

The Word of His Grace

Joe Slater

And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:32)

As Paul bade this tearful farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus, he urged them to rely upon God and “*the word of His grace.*” How is God’s grace related to His word? In what sense are the Scriptures “*the word of His grace*”?

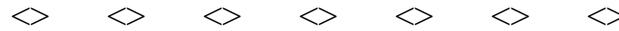
First, God’s word informs us of His grace. How would we know about His grace, especially as it relates to eternal life, if not for the Scriptures? Observing God’s creation makes us aware of His infinite power (Romans 1:20), but not of His grace. Without God’s word, we could not know that we can be “*justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 3:24). Only through the inspired word do we learn that salvation by grace through faith is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). A gift is of no value if you don’t even know it is available. Thank God for His inspired word that tells us of His grace!

Even if you know a gift is available, it helps little unless you know how to receive it. So, the second sense in which the gospel is the word of God’s grace is that by the word we access His grace. “*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom also we have access by (the) faith into this grace in which we stand . . .* (Romans 5:1, 2a).

Yes, our access to God’s grace is not simply “by faith” (your personal belief), but “by **the** faith” (i.e. the gospel). When you believe and obey the gospel, you

access the grace of God; you enter into a state of grace. This cannot be done by any other means (e.g. saying the “sinner’s prayer,” being a good moral person, etc.). Thank God for His inspired word by which we access His grace!

Finally, the Scriptures are the word of God’s grace inasmuch as His grace motivated Him to give us His word. Certainly God was under no moral obligation to rescue sinful people. He did so through the Scriptures, not because we deserved it, but by His grace (unmerited favor). Thank God for His inspired word, which He gave to us by His grace!



Blessed Unity

There is too much division in the religious world. God wants all people to unite under the banner of the cross and with the gospel of His Son. Paul wrote that we should endeavor “*to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:3). By doing this, we can be . . .

Children in one family

--One Father (John 20:17)]

Disciples in one school

--One Teacher (John 13:13-35)

Sheep in one flock

--One Shepherd (John 10:16)

Members of one body

--One Head (Ephesians 4:15)

Stones in one building

--One foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:5).

--via House-to-House/Heart-to-Heart

How Deep Is Your Love?

A once-popular song asked the question, "How deep is your love?" It is a question that sometimes haunts us. Maybe it is another way of asking ourselves what we are willing to do for someone else. How much of our time, how much of our money, how much of our energy, and how much of our emotions do we invest to show our love?

Perhaps Peter struggled with these questions. He asked Jesus, "*Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?*" (Matthew 18:21). Jesus knew that it takes a lot of love to forgive. His reply was, "*I say not unto you, Until seven times; but, until seventy times seven.*" Jesus didn't mean four hundred and ninety times. He meant Peter was to have enough love for his brother to forgive him as many times as it takes.

Of course love means more than forgiving. Peter goes on to say in I Peter 4, "*Using hospitality one to another without complaining: according as each has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*" If Peter were among us today, he might preach, "If you can teach a class, teach. If you can cook a meal for someone, cook. If you can smile, shake a hand, visit the lonely, give someone a ride, do it. Whatever you can do to show your love, whatever you can do to invest of yourself for someone else, you are glorifying God."

Love covers over a multitude of sins, not only others' sins, but also our own. When we serve others because of our love for them and for God, we are serving God and glorifying Him. Service is our way of showing how deep our love is for God and man.

--Donna Richmond Wittlif (Denver, CO)