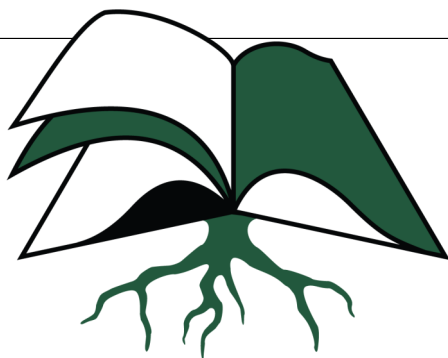


Pennsylvania Bible Teaching Fellowship

Spring Newsletter



This quarterly newsletter is written to enhearten, encourage and inspire so that the Word of God may continue to grow and increase both in quantity and quality in the hearts of God's beloved.

*...receive with meekness the implanted Word,
which is able to save [deliver] your souls.*

James 1:21b WT



SPRING

2019



THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

By Shawn Weir

It is impossible to boast too much about God. There is no one like Him and no one who comes even close. None is wiser, mightier, more loving, or more glorious than our Father. In the epistle of **1st Peter** we find one of the many great descriptions of our God and another unparalleled characteristic:

1st Peter 5:10b – 11 ESV

10b the **God of all grace**, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Our God is the God of ALL grace. He is the source of all of it and it cannot be found elsewhere. Grace is God's willingness to show favor to the undeserving. Grace is God's warm and loving disposition to show His kindness to the unworthy. The more the Christian heart grows in an appreciation of the endless chasm between our unworthiness and the value of what God has given by grace, the more the heart desires to live only for Him. After all, who am I and what is my life, that God would show so great a grace unto me? As the old song puts it so well:

**“Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me!”**



THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

Grace is a core and defining trait of our God and yet, all of the very nature of man fights against it tooth and nail. The vanity of flesh wants to earn, work, and fight for better standing, rank, and recognition. The very suggestion of God showing His goodness to those without strength, ungodly, sinners, and enemies (**Romans 5:6 – 10**) is an offense to all of man's pride.

Grace is also a complete contradiction to all of the world's religions. They all share the similar premise that I, as a man, must do something worthy or impressive enough to God (or to gods) in order to curry favor, gain blessing, and/or earn eternal salvation. In every man made religion there are the things which one must do (and often, one must do them a lot) in order to hopefully find out when they die if they did them enough. All are measured on individual merit, accomplishment, and work.

However, God does not declare Himself as the "God of all works"; He is the **God of all GRACE**.

One thing is consistently clear through all the Scriptures: grace and works cannot mix.

Romans 11:6 NASB

But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.



THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

There's a great parable explaining how grace stands, in contrast, to work in the gospel of **Matthew**:

Matthew 20:1 – 15

1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

The phrase “early in the morning” is “at dawn” or about **6:00 AM**. A “penny a day” was one denarius a day, which would have been an appropriate pay for a day's work.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

The third hour was about **9:00 AM**. The sixth hour was about **12 noon**. The ninth hour was about **3:00 PM**. The eleventh hour is about **5:00 PM**.



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7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

These men in this last crew had no one else to hire them for the day, and were offered to join the labor in the vineyard with the other groups of men. Note the phrase of the householder to the workers, “whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.” Who gets to determine what amount is right to compensate, the workers or the boss? This will be crucial to understanding this parable.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

I bet those men of the first crew hired at 6 AM got pretty excited when they saw the men who only labored for an hour got a whole day’s wage. How much more they should expect to receive for having worked from dawn! Yet, the lord of the vineyard gave them all a penny.



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11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

This grumbling of the first crew is exactly what the pride of flesh always does. “We worked all day, they only worked an hour! We’ve done more, we deserve more!” Remember the phrase spoken by the lord of the vineyard was, “whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.” How human of them to see the graciousness shown to the others and despise it, feeling that they deserved more. Also, note that the biggest part of their objection was “thou hast made them equal unto us.” They didn’t want to feel equal; they wanted to feel superior. The record goes on...

13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

Other translations handle that last line as “do you begrudge my generosity?” or “is your eye envious because I am generous?”



THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

This parable shows how God's generosity works in the kingdom of heaven. Man is used to "you get what you deserve," but God is like that gracious lord of the vineyard. He rewards and blesses man according to His will and pleasure. Grace is His dealing with us not according to who we are (and our own worthiness), but according to who He is.

There's another problem with the idea of approaching God based on works. The humbling truth of the gospel is that before the One True God you *never* can be accepted by your own efforts. He is "the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy" (**Isaiah 57:15**) and His righteous requirement is absolute perfection. God's holiness requires flawlessness. No sin. No faults. No failures. No mulligans. The self-righteous strivings of men may come up with many other means of measurement upon this earth, but when standing before God on high, no other standard is relevant, valuable, or valid. Man by his own work was eternally stuck in a wretched state, but God sent his obedient son to satisfy that righteous requirement and showed unto this dying world that He is the **GOD OF ALL GRACE**.

