

## Grace of God VI The Works of Grace

Fred R. Coulter—April 13, 1985

I want to review just a little bit to mention that the grace of God needs to be the whole umbrella under which everything that God does fits—*everything!* It emanates from the love of God and how God deals with us. I think that too many times people get all involved in things relating to law more than it is to grace. What the Bible has is the grace of God and everything is under that. Then you'll have many limiting factors so that you don't go out on a limb and turn the grace of God into licentiousness.

Let's just review a couple of things. Ephesians 2 is really the heart and core of the central theme of being saved by grace. Let's understand something that we need to look to in relationship to the grace of God, the salvation of God, and so forth, and that is the meaning of grace is *God's goodness and kindness, God's gracious gift!* Whatever we have from God is a gift. Stop and think about everything that we have that we receive from God, it is all *a gift*. We don't earn a thing.

- we didn't earn to be born
- we didn't earn to be called
- we didn't earn anything as far as salvation is concerned
- we didn't earn to be born here vs being born in Africa
- we didn't earn to be either a man or a woman

All of that came without any of our say so or input.

When God calls us it is with God's grace. He chooses us. That's why there are a lot of people running around seeing if they can find God, and seeing if they can choose God. But unless God calls them then there is no choosing of God. When God calls us it isn't by our own works, though God requires works that we are to do, and certainly we need to have them. Once you understand the Grace of God and understand why God has done the things that He has, and the way He has, then who would want to go out and sin and break the laws of God? It becomes a whole internal motivating moving way of living.

Ephesians 2:1: "Now you were dead in trespasses and sins..." When you are in a state of sin you are as good as dead. That means everyone walking around is living in a state of sin, they are as good as dead, because unless God calls them—which God is merciful to call us; 'the wages of sin is death'—that is what is going to happen.

Verse 2: "In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience" That's interesting! Who's one of the famous singers now? *Prince!* He's the most pornographic wretched person around as far as music goes. Anyone that listens to that they need to have their head examined.

"...the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the children of wrath*, even as the rest of *the world*. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us..." (vs 2-4). The operation of love transmits down to us in the form of grace.

Verse 5: "even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ..." In other words, the minute that Jesus' sacrifice was accepted by God the Father *it was accepted*, as far as God is concerned, *for the sins of the whole world*. But they can't be forgiven to each individual unless three things happen:

- God forgives them
- God calls them
- they repent of their sins

All of those have to take place.

"...(For you have been saved by grace)" (v 5). A person, in the way that the Baptists would take it, say 'once saved always saved.' That is only true if you remain in grace, because we will see a little later you can fall from grace through sin. Salvation is a three-fold thing:

1. you *have been saved* from your past sins

That's what it's talking about here. When you've repented and been baptized you *have been saved* from your past sins

As long as you are walking in the Gospel of God:

2. you *are being saved* from your sins
3. And salvation ultimately *will be* at the resurrection.

It's interesting that salvation, redemption and deliverance all are part of an operation of God, and describe the same thing of salvation.

Verse 6: “And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus” (vs. 6). That’s not something that takes place now. We are not in the heavenlies right now in the sense that we are with God. However, we have the Spirit of God, which comes from God. Where is God? God is in heaven—isn’t He? He sends His Spirit. That means that when we have the Spirit of God, God looks upon us as if we are there already though we are not, because the operation of God is that He calls things that aren’t as though they were.’

Verse 7, shows us when: “So that in the ages that *are* coming... [when Christ returns] ...He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.... [the Anointed Savior] ...For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves...” (vs 7-8).

That is one lesson that we are all going to learn. Though we can have desire, though we want to do the things that God wants, it is still not of ourselves. We can’t walk up to God and say, ‘God, I’ve never done this, or I’ve never done that, and I’ve never done the other thing, so therefore, You need to give me salvation.’ No, there is not one thing that we can do to earn it, because eternal life and salvation comes from God. However, we are to have good works. We’ll see what they are here in just a minute.

“...*it is* the gift of God, not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship...” (vs 8-10). We’re the workmanship of God. I think that that would help us all understand each other a whole lot better if we would realize that ***we are all the workmanship of God!***

“...created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v 10). Living under the Grace of God includes keeping the commandments because Jesus said, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ It includes the good works, which God said that we should do, which come under the umbrella commandment of ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’

The good work of loving God, the good work of helping and serving each other, those are all the things that God wants. But the best work that can be worked in us is the inner working of God’s Holy Spirit. That’s the best good work that can be done and we are to walk in them. Our way of living is a walk of life, and is typified by the Days of Unleavened Bread that we walk out of sin, we walk out of Egypt, we walk out of the things of this world

and *walk toward God and walk toward the Light.*

### **God Gives Grace:**

There’s something that’s very interesting that God does. The principle is: *he who has shall receive*. Remember the one who went out and worked with the talents, developed them and doubled them? One got five with the five, and the other one got two with the two, and the other one with one got nothing. To whom did God give the one? *He gave it to the one that had developed the five!* In one parable it’s five and in another parable it’s ten. So likewise, once we receive of the grace of God we are to receive more of God’s grace on a continual basis. As I’ve mentioned, it is a supply of grace that God gives to us.

