

1

TITLE PAGE

Grace

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OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

LESSON ONE.	INTRO TO GRACE
LESSON TWO.	GOD OF GRACE
LESSON THREE.	COVENANT OF GRACE (ADAM TO ABRAHAM)
LESSON FOUR.	COVENANT OF GRACE (MOSES TO DAVID)
LESSON FIVE.	NEW COVENANT IN JESUS CHRIST
LESSON SIX.	ORDINARY MEANS OF GRACE
LESSON SEVEN.	GRACE IN THE CHURCH AND GRACE TO THE WORLD
LESSON EIGHT.	FAITH IN FUTURE GRACE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

BIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

This course is an overview of the topic of grace. The course will attempt to give a scriptural foundation to the concept of grace and provide help in the application of grace.

COURSE CONTENT

This course is divided into 8 lessons. The main themes covered are the foundations of grace in the character of God. The theme of grace throughout scripture as found in the covenant of grace and the application of grace to our lives.

COURSE MATERIALS

The lecture notes comprise the main material for the course. The book *The Ragamuffin Gospel* by Brennan Manning is also required reading. If the students don't have access to the book, they should read *Two Covenants* by Andrew Murray. This book is available online at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/murray/covenants.toc.html>. This book doesn't touch on the more practical aspects of living in grace, but the foundation it offers in the covenant of grace is invaluable. For those who are interested and motivated both of the books are recommended reading.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To study the bible with other students.

To grow in our daily dependance on God's grace.

To have a firm grasp of the foundations of God's grace toward us.

To responsibly, graciously, and scripturally interact with fellow believers about the bible and theology.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course has been organized into eight lessons. The lessons take us from the foundations of God's grace to the practical outworking of His grace in our lives.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participate in 15 hours of common teaching time.
2. Complete the Bible study exercises as contained in the eight lessons.
3. Read the lecture notes, *The Ragamuffin Gospel* by Brennan Manning, *The Canons of Dordt* (available at http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_dordt.html), and *The Westminster Confession of Faith* chapters 10-18 (available at http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/index.html) for Master's level. For Bachelor's level read only *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. If *The Ragamuffin Gospel* is not available, read *Two Covenants* by Andrew Murray. This book is available online at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/murray/covenants.toc.html>. Be prepared to give a five minute oral report for Master's level and a three minute oral report for Bachelor's level. Also give a five page written report for Master's level or a three page written report for

Bachelor's level.

4. Write a sermon or a bible study lesson plan expounding upon either the foundations of grace in our life or living in grace. This should be no more than twelve pages at the Master's level and no more than seven pages at the Bachelor's level.
5. Complete one Final Exam which is comprised of questions from the homework assignments at the end of the lesson. Students will also be asked to demonstrate knowledge of biblical theology by explaining how a certain passage, that was spoken about in the lecture notes, ties in with the overall themes of scripture.

COURSE EVALUATION

1. Attendance (15%): One percentage point is given for each class hour attended. A student loses a point for coming late or leaving early.
2. Question and Answer Homework (25%): Three percentage points are given for completed homework assignments at the end of each lesson. One percentage point is given at the end if all of the assignments were completed correctly.
3. Readings, Oral Report, and Written Report (25%): 15% for completing the assigned reading, 5% for an oral report on the reading, and 5% for a written report.
4. Writing Assignment (25%): Sermon or bible study lesson based on the themes of kingdom, covenant, and mediator that can be used in your ministry. Essay will be graded on content, style, grammar, verification, and application.
5. Final Exam (10%): This is a review of questions from the homework assignments and one question about a passage of scripture from the lecture notes.

BENEFITS OF THE COURSE

This course will point students towards a greater dependence on God's grace everyday in their lives. It will give a firm knowledge of the foundations of God's grace to help them fight the condemnation that Satan tries to burden them with. It will give them practical ideas about how they can live out the grace God has given us.

LESSON ONE: INTRO TO GRACE

2 Timothy 2:1-3 *You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*

In researching, studying, and preparing to write a class on grace, I have learned a few things above all that I will share with you as you begin your studies on this amazing, wonderful, praise to God inspiring topic. The first is that I haven't even begun to scratch the surface of how deep, rich, and amazing God's grace is. The second is that this can be a dangerous topic. Understanding more of God's grace will potentially change your view of the world around you, the people around you, your neighbors, your coworkers, and the people in your church. It can change your view of yourself, your view of God, as well as your understanding of how God views you. It can change how you do theology, how you speak to people around you, and how you disagree with others. It can humble you to lowest point and also lift you up with more hope, joy, and glory than you ever thought imaginable.

Take a minute to sing, read through, meditate, on one of the most familiar hymns in the church today, Amazing Grace, written by John Newton:

Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found—

Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

And grace my fears relieved;

How precious did that grace appear

The hour I first believed!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,

I have already come;

'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,

And grace will lead me home.

And when this flesh and heart shall fail,

And mortal life shall cease,

I shall possess within the veil

A life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years,

Bright shining as the sun,

We've no less days to sing God's praise

Than when we've first begun.

Father, we pray that by Your Holy Spirit, we will be strengthened by Your amazing grace that is in Christ Jesus. Please open up our hearts to learn more of the depths and riches of your grace everyday of our lives. Amaze us over and over again by Your grace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

What is Grace

In his book, *What's so Amazing About Grace*, Philip Yancey does a great job of showing how the notion of grace has captured the imagination of our culture. According to Yancey, grace is the "last best word." The concept of grace has been used and reuse throughout the English language. In almost every use it has retained the idea that grace is something desirable, something we want, even something that we are in trouble without. "We are grateful for someone's kindness, gratified by good news, congratulated when successful, gracious in hosting friends. When a person's service pleases us, we leave a gratuity...We insult a person by pointing out the dearth of grace: 'You Ingrate!' we say, or worse, 'You're a disgrace!' A truly despicable person has no 'saving grace' about him." (Yancey, 12-13)

One popular definition often used in the pulpit is that grace can simply be defined as undeserved favor. In this view, God's grace is the favor that He has shown to a completely undeserving creation. This helps us to see that everything in our lives and everything around us is by the grace of God. In Romans 5, Paul explains our predicament that stems from the sin of Adam in Genesis 3. Romans 5:12 says, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." The fact that we are still alive, that God has given anyone life through Jesus Christ is a testament to God's grace. We deserve death, but God gives life to those who don't deserve it through Jesus Christ.

However great this definition may be, it still leaves us searching for more. After all, isn't there something about God's grace that is particularly great for followers of Christ? Matthew 5:45 tells us, "...For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just

and unjust." Isn't this also undeserved favor for followers of Christ as well as those who reject Him? That is why, in theological terms, we find a great number of terms that explain different facets or ideas about grace. You may hear people talk about saving grace, common grace, future grace, the means of grace, or covenant of grace. Within all of these terms, at the heart there is undeserved favor, yet that favor takes on a very different look within all of those terms.