Titus 2:11 ESV For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people

The grace of God brings salvation. You don't go out and "get" salvation; it has been brought to men in the grace of God and now all people have the opportunity to receive it by faith.



THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

Again, in great contrast to all of the religions of the world, Christianity is not about how man obtains salvation and brings it to God. The gospel is the message of how God, by His grace, brought salvation to man. It also said the grace of God has appeared for *all* people. There is one gospel of grace for all of mankind. There is not a gospel of grace for some and a gospel of works for others. But now *all* men, high and low, may obtain salvation by the grace of God.

The word “appeared” in that verse is the ancient Greek word *epiphaino* and it means, “has shined out.” We get our English word “epiphany” from it. This is a word used for the appearing and shining out of the stars in the heavens. That’s something to meditate about the next time you see a clear night’s sky.

Titus 3:3 - 7 ESV

3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,

That word “appeared” is the Greek word *epiphaino* again. The goodness and loving kindness of God shined out to us when we were most undeserving.



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5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,
6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,
7 so that being justified by his **grace** we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

It was not any work that we had done, but one work that He got done. He sent His Son so that the world through him might be saved. (**John 3:17**) So we've been justified (made righteous) in God's sight solely by His grace. Unlike the workers in the parable of the Lord's vineyard, we didn't even work in the 11th hour. We were so miserably lost in the death and sin of Adam, that no amount of works done by us in righteousness could have possibly been enough to justify us according to the perfect standard of the righteousness of God. That is not to say that the work did not have to be done. It is just to say that we could never have done it. God in His grace has blessed us based on the merit of another man's worthiness.

The man who did the work for you is Jesus Christ. At his cross on Calvary, the greatest measure of God's love and the blackest degree of man's sin met and did battle. Jesus' empty tomb proclaims that God's grace emerged victoriously.



THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

The horrible price was paid. Justice was satisfied. The work is finished. How this needs to humble any pride of our flesh based on any work of our own. The only way for us to have received so great a grace was because the just was given for the unjust (**1st Peter 3:18**). We don't want to be like those laborers who despised the graciousness of the lord of the vineyard, especially when we honestly measure what we really deserved!

Galatians 2:20 - 21

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

In **verse 21**, the Greek word for “frustrate” is *atheteo* meaning, “to do away with, to set aside, disregard, to thwart the efficacy of, nullify, or make void.” Paul is very clear that he won't do this to the grace of God, and that the implication of laying the grace of God aside to embrace a standard of righteousness based on one's own merit is unspeakable. If righteousness comes by that law (or by any other means), then the implication would be that Christ died for no reason.



THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

In Jesus' prayers in the garden, he asked three times if there could be any other way to accomplish what stood before him at the cross. He asked if it were possible to let this cup pass from him, but there was and still is no other way to accomplish what he did.

I ask you to consider this very carefully in closing: think about the dreadful cost paid by our lamb. Such an inestimable price was paid by a person who loved you and gave himself for you. Would we dare disgrace him by disregarding all of that effort, boasting of our own works, actions, and merits?

There were many who despised him and mocked when he was up on the cross bearing the sins of the world on his shoulders. They saw his death and shed blood as of little value, unremarkable, and meaningless. If we consider there to be any other way to find life or righteousness, we join in their company, claiming that he died in vain.

All of mankind and every religion may clamor for works, but let us show honor to our God of all grace. Let us show our thankfulness to our Lord by embracing this grace, because we acknowledge the great cost. We never want to reject or think little of the amazing grace that God has shown and will continue to show the exceeding riches of in the ages to come. The only right response to so great a God is to wholly devote living the rest of our justified and eternal lives to the praise of the glory of His grace!



UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>Event</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Details</u>
Youth Camp	<u>June 24 - 28th</u>	A camp for all children ages 5 and up who want to learn more about the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ. Our topic this year is: Choosing God's Way
Area Fellowship	<u>June 30th</u>	In pavilion at the Seace's. A Children's Fellowship will be available. After the teaching we will eat lunch together. Please bring a side or dessert to share.
Area Fellowship	<u>August 4th</u>	In pavilion at the Seace's. A Children's Fellowship will be available. After the teaching there will be a lunch available to eat together. Please bring a side or dessert to share.
Family Camp	<u>August 11th - 16th</u>	A great time in God's Word for all members of the Family of God. Our topic this year will be: The Gospel of Jesus Christ: Our Lord and Life
Area Fellowship	<u>September 8th</u>	In pavilion at the Seace's. A Children's Fellowship will be available. After the teaching there will be a lunch available to eat together. Please bring a side or dessert to share.

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