James 4:6: “But He gives greater grace.... [That is to overcome the things of the world, the sins that are listed up here above.] ...This is the reason it says, ‘God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble” In other words, God’s gracious gift of love and mercy and forgiveness. Most of the time when you ask people, what is the grace of God? They will say, ‘The forgiveness of sin.’ That’s part of it. It is also the blessings of God. It is everything that God does for us. He’s willing to give us more grace if we come to God in the right way.

Verse 7: “Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” How then are we going to be able to resist the devil and temptations? *By drawing close to God, receiving more of His grace!* That grace in the faith will then cause the devil to leave us. I know, just by experience, and I can say it is true—I hope that you find it so—the more that you draw close to God in this attitude the less you are going to find yourself sinning and repeating the same sins, the sins of the mind and all that. Things will fall into place much better because God is giving you more of His grace so you won’t end up doing that.

We’re going to see here about grace and salvation, where they come together. You can’t have salvation without grace, and you can’t have grace without salvation.

1-Peter 1:6: “In this you yourselves greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials; in order that the proving of your faith, which is much more precious than gold that perishes...” (vs 6-7). I think we can all live those things in our lives—can’t we? And we can all look back and see how those things work out that way.

“...though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the*

revelation of Jesus Christ; Whom, not having seen, you love; in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, *and* rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory; *and are* receiving the end of your faith—*even the* salvation of *your* souls... [your whole life, your whole being] ...concerning which salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you have diligently searched out and intently inquired” (vs 6-10).

The grace of God and the way that God deals with us is absolutely fantastic. I think if we understood it more we would treat each other a whole lot better, I’m sure of that.

Verse 11: “Searching into what *way* and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ *which was* in them was indicating, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and these glories that would follow; to whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but to us they were ministering these things, which now have been announced to you by those who have preached the Gospel to you by *the* Holy Spirit, sent from heaven—into which things the angels desire to look” (vs 11-12).

At the resurrection if we see some of the angels we can ask them ‘what was it that you were desiring to look into?’ When we’re resurrected and meet Christ and all the saints we’re going to have a lot of questions that we’re going to ask them. ‘What was it like at this point? What happened there?’ It will be very interesting. We will see some of the angels and we’ll ask them what it was they were desiring to look into.

Verse 13: “For this reason, be prepared in your minds, be self-controlled, *and* be fully hoping in the grace that will be brought to you at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ.” We can see with this that the grace of God has a broad application. The grace of God to be given to us, and it brings

- hope
- salvation
- Truth

1-Peter 5:5 is the parallel account that we have in James 4:6-7 that we just covered. It says that we are to yield ourselves to God. ***He gives grace to the humble***, and how we are to resist the devil in that particular way. There are some other categories, I realize this is kind of a potpourri if you haven’t followed through all of the other series on it this will not be exactly the easiest thing to follow.

#### **For the Work of the Ministry:**

There is another aspect of the grace of God, which is very important for us to realize, and that is the grace of God as it refers to a ministry or work that a minister is doing. It is by the grace of God that we are able to preach the grace of God. I’ve seen this as a minister, I have seen that when I really prepare and do the things I need to, that God gives an extra amount of His Spirit to do the things that are necessary as far as preaching. That is part of God’s grace.

Acts 14:25: “And when they had spoken the Word in Perga, they came down to Attalia; and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been **committed** to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled” (vs 25-26). There it shows very importantly and gives a greater degree of understanding of serving and teaching and ministering and things like this. It is of the grace of God for the work that they were to fulfill.

Verse 27: “They arrived, they gathered the Church together and declared all that God had done with them, and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there with the disciples *for a long time.*” (vs 27-28).

Here again we find concerning the grace of God and the ministry in preaching and teaching and things like this. Romans 1:3: “Concerning His Son; Who came from *the* seed of David according to *the* flesh, Who was declared *the* Son of God with power, according to *the* Spirit of Holiness, by *the* resurrection from *the* dead—Jesus Christ our Lord” (vs 3-4).

That’s the key thing. Remember in the Feast of Unleavened Bread it is not just the Passover but it is the *whole* feast. It starts with the Passover and then you have the whole feast, and remember that the resurrection of Jesus Christ occurred during that time. It says that if Christ is not raised then ‘you are dead in your sins’ (1-Cor. 15).

He declared then to be the Son of God with power “...according to the Spirit of Holiness, by according to *the* Spirit of Holiness, by *the* resurrection from *the* dead.... [If you carry the authority and the weight of what he just said.] ...Through Whom we have received grace and apostleship...” (vs 4-5). Grace and apostleship in teaching and preaching are tied right together. We’re going to see one place where Paul says, ‘You were saved by my grace.’ Does that mean that Paul gave grace? ***No! That means by his ministry!*** By the grace of his ministry, which is part of the grace of God.

Verse 5: “Through Whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all the nations, in behalf of His name.”

1-Corinthians 15:10. “But by *the* grace of God I am what I am...”

Let’s go back and see that he is talking about the apostles, v 7: “Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage. For I am the least of the apostles, *and* am not fit *even* to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by *the* grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain...” (vs 7-10).