While reading the Old Testament, it is rare to come across the actual word "grace." More often than not, one will see words such as loving-kindness, steadfast love, kindness, or goodness. These are usually a translation of the Hebrew word, *hesed*. *Hesed* can be used two ways. One is in relation of God to man and the other is man's relation to God or to another man. When it is used to describe God's relation to man, we can certainly think of this as communicating grace. God, our superior, is showing undeserved *hesed*, or steadfast love, to man particularly through His covenants and promises to them.

Another Old Testament word that carries the idea of grace is *hen*. In different translations this word has been translated as grace, favor, loving-kindness, and faithfulness. When we see the word *hen* we know that it is speaking of God's grace to us. This word is specifically used to describe the undeserved favor of a superior to an inferior.

The closest Greek word to the Hebrew word *hen* is *charis*. *Charis* is most often translated by the word grace in the New Testament. The closest corresponding verb is the word *charizesthai*. This verb is usually translated forgiveness. The Greek word *charis* is an excellent word to understand grace because not only does it give us the idea of undeserved

favor, but it can also be used to communicate the divine or superior power that equips the one who is receiving the favor.

In this class, when we speak of grace of God toward men, we are referring to undeserved, unmerited favor of God which also equips the recipient with whatever God sees fit. When we speak of grace in relation of humans toward fellow human beings, we mean the undeserved forgiveness, love, and acceptance that we can show to fellow human beings.

Reformed Understanding of Grace

Particularly in the reformed tradition, there are a few other topics that need to be mentioned alongside grace. These are doctrinal points that help us to understand the bigger picture of grace in the reformed church. Two of these points are election and covenant. It will greatly help us to understand what is meant by both election and covenant as we strive to gain a better understanding of God's grace. I will also suggest some further reading from the historic reformed confessions on both of these topics.

To understand the doctrine of election and the connection to grace, it will be helpful to read *The Canons of Dordt* second main point of doctrine articles 7-14. These articles cover a definition of election, and go into some detail answering some of the most common questions about election and even how to teach this sometimes unpopular doctrine with boldness yet gentleness and respect.

Article 7 says, "Before the foundation of the world, by sheer **grace**, according to the free good pleasure of his will, he chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out

of the entire human race." It goes on to say that this choice was done to demonstrate God's glory and His mercy alone. Those chosen were no more deserving than those who were not chosen. God's election into Christ not only saves them, but by grace, equips them with the faith to believe and follow God through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Election is hard for many people for two main reasons. One is that we want to deserve the gifts we get from God. It is hard to accept a gift we don't deserve in any way. Our sinful nature causes us to desire self sufficiency and independence, even from God. Another common complaint against election is that it seems unfair to some. If we are chosen by God, not for any goodness in us, then why were some people not chosen? The apostle Paul and the writers of the Canon of Dordt both instruct us that this is the wrong question. It is not our place to question the creator of all things about why some were chosen into Christ and others were not. In Romans 9:20, Paul tells us, "But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"" Rather, it is more appropriate for us to stand in awe, to be amazed by the fact that anyone is chosen at all! Be amazed by the fact that out of an undeserving creation that has rejected the Father, killed the Son, and mocked the Holy Spirit, God has promised to save, not just some, but a multitude from every tribe, nation, and tongue on this earth. Our election, to be chosen to be hid in Christ, is completely undeserved, but that is what grace is all about after all!

In regards to the covenant it will be helpful to read the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter VII and the Westminster Larger Catechism numbers 31-36. The covenant referred to in these sections has been titled "the covenant of grace." The covenant of grace refers to the promises, covenants, prophecies, laws, sacrifices, and circumcisions in the Old Testament

which at that time pointed the people to the coming Savior, the Messiah, Jesus. In the New Testament, Jesus himself is the substance of the covenant of grace. The outward signs of the covenant are the preaching of the Word, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Point number 3 of article 7 in the WCF capture the grace involved in this covenant, "Man by his fall, having made himself incapable of life...He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ."

The covenant of grace is one of the main themes that runs throughout the scriptures. From Genesis 3, the very time of man's fall into sin, we see that God has a plan to restore man to Himself by His grace. Every time we see something that points to our redemption or to Jesus, this is a part of the covenant of grace. The fullness, the completion, the substance of this covenant is in the person of Jesus Christ. By His incarnation, His life, His death, His resurrection, His position of authority and Kingship with the Father, His ministry to us through the Holy Spirit, His promise to come again, and His promise of a new heaven and new earth, Jesus reveals the grace of God to us. We are undeserving of Him, but He has chosen to grant us favor, to love us, even to die and take the wrath of God for our sins upon Himself. Jesus truly is amazing grace!

Conclusion: Applying Grace

Throughout this introduction to the topic of grace, I have used a certain word over and over. That is undeserved. It is a key point to understanding grace. However, if we are honest with ourselves, it goes against human nature. As a missionary, and someone who loves to travel, I've had the amazing opportunity to travel to many different parts of the world and experience their cultures. Never have I found a culture that, apart from the teachings of Christ, has set

up a system of undeserved rewards. Maybe it does exist, but at the very least it is extremely rare. All around the world, the accepted norm is that people should get what they deserve, whether reward or punishment. This should make us thankful and praise God for His glorious mercy towards us in His grace. However, we need to be aware, especially as we go through a class studying the concept of grace, that applying what we learn to our lives will be difficult. It will rub people the wrong way sometimes, it may even get you in trouble.

One example is from when I was serving as a missionary in East Asia. I had a job teaching English at a university. In this area, many of the students grew up in a culture where cheating was accepted, especially if you were cheating to help a friend. Realizing this, the university I worked at wanted to instill a sense of integrity in the students. In following the campus integrity movement, our office had extremely strict policies toward cheating. After giving one of earlier classes the final exam, I found that one of my students had written down some answers from the test to give to someone in a later class. The office policy was to give him a zero for the test and an F for the class. I brought him into my office and questioned him about who he was helping to cheat. He refused to tell me the other persons name. Because he wasn't cooperating I wasn't supposed to show him any leniency.

My problem is that, even more than teaching him English, and even before teaching him about integrity, I wanted to teach about grace. I wanted to do something that would demonstrate the love and grace of God to him and then tell him about the much much greater love and grace that God displayed through His Son, Jesus. Yet justice would have to be served. Instead of my student receiving the penalty of that action, I would have received the wrath of my office manager! I'm not sure what would have happened, but I knew that grace

was not the accepted course of action that my office and my school wanted me to take. Maybe that wasn't even the best time to show grace to that young man. The point is that it was a hard decision. Showing grace would have gotten me in trouble. As we continue in this class and learn about God's amazing grace to us, continue to ask for God's guidance in how your life and your relationships can be filled with grace. Realize that it will be a challenge, but it will be worth it.

Lesson 1 Questions

1. What are some of the different ways the Hebrew word *Hesed* has been translated into English?
2. When the Hebrew word *Hen* is used, who is showing grace to who?
3. Besides undeserved favor, what other concept does the Greek word *charis* introduce?
4. What definition for God's grace is being used for this course?
5. How do grace and election relate to each other?
6. Where can we find the covenant of grace in the scriptures?
7. What is counter-cultural about grace?
8. What is humbling about grace?
9. According to the Westminster Confession of Faith chapter VII, what was the first covenant God made with mankind?
10. What was the second covenant and why was it necessary?

