

ONE ACCORD
AND CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
(Saturday—Evening Session)

Message Six
Grace in Acts

Scripture Reading: John 1:14, 16-17; Acts 4:33; 11:23; 13:43; 14:3, 26; 15:11, 40; 20:32

I. We need to know, experience, and enjoy the grace of God—Eph. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:10:

- A. The grace of God is a matter of tremendous significance.
- B. According to the New Testament, grace is actually what God is to us for our enjoyment—John 1:16-17; 2 Cor. 12:9.
- C. The New Testament reveals that grace is mainly not the work God does for us; grace is the Triune God Himself dispensed into our being and experienced as our enjoyment.
- D. Grace came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17); this indicates that grace is a person.
- E. The personification of grace is God Himself; Paul realized this when he said, “Not I but the grace of God which is with me”—1 Cor. 15:10.
- F. When God is enjoyed by us, that is grace.
- G. Grace is God in His Son Jesus Christ to be our portion so that we may enjoy all that He is.
- H. Grace is not merely Christ Himself; it is also Christ moving, Christ working, Christ reigning, Christ convincing, Christ subduing, Christ saving, and Christ uplifting.
- I. There are different aspects of grace:
 - 1. Great grace—Acts 4:33.
 - 2. Visible grace—11:23.
 - 3. Grace saving us—Eph. 2:5; Titus 2:11; 2 Tim. 1:9.
 - 4. Grace empowering us—2:1.
 - 5. Grace imparted—Gal. 2:9.
 - 6. The real grace—John 1:14, 16-17.
 - 7. Commended to the grace of God—Acts 14:26.
 - 8. Grace to function—Eph. 3:8.
 - 9. Grace for timely help—Heb. 4:16.
 - 10. Abounding, reigning grace—Rom. 5:2, 15, 20-21.
 - 11. Justified by His grace—3:24.
 - 12. How to receive grace—Lam. 3:55.
 - 13. Gifts according to the grace—Rom. 12:6.
 - 14. Sufficient grace—2 Cor. 12:9.
 - 15. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ—13:14.
 - 16. Grace with our spirit—Gal. 6:18; 1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Tim. 4:22.
 - 17. “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen”—Rev. 22:21.
- J. As believers in Christ, we need to experience the grace of the Lord as revealed in the New Testament:
 - 1. Having faith and love through the Lord’s superabounding grace—1 Tim. 1:14.
 - 2. Having obtained access into and standing in God’s abounding grace—Rom. 5:2a.
 - 3. Enjoying eternal comfort and good hope in grace—2 Thes. 2:16.
 - 4. Coming forward with boldness to the throne of grace to find grace for timely help—Heb. 4:16.

5. Receiving God's abounding supply of all grace—2 Cor. 9:8.
6. Constantly enjoying God's multiplying grace—1 Pet. 1:2b; 2 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 22:21.
7. Enjoying God's greater grace by being humble—James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5.
8. Experiencing the perfecting of the Lord's sufficient grace, Christ's overshadowing power, in our weakness—2 Cor. 12:9.
9. Being perfected, established, strengthened, and grounded by God's all grace after having suffered—1 Pet. 5:10.
10. Carrying out the stewardship of the grace of God entrusted by Him—dispensing to people the riches of Christ as the grace of God—Eph. 3:2, 8.
11. In our living, speaking words for building up and thus giving grace to people—4:28-29.
12. Reigning in life by receiving the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness—grace reigning unto eternal life—Rom. 5:17b, 21b.
13. All the believers having grace upon them and the church being built up; the grace received by the believers being visible—Acts 4:33; 11:23.

II. We need to see grace in Acts—4:33; 11:23; 13:43; 14:3, 26; 15:11, 40; 20:32:

- A. "With great power the apostles gave testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all"—4:33:
 1. We appreciate the phrase *great grace was upon them all*.
 2. This happened at the time of Pentecost; thousands of people were being brought to the Lord—2:41; 4:4.
 3. This was a situation in which people could realize that great grace was upon the believers.
 4. This grace was nothing less than the living Jesus moving, convincing, subduing, releasing, uplifting, and transcending.
 5. "He [Barnabas] arrived and saw the grace of God"—11:23a.
 6. When he saw the grace, he "rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart"—v. 23b.
 7. The grace that was seen by Barnabas must have been the Triune God received and enjoyed by the believers and expressed in their salvation, change in life, holy living, and the gifts they exercised in their meetings, all of which could be seen by others.
- B. "Paul and Barnabas ... spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God"—13:43:
 1. To continue in the grace implies that we have already received this grace.
 2. Having received the grace of God, we now need to continue in it:
 - a. Actually, the believers received the holy and faithful things in verse 34.
 - b. Then these holy and faithful things became the grace of God in verse 43.
 - c. Hence, the grace of God is compounded of all the holy and faithful things.
- C. "They spent a considerable amount of time speaking with boldness in the Lord, who testified to the word of His grace"—14:3:
 1. We need to see the significance of the expression *the word of His grace* in verse 3.
 2. The phrase *the word of His grace* denotes certain dispensational points; the word of the Lord's grace replaces the law.
 3. This phrase is a strong indication of a change of dispensation, of a change of God's arrangement in His economy.
- D. "They had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled"—v. 26:
 1. Grace is the Triune God becoming life and everything to us.
 2. The grace that motivated Paul and operated in him was a living person, the resurrected

Christ, the embodiment of God the Father who became the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, who dwelt in him as his everything—1 Cor. 15:10.