He’s talking about *his work* of the ministry. Of course, there has to be a tremendous amount of grace—doesn’t it? He understood what he was doing after he did it, that he was persecuting the Church of God and causing people to be killed. He thought for sure he was doing what was right. He was getting letters from the high priest. You can’t have any greater authority than letters from the high priest.

Let’s liken it to owning property. If you have title to property you go take it and possess it and own it and no one can deny you. Well here, he had the authority of the high priest. Didn’t the high priest know what he was doing? *No!* But he thought he did. Weren’t they trying put out *the way* of the Christian life? *Yes!* He caused people to be killed. Now, Paul didn’t do that after he was converted. But he said, ‘By the grace of God...’

- How much will God’s grace cover? It will cover an awful lot.
- How bad can a person be before conversion? *I don’t know; that is God’s judgment!*

We’ll look and see what part of the unpardonable sin is. People can get to the point that they think they have done it, and they may have not committed the unpardonable sin, they may be knowingly living in sin and really not wanting to, but really not wanting to change—that is not he unpardonable sin. You really haven’t rejected God, but nevertheless, tremendous thing! I don’t know of anyone who has killed people in the Church of God that God has subsequently called, except Paul.

Verse 10: “But by *the* grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain; rather, I have labored more abundantly than all of them; however, *it was* not I, but the grace of God with me.” Then he goes on explaining about the resurrection.

We’ll see that the Apostle Paul had an awful lot to say concerning the grace of God and his preaching, and the grace in his apostleship.

Romans 15:15: “So then, I have more boldly written to you, brethren, in part *as a way of* reminding you, because of the grace that was given to me by God.” He says it a little more directly here to whom he is writing. What is he writing? *He’s telling them what they should be doing!* It’s interesting that in the book of Romans there is more discussion concerning the grace of God than any other book, and showing

- why we need the grace of God
- why human nature is the way it is
- why we need that forgiveness

He says that he is writing this to them because of the grace of God that was given to him.

Verse 16. “In order that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles...” That’s why a ministry cannot be, just because people appoint them or people elect them, or because a friend of so and so, or because there may necessarily be whatever other circumstances, but it is definitely a calling by the grace of God. He said clearly here:

“...that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles, to perform the Holy service of teaching the Gospel of God; so that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by *the* Holy Spirit” (v 16).

As you know the whole purpose of going through this in-depth is so that we can cover all the aspects of grace and to cover as many Scriptures as possible. I’m not going to cover every one. I won’t have time to do that.

Referring to the ministry that he had and the work that he was doing, 2-Corinthians 1:12: “For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in *the* simplicity and sincerity of God (not in carnal wisdom, but in *the* grace of God)... [Paul looked at everything that he did, which is true, in his life as being part of the grace of God. His ministry, his life, what he was doing, and everything.] ...we had our conduct in the world, but more abundantly toward you.”

This study is a little bit different than just going through in a sermon type thing, but it is to go through and look at all of the Scriptures covering a certain aspect of it. So here we are looking at the aspect of grace in relationship to the ministry of the Apostle Paul, and as it refers to a ministry then to all of the other ministers of God who are truly ministers indeed.

Ephesians 3:2: “If indeed you have heard of the ministry of the grace of God that was given to me for you.” That grace of God came from God to Paul, and then to the people. Not that Paul was

dispensing God's grace and everything had to go through Paul in order for them to get to God. *No*, that is not true. But the ministry that he had in teaching and preaching to them *was* the dispensation of the grace of God, which was given to him.

Verse 3. "How He made known to me by revelation **the mystery...**" That could well be translated *secret, the secret of God!* It is kept secret from the world. It's not a mystery in the sense that the Catholics think of a mystery or the mystery of whatever they're supposed to be doing. It is the secret of God not revealed to the world.

"...(even as I wrote briefly before, so that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of Christ), which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His Holy apostles and prophets by *the Spirit*; that the Gentiles might be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel" (vs 3-7). That's an interesting statement, the gift of grace.

### **The Righteousness of Christ:**

What is the gift of grace? *The gift that God gives to each one of us, which is the righteousness of Christ!* In order to qualify for eternal life it can't be on our righteousness. Even though we are keeping the commandments of God from an internal point of view, because we have the 'law of sin and death,' we cannot be truly righteous.

For example: if you had a gold coin, and if you're doing like a lot of them are now, so if you buy any gold coins be careful. Buy one of these things to test it, because in Syria and Saudi Arabia they are making South African krugerrands—just a little bit bigger than the regular South African krugerrands—but they are made with an overlay of gold and inside is lead. We can liken that counterfeit to human nature. It may look good on the outside but it's got lead on the inside. There is no way that that can ever, ever, qualify to be 100% pure gold, it is an impossibility!

So, with human beings. We have the 'law of sin and death' in us so it is impossible for us to ever, ever, be wholly righteous on our own, cannot be done. The *gift of grace* is the giving to us by imputing to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. When God views us He views us as He views Jesus Christ. We didn't earn it, any more than you can change that counterfeit coin, that the inside is lead, into 100% gold. Nor did we earn anything that God gave to us. He gave it to us; it is His gift—*the gift of grace*.

He's also referring to the gift of grace referring to his ability in preaching, and in writing, where he was writing to them by the grace of God. It is the gift of grace of God, which is

"...*which was* given to me through the inner working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, was this grace given, that I might preach the Gospel among the Gentiles—even the unsearchable riches of Christ" (vs. 7-8). And there again he makes it very clear concerning his ministry based on grace.