LESSON TWO: GOD OF GRACE

Exodus 34:5-7 *"The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.'"*

In a topic as important and mysterious as grace, there are quite a few questions one might want to ask. It is often helpful to go back to our "wh-" questions we learned back in our early school days. What is grace? When does grace apply in my life? How does grace work? Why do I need grace? Why did God give grace? Yet this lesson is all about the "who?" Who is the God of grace? What is His character? What are the foundations of His grace toward us? How God's grace affect our relationship and our worship to Him? In an attempt to begin to answer these questions (because we certainly can't answer them fully) we will explore the foundations of His grace toward us, through Jesus. From there, we will examine the eternal nature of God's grace and how we should relate to Him as a God of grace.

Please pray with me..."*Dear Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three and yet still one. You are a mystery to us. However, by your grace, because of your incomprehensible love for us, you have revealed yourself to us. You have shown us the embodiment of Your very word in the life of Jesus Christ. You have even chosen to dwell within us through Your Holy Spirit. You have already been so kind and so gracious to us. Please also grant us to reveal your loving, your gracious, your Fatherly heart toward us.*

In the name of Jesus Your Son, in whom all our hope lies, we pray. Amen."

More Grace than our Earthly Fathers

I have a relative in my family who has been an alcoholic and involved in drugs for a number of years. As a young child, he grew up in a Christian home. His brother even led him through a prayer at a fairly young age. Yet, as he grew older, he seemed to abandon those childhood beliefs. He started drinking and as he got older it grew worse and worse. His parents were sorely disappointed, **but they still loved him.** Later, he got into drugs as well and abandoned his wife and kids for a period of time. Many people wrote him off as a lost cause, **but his parents still loved him.** Eventually things got so bad for this family member that he ran away from all his problems. For years he hid from friends, family, and also people he owed money. His parents, brothers, and sisters had no contact with him. They even hired private investigators to try and track him down. Even when they occasionally caught up with him, he ran away again. Yet still, **his parents loved him.** A few years back he got in contact with the family and decided to come back. He realized that he needed a lot of help. He went through a rehabilitation program. He was trained in a job that he could earn a living with. During this time his parents were ecstatic to have their son back. They helped with his program and found a place for him to live near them and sometimes even with them. Their prayers were answered and they had their son back. However, that isn't the end of the story, probably the most painful turn of events for his parents is that after all of these good time of restoration and healing, he fell again. Something happened and he started drinking and ran away again. This time his parents were hurt more than ever, **but they still love him. They will always love him.**

You might ask if it is wise to continue to love someone who hurts and betrays you. According to some in the world, it isn't wise, but it is God's example. Earthly fathers and mothers love their children, not because of what they have accomplished. Parental love doesn't even depend on what the child can give back. Parental love is based on status. It is fostered and encouraged by the helplessness and utter dependency of a newborn baby. As long as a child is a son or a daughter, parental love exists. In the example from my family, the parents can't reach a point where it hurts too much and just turn off their love. Even though it causes them pain, their son is always their son. Whether he acknowledges it and enjoys the blessings of it or not, that status means that he is always loved.

Parents act this way because it is a reflection of how God loves us. God's teaching on family structure in Ephesians is an earthly example of His character and His love for us. The teaching on husbands, wives, fathers, children, slaves, and masters is found in Ephesians 5-6. Before that though, Ephesians 5:1 summarizes all the teaching that follows with the simple command, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children." Grace is not the same thing as love, though grace does naturally flow from a loving relationship. For a parent to continue to love a rebellious child requires a great deal of grace in that relationship. For God to continue to love many of us as His children, it requires grace. Yet, that grace is freely and joyfully given based on status. To investigate this further, we must look at this particular aspect of God's character and see how it relates to His grace.

The Fatherhood of God

God is a Father. Within the trinity there is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Even within the Godhead, there is unity as one God, but in the three distinct persons, one is characterized as

the Father. God does not only have a father relationship within the trinity, but with His elect, (Jude 1), and in a broader sense with all of heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1). Yet, in the deepest and most meaningful way, the Father is the Father of the Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the "image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."

Throughout the gospels, Jesus refers to the Father numerous times. Long before Jesus' baptism, and the beginning of His recorded ministry in the gospels, Jesus as young boy affirms His relationship with God the Father in the temple. He says to His mother who has been searching for Him, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Again in the temple, Jesus refers to it as **my** Father's house in John 2:17, "...do not make my Father's house a house of trade."

In John 5:17 Jesus says that His work is also the work of the Father. "My Father is working until now, and I am working." Surprisingly, the leading rulers of the Jews interpreted Jesus correctly. However, it didn't exactly cause the correct reaction, "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."

297 times the words father and God occur in the same verse. The Westminster Shorter Catechism does an excellent job of describing God's characteristics. Question 4 asks, "What is God? God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." So in all His attributes, He is, "infinite, eternal, and unchangeable." The one we should specifically take notice of right now is in His being. If God is your Father, if he loves and accepts you. If he has been gracious to you and accepted, then that status is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. The foundation of this status

isn't earned. It is found only resting in the status of the Son.

The Sonship of Jesus

As much as the Father is eternally the Father, Jesus is eternally the Son. Though He had no beginning, though He was not created, He is "eternally begotten of the Father." (WCF 2.3) Jesus always retains the status of the Son. Sons are loved, cherished, and accepted by their Fathers.

To see how strong this relationship is, it is very helpful to understand what kind of a son Jesus is. In Matthew, just after Jesus rose from being baptized by John the Baptist, we are given witness to a very special moment in the trinitarian family. The Spirit comes on Jesus in the form of a dove and in a voice from heaven the Father proclaims, "This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased." This is a very clear statement. Jesus is the Son. Jesus pleases the Father. He is a good Son. He is an obedient Son. He honors His Father and brings glory to His name. Yet a closer look at this statement reveals an even more intimate relationship than we first thought. The first part of the quote, "This is my Son..." is taken from Psalm 2:7 which says, "I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." This is a messianic and a royal psalm. God the Father loves His Son and has given Him royal position of glory and honor. Jesus is the Messiah, the eternal King in the line of David. However, the second part of the quote, "in whom I am well pleased," comes from a very different source. This comes from Isaiah 42:1, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations." In the context of Isaiah, the servant is one who has a special job to bring justice to the nations. In the process, the servant will be despised, rejected, acquainted with sorrows

and grief. That is why we often refer to this as the Suffering Servant in Isaiah. So God the Father honors Jesus with glorious royal stature. God the Father trusts Him to be the ruler of all His people. God the Father has also entrusted the Son with the most dangerous and painful task to be accomplished. The redemption of God's elect and the judgment of sin being poured out. Jesus is a good and trustworthy Son.

