

# **Grace Be Unto You**

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(Split Sermon)

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Greetings, everyone.

A few years ago I was working with a guy named Ozzie. He was kind of a gruff character. He had a high opinion of his intellect. His job was to make molds of the fireplace logs that were being designed by the engineers in collaboration with the customer. The last stage of the mold was to suspend the master log upside down inside the mold box, and then pour silicon rubber into the box around the log. After the rubber had set up, it was then removed from the box and peeled off the log. The combination of the box and the molded rubber would be the mold used in production to produce the ceramic log.

During the setup time of the rubber, when no one was looking, someone would invariably come along and touch the rubber to see if it was dry. Depending on how close it was to being set, there would be some fingerprints in the rubber. When Ozzie would come in to work the morning and see someone's fingerprints in the rubber, he would launch into a stream of expletives that would end with the word "morons."

One day an odd thing happened. I had left work sometime during the day to help my lovely wife. She had locked herself outside of the car and needed my keys to get in. When I got back to work, Ozzie had been looking everywhere for me to answer a question. I explained to him what had happened. The odd thing he said was, "That was gracious of you." First off, I wouldn't have thought that "gracious" would have been in his vocabulary. It had way too many letters. I also wondered if he would have been gracious and helped his wife in a similar manner, but it doesn't seem likely considering the fact that he refers to people who leave fingerprints in the rubber as morons. However, his usage of the word "gracious" seemed to indicate that he had some understanding of the word.

Today I would like to look into grace and see if we can get a better understanding of this word. I remember giving a sermonette about four years ago about it, but most of the sermons I've heard, which are few, focused on debunking the world view of grace, like, "once saved, always saved" or "grace does away with the law."

In this message, I would like to focus more on how the word should be translated and show how simply it can be viewed, rather than make it such a complicated definition. No doubt you've heard the phrase, "When you understand grace, you will have more joy or, you will feel more connected to God and have a better relationship. It will help you

grow as a Christian and bear more fruit.” Regardless of the thing that you will get when you understand grace, it always sounds as though you’re going to be so much better when you finally reach this breakthrough.

I once heard a sermon on grace that made my view of it seem too simplistic. I felt I must be missing something.

In the Old Testament, the word translated as “grace” appears 69 times. In the New Testament, the word translated as “grace” appears 156 times. This is a significant topic for there to be such usage of this word. The New Testament word that is translated as “grace” is “charis.” A lexicon in the computer Bible program, Online Bible, defines “charis” as follows: *that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness, grace of speech, good will, loving kindness and favor. Of the loving kindness by which God, exerting His holy influence on souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection and kindles them to exercise of the Christian virtues.*

What is due grace? *The spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace, the token or proof of grace, benefit, a gift of grace, bounty and thanks for benefits, services or favors, recompense or reward.*

I’d like to compare this with what Dr. Zeba Crook says, who is an Associate Professor of religious studies at Carlton University in Ottawa. This is from an article he wrote where he takes the position that the translations of the Bible take on the theology of the translator at the expense of the total meaning of some words. This is what he has to say about charis:

It’s a lexical context, is ancient Mediterranean patronage and reciprocity. Sometimes referring to patronage and reciprocity between humans and sometimes between humans and their gods. The context of patronage and reciprocity accounts for two of the most common uses of charis. To refer to the thing that is given, the benefaction or favor and to refer to the response of the recipient, gratitude. In terms of ancient patronage and reciprocity, a benefaction could be earned and it could be sought out. It might have, at times, been spontaneous, but that quality is not part of what makes it a charis.

What makes it a charis, whether it comes from God or a human, is that it comes at all, and that the recipient could not have attained it alone. Benefactions do come with strings attached. The recipient is expected to honor and praise the benefactor or patron loudly and publically.”

As you can see, the Lexicon Online Bible has a more theological approach to the definition and includes things which point to or add to the validity to the Protestant doctrine of grace. You can also see Dr. Crook’s point of missing the total meaning of the word charis.

Let's look into God's word and try to understand grace more fully. Turn to Romans 6. This is often a go-to verse to say that the law is done away with and replaced with grace, the old "grace trumps law" idea.

**Romans 6:14.** *For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (NKJV)*

In this verse, we know what sin is and we know what the law is, but what is the grace that is being talked of? Is it like the on-line Bible Lexicon says; the merciful kindness by God, by exerting His holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ; keeps, strengthens and increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection and kindles them to the exercise of Christian virtues? Is it the spiritual condition of one governed by the power of grace divine? In that case, we wouldn't have to do anything, because everything is being done for us.

Let's consider the secular translation of charis which maintains that it's a benefaction, a benefit or gift from God, a gift or benefit that one couldn't attain on their own without God.

What are the gifts that God has given to us, the gifts that we cannot attain without God? It could be Christ being sacrificed for our sins. It could be having the penalty of sin removed from us through Christ's sacrifice. It could be the gift of the holy spirit. It could be God showing us mercy; or maybe it's God forgiving us of our sins when we confess and repent of them.

There is a parable of Christ that may give us more understanding of this. While this doesn't say anything about grace specifically, it is talking about being justified before God. Being justified before God; is this not a gift of God? So would it not fall into the category of charis or grace? It's a gift of something that you cannot attain on your own, something that you seek from God and He gives it to you.

**Luke 18:9.** *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:*

10) *"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.*

11) *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.*

12) *I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'*

13) *And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'*

14) *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."* (NKJV)

Now is not the Pharisee in this parable depending on his law keeping to justify himself before God? He trusted in himself that he was righteous. He thinks that he keeps the

law so much better than everyone else. He's so bold to compare how good he is to others, to the point of despising the publican. Christ says that he is not justified. If you depend on the law to justify yourself before God, you must keep it perfectly. Exalting yourself and putting someone else down is not keeping the law perfectly. The Pharisee did not stand before God justified. As a matter of fact, he was praying with himself. God was not listening to him.

