

Can Grace Really Be That Good?

Introduction and Review

- We considered the role of grace & works in the process of salvation & in the relationship with God.
- All sinners need the same grace for salvation & NOTHING they have done counts toward salvation (Eph. 2:4-9; Rom. 11:6).
- All believers need the same grace for the relationship with God to be maintained & NOTHING that a believer does can improve or destroy that relationship (Rom. 8:28-29; 1Jn. 3:1-2).

I. Sinners Really Are That Bad (Col. 1:21)

A. Humanity's self-assessment

Verses 21 & 22 give us a contrast life before & after people experience grace. Mankind believes that there is some inherent natural goodness that makes humanity favorable or pleasing to God. Most people believe that they are going to heaven or a blessed afterlife regardless of the way they live or what they believe – Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventist, etc. Moreover mankind believes many deeds are considered good & merit-worthy by God (Lk. 18:9-12, 18-23; Ac. 17:22-23).

B. God's assessment of humanity

"...the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." (Jn. 3:19) God's standards are perfection; loving what is holy, righteous & good (Mt. 5:48; 1Pe. 1:16). Therefore all of humanity falls short of God's perfection (Rom. 3:10-12, 23). All of humanity is alienated from God, hostile in mind toward God and doing evil deeds (Col. 1:21; Tit. 3:3). We've seen other descriptions of this dreadful & miserable condition: Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 1:18ff; etc.

II. Grace Really Is That Good (Col. 1:22)

A. Reconciliation

ALL believers once were alienated, but are now reconciled. Reconcile (ἀποκαταλλάσσω) means to reestablish proper friendly interpersonal relations. How can proper peaceful, relations be established between holy God & sinners that are

alienated & hostile toward God? Reconciliation takes place only through the death of Christ in his human body for the sinner – "in his body of flesh by his death". Justification is a legal pardon & reconciliation is relational acceptance.

ILL: If a judge pardons a criminal & restricts his relationships with people, then he's not fully restored – no acceptance by offended. But if he pardons & restores all relationships, then he is reconciled.

APPL: The same is true with God & the believer spiritually...

B. Blameless

Believers were reconciled with a future purpose, "in order to present you". Holy (ἅγιος) means consecrated or set apart to God. Blameless (ἄμωμος) means without any moral faults. Above reproach (ἀνέγκλητος) means free from accusations. This is the glorious future for every believer in Christ – holy, blameless & above reproach as a PERFECT SACRIFICE. It really is that good & it's all because of grace! God's forgiveness is total, complete & unconditional forever (Ps. 103:12; Is. 43:25) - He chooses to never remember our sins or bring them up against us!

APPL: Regardless of the number & severity of your past sins, if you have believed in Christ there is no condemnation now & there will be no condemnation in the future (Rom. 8:1ff).

CONCLUSION

Therefore the life of grace is a life free of condemnation beginning with salvation throughout all of eternity. Grace covers all sins from birth to the grave; from lying & covetousness to murder; from dishonoring parents to idolatry. The grace of God is completely thorough for where sin increased, grace increased all the more. Jesus paid our sin debt with his own life & death. The holy demands of God for our sins were completely & thoroughly met by Christ; Jesus paid it all. And now we simply need to live for Him who died for us; live for Jesus because of His amazing grace – no more guilt, shame, fear, condemnation, wrath & punishment. Grace really is that good! Hallelujah! What a Savior.

And if you are not a Christian, you can be free from condemnation, guilt & shame from sin too; free from worry about your future when you have to face Jesus as Judge. You can be saved by grace; you must believe in Jesus...

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