It is also worthwhile to look at what Jesus has likewise said about the Father. According to Jesus, it is the Father who gives Him authority to act, "So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise." (John 5:19) Jesus said that is the Father who reveals truth, "And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." (John 16:17) Jesus says that the Father is the source of eternal life and that He is glorious. In every thing He does, Jesus always makes sure to honor His Father.

If sinful earthly parents, who love imperfectly, can continue to love and accept a disobedient and rebellious child, what will God the Father do with Jesus. How secure is the position of the perfect Son in the loving arms of the perfect Father? That relationship will never be changed. It is strong and eternal. God will always fully accept Jesus as His Son.

Relating to a Gracious Father through a Perfect Son

Unfortunately, I know that not all father/son relationships are ideal. In this lesson we have seen the example of great fathers, the greatest of course being the perfect Father God. However, it's hard for those of us with strained father/child relationships to understand this

and grasp how we can relate to God the Father. It can be a serious detriment to our understanding of grace and of our position in God through Jesus Christ. Before we move on, this would be an excellent time to pray and ask God for help in this area. If you have an excellent relationship with your father, thank God for that and ask Him to reveal through the Holy Spirit how that can help you relate to God the Father in a deeper and more intimate way. Yet, if your relationship with your Father is strained in any way, maybe you can ask God to forgive and remove the bitterness in your heart. Ask God to show you what an ideal Father is through His relationship with the Son.

Even though we haven't spoken directly about grace much in this lesson, this is part of the background of everything we will discuss in this course. We have already covered the idea that grace is not about something we deserve. In fact, it is the opposite, it is undeserved favor. Those who are counted as God's children, that is not an earned position either. The Christians position is in Christ. Those who are in Christ are always God's children. God places us in Christ by His grace. God keeps us in Christ by His grace. Those who are resting and trusting in Christ need only to ask the question, does God the Father love Jesus? YES, and that means the Father loves you. Does God the Father accept Jesus? Yes, and that means God the Father accepts you. Our position is secure because of God's graciousness to hide us in Jesus Christ.

Here is a classic hymn that will help us remember that our position in hidden in the one whose position is secure.

1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,

from thy wounded side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure;
save from wrath and make me pure.

2. Not the labors of my hands
can fulfill thy law's commands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears forever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
thou must save, and thou alone.
3. Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to the cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.
4. While I draw this fleeting breath,
when mine eyes shall close in death,
when I soar to worlds unknown,
see thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee.

Lesson 2 Questions

1. What familial status does the believer have with God?
2. Who is Jesus in relation to God the Father?
3. (WSC#4) What is God?
4. After coming up from baptism by John the Baptist, what does God the Father declare about His Son Jesus?
5. What verse in the Psalms is "This is my Son" taken from?
6. What verse in Isaiah is "in whom I am well pleased" taken from?
7. Was Jesus an obedient Son to the Father?
8. What benefit does Jesus' status as Son have for the believer?
9. Does God the Father love Jesus always? Why is that important for me?
10. What does it meant to be 'hid in Christ'?

LESSON THREE: COVENANT OF GRACE (ADAM TO ABRAHAM)

Luke 24:25-27 *"And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."*

Genesis 3 describes the fall of man into sin. Satan, in the form of the serpent, planted a seed of temptation in man's heart and carefully cultivated it and manipulated it into rebellion against God's commands for Adam and Eve. Satan started with a lie that contradicted God's word. "And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' 'But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die...' "(Genesis 3:2-4) Then he planted the devastating seed, "...for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing good and evil." Satan tempted Adam and Eve with independence, equal footing with God, knowledge, and power to discern good and evil.

Instead of gaining all that their heart desired through eating from the tree God had forbidden them to eat from, they brought a curse upon themselves. They were banned from the garden of Eden and the tree of life. Contrary to Satan's lies, they did indeed die, even though through God's mercy it was many years later. Yet, most interestingly, instead of equality and independence from God, they became utterly lost and hopeless without Him. It was at this time that God decided to show His great mercy toward them. In His curse toward the serpent, God lets Adam and Eve know that He will not kill them immediately. In fact they will even have offspring. In that offspring lies the beginning of hope. "I will put enmity between you

and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

The timing of this proclamation is incredible. It is reminiscent of Romans 5:8, "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." In God's first interaction with Adam and Eve since their fall and the introduction of sin into His good creation, God speaks grace. He speaks of a seed, an offspring of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent, even though the serpent would bruise his heel. This seed of the woman, is first in a long line of covenantal promises in the bible which point to Jesus.

As a whole, these promises and their fulfillment, Jesus, make up what we refer to as the covenant of grace. In this lesson we are going to look at the development of the covenant of grace from Adam, through Noah and Abraham. In lesson 4 we will look at the covenant promises given to Moses and David. Then we will look more in depth at the fulfillment of the covenant, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dear Heavenly Father, please help us to grasp your amazing grace that rings true through every page of scripture. Lord we humbly thank you for how you have revealed your grace from the time of Adam in different ways leading all the way to Jesus. We especially thank you for how you revealed your grace and revealed your Son to us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Please use your Spirit in us to reveal more and cause us to grow in your grace as we learn of your secure promises. In Jesus holy name we pray. Amen.

Nature of Covenantal Revelations

In his excellent book, "Christ of the Covenants", O. Palmer Robertson depicts the covenant of grace as an acorn seed. It is small and by looking at it alone, it would be hard to tell the amazing tree that it would one day become. Yet as that acorn is planted in the ground and begins to grow, over time it starts to look more and more like the amazing tree it will one day become. I like to think of the covenant of grace as an amazing library. Imagine a library filled with ancient books, glorious paintings, and fountains of new knowledge. Yet imagine that this library has no electricity, only candle light. God's first promise to Adam is like bringing one candle into that library. With each successive covenant promise, another light is added and we learn more about the library. Until finally, when all is revealed, the electricity is turned and we can fully see all that this amazing library has to offer. I like this illustration because it emphasizes the point that God's gracious design towards us has never changed or never altered. Our perception of it and how we relate to it has changed, but that is only as God has revealed more and more to us. After that first promise to Adam, the next candle to be brought in was God's covenant with Noah.

Grace in the Noahic Covenant

My son's toybox is filled with toys of happy smiling Noah and his animals on the ark. If we can get past that modern perception and look at the what the scriptures say about the flood account, it is devastating. In the flood we have perhaps the clearest and most severe judgment on sinful man in the history of the world. There is an unmistakable message in the flood account, God hates sin!

So why do we find ourselves looking at the story of Noah in a class all about God's grace?

God hates sin, but God is still gracious. He still preserved humanity and His creation through Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark. For our purposes, the focus will be on God's dealings with Noah after the flood subsides and they venture out of the ark. One of the first things God says to Noah is that He will be patient with mankind, even though He is evil! "And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done." (Genesis 8:21) That is grace! God's patience is grace. We deserve to be struck down. Mankind, whose heart is evil from his youth, deserves the judgment of the flood, or worse. Yet God has promised to be patient with us.