Can we see that sin had dominion over the Pharisee? Despising the publican; now that's a sin. He was so consumed with justifying how well he kept the law, he was under the law and looked to the law to be justified by God. He couldn't see that he was committing a sin by despising the publican and exalting himself. He was using this sin to try to justify himself, so this sin had dominion over him.

Going back to Romans 6:14, let's consider this verse compared to what the publican is doing.

**Romans 6:14.** *For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (NKJV)*

The publican recognizes a sin, but doesn't look for the things he did right in the law to justify the sin. He asked for God to be merciful to him. He looks to the mercy of God, which is a gift from God, a charis. He is under grace. Christ said that he was justified because he humbled himself. God heard his prayer and he went home justified. So we are talking about being justified, and specifically justified by God's grace, as it says in Titus 3:7.

**Titus 3:7.** *that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (NKJV)*

Now with that, let's look at another scripture.

**1 John 1:9.** *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (NKJV)*

Is this not being justified? The publican confessed that he was a sinner and asked for God's mercy. In Jesus Christ's own words ...

**Luke 18:14.** *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified ... (NKJV)*

Are we not forgiven our sins by the sacrifice of Christ? So is it true that the sacrifice of Christ is the path to eternal life? Therefore, as it states in Titus 3:7, that being justified so that we can attain the hope of eternal life, this requires the sacrifice of Christ. If we are justified by His grace, His grace in this verse must be the sacrifice of Christ, a charis, a gift from God, a gift that we cannot attain on our own, a gift that we are grateful for and we give praise and honor to God for it.

Is grace always the sacrifice of Christ? No. Grace is always a gift or a favor given. It can encompass all the gifts of God or it can refer to a specific gift. It's the gift or favor for which we give honor to God. It's something that we cannot attain on our own.

We are instructed in 2 Peter 3:18 to grow in grace. How do we grow in a gift or a favor? Turn with me to 2 Peter 3:18, where we'll read this at the end of the apostle's valediction. It's the ending of the epistle.

**2 Peter 3:18.** *but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen. (NKJV)*

Now if we are to grow in grace, do we not need to know what it is? Is it just something that happens as a result of being a Christian as the doctrine of grace believes? Or is it something that requires something of us?

**John 1:17.** *For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (NKJV)*

When Jesus walked on this earth, He gave us the example of truth. He was full of truth. He gave us the example of grace. He was a gracious individual. There is no doubt that you can think of many examples in Jesus' life where He exhibited grace, such as healing the sick. Now healing is a gift from God. It's something that we cannot attain on our own. Let's look to Luke 17. This is an example of Christ giving grace to ten lepers by healing them.

**Luke 17:12.** *Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.*

*13) And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"*

*14) So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.*

*15) And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God,*

*16) and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.*

*17) So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"*

*18) Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?"*

*19) And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." (NKJV)*

Only one of the ten did what was expected of him, and make no mistake about it, giving glory to God was expected as a result of the healing. If that was not the case, Jesus would not have said, "Where are the nine?" They were not found. They did not give glory to God.

Let's grow in the grace by showing the grace that Jesus Christ showed us by helping others who are in need, by being grateful for the grace that is given to us by others and praising God for His grace.

**Luke 6:31.** *And as you would that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise.*

32) *For if you love them which love you, what thanks have you? for sinners also love those that love them.*

33) *And if you do good to them which do good to you, what thanks have you? For sinners also do even the same.*

34) *And if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.*

35) *But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*

36) *Be therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. (KJV)*

In this scripture there is a word that appears three times that comes from the Greek word charis. That word is "thank." Now let's reread this scripture replacing "thank" with "grace," the most common translation of charis.

**Luke 6:31.** *And as you would that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise.*

32) *For if you love them which love you, what grace have you? For sinners also love those that love them.*

33) *And if you do good to them which do good to you, what grace have you? For sinners also do even the same.*

34) *And if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what grace have you? For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again*

35) *But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*

36) *Be therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. (KJV)*

If you love those who love you, do good to those that do good to you and lend to those that will give back to you, by doing these things, there is a question of grace.

There is no question that you are exhibiting grace, by loving your enemies, doing good and lending and hoping for nothing in return. This is, I think, something that most people can grow in. Make no mistake about it, this is grace.

In closing brethren, 2 Corinthians 11:3 tells us of the simplicity that is in Christ. Grace, as the Trinitarians define it, is not a simple thing to understand. It's just like the whole Trinitarian concept. That's just not understandable. There is no doubt that the Bible lexicon definitions are tainted by Trinitarian views of grace. It is also apparent that the definition of grace has been tainted by theology. In simple terms as it relates to

scripture, grace is all of the gifts and favor that God has bestowed on humanity, gifts and favor that humanity cannot attain on their own, in some instances, the gifts and favor that we may give to one another. It encompasses the gratitude from the recipient and the glory and honor given back to God or the person that gave the gift or favor to another.

Consider my opening story where I went to help my wife. She was in a situation where she needed help. She called and asked for the help, and I gave her the help that she needed. She was very grateful to me for coming to her rescue. That is grace on a smaller scale. So Ozzie was 100 percent right when he said that was gracious. How he knew that, I don't know. God's grace is on a massive scale that includes all of humanity.

Let's conclude with 1 Corinthians 16. This is the ending of another epistle, a valediction.

**1 Corinthians 16:23.** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (KJV)*

These are all the gifts and favor from Christ, including the mercy and love that Christ has for us. So the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.