

ROMANS 3:19-26, TITUS 2:11-12 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

WHAT IS GRACE? - [\(SERMON MP3\)](#)

Martin Luther and other reformers of the 16th Century echoed the phrase, "Sola Gratia." They insisted that justification was by grace alone, not grace plus some merit on our part. We do not make ourselves fit to receive grace, nor do we grow in a state of grace through our good works. It is all grace and only grace. Look up (Rom. 11:6; Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9; Gal 2:16; John 14:15) and reflect on the relationship between grace and good works. In light of that, respond to the following two statements from prominent religions today.

- ☼ **LDS Bible Dictionary** - *"This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts. Divine grace is needed by every soul in consequence of the fall of Adam and also because of man's weaknesses and shortcomings. However, grace cannot suffice without total effort on the part of the recipient. Hence the explanation, 'It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Ne. 25:23)" (LDS Bible Dictionary p. 697).*

- ☼ **Council of Trent called by Pope Paul III** - *"If anyone says that the faith which justifies is nothing else but trust in the divine mercy which pardons sins because of Christ, or that it is trust alone by which we are justified, let him be anathema (Session 6 Cannon 12). The believer through observance of the commands of God through the church increases that justice received through the grace of God, and they are further justified (Session 6 Cannon 10). If anyone says that justice once received is neither preserved nor increased in the sight of God by good works, but that the works themselves are no more than the effects or signs that one has been justified, let him be anathema (Session 6 Cannon 24)."*

Name	Prayer Need

A man named John Newton lived in the 1700's and was influenced by George Whitfield and John Wesley. He was saved and went on to serve as a pastor for 43 years. During his ministry, he wrote 282 hymns, among which was one entitled, "Faith's Review and Expectation." Prior to his salvation, he was a self described, "lost, blind, wretch." But grace got a hold of John and saved him! **Google "John Newton" and read a synopsis of his life and conversion.** See if you can figure out the amended title for John Newton's hymn. Read the verses of the poem and see if they make more sense after discovering the author's life story.

- ☼ *Every conversion story points to grace. The apostle Paul wrote about his in (1Tim. 1:12). How does he describe himself prior to salvation? Notice the end of the verse, "the GRACE of our Lord overflowed for me..." What rescued him? God's grace!*

- ☼ *What were you like prior to God's grace saving you? Where would you be if His grace hadn't reached out to you? (Perhaps someone could share their testimony of grace about how and when they were saved).*

Some people wonder if God has enough grace for the depth of their depravity. They think things like, "I don't know if God could forgive someone like me. I've done some terrible things in my life." What comfort does (Rom. 5:20) offer us when we are deep in sin?

- ☼ *How does (Eph. 2:7) describe the greatness of God's grace? _____ The phrase describes the extraordinary, extreme, supreme, intensive degree of God's grace. It is great grace.*

- ☼ *God's grace is great because of what it does. According to (Eph. 2:5, 8) what does God's grace do? _____*

- ✿ *But this work of God is not without cost. God's grace is great because of what it demands. According to (Eph. 1:7; 2:13) what did God's grace demand?*

Neither morality, sincerity, or religiosity will invoke God's grace. It is a free gift (Eph. 2:8). It can't be earned, achieved, or deserved. It can only be humbly received. (1Pet. 5:5) "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

- ✿ *People who are proudly confident of their own uprightness have no need of God's grace. They think, "God, I don't need you because, frankly, I'm okay." That's what the Pharisee in (Luke 18:9-14) thought. Look up the reference and contrast the Pharisee with the other character mentioned. Then write out their distinct ends. Self-righteousness never promotes a pursuit of grace.*
- ✿ *In your present spiritual journey, are you operating on an "I'm okay" mentality? Are you functioning without a sense of need for God's grace? Explain your response. What we need to be doing, is pleading for, crying out for, clutching onto God's grace with both hands, refusing to let go until it has done everything it was given to do.*

Some people refuse grace. It rubs them the wrong way. They feel like the rotten apples of society are too bad for grace. In their minds, it would unjustly erase the crimes and atrocities of those who are "truly sinful." I mean, can grace just save people like Hitler, Stalin, Saddam, Manson, Bundy, or bin Ladin? Could they just receive God's grace and be in heaven one day?

- ✿ *Compare the older brother in the story of (Luke 15:11-32) with the prophet in the story of (Jonah 3-4). Why did grace grate them so much? What's at the root of their anger? How did they see themselves and how did they see others?*
- ✿ *The prophet will preach, people will be saved, and he'll get mad. In (Jonah 4:1) it says, "It displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry." In exasperation he'll state, "I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love (Jonah 4:2)." Why did he respond that way to grace?*
- ✿ *The older brother would not join the celebration when his younger sibling returned home. In fact, the text says, "He was angry and refused to go in (Luke 15:28)." Why did he respond that way to grace?*
- ✿ *Is grace really a free pass in God's economy? Does sin go unpunished and evil go without justice? Does grace just sweep sin under the carpet? Is grace a valid license to live as you please. Look up (Isaiah 53:4-8; Rom. 3:23-26; 6:1-4; Titus 2:11-12) to help answer the questions.*

Some people refuse grace, because they think in and of itself it's too easy. They want to work for it. They want to make themselves worthy of it. They want to learn and grow so that they can merit it. They feel like something great can't just be given away. It can't be that simple.

- ✿ *Read Naaman's story in 2 Kings 5. Write down some of the reasons why he wouldn't do the simple thing Elisha told him to do.*
- ✿ *According to 2Kings 5:13 what was at the heart of Naaman's refusal?*

Write down any additional thoughts connected to the following two points. Why are these important? What makes them hard to accept or implement? How do they touch your life personally? What would need to change in order to apply these to your life?

- ✿ *God supplies grace to save (Romans 3:19-26).*

God supplies grace to sanctify (Titus 2:11-12).