God goes even further with His grace to give blessings to Noah and laws that promote life instead of death. God blesses Noah and says, "be fruitful and multiply, teem on the earth and multiply in it." (Genesis 9:7) God gives Noah the same blessing that He gave Adam, to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. God knew that the flood didn't change man's heart. He knew that the evil they were doing that caused the flood, they would return to. Yet still, God in His grace and patience gives Noah this blessing. God was also gracious in the establishment of a law for mankind. God said, "'Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.'" (Genesis 9:6) This law gives order to the nations and people that would come from Noah and his sons.

God is gracious in His patience and in His laws, but His greatest display of grace with Noah is still to come. God gives a sign for Noah and all the generations to come so that they will know the words God spoke, the promises He gave, will always be true. "And God said, "This

is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh." (Genesis (9:12-15) God doesn't refer to this sign as a rainbow, but simply a bow, as in a bow and arrow. The bow of God's covenant with Noah points towards God. God has made a covenant with Noah that completely rests on God's own faithfulness to keep it. Also, the threat of punishment to fail to keep this covenant is leveled solely on God. God reveals to Noah that He is willing to take the punishment, even though man's sinful heart caused the situation in the first place.

The Noachic covenant sheds a little more light on God's initial covenant with Adam. God is patient, even with sinful man. God wants to bless mankind and His creation. There must be punishment for sin, but God is willing to even take that punishment Himself.

Grace in the Abrahamic Covenant

At the time of Abraham, we see a rather large development in God's dealings with mankind. In the covenant promises to Adam and Eve, these promises referred to their seed and ultimately dealt with the whole history of mankind since it would come from them. Noah was indeed chosen by God before the flood, yet the covenant promises with him again referred to a promise applying to all creation not to be destroyed by flood again. Yet, with Abraham, the covenant now comes to a particular people whom God chose for Himself.

In God's interactions with Abraham, we find a few different covenant promises and covenant signs. They are all filled with God's grace toward this new people He is establishing through Abraham. The main covenant promises that we will touch on are the promise of land and the offspring to possess it and the amazing promise of relationship with God Himself.

In Genesis 15, God institutes the first covenant with Abraham. God has just promised Abraham his very own son to be his heir. He also promised Abraham that He brought him to the land of Canaan to possess it. But Abraham said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" (Genesis 15:8) In the account that follows, Genesis 15:9-21, God confirms His covenant promises to Abraham.

One of the most amazing and gracious things about this covenant encounter with Abraham is God's initiative. God listens to Abraham and promises a child, an heir, but then God goes further and promises numerous offspring who will possess the land of Canaan. God initiated this promise, this gift to Abraham and in the covenant confirmation God takes the ownership completely upon Himself. Abraham brought the Lord a heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon. Abraham cut them in half and prepared them for the covenant ceremony. Then, instead of the two covenant parties walking through the animals, which Abraham had cut in half, God caused a deep sleep to fall over Abraham. Then a smoking pot and torch appeared to Abraham, which represented God, and these walked through the pieces alone, without Abraham. This means, "God call upon Himself the curse of dismemberment if He does not fulfill to Abraham the promise of possessing the land... It is confirmation to Abraham, not confirmation from him." (Murray J., 16-17)

God takes all the responsibility of this covenant. It is the same theme we saw in the Noachic covenant. God condescends to give us a gracious promise we don't deserve. In the process, He is even willing to accept severe retribution should that promise not be kept. Through these actions we can see that there is certainly a penalty for sin. Even God makes Himself accountable to this accounting for sin. In Abraham's case, God is willing to be torn apart just as those animals were if He doesn't keep His promise to Abraham. The punishment for sin is clear, yet for God's chosen people, God is willing to lay these horrible covenant curses at His feet rather than place them on His people. This is a theme that Jesus will take even further. He accepted the punishment that He didn't even deserve, on our behalf.

The next covenant promise of God to Abraham also had to do with his offspring. God once again promised that Abraham's offspring would be fruitful and expand into a multitude of nations. Yet this time, the promise of offspring was not just to fill a piece of land, this was to be a people of God's own choosing. "And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." (Genesis 17:7-8)

God's promise to Abraham is for relationship. Throughout Abraham's life, he had shared an intimate relationship with God. God had chosen Abraham and given him a promise. Abraham obeyed God and followed where God told him to go. God listened when Abraham prayed. God even appeared to Abraham and talked to Abraham. Now God was promising that relationship would continue through his offspring. Abraham's offspring were to be

chosen, from among all the nations and all the peoples of the earth, for God to be their God and to be His people. As a result, God would use them to be a blessing to all the nations. (Genesis 12:3)

The sign for this new promise to Abraham was the covenant of circumcision. "This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you." (Genesis 17:10-11) Yet this sign brought a new element of responsibility to Abraham and his offspring. Though God referred to it as an everlasting covenant, there is written in it a possibility of breaking it. In verses 9 and 10 of Genesis 17, God says that Abraham and his offspring must **keep** the covenant. In verse 14 God says that failure to circumcise would **break** the covenant and therefore cut that person off from God's people.

The question must be asked, is this grace? It is definitely a departure from the earlier covenants where God took all the responsibility upon Himself. Did having to keep the covenant sign of circumcision entitle and therefore earn God's favor for the people who abided by it? To answer these questions, we must look at what was commanded and what was promised. God told Abraham to circumcise all the males in his household. This was a response to the living God, the creator of all heaven and earth, the giver of life, choosing Abraham and his offspring for a special relationship and to be a blessing to all the nations. The covenant promise so far outweighs the covenant stipulation, it is definitely still grace. One example might be if I called you on the phone and told you that I have \$1,000,000 to give you. The money is at my house and you need to come and get it. Does the fact that you

come to my house mean that you have earned \$1,000,000? Not at all! It is still a gracious gift that you don't deserve. The same is with God's promise of relationship to His people.

God's promise was for a relationship and relationships by definition are mutual. "The keeping of the covenant, therefore, so far from being incompatible with the nature of the covenant as an administration of grace, divine in its initiation, confirmation, and fulfillment, is a necessity arising from the intimacy and spirituality of the religious relation involved." (Murray J., 18)

Nature of God's Grace

So what do we learn about God's grace from the Noahic and Abrahamic covenants? God, in His grace towards us is patient. Even though we are sinners from birth, rebellious toward God, He does not destroy us, but is patient with us. Even though there is punishment for sin, God is willing to take that punishment because we can't bear it. The awful punishment for sin is too much for us. The responsibility of the covenant and the curse of dismemberment was too much for Abraham, so God took it on Himself. Even though Noah's family would continue to have children who were evil from their youth, God put the responsibility of that covenant all on Himself. Even when there is a covenant stipulation for us to keep, like Abraham had to keep circumcision, God gives us the means to do it. For Abraham, he gave him a visible sign that he could manage. For us, even though we still transgress, God gives us His Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us to place all of our trust in the life, death, and resurrection of of Jesus Christ our risen Lord.

