)
- E. I often think of the Spirit's power to do the works of God as it relates to ministry. However I can't forget that the Spirit's power also enables me to love God fully in the day to day.
1. *Pursuing Principle (Rom. 6:13b):* This speaks of loving and serving people (family, church, neighbors, etc.) as we commit to grow in our love for Jesus. Our first focus (but not only) is to love God and seek to grow in the knowledge of Him.
But present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members [your body, time, money, abilities, etc.] as instruments of righteousness to God. (Rom. 6:13b)

IV. GRACE TO PURSUE GOD

- A. Matthew 5-7 teach us how we're to respond to God's grace. These three chapters are known as the Sermon on the Mount and they give much more meat to the passage in Titus on grace.
For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, godly in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. (Tit. 2:11-13)
- B. In Mt. 6 Jesus describes five spiritual disciplines that position us in humility to experience more grace: serve and give (charitable deeds: service and/or money (6:1-4, 19-21), pray (6:5-13), bless adversaries (full forgiveness, 6:14; 5:44), and fast (6:16-18), leading to rewards from God (Mt. 6:4, 6, 18, 20).
That your charitable deed (serving or giving money; v. 20) may be in secret; and your Father...will reward you openly...⁶When you pray...your Father...will reward you openly

...¹⁴Forgive men their trespasses...¹⁷When you fast...¹⁸your Father...will reward you openly.
¹⁹Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...²⁰but treasures in heaven... (Mt. 6:4-20)

- C. These activities don't earn us God's love, but rather position us in humility before the Throne of Grace. He does not love us more but gives more grace when we grow in humility.

He gives more grace...God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (Jas. 4:6)

- D. These disciplines mark us with profound humility because our attempt at them is usually very small and weak. This weakness, if embraced with endurance, is the key to growing in spiritual authority and power, having then a greater ability to be Christ-like in our attitude and action.

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses (lifestyle of pursuing God), so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong (strong in spirit by God's grace) (2 Cor. 12:9-10 NASB).

My grace is sufficient for you for My strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9 NKJ)

- E. Possibly the greatest enemy of the disciplined lifestyle of Mt. 6 among believers is the false notion that it is *radical Christianity* and is therefore optional for healthy Christianity. It is not radical. It is normal and basic to the Christian life—it is Christianity 101. It is not possible to live biblical Christianity without being committed to a lifestyle of praying, fasting, giving, serving, and blessing our enemies.

- F. Jesus emphasized that the Father will openly reward the activity/disciplines of Mt. 6. Some of the rewards are external, as circumstances are changed by God's power. Some are internal, as our hearts encounter Him and are tenderized towards Him. Some are eternal, affecting our destiny in the age to come.

- G. We do these disciplines with confidence in His rewards (eternal and temporal). We must have confidence that His eyes are on us and that He is responsiveness to us (Heb. 11:6).

Without faith [confidence in God] it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)

- H. Jesus taught more on rewards than any other man in Scripture (Mt. 5:5, 12, 19; 6:4-6, 18-20; 10:41-42; 16:27; 18:4; 19:21, 28-30; 20:16, 27; 22:14; 23:11; 25:21-23; Mk. 9:41; 10:21, 42-43; Lk. 6:23, 35; 9:48; 12:21, 33; 14:11; 16:11; 18:14, 22; 19:17-19; 22:26-30; Jn. 12:26; Rev. 2:7, 10-11, 17, 26-28; 3:4-5, 9, 11-12, 18, 21; 11:18; 16:5; 19:7-8; 22:12).