

What God's Grace Does

Introduction. We live in a world of gross immorality. Just consider the breakdown of the American home. Today, the marriage vows are taken very lightly. Almost one out of every two marriages ends in divorce. Some folks trade cars less frequently than some trade marriage companions. Furthermore, one could consider the many forms of sexual immorality. Enticements to or from some type of sexual situation bombards us from every side. Add to this dancing, mixed swimming, immodest apparel, and suggestive music and you have got a very morally loose situation. Paul could well have been describing our world in 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

The grace of God is truly amazing and wonderful for us. We do not want to minimize the greatness of it, nor do we want to imagine it out of proportion to the scriptures. The grace of God, as described in Titus 2:11-14, can help us to overcome the moral decay around us. These verses also provide, not the denominational concept of grace, but the correct view of grace.

Even though the Bible was written many, many hundreds of years ago, its message should still penetrate us (Hebrews 4:12-13). The gospel still can confront moral issues. There are a lot of them out there. Paul and Peter instruct us well (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 Peter 2:11, 21-25). The Bible is the Christian's absolute standard of morality and there are very distinct moral consequences to the teachings of Christ and the apostles.

I. ***It Saves Us From The Penalty Of Sin***

- A. In His grace, God often saves from physical danger and affliction, even death:
 - 1. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3:24-27).
 - 2. Daniel (Daniel 6:19-22).
 - 3. The disciples (Mark 4:39).
- B. But this deliverance is from sin and its consequences.
 - 1. This grace brings salvation (John 3:16).
 - 2. Thus, God's grace is offered to all, but refused by most.
 - a. This does not refer to universal salvation but to the universal opportunity for salvation.
 - b. God is by nature a Savior, and it is unbelievers who are responsible for the sin that sends them to hell (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).
 - c. So men are not condemned because God has not chosen them but because they have not chosen Him.

3. The grace appeared in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection (Titus 3:4-7).
- C. God's manifestations of grace are not permanent or eternal. One day they will end (Romans 2:5; Mark 9:44, 46, 48).

II. ***It Saves Us From The Power Of Sin***

- A. God's grace teaches us to deny ungodliness.
 1. The instruction, training, or education is carried out by God's word (1 Corinthians 2:12-13, 16).
 2. True grace does not allow ungodliness to continue (Romans 1:18-19; 6:1; 11:26). When a person is truly converted, there is a transformation of the way they live (Galatians 2:20).
 3. Jesus' horrible death was grace exposing the ugliness of sin (John 16:8). In Acts 2:22-37, Peter's sermon was the grace of God exposing their ugly deed and inviting them to the remission of sins through obedience to Jesus.
 4. To "deny" carries with it the idea of a conscious, purposeful action of the will. It is to confess and consciously turn away from sin and turn toward what is good.
- B. Consider the definitions of the words:
 1. Ungodliness -- a lack of true reverence and devotion to God, of which the wrath of God is revealed (Romans 1:18).
 2. Worldly desires -- sins that, although we may not actually have committed, we nevertheless long to commit (2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 Timothy 6:9).
 3. Soberly -- the exercise of a sound mind that possess self-restraint that governs all passions and desires, enabling the believer to be conformed to the mind of Christ (Titus 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:13-14; 4:7).
 4. Righteously -- "upright" or "law-abiding" (1 John 3:7; Hosea 10:12; Ephesians 6:12). This is action which is in accordance with God's will.
 5. Godly -- a manner of life which reflects godliness and reverence (1 Timothy 2:1-2; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Peter 3:11).
 6. It could be said that living sensibly could relate to the change within us, living righteously could relate to our changed relationship toward others, and living godly could relate to our changed relationship to God Himself.

III. ***It Saves Us From The Presence Of Sin***

- A. When the Lord appears a second time, total and permanent removal of sin will occur. Paul could therefore say that he truly desired death (Philippians 1:21, 23). "Looking for" carries the

meaning of not only longing and waiting but also of eager and certain expectation.

- B. "Hope" gives us a confident certainty. Paul is not speaking about a fond human wish but about a divinely promised certitude.
- C. "Appearing" carries the idea of uncovering, unveiling, and disclosing. Paul uses the term both of Jesus' first and second comings (2 Timothy 1:10; 4:1).
- D. Paul is considering the culmination of our salvation, which will be perfected and completed when our Lord calls us to heaven (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). Although we remain on earth, our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20-21).

IV. ***It Saves Us From The Possession Of Sin***

- A. Jesus gave Himself to redeem us. The word "redeem" refers to the releasing of someone held captive, such as a prisoner or a slave, or receipt of a ransom payment. We are redeemed by the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).
- B. The purpose of the Son of God coming to earth was to give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). He will deliver us out of this present evil age (Galatians 1:4). His offering was a sweet sacrifice to God (Ephesians 5:2).
- C. The church, by virtue of being the church, is to stand for, and practice, morality. She is composed of the "called out." We are called out of the world and out of a life of sin by the gospel to a life of holiness.
- D. We are God's people. The Bible tells us several times in several different ways:
 - 1. We are God's by design (Psalm 100:3; 139:14; Acts 17:28).
 - 2. We are God's by purchase (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20).
 - 3. We are God's by dedication (Philippians 1:21; Romans 6:17-18).
- E. Our speech and actions come from the heart (Proverbs 4:23; 23:7). Jesus knew the importance of the heart (Matthew 12:34-35) and Paul recognized the importance of right thinking as it relates to right speech and right actions (Philippians 4:8). When we put away sin, we show that God's grace has greater dominion over us than the devil.

Conclusion. If the word of God had a corrective effect upon the perverted society in Corinth, it can have that kind of corrective effect upon the immoral society of our day. It has always been God's purpose for His people to be righteous as a testimony to His own righteousness and holiness before the unbelieving world (Deuteronomy 26:18-19; 1 Peter 2:12). We need constant admonishment and encouragement to do good.