Lesson 3 Questions

1. What had just happened before God established His covenant promises with Adam and Eve?
2. What was gracious in God's covenant with Adam?
3. Explain how the different covenant promises are unified into one covenant.
4. What does Noah's story tell us about God's attitude toward sin?
5. What is gracious about the Noahic covenant?
6. How did God indicate that He is willing to take the punishment for sin in the Noahic covenant?
7. What is different about the range of the Abrahamic covenant compared to the Adamic and Noahic covenants?
8. What are the three main promises of the Abrahamic covenant?
9. How does the Abrahamic covenant extend blessing to all the nations of the world?
10. How did God indicate that He is willing to take the punishment for sin in the Abrahamic covenant?

LESSON FOUR: COVENANT OF GRACE (MOSES TO DAVID)

Exodus 6:7-8 *"I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord."*

If we were to return to the initial illustration of our library of God's grace we now have a much greater insight into God's graciousness towards us. What started as one small candle that revealed a promised seed has now turned into many candles. We now know that the promised seed will come through Abraham's offspring and that He will be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. We also know that even though we are sinful, God is patient in dealing with us. We know that there must be a punishment for sin, but God has shown a willingness to take responsibility for that punishment on Himself in some cases. In this lesson, we will add a great many more candles to that library. As we dive into the covenants given to Moses and to David, this will bring us right up to the brink of when the lights are turned on and the fulfillment of all these promises makes His appearance in Jesus. Before we dive in to the Mosaic and Davidic covenants, it might be helpful to meditate on and pray through the words of a familiar ancient hymn. These words which we often sing at Christmas time were compiled in the 12th century. They give us an excellent insight into both the Mosaic and Davidic covenants, and where they ultimately point to.

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.*

***Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.***

*O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who orderest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.*

*O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory over the grave.*

*O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.*

*O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.*

*O come, O come, great Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times once gave the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.*

*O come, Thou Root of Jesse's tree,
An ensign of Thy people be;
Before Thee rulers silent fall;
All peoples on Thy mercy call.*

*O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace.*

Grace in the Mosaic Covenant

When speaking of the covenant of grace as a whole, perhaps the hardest part to fit into that name would be the Mosaic covenant. To some, the Mosaic covenant and the giving of the

law is anti-thetical to grace. In fact, when many people pit grace vs. law, they chiefly have the Mosaic law in mind. The Mosaic covenant is filled with warnings, curses, and stipulations such as, "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant..." (Genesis 19:5a) If there is any covenant promise that is earned, then indeed, it must be the Mosaic covenant. However, to take such a view would actually be contrary to what the scriptures teach us. Just as in the covenants given to Adam, Noah, and Abraham, the covenant given to Moses and the Israelites is gracious through and through.

Sadly, so many people look at the multitude of laws, rituals, and feasts in the Mosaic covenant that they miss the central point. Exodus 6:6-8,

"Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.' "

The Mosaic covenant is undeniably linked to the deliverance of Israel from the land of Egypt. Within that deliverance and settling into the promised land of Canaan, God shows His real heart behind the covenant, to have a people for Himself, "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God." This is the most gracious promise that He can give. God is promising the best gift that can be given, Himself, to an undeserving people.

God promises deliverance and relationship and expects a response from the people. "We must not, therefore, suppress or discount these important considerations that the Mosaic

covenant was made with Israel as the sequel to their deliverance from Egypt, a deliverance wrought in pursuance of the gracious promises given by covenant to Abraham, wrought with the object of bringing to fulfillment the promise given to Abraham that his seed would inherit the land of Canaan, and deliverance wrought in order to make Israel His own Peculiar and adopted people." (Murray J., 21)

One more thing to consider when looking at all the stipulations and conditions of the covenant is that in all of them God has already given the covenant. We will take a look at two examples which are fairly typical of other references throughout the pentateuch. In Exodus 19:5-6 there is clear conditional reference to **if** you will obey and keep my covenant. Again in Exodus 24:7 when Moses presents the people with the covenant, he waits for a response as if it could be conditional upon the people's acceptance. What is interesting to note is that in both cases, the covenant is already in place. In chapter 19 the condition of obedience has nothing to do with the covenant being in place. In fact when the covenant is first communicated to the people it says that they must keep it. That means it is already in place before any obedience or disobedience. The same is true in chapter 24. Before the Israelites give the correct response of promising obedience to all that the Lord said, the covenant is already in place. God has already become their God and they are already His people. God sovereignly and graciously instituted the covenant by His own initiative. However, since the central point of the covenant is a relationship, for those promises to be enjoyed, the people must keep the covenant.

God's grace is all throughout the Mosaic covenant, even in expansive moral law, the lists of do's and don'ts. Take the ten commandments for example. They point the people toward

Jesus. Speaking about the law in the Mosaic Covenant, Andrew Murray states, "The Old Covenant attains its object only as it brings men to a sense of their utter sinfulness and their hopeless impotence to deliver themselves." (Murray A., 23) Just as God took the threat of punishment on Himself with Noah and Abraham, the law shows us that we can't stand up to God's standards. There must be something to take the punishment for our sins because we can't bear it. Then in the same Mosaic covenant, the shadow of the full answer to that problem is given in the ritual sacrifices. Far from a legalistic method of cleansing people, this provision of sacrificing a lamb for their sins shows people of their need and God's willingness to accept a substitute. However, the perfect substitute has not yet come at the time of Moses, they are still looking forward.

Looking back it is clear to see the unity between the Mosaic covenants and those that came before it. The Mosaic covenant is the continuation of the Abrahamic covenant of God's people and deliverance and the land of Canaan. Furthermore, the need shown by the law and the provision given by the sacrifice of the lamb, point the people back to the very first gracious promise given to Adam, the promise of a seed. The same seed promised to Abraham that would be a blessing to all the nations. That would be the seed who is the fulfillment of the law and sacrificial system.

Grace in the Davidic Covenant

The covenant God made with David gives further insight into the promised seed. 2 Samuel 7:12-17

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He

shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.' ” In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

David was a man who never sought to be king as a young man. It was God that chose him from among his brothers when he instructed Samuel to anoint him in place of Saul. Even after his anointing, David had many opportunities to take Saul's life and ascend to the throne. Yet David still didn't consider it His place to harm Saul who was also God's anointed one. David lived by what God gave Him. The same is true of this covenant. David wanted to build a temple for God, but God didn't let him. Instead God initiated a covenant promise to provide for David instead of David providing a house for God.

The key aspect of God's covenant promise to David is the longevity. God promises that David's offspring would rule on the throne forever. The word forever is repeated over and over in reference to the kingdom, the throne, the house, the special relationship with God, and the security. God will provide for David's household and his kingdom will extend forever.

Initially, it would be difficult to see how David's kingdom relates to the over all covenant of grace. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit does the work for us as He reveals through the prophet Isaiah more about the ruler who would come from David. Isaiah speaks of a servant, chosen by God, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations." (Isaiah 42:1) He later says, "I am

the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations." (Isaiah 42:6) Finally, we find out that this promised servant is the same one promised in the everlasting covenant to David. "Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples." (Isaiah 55:3-4) Isaiah prophesied that the servant would be a living embodiment of the covenant. The covenant he references is the everlasting covenant made with David.