Philippians 1—here's the Scripture that I mentioned concerning Paul's grace. I know the first time I read that I thought: I wonder if that's a mistranslation. Once you have any understanding of God's grace you know it has to come from God—must come from God—otherwise it's not God's grace. So, when I read this, I kind of did a double take. You know, you're eyes kind of cross and you think about it, and you go on. You can know this for sure: ***there is nothing in the Bible that is wrong***, so therefore, there is a proper explanation of it.

Philippians 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you... [Who's doing the works in us? *God is through the Holy Spirit!* The inner workings of God's Spirit; the good work in us.] will complete *it* until *the day of Jesus Christ.*" Have no doubt, God is not going to give up on you. He'll keep performing it until the day of Jesus Christ if we be willing.

Verse 7: "It is indeed right for me to think this of you all because you have me in *your* hearts, both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, **and you are all fellow partakers of my grace.**" That means they were partakers of *his ministry!* They didn't partake of grace because God gave it to Paul, and then Paul gave it to them. No! Paul came preaching the Gospel of the Grace of God. Through grace Paul was given the ministry. Through the grace that God gave them, coupled with the ministry of the Apostle Paul, then they had their standing in salvation through the Gospel.

### **Calling of God—Election of Grace:**

God is the One Who does the *selecting*. That's why you see all these great revival campaigns on television, and they all come screaming down and they all give their heart to the Lord. They're all emotionally stirred up, and I'm sure a lot of them are really wanting to do what is right. I'm sure that many of them are totally sincere in what they're doing, but why is it that it never follows in a lasting way? *Well, because God didn't do the calling*, the

preacher did. He said, 'You all come.' You have to answer the call of God, not the call of the preacher.

Romans 11:5: "Now then, in the same way, at the present time also there is a remnant according to *the* election of grace." Strange as it may seem, you go back and you analyze all through the Bible, it's been hard for people to understand it. Let's just stop here and we'll take a little diversion.

Everything that God has done in the calling of people and working of people is an *election of grace*. Every bit of it! You go back to Abraham.

- ✓ When God called Abraham, it was God's choice to call him. It is by grace.

It doesn't say it exactly that way, but that's what it is because ***everything God does is by His grace***, even the getting rid of the wicked from the point of view that it spares the righteous. Here's how God called him.

Genesis 12:1: "And the LORD said to Abram, 'Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house into a land that I will show you.'" He had to get up and just leave everything. God didn't call Nimrod. Nimrod wanted to go *his way* and become the great lord. These people over here in Gen. 11 said, 'We're going to build a tower and make us a name.' God didn't have any part of that. He destroyed the tower of Babel, and He calls Abraham.

Verse 2: "And I will make *of* you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great.... [it's not what men will, but what God does] ...And you shall be a blessing.... [by grace God says]: ...And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you...." (vs 2-3). That's exactly the way it is.

- ✓ by grace Isaac was born  
*At the time God chose!* That was by grace.
- ✓ Isaac, when he had his two sons Jacob and Esau.
- ✓ by grace God chose Jacob rather than Esau
- ✓ by grace God chose Joseph
- ✓ by grace God chose Ephraim and Manasseh.

That means every blessing that flows from there, it's by God's grace by promise, which He cannot break, so therefore, people are receiving the things by grace undeservedly.

- Do we live in this land because of the grace of God then? *Yes!*
- Did we earn it? *No!*
- Did we deserve it? *No!*

We don't deserve anymore than the Aborigine living down in whatever place, wherever in the world, plague infested, either the jungle or the desert, it doesn't make one bit of difference. God did not choose them. Because God chooses us does that mean we are better than the other person? *No!* It is *God's choosing*, so it is all in God's plan. Then you just go right on down.

- ✓ the Exodus was an act of grace
- ✓ the giving of the Ten Commandments was an act of grace

All the way through those things are of the grace of God. You can study all of the Bible with that in mind, that ***everything that has been done is by the grace of God!***

We have an example here in Romans 11:4; remember when Elijah, and Elijah said, 'Oh, God I'm all alone and there is none.' God said *no!* "...I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed a knee to Baal.'.... [God has a lot more going than we think.] ...Now then, in the same way, at the present time also there is a remnant **according to the election of grace**. But if *the election is by grace, it is no longer by works...*" (vs 4-6).

This is a famous Scripture that all Protestants like to use to show you don't need to do anything because if it is by grace then it can't be by works. That's not what it's saying. It's talking about the election of grace is not a result of your work. Do you understand that? In other words, because God calls you does not mean that He does it because you have done something to deserve it. That's *God's election of grace*. It's not of a work that you do. So therefore, salvation is by the grace of God, but that does not mean that you do not have works to do.

These works that it's talking about here has nothing to do with the good works reference earlier in Eph. 2. This is the merit badge work. Like my son David going through school, if he passes the grade he earns the promotion to the next grade. They cannot deny him that. His works earn him that promotion, it will be the 11<sup>th</sup> grade next year. But because you were good growing up, because you are able to do all of these things and you knew about God's work, therefore then

- God has to
- God is impelled to
- God must give to you

*a calling* because of that. ***NO!*** God is not impelled by any of our works. Maybe God will have mercy and understanding, and God will hopefully call, and I hope God does call all my family, but it has to be that *God does the calling*. It is not by works.

