

Defining Grace: It's Not So Easy!

by Matthew Finley

JUSTICE is getting what you deserve, **MERCY** is not getting what you deserve, and **GRACE** is getting what you don't deserve.

Justice and mercy are common ideas easy for American society to understand, because our country is foundationally built upon these two concepts. The subject of grace is far more difficult to grasp because it is counter-cultural. Showing grace has the aspect of "everything to lose and nothing to gain". Grace is getting what you **don't** deserve. It's far more difficult to understand grace unless you understand God and His Son. Let us examine the source, the cost, and the purpose of grace.

THE SOURCE. *John 1:14, 17* – "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, **full of grace and truth; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**" God makes it known to His people that He is gracious by physically showing them grace – delivering them from Egyptian slavery (Exodus 14), raining bread from heaven when the Israelites were hungry (Exodus 16), providing water from a rock (Exodus 17) just to name a few. Until the time of Christ entering into the world, God has shown grace to His people in physical manifestations, however, they didn't get it. It took His own Son to become flesh, the creator becoming the creature for His people to see the completeness of grace, or getting what you **don't deserve**.

THE COST. *1 Peter 3:18* – "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God,

being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit..." Grace is not cheap. It took the most drastic measure to purchase grace. God has abundantly overpaid for His people. It took sinlessness to take on the sins of the world to provide us with grace. What was the motivation behind getting what we **don't deserve**? "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved..." (Ephesians 2:4-5)

THE PURPOSE. *Ephesians 2:8-9* – "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." The gift of salvation was the purpose of sending the source of grace to this earth and take on the just penalty for the sins of man – death. There's nothing we can do to earn grace. It is a gift given to us from God, through access of the blood graciously given on our behalf by His Son.

It's so hard for me to understand why God would give so much, when I provide him with so little. But it's the love of God desiring to save His people. This must compel us to obey Him and give him our allegiance, in what fragile way we can.

Joel 2:13 – "Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster."



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