God promised that out of David would come a royal servant who would sit on the throne for eternity. According to Isaiah, this servant would be a living embodiment of the whole covenant of grace. He would be the seed promised to Adam. As in the case of Noah He would declare both justice and mercy. As was promised to Abraham, He would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. As we saw with Moses, this promised seed would be a living embodiment of God's holiness and faithfulness to His law and a fulfillment of the sacrificial system to pay for the sins of God's people. Then, as promised to David, this servant would be royal, he would be as a Son to God the Father and His kingdom will never end.

This is the introduction to Jesus Christ. Does Jesus fulfill all of those promises? He absolutely does, as we will see in the next lesson. However, it is definitely not always in the ways that we would have expected Him to fulfill those promises. As we reviewed the details of the Mosaic covenant, did you find it difficult to see the law as part of God's grace towards you? Does the law defeat and condemn you, or does it point you to the one who fulfills the law and offers freedom and rest for the weary? Similarly, what implications does Jesus'

royalty have for you? Jesus is more than just a substitute for the penalty of sin. Remember the motivation behind the first sin of Adam and Eve. Even today, we still long for and are tempted by the allure of being our own rulers and having independence from God. Yet, our Savior is a King. Our King Jesus graciously keeps us from being our own master and demands submission to Him. Praise God for His grace to save us from ourselves!

Lesson 4 Questions

1. What is the central point of the Mosaic covenant?
2. Under Moses, did God require obedience from the people of Israel to receive the covenant from Him?
3. Why do people find it difficult to see grace in the Mosaic covenant?
- 4.. How do the laws and regulations of the Mosaic covenant point people toward the grace of God?
5. How is the necessary punishment for sin addressed in the Mosaic covenant?
6. Name one way that the Mosaic covenant is a continuation of the Abrahamic covenant.
7. What is the scope of time referred to in the Davidic covenant?
8. How does the promise of a king in the line of David relate to the covenant of grace as a whole?
9. What implications does Jesus' royalty have on those of us who have received His grace?
10. What two things does God promise David in His covenant with King David?

LESSON FIVE: NEW COVENANT IN JESUS CHRIST

Jeremiah 31:31-34 *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

Jeremiah 31 introduces the new covenant while the people are in exile. In this lesson we will look at how Jesus Christ establishes the long awaited new covenant. We will also look at how the new covenant relates to the old covenants to give us a fuller picture of God's gracious character towards us.

We have finally reached the point, where all the promises, all the hints, all the shadows come to light. The fulfillment of the whole covenant of grace which we have gone over in the past two lessons is in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus ushers in what we call the new covenant. The new covenant fulfills the Adamic covenant by bringing forth a seed which crushes the head of Satan even though Satan did bruise his heel. It fulfills the Noahic covenant and the Abrahamic covenant ideas of God taking the retribution on Himself for a broken covenant. It also fulfills the Abrahamic covenant promise of a seed that is a blessing to all the nations. It fulfills the Mosaic covenant by keeping the law, putting forth a living embodiment of The Word,

and bringing to completion all the animal sacrifices that pointed forward. It fulfills the Davidic covenant by setting up a true king in the line of David who will sit on the throne for eternity!

In Jesus Christ there is completeness, and there is grace. God gave us a blessing, at great sacrifice and cost to Himself, which we did not deserve. He gave us His son Jesus, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Dear Heavenly Father, as we ponder the grace embodied in Your Son, Jesus Christ, lead us by Your Holy Spirit. May the result of this lesson, of this class, be to grow in grace, to grow in the likeness of Jesus Christ. We praise You for Your gracious sovereign plan. Help us to know Your goodness, Your grace, and to joyfully submit to You as Lord

Jesus' Covenant: New or Old

As we have studied the covenant of grace, one theme that has been stressed is the unity of the covenants. I gave the illustration of a dark library where each successive covenant is an extra light revealing more and more of what is inside. Yet, if this is an accurate illustration, why does the bible refer to Jesus' administration of the covenant as the new covenant? As helpful as illustrations can be, we need to make sure that they are guided by whole truth of scripture rather than reading our presuppositions into the Word of God. Is Jesus' Covenant a completely new covenant, or part of the whole covenant of grace?

Verses that point to the newness of Jesus' covenant are Jeremiah 31:31-32, "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day

when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:31-32) There is even whole chapter that makes a very convincing argument concerning the newness of Jesus' Covenant. Read through Hebrews 8. It is clear that there is a contrast between the covenants we have looked at previously and the covenant that Jesus mediates on our behalf. Perhaps the most telling verse in that chapter is Hebrews 8:13, "In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away."

Yet even in the verses we have looked at, there is also evidence for the unity of the whole covenant of grace, from Adam, all the way to Jesus. Earlier in chapter 31 of Jeremiah, which first introduces the idea of a new covenant, is all about what God will do again for the people of Israel, in faithfulness to His earlier covenant promises. Even Hebrews 8, which is part of a larger argument for the greater High Priesthood of Jesus, is followed by Hebrews 9 which validates Jesus' blood as a mediation of the covenant by relating it to the blood of lambs and bulls from the Mosaic covenant which pointed forward to Jesus. Other verses also point to the unity of the covenants. In regards to the law which was given as part of the covenant, Jesus says, ""Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished." (Matthew 5:17-18) Jesus Himself first mentions the idea of a new covenant in the context of the passover meal, part of the Mosaic covenant, "And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.' " (Luke 22:20)

Is the new covenant new? Is the new covenant unified? Yes and yes! If we cling to the unity of the covenants to such a degree that we miss newness and amazing benefits which our Lord Jesus brings then we are not being faithful to the teaching of scripture. Jesus changes things. His covenant is new and it is better! On the other hand, if we throw out God's redemptive history and acts and covenants before Jesus then we miss the full picture of God's grace. Jesus' covenant, the new covenant is the most significant act in all of history. Yet all of history has, how God has acted, led up to the new covenant in Jesus. That's why this discussion is important to you and me. That's why we're talking about unity and newness and covenants. It concerns God's heart. God's heart has never changed. It has always been focused on the redemption of His people. Our God has always been gracious. He will continue to be gracious. God has given us grace in the past and He has given us promises of future grace, which we will look at more in depth in a later lesson. We can rest absolutely secure in the promises of future grace because our God has demonstrated unity, immutability, and the same mercy, and grace from the very beginning, through Jesus, and even now.

Grace in Jesus' Covenant

If there were any question whether or not Jesus' covenant was all about grace, look at the setting in which He introduces it. The passover meal in Luke 22 is where Jesus says that the new covenant is in His blood. The passover meal celebrates the deliverance of Israel from the angel of death and slavery in Egypt. This deliverance came through a slaughtered lamb whose blood was put over the doorpost so that the firstborn son would be saved. The sacrificial lamb later came to symbolize the deliverance of all the people of Israel from the wrath of God for their sins. The context of the new covenant is the sacrificial lamb,

deliverance from death, rescue from slavery.

