

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The Trinity is a mystery. As we grow spiritually, we will be able to relate to each person of the Godhead in a very specific way. We generally pray to God the Father in Jesus' name but there is no division or gap within the Trinity. However in addressing our prayer to the Father, some people erroneously thank Him that He died on the cross. The Father didn't die on the cross. Some people can only address the Lord Jesus and cannot address the Father or the Holy Spirit because there are blockages in their thinking. The essence of the Father is that of love, depicted in the story of the Prodigal Son. Besides, the Holy Spirit is here to commune with us.

Today's focus is on the grace of the Lord Jesus. In the Amplified Bible, grace is favour and spiritual blessing. It is undeserved. It is unmerited and we cannot work for it. It cannot be earned. It is the supply for what we need for life. God is our creator and knows exactly what we need in life, contained in the glorious riches in Christ, expensed to us bit by bit, grace upon grace. We are impoverished to the degree we don't know. Hence it behoves us to learn. Truth is always caught and when experienced, becomes a part of you. God's grace comes to us in two broad ways:

1) God's grace saves us who believe.

Ephesians 2:8 says "For by grace you have been saved through faith." It is by pure mercy and grace that we are saved. As in **Romans 5:8**, we were sinners when He died. We were ungodly, i.e. having no regard for God at all in our lives. He was not factored in our decisions.

God reaches out to save us. **John 3:16** tells us that God loves us and sent Jesus to die for us so that we may not perish but have eternal life. How am I saved? When I believe and receive Him as Lord and Saviour, that's how I am saved.

Philippians 2:7-8

But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death of the cross.

Jesus is fully God, becoming fully man; the Son of God becoming the Son of Man. He put aside all His divine powers in becoming flesh and blood, operating just as a man. The difference is that He is without sin. He can empathize with all the temptations and struggles of man. He modelled the way to live a victorious life, totally depending on the Holy Spirit. We can live like Christ, in total dependence on the Holy Spirit, for victorious life.

2) In Christ, grace and truth come together

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

We must grow as a gracious people. We are going to meet all kinds of people coming to church. They may be people with tattoos or people whose lifestyles are not the norm or different from us. We must learn to receive them with grace. The kingdom of God is larger than the local church.

Grace is always along the side of truth.

Story is told of someone looking to hire people. She engaged an agency to help. In making the submission, she was told to indicate \$2500 as the salary that would be paid to the hired. However, she was told that she could subsequently pay less in reality. This business woman didn't agree with the agency. She believed that what was to be paid was to be the amount indicated on the application form. She was not prepared to pay lower. She was told that the re-submission would cause a delay and it might be a couple of months before the approval could be released. She insisted on the re-submission and she got the approval in unexpectedly quick time. She wanted to be truthful and grace was released for her re-submission to be processed quickly.

The law will point to what is right and wrong but the law is unable to empower us to do what is right.

At the dental clinic, the dentist will use a small mirror which will show the cavity, the receding gum but the mirror cannot do anything else. It cannot extract the bad tooth. It can only show, reveal but leaves the condition as it is. It is the dentist that has to do his redemptive work.

What's the purpose of the law?

Galatians 3:19 What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made, and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.

If law can give life, righteousness would be by the law but it couldn't. What is righteousness? It is right-standing with God which comes through faith in Christ. There is salvation in no other name but through faith in Christ. The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Faith in Christ empowers us through the Holy Spirit to do right and hence obey the Law.

Only by faith in Christ can grace and truth be one in our lives.

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

Very simply, we are saved by the grace of God. Why? It's finished, the work is done. Example of grace and truth is the sovereignty of God. He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. The sovereignty of God is channelled through His character. In **Jeremiah 9:24**, He is simultaneously loving-kindness, simultaneously just and simultaneously righteous. Grace and truth come together.

God has given earth to man. He cannot love us and violate His laws. He is El Shaddai. He shall not break His covenant or alter the words that have gone out. The spirit that He gives us is that of love, power and a sound mind.

Some mothers are broken-hearted. They give so much to their children but with soulish love. There is a difference between the love of the Father and soulish love. As we want to love our children and spouse, love them so with the love of God which comes with grace and truth. The grace and truth is moderated by a sound mind, i.e. not pushed to the extreme which can be legalistic. There is a line drawn between loving and suffering. Jesus is said to die to our natural love and soulish love as it is corrupt and is of the Adamic nature.

3) God's grace sustains us in life

Galatians 3:3,5 Are you foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

Having faith in Christ is to believe, to stand on the promises of God. Can we now revert to self-dependence or pray harder? There is no such thing as praying harder. God responds to faith. When we hear the Word, faith is produced in our spirit and we respond by faith, standing on the promises of God. The opposite of that is self-reliance, work performance and depending on one's strength.

Romans 8:1-2

There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

How do we continue in our Christian life? It is by grace. Day by day, we are subject to temptations to lie, to cheat, etc. How should we overcome this? Paul tried to overcome by self effort. But the law of sin and death is greater than the law of our will and mind. We have to come to the end of ourselves and come to faith in Christ. To believe and trust in God is to depend on the Holy Spirit. His grace will empower us to give up smoking, for instance.

Acts 20::32 So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace.

Paul told them they had the Word of God which will build them up, in the light of wolves coming.

Romans 10:17 So then, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

What we are hearing is sound waves but what we are receiving is spirit and life. There in our heart, faith is produced. Faith is caught more than taught. Faith is the key to receive grace. (**Romans 5:2**)

The Lord has already provided all the grace we need for our lives. See verse below:

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

The source of blessing is God. In **1 Corinthians 12**, there are gifts also for the physical bodies. The 'every blessing' means the source is spiritual but it comes to man; to our mind, will and emotions. We want blessings that flow into people. God is interested in every iota and details in our lives.

What is the grace we need? It may be:

- Loving the unlovable
- Grace for marriage
- Self-control
- Peace of God
- Family harmony
- Bodily health
- Financial freedom, etc

We receive the specific grace by faith. The grace of God is always sufficient for us.

2 Corinthians 12:9a And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

A story is shared about someone who had a difficult mother-in-law. Had not been for the grace of God, this person might even have resorted to harming her mother-in-law. The grace of God is sufficient.

Sometimes in a job situation, we may have no idea but God downloads an idea to help us. In a situation, we may have 60% faith and we cannot get things through. God provides the grace so that eventually things get through. We look to Jesus because He is the perfecter and author of our faith.

We are to grow in grace and knowledge of Christ.

2Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

2 Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord...

The grace is not ours if we are ignorant. After we know, we must receive.

We must deal with the grace blockers in our lives.

Hebrews 12:14 Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble and by this many become defiled.

Bitterness will block the grace from flowing into your life. Bitterness will produce the foothold, the ground and it will defile us.

Summary

God's grace comes to us in **2 broad ways**:

1. God's grace saves us who believe.
 2. In Christ, grace and truth come together
 3. God's grace sustains us in this life.
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