

God's Grace

- Ron Stullenbarger -

Grace is one of the most astounding and life-transforming aspects of God's character. From the beginning of time God has chosen to lavish grace upon us instead of wrath. Time and time again, we've turned our backs on Him. And time and time again He demonstrates the depth of His desire for us through the giving of His boundless grace. In His grace we are afforded a life not only apart from His wrath, but lived in the glory of relationship with our Creator through the redemption of Jesus.

Ephesians 1:7 says, *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace."* Have you thought about the nature of your redemption in depth? Colossians 1:19-22 says, *"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him."* Such is the grace of our heavenly Father that there is not a single thing between us and Him. We, who at one time stood apart from God, have been brought into the family of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus.

Not only have we been redeemed once and for all, but we are forgiven both now and forever. Paul writes that we as believers have *"the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace."* Where in your life do you need forgiveness? What do you feel is separating you from unveiled relationship with your heavenly Father? If you are a Christian, when you confess your sins, God offers you His forgiveness for anything you have done (1 John 1:9). *"According to the riches of his grace,"* which was made perfectly evident in the death of Jesus, you are being offered forgiveness. If God would send His Son to die in order to have restored relationship with you, you better believe He will forgive any trespass that seems to stand in your way now.

God doesn't operate the way the world does. He doesn't make you pay the penalty for your own sin. Instead, He offers perfect grace. Why? Because you can't get rid of the guilt of sin any other way! In story after story in Scripture God turns the systems of the world on their head through the concept of grace. In the story of the prodigal son, the father allowed the son to dishonor him, set aside his rightful punishment, and threw a huge party for his wayward child returned home. He didn't make him wait. He didn't make him work for his redemption. He immediately offered him forgiveness freely in grace. God offers us the same today.

Live in light of God's grace. Offer your heart to God freely. Let Him work out redemption in every area of your life that you might more fully experience the wonderful relationship you have available to you with God.