Verse 6: “But if *the election is* by grace, it is no longer by works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace....” The grace of God for calling is no more grace. But you can line up and if you qualify, just like welfare, if you qualify. If by the lack of work and if by the lack of income you qualify, you earn welfare. People work for welfare by not working. That’s sort of turning it around a little bit, but I’m sure you can see the example very clearly.

“...otherwise grace would no longer be grace....” (v 6). Now let’s look at it the other way:

- if when we are called by the grace of God
- if we receive the Holy Spirit by the grace of God
- if we repent by the grace of God
- if we are walking in the works that God has given us to do—the right works that are included under this umbrella of grace

What if we start relying on the works rather than the grace? *We turn it in reverse, and that’s the whole problem of the book of Galatians!* They received the Holy Spirit *by grace!*

Then they ended up saying, ‘Well now we have this, so let’s go do whatever we want to.’ Then they fall from grace and depend on their works. Sunday-keepers have salvation by works; their works of Sunday-keeping. We are to keep the Sabbath because God says so, but that’s what God requires; that is a requirement. We can’t go to God and say, ‘God, I’m so much better than everybody else because I’ve kept the Sabbath all my life.’ The high priest could say that. He was born into the family of Aaron. He was due by birth, the high priest at a certain age. Not now, not under grace. I hope you see the difference there.

Verse 6: “But if *the election is* by grace, it is no longer by works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? What Israel was seeking *through works*, this it did not obtain. But the election obtained *it through grace*, and the rest were hardened...” (vs 6-7). Well, I won’t get into a full dissertation on that. The grace of God by election is *a calling*.

If we have it by our works, what we do then, we go along and we do something and say, ‘God, I did this. Put your approval on this.’ Well, maybe God didn’t want it in the first place. God’s approval is not going to be on it. I can go back and see there are a lot of things that I used to do. I’d go along and I’d do and have to look back and say, ‘God, yes, this

is good, oh approve this, by the way I prayed in your name.’ No! It doesn’t work that way.

2-Thessalonians 1:11: “For which cause also we are praying continually for you, that our God **may count you worthy of your calling...**” I want to emphasize *calling*, and that Greek word is ‘election’ or ‘selection.’ It is not election as we think of as voting but it is God’s choice, His election, which is *selection*.

“...worthy of *your* calling, and may fulfill *in you* all the good pleasure of *His* goodness, and *the* work of faith with power; so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and of *the* Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 11-12). There’s the operation of grace through God’s calling and through God’s bringing us to that.

Galatians 1:16 where Paul talks about his calling, even his birth, yes, everything he did as part of the grace of God (Gal. 1:16).

(go to the next track)

### **A Way of Life Serving Jesus Christ:**

Acts 13—here it is even just a little more than the grace of God as a message, but also the grace of God as a way of life; the grace of God as serving our Lord Jesus Christ. I’ll just summarize. He came into the synagogue and then he was teaching about Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead.

Acts 13:38, Paul says: “Therefore, be it known to you, men *and* brethren, that through this man *the* remission of sins is preached to you. And in Him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses” (vs 38-39). Then you know what happens. The Jews kicked him out, the Gentiles came and said, ‘Come and preach to us the next Sabbath.’

Verse 43: “Now, after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes who worshiped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.” That has to do with ***the message of God, the way of living!*** It is the grace of God. You can see how all encompassing the grace of God really is.

Acts 14:2—here again Paul went into the synagogue, “But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. For this reason, they stayed a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord...” (vs 2-3). It doesn’t say how long they were there, but I’m sure that they were there several months.

“...Who bore witness to the **message of His grace**... [What is one of the names of Jesus Christ? *The Word!* Through Whom do we have grace? *Through Jesus Christ!* We can expand this even more. It has more meaning than just the word or a preaching or a message, but it has to do with *everything concerning Christ.*] ...granting that signs and wonders be done through their hands” (v 3).

2-Timothy 1:8. “Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but jointly suffer with *me for the sake of the Gospel*, according to *the* power of God, **Who has saved us and called us**... [there it is, all with the grace of God] ...**with a Holy calling—not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace**...” (vs 8-9). God’s purpose and grace is

- the calling
- the saving
- everything to do with God interacting in our life

—according to God’s purpose and grace.

Verse 10: “But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who has annulled death... [That is tremendous! People really understood that.] ...and has brought to light *eternal* life and incorruptibility through the Gospel unto which I was ordained a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of *the* Gentiles” (vs 10-11). All of this then is by the grace of God.

### **Jesus as He was growing up:**

How was Jesus able to do the things that He did? *By the grace of God!* That’s how He was able to do it. Mary was selected to bare Jesus by the grace of God. The angel came and said, ‘Hail, Mary, you are well favored’—you have received grace from God. There can be no more graciousness given to a person than that. That’s quite a mighty thing to be chosen to bare the very Son of God.

Luke 2:40: “And the little child grew and became strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom; and **the grace of God was upon Him.**” Jesus’ whole life, everything that Jesus stood for was the epitome of grace. He needed the grace of God and it was upon Him.