- E. “We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we are saved in the same way also as they are”—Acts 15:11:
 - 1. This grace comprises the Lord’s person and His redemptive work—Gal. 2:21; Rom. 3:24.
 - 2. Peter and the Jewish believers were saved by this grace, not by keeping the law of Moses.
- F. “Paul chose Silas and went out, having been commended to the grace of the Lord by the brothers”—Acts 15:40:
 - 1. Paul was commended to the grace of the Lord.
 - 2. The fact that Paul was commended to the grace of the Lord by the brothers indicates that he had taken the right way.
- G. “I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who have been sanctified”—20:32:
 - 1. The word of God’s abundant grace is able to build up the saints.
 - 2. The word of God’s grace functions to give us the inheritance among all those who have been sanctified:
 - a. This inheritance is the Triune God Himself with all that He has, all that He has done, and all that He will do for His redeemed people.
 - b. Our eternal inheritance is related to the divine life, which we have received through regeneration and which we are experiencing and enjoying through our entire Christian life.
 - c. To participate in God’s inheritance requires us to be sanctified, and to be sanctified requires the word of God’s grace.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

GRACE

Ephesians 2:7 says, “That He might display in the ages which are coming the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” In 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul testifies, “But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.” The grace of God is a matter of tremendous significance. It is important for us to find out the genuine and proper meaning of the grace of God in the New Testament. If we would understand what the grace of God is as revealed in the New Testament, we need a clear view of the New Testament as a whole.

When I was young, I was taught that grace means that we do nothing and that God does everything for us. According to this teaching, anything we do is work, not grace, but whatever God does for us is grace. However, according to the New Testament, grace is actually what God is to us for our enjoyment (John 1:16-17; 2 Cor. 12:9). Grace is actually God in Christ dispensed into our being for our enjoyment in our experience. Grace is mainly not the work God does for us; grace is the Triune God Himself dispensed into our being and experienced as our enjoyment. In brief, grace is the Triune God experienced and enjoyed by us. The New Testament reveals that grace is nothing less than God in Christ dispensed into our being for our enjoyment.

John 1:17 says that grace came through Jesus Christ. This indicates that grace is somewhat like a person. The personification of grace is God Himself. Paul realized this when he said, “Not I, but the grace of God with me” (1 Cor. 15:10). For Paul, grace was a living person. In Paul this person became the very grace by which he labored. Therefore, grace is God Himself; it is what God is to us for our enjoyment. When God is enjoyed by us, that is grace. Grace is the very God in His Son Jesus Christ to

be our portion so that we may enjoy all He is.

We need to emphasize the fact that grace is God as our enjoyment. When God becomes our portion for us to enjoy, that is grace. Do not consider grace as something less than God. Grace is nothing less than the Triune God enjoyed by us in a practical way as our portion. Concerning this definition of grace, the first stanza of *Hymns*, #497 says:

Grace in its highest definition is
God in the Son to be enjoyed by us;
It is not only something done or giv'n,
But God Himself, our portion glorious.

Grace is God not in doctrine, but in our experience, for grace is God in Christ with all He is for our enjoyment. This includes life, strength, comfort, rest, light, righteousness, holiness, power, and the other divine attributes. When we enjoy God and participate in Him, that is grace.

We have pointed out that in Ephesians 2:7 Paul indicates that God will “display in the ages which are coming the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” To display the riches of God’s grace is to exhibit them to the whole universe. The riches of God’s grace surpass every limit, for they are the riches of God Himself for our enjoyment. The riches of God’s grace will be publicly displayed for eternity.

In Ephesians 2:8 Paul goes on to say that we are saved by grace. In Ephesians grace denotes God dispensed into us. Therefore, to be saved by grace means to be saved by God dispensed into us in Christ. Most Christians, however, regard grace as a thing, not as a person. To them, grace is merely a gift freely given. According to this concept of grace, we were sinners who did not deserve God’s salvation, but God saved us freely by giving us His unmerited favor. This, however, is a superficial understanding of what it means to be saved by grace. Ephesians reveals that saving grace is God Himself in Christ wrought into our being. Hence, to be saved by grace actually means to be saved by the dispensing of the Triune God into us.

According to Ephesians, salvation is the transmission of God into us as grace. It was not a simple matter for God to be transmitted into us as grace. It was necessary for Him to be processed through incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. By being processed in this way, He is now able to transmit Himself into us. When the processed God is transmitted into us, He becomes saving grace to us in our experience. This grace is not only amazing grace; it is abounding grace. Grace is the processed God transmitted into our being.

If you read Ephesians 1 and 2 with much prayer, you will see that God processed and transmitted into our being is the saving grace and the abounding grace. We have been saved by the transmission of this processed God. In His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus, God has saved us by His grace. In the ages to come—in the millennium and eternity—God will display this grace publicly to the whole universe.

In 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul speaks three times concerning grace. Twice he speaks of the grace of God, and once, of “His grace.” In this verse grace is the Triune God becoming life and everything to us. It was by this grace that Saul of Tarsus, the foremost of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15-16), became the foremost apostle, laboring more abundantly than all the apostles.

First Peter 4:10 speaks of the varied grace of God: “Each one according as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.” The varied grace of God is the rich supply of life, which is the Triune God ministered to us in many aspects. As good stewards, by the gift we have received we should minister to the church and to the saints such grace, not mere doctrine.

In 1 Peter 5:10 we have a word concerning “the God of all grace.” In this verse “all grace” refers to the riches of the bountiful supply of the divine life in many aspects ministered to us in the many steps of the divine operation in God’s economy. The term “the God of all grace” is unique; it is found in the New Testament only in 1 Peter 5:10. Peter does not say merely that God is the God of grace; he

says that God is the God of *all* grace. As believers, we should be encouraged by the fact that our God is the God of all grace. This divine grace is an outstanding attribute of our God who has favored us with it in Christ. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 102-105)