

## Do Not Receive the Grace of God in Vain

### Introduction and Review

- **The love of Christ controls us!** It motivates godly fear (5:10-11), a clear conscience (5:11c) & humility with self-sacrifice (5:14-15)
- The fear of the Lord motivates: godly persuasion of other people (5:11b) & a good reputation with other people (5:12, 13b)
- The love of Christ gives us a new perspective regarding Him – He is the unique Son of God & fully divine (5:16; Jn. 1:1, 14)
- The love of Christ gives us a new perspective regarding every believer: is a new creation (v. 17), has the ministry of reconciliation (v. 18-19), is an ambassador for Christ (v. 20) & knows the truth about reconciliation (v. 21).

### I. Making An Appeal for the Grace of God (v. 1-2)

#### A. God works with believers (v. 1a)

*Every true believer is an ambassador for Christ by representing Him with our attitude, words & actions (5:20a). But we are not alone in life & ministry, Christ is with us (v. 1a; Mt. 28:20b; Col. 1:27b).*

#### B. God appeals through believers (v. 1b-2)

*God gives a believer **grace** to be saved & to grow (Eph. 2:8; 2Pe. 3:18). God uses believers to plead with people to receive this grace (5:20; 6:1b) – “appeal” & “implore”. We must urge & beg people not to disobey God after they know the truth (v. 1b-2; Jas. 4:17; Lk. 12:48) – vanity.*

**God pleads for obedience from people through believers.**

### II. Removing Obstacles for the Grace of God (v. 3-13)

#### A. Obstacles for servants (v. 3-10)

*Believers must have a clear conscience regarding obstacles in ministry (v. 3-4a). This is accomplished by: **enduring** hardships (v. 4b-5), living with **integrity** (v. 6-7) & finding **contentment** in all circumstances (v. 8-10).*

#### B. Obstacles for recipients (v. 11-13)

*Unwillingness to reconcile prevents people from hearing the truth & discerning true motives (v. 11) – mouth & heart. Unwillingness to forgive, repent or change prevents reconciliation (v. 12). Forgiveness & love must come from the heart (v. 13) – genuine & unconditional.*

**God gives grace to handle any obstacles in believers' relationships!**