After the incident there at the temple, and they found Him and brought Him back home and so forth, v 51: “Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He was subject to them. But His mother kept all these things in her heart.”

I just wonder what Mary thought at the resurrection. And remember when they were all

gathered in that room where 120 of them were? I wonder what was in her mind, what was in her heart, because all these things were going on. Several places Luke said, ‘she kept it in her heart.’ In other words she remembered it.

Verse 52: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature [age], **and in favor**...”—in grace. *He grew in grace!* Not that He was ever lacking in grace. Just like God is always perfect, but God is also growing in knowledge, Jesus was perfect from the time that He was conceived. But at His conception He was not a perfect 20-year-old.

This is why He grew in “...wisdom and stature and in favor [grace] with God and men” (v 52). Shows us quite a bit about the life of Christ as He was growing.

### **The end of Jesus’ life:**

Let’s go to Hebrews 2 and let’s look at the end of His life, because that was also by the grace of God. Let’s understand one of the verses that we covered in 1-John 1 where it says that Jesus was **full of grace and Truth**, which means then that **everything that Jesus did was directed by the grace of God**. Everything, from the time that He decided to become a human being, and that is by God’s Own choosing, God’s *election*.

Everything that we see, God has reached down and He is the One Who has done it. Lots of times we like to think God does something because we’ve done something, and it’s the other way around. We do something because God has done something. So therefore, we don’t need to get all uppity-uppity about what we do or do not do because God is the One Who does it. James said don’t say that we will do this or we will do the other thing tomorrow. You say, ‘if God will.’ Why? *Because if it isn’t with the grace of God you may not do it!*

Hebrews 2:8 talks about Jesus: “‘You did put all things in subjection under his feet.’... [that is, mankind in general] ...For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing *that was* not subjected to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the* angels, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering the death, in order that **by the grace of God**...” (vs 8-9). That’s a tremendous thing: “...by *the* grace of God...” How much does God want us to receive eternal life? *So much so that He sent His Son so that our sins could be forgiven!*

“...by *the* grace of God He Himself might taste death for everyone” (v 9). That’s a tremendous gracious act that God would give His Son. That’s why it says there in John 3:16 that God ‘gave His



only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.’ It’s by the grace of God.

Verse 10: “Because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Do you remember how I mentioned that the reason that Jesus sits at the right hand of God is because the right hand is symbolic of salvation and Jesus is our Savior? Add that together with what we read here:

Hebrews 4:14: “Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses...” (vs 14-15). In other words He can. He feels it. He understands them. He knows them. Yes, He has lived them.

“...but *one Who* was tempted in all things according to *the likeness of our own temptations*; yet *He was* without sin. Therefore, we should come with boldness...” (vs 15-16). That doesn’t mean come barging up like a charging pit bull or elephant. It means that you come confidently, courageously, knowing that you can trust in Christ.

Verse 16: “Therefore, we should come with boldness **to the throne of grace**... [Christ is there. That grace is to be given. We are to live in that grace, and walk in that grace.] ...so that we may receive mercy and **find grace to help**... [grace is given to help; that means then we get an extra supply of grace] ...**in time of need**.”

That doesn’t mean just run to God whenever things get so bad you’re ready to squeal ‘uncle,’ because there is not a time that we don’t need the grace of God. Can you think of a time that you don’t need the grace of God? I can’t think of one time when we don’t need the grace of God. I mean, we need the grace of God in everything we do. So we need to come to God in that time of need, and of course that is everyday.

### **The Grace of God and Power:**

I’ve heard many ministers talk about, and I’ve heard people ask: Why aren’t there miracles? If we could only do better things there would be miracles. If you only had faith there would be more miracles, because Jesus said if you have ‘faith as a grain of mustard seed you can say to this mountain, *be removed*, and it will go into the sea.’

So therefore, we all run around and condemn ourselves because God is not doing the things because we’re not doing them. Is that true? *No!* That’s not true, because when God *gives grace for power*, God is the One Who decides to give it. If we go to God and by our works we earn it then it’s not grace. You don’t earn a miracle. Ministers can’t earn the privilege of God using them for miracles.

I’ve known ministers that have fasted, I’ve known ministers that have prayed. I’ve even heard them bragging, ‘Oh, I’m fasting and praying so we can have more miracles,’ and let everyone know. Well, God could care less. God will do it when it’s *His* time, and He will do it in *His* way.

Let’s see exactly what was happening here. This is after they were released from prison. They were all praying together. Acts 4:29: “And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings, and grant that Your servants may speak Your Word with all boldness... [and that’s what we need to have, that kind of boldness and confidence] ...by reaching out Your hand to heal...” (vs 29-30). They’re asking God to stretch forth *His* hand. Not asking God that they could have good works so that God would have to work miracles through them.

No, they asked God that “...by reaching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your Holy Son, Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with *the Holy Spirit*, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness” God decided that He was going .... [to give that power, and that He was going to give that grace] ...And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things common.” (vs 30-32).

This is not communism, or that we all run off someplace and sell everything and give it all to the preacher and he puts in the bank and you all go live out here and when the communal fails then he’s got the money in the bank and you have nothing. *No!* They were there together because this is an extension of the time from Pentecost and they all stayed together through that time after Pentecost. Rather than going home they stayed in Jerusalem. That’s why they had all things in common. It would be like if we all had to stay here for a while, well then we would have to share and give and things like that. That’s what it’s talking about.

### **Great Grace:**

Verse 33: “And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and **great grace** was upon them all.” God gives more grace; it’s called *great*. In this sense it’s not great in what we think of as a great person, but great in the sense of the amount of grace that God gave, or the quantity that God gave.

### **Grace—Favor or Gift or Acceptable:**

Let’s see one of these instances. I’ll just refer you to the notes on grace so you can look them up if you desire to look up those different areas where the word grace from the Greek ‘charis’ is used in a different translatable way.

Luke 6:32: “But if you love *only* those who love you, what **praise [grace]** is it to you?” The Greek there is ‘charis’—which means *what grace have you*. In other words, if you only do the things of loving those that love you, there is no grace from God. That’s what it’s talking about. What grace have you? Obviously you have thanks. The people that you love thank you, and you thank them. But it is, “...what **praise [grace]** is it to you?” What grace have you from God? *Because you love those that love you!*

“...For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good *only* to those who are doing good to you, what praise is it to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive, what praise is it to you?” (32-34). What grace have you? That’s why another instance, the gift that was sent by the Greeks down to Jerusalem, the gift of grain and dates, and things when there was the famine down in Jerusalem, it was called *a gift*. It was also called *grace*. It could refer just to the physical giving. If you just give to them what grace have you?

“...For even sinners lend to sinners, that they may receive as much again.... [in many cases because of interest, a whole lot more] ...But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great...” (vs 34-35) God will count it the way He will through His grace, not through your way of doing things.

How many times has some political mucky-muck been on some board of whatever. It think a lot of them are on United Way, and they are the big this and the big that, and they are giving their time and donating. Then you find out later they’re nothing but crooks under the skin anyway, so you see that’s why God has it so that we don’t plan it. ‘I will join the United Way and I will donate my time and services and I will be noted in the community and then I will run for mayor and I will be elected.’ That falls into the category of doing things that you hope a return

for.

Verse 35: “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be *the* children of the Highest; for He is good to the unthankful and *the* wicked.” If He weren’t there wouldn’t be anyone left alive.

### **Grace and Gifts:**

God gives certain gifts and of course that all ties in with 1-Cor. 12 about the gifts and so forth. This is a word that means *freely given*. Even our understanding of God’s Word, even our understanding of the things that we have of God.

1-Corinthians 2:12: “Now, we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things **graciously given** to us by God.” *No charge!* That’s why it says that *you can’t buy your way into the Kingdom of God*. Simon Magus tried to buy the Holy Spirit. It is freely given unto us.

Romans 12 talks about the grace of God that is given to us in reference to the gifts differing one from another. We’ll see how this ties right together. Paul is speaking here of the grace that was given to him.

Romans 12:3: “For I say through the grace that was given to me, to everyone who is among you...” [This is part of God’s giving of grace to the apostle Paul for the effect of preaching. He is speaking to every one that is among you.] ...not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think with sound-mindedness, as God has divided to each one a measure of faith. For even as we have many members in one body, but all members do not have the same function; likewise, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another. But each one has different gifts **according to the grace that is given to us...**” (vs 3-6). The giving of this gift, whatever it is. Some people have one gift one way, some have a gift another way. That is all from the grace of God. *It is given to us!*

“...—whether prophecy... [speaking or preaching] ... *let us prophesy* according to the measure of faith; or service, *let us tend* to service; or the one who is teaching, *let him tend* to teaching” (vs 6-7). And he goes right on showing that all of these things then are exercised through the gift of a grace of God.

1-Peter 4:10: “*Let each one, according as he has received a gift from God...* [‘cheritos’—*the gift*] ...*be using* it to serve the others as good stewards of *the* grace of God...” The giving that God gives to us,

the calling that God gives. All of it has to do with the grace of God.

There's one other section that is important that we need to understand that has to do with the grace of God and each of us individually. This kind of flows into one of the other sections that I have. There is a whole section that I'm not going to cover except just a few Scriptures, which has to do with the opening and closing of each of the epistles, having to refer to the grace of God.

### **Grace and Peace:**

1-Corinthians 1:3: "**Grace and peace** *be* to you..." That's very important. When we understand the grace of God we have more peace. I think that we have really begun to understand that and learn that and we are going to preserve that peace by the grace of God.

Verse 3: "**Grace and peace** *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always concerning you, **for the grace of God that has been given to you in Christ Jesus** (vs 3-4). You think of it in a personal way. Christ is the One Who has given it to you. That shows how active God that is involved in our lives.

Talking about with our speech, Colossians 4:5: "Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside *the Church*, redeeming the time. *Let* your speech *be* always with grace... [in other words in a good and positive and kind way] ...seasoned with salt, that you may know how to answer each one" (vs 5-6). It just becomes part of our way of life, the way we walk, the way we talk, and everything then reflecting the grace of God.

### **Affliction and Suffering:**

Sometimes you will see someone who is afflicted with something and God does not intervene to do anything for them. God does not heal them, though they pray, though they've been anointed or whatever. God has another purpose in mind for them. We have one such a lady—Esther Greisinger—who is much that way. She has done more to help people in her state of weakness than she could have done any other way because of the grace of God that is given to her for that very purpose.

Paul is talking about his affliction that he had. When he had the vision and he didn't know if he was in the body or out of the body he says, 2-Corinthians 12:5: "I will boast of such a one as this; but of myself I personally will not boast, except concerning my weaknesses. But even if I choose to boast, I shall not be a fool; for I will speak the Truth. However, I will forbear, lest anyone think of me

above what he sees me *to be*, or what he hears from me. But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations, *there* was given to me a thorn in the flesh..." (vs 5-7).

We know that he had this terrible eye condition. Terrible eye condition, where in Galatians it said that they didn't even want to look upon him. When he wrote the book of Galatians it was with such large letters so that they could read it. It says, "...a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me..." (v 7).

That doesn't mean that it was a demon because obviously Paul was not bothered with demons. A messenger comes from the word 'angelos'—which is also translated *angel*. This has to do with a messenger or probably was a messenger from Satan...BAM!...just like it was with Job, the disease was upon him. But that doesn't mean that it was there on him, or that he was demon possessed, or that he was demon bothered.

In other words God allowed that messenger to afflict him with this affliction, and then obviously left him. Just like during the affliction of Job, was Satan there with him all the time? *No, only to afflict him!* When the affliction was gone it was Job and his three friends and then God up there listening to what's going on. Satan was not there. There are some people who thought that this means that Paul had a demon with him all the time, just to kind of correct him. *No!* He had an affliction that was a messenger from Satan.

Once he received it then it was to buffet him, "...so that I might not be exalted. I besought the Lord three times for this, that it... [what ever the illness was] ...might depart from me; but He said to me, '**My grace is sufficient for you...** [God's grace is sufficient] ...**for My power is made perfect in weakness.**' Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (vs 7-10). Understanding fully the grace of God he understood what it meant to be afflicted.

There are several Scriptures that we want to cover in the opening and closing of some of the epistles. It's interesting that if you go through and study it, Paul and Peter talk more about the grace of God than any of the others. It is very important for us to understand that when they wrote their epistles, and when they wrote these letters and they said 'the grace of God be with you. grace and peace, and love and mercy of God the Father and our Lord Jesus

Christ,' there is an actual blessing that comes with that. It's a very important thing that they put in there.

Here the Apostle Peter says, 1-Peter 1:2: "*Who have been chosen according to the predetermined knowledge of God the Father, by sanctification through the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you.*"

That is quite an introduction and lots of times we go studying along and boy we want to get to the important things so we cut out the first verses and we cut out the last verses and we don't realize how important that is for us. Go through and you study those and you read those and they are important to us.

It does it twice here in Romans 16:20: "But the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.**" Amen means *so be it*. So, if he says the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen, it means that he wants the grace of God with you.

Verse 24: "**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.**" That's one of his more powerful endings.

2-Corinthians 13:11. "In conclusion, brethren, rejoice! Be perfected; be encouraged; be of the same mind; be at peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with a Holy kiss. All the saints send salutations to you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit... [that is the fellowship, the inner fellowshipping of the Holy Spirit with you] ...*be* with you all. Amen" (vs 11-12). That's almost one of the best endings that you could have, right there.

Galatians 6:18: "Brethren, **may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit**.... [in the spirit of your mind] ...Amen." That's a significant verse—isn't it?

Ephesians 6:23: "Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith from God *the* Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. **Grace be with all those whose love**... [grace and love go together] ...*for* our Lord Jesus Christ is uncorrupted. Amen" (vs 23-24).

It might be very inspiring for you to read through the first three or four verses, and the last three or four verses of every one of the Epistles of Paul and I think you will see how much the grace of God is involved actively, just like it said, 'and the grace of God be with your spirit.'

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 2:1-10
- 2) James 4:6-7
- 3) 1 Peter 1:6-13
- 4) Acts 14:25-28
- 5) Romans 1:3-5
- 6) 1 Corinthians 15:10, 7-10
- 7) Romans 15:15-16
- 8) 2 Corinthians 1:12
- 9) Ephesians 3:2-8
- 10) Philippians 1:7
- 11) Romans 11:5
- 12) Genesis 12:1-3
- 13) Romans 11:4-7
- 14) 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12
- 15) Acts 13:38-39, 43
- 16) Acts 14:2-3
- 17) 2 Timothy 1:10-11
- 18) Luke 2:40, 51-52
- 19) Hebrews 2:8-10
- 20) Hebrews 4:14-16
- 21) Acts 4:29-33
- 22) Luke 6:32-35
- 23) 1 Corinthians 2:12
- 24) Romans 12:3-7
- 25) 1 Peter 4:10
- 26) 1 Corinthians 1:3-4
- 27) Colossians 4:5-6
- 28) 2 Corinthians 12:5-10
- 29) 1 Peter 1:2
- 30) Romans 16:20, 24
- 31) 2 Corinthians 13:11-12
- 32) Galatians 6:18
- 33) Ephesians 6:23-24

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Peter 5:5
- Genesis 11
- Galatians 1:16
- John 3:16
- 1 Corinthians 12