Jesus bought for us a deliverance and rescue that we didn't deserve. He offered up His body to broken. He gave His blood to be spilled out. He gave us grace in His very body. God was gracious to Noah when he pointed the bow toward heaven, indicating that He would take the punishment if He broke His promise. God was gracious to Abraham by walking through the animals cut in half alone, indicating again that He would take the punishment for failing in His promises to Abraham. Yet through Jesus, God didn't take the punishment for a promise that He broke. Jesus suffered the wrath of God for us, "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God." (Romans 5:8-9)

In the promise of the new covenant, Jeremiah says, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:34b) That is accomplished through Jesus. His substitutionary death removed the guilt and stain from His people forever. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2)

Another promise in Jeremiah is "And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 31:34a) One commentator suggests that, "This exhortation summarizes the obligation of the law. The old covenant required God's people to know him..." (Pratt, 1253) Yet in the new covenant, this is moved from obligation to promise. Those who are in Christ will inherently 'Know the LORD.' This is accomplished by one of the

most mysterious and gracious realities of the new covenant. 1 John 2 explains the believers anointing from the Holy Spirit, so that the Spirit of Christ is in us and, even as we live here on earth, we are in Christ. "But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge... But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie--just as it has taught you, abide in him." (1 John 2:20,27) The believer is taught by the Spirit of Christ. This doesn't mean that those with the Holy Spirit are omniscient. We don't know everything about the world and we don't know everything about God. However, God is revealing Himself to us everyday through His Holy Spirit which abides in Him. The command of the old covenant, 'Know the LORD', is graciously fulfilled because God allows us to know Him in a personal way, through His Son, through His Spirit. Therefore, through the Holy Spirit, the law is within the believer and written on their hearts. The new covenant promises are indeed greater than anything before them.

Entrance by Grace Alone

Another important factor of the graciousness of the new covenant is how do we enter into it? Is the salvation, deliverance, and indwelling of the Holy Spirit a free gift of grace? Is it somehow earned on our part? Scripture is very clear that from beginning to end, salvation offered in the new covenant is completely by God's grace toward undeserving humankind. Ephesians 2:8-9 clearly states, "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." (Ephesians 2:8-9) Even the life after salvation is covered in this passage for the next verse continues, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10) Even the good works

of a believer are prepared beforehand by God. Our salvation and our saved life is totally by grace alone.

The apostle Paul describes our salvation in beautiful language. In what is often called the *ordo salutis*, or the order of salvation, Paul makes it clear that God set our salvation in motion long before we get involved in the process. "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified." (Romans 8:29-30) God predestined us, He chose us, He called us. He did all of these things out of love for us. Our predestination, His choosing of us took place before the foundation of the world! (Ephesians 1:4)

Praise to the Word of Grace

God is so gracious toward us. His grace gives us hope and courage. Knowledge of God's grace is where we run when we need any encouragement. As we have looked at the whole covenant of grace, albeit very quickly, we have seen that the revelation of God, from beginning to end, is grace. The whole history of God's people is grace. God has always been revealing His grace to us, and then came the ultimate revelations. Jesus, the Son of God, the Word in the flesh. Jesus is the Word. The Word is God's story of redemptive history, of grace throughout the ages. Let us praise God, praise Jesus, for bringing grace to us in the flesh.

God's motivation for grace to us is certainly love. (Ephesians 1:4-5) However, His love and

His grace are ultimately out of a desire to display His glory. God is glorious, and let us not pass up this opportunity to praise Him. He is gracious in revealing His glory to us by grace. God displays both His wrath and His mercy so that the riches of His glory would be known. (Romans 9:22-23) God acts to deliver and to save out of concern for His Holy Name (Ezekiel 36:22) So God's grace to us should always lead back to praise to God. It's not a payment for grace. The giver of grace doesn't need praise from us. However, it is the right response. We are able to praise God, because He has made Himself known to us by His grace and we should never squander an opportunity to take advantage of that fact.

Lesson 5 Questions

1. What is the fulfillment of the Old Covenant promises?
2. How does Jesus fulfill the Adamic covenant?
3. How does Jesus fulfill the Noahic covenant?
4. How does Jesus fulfill the Abrahamic covenant?
5. How does Jesus fulfill the Mosaic covenant?
6. How does Jesus fulfill the Davidic covenant?
7. How is the new covenant different and how is it similar the old covenant?
8. How did Jesus Himself first introduce the idea of the new covenant to His disciples?
9. According to Ephesians 2:8-9, how are we saved?
10. According to Romans 8:29-30, what is the *ordo salutis*?

LESSON SIX: ORDINARY MEANS OF GRACE

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 to the day of eternity. Amen.*

The apostle Peter exhorts us to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We are to live as followers of Christ in dependence on the grace that He provides to do so. Our dependence on God's grace should grow more and more. In fact, in the very first lesson we defined grace as something that provides in this way. We defined it as the undeserved, unmerited favor of God which also **equips the recipient** with whatever God sees fit. God's grace equips the believer to grow in dependence on God's grace alone.

Growing in grace can be a confusing idea because we are used to thinking of grace as something that God has lavishly bestowed upon us. He has given us more grace than we could ever need. First of all, how can we grow in something that God provides for us? That certainly seems like it could be bringing in some kind of work to the idea of grace. Secondly, why is growth needed in something that God has already provided in abundance? To answer the first question, a famous quote from Martin Luther is helpful, "We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone." The same could be said of grace. If you believe that you were saved by God's grace and it doesn't equip you for good works, for growing in your dependence on His grace more and more, then you should definitely follow the example of 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" To answer the second question about growing in God's grace, we need to realize that God provides all the grace we will ever need. Indeed, "I can do all things

through Him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13) The growth that is involved isn't a matter of obtaining more grace, rather growing in dependance on the grace that God has so abundantly and richly provided.

Growth in grace is accomplished by the means of grace. Means doesn't mean that growth in grace is purchased or obtained by a special formula. The Westminster shorter catechism question 88 asks, "What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption? The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation." In the question, the framers of the Westminster Confession explained the connection set forth by 2 Peter 3:18. Peter implores us to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Growing our dependance in grace is indeed a growth in the practice of grace and the knowledge of the one who gives us grace. The tools God has provided for such growth are the the Word, sacraments and prayer. We will examine how God uses each of these means for the communication and growth of grace in the believer.

Dear Heavenly Father, please use the means of grace in each of our lives to make us more like you. Father, it is only by your grace that we can know you more and live by faith in You. Please use the word to change our lives and reveal the truth to us. Please use the sacraments to show us your grace in tangible form. Please use prayer to give voice to our complete dependance on your grace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Word

The word of God is a tool God uses to communicate not only saving grace, but also the everyday equipping grace of God for the Christian life. The word, is an indispensable tool for communicating God's saving grace to others. In today's world, there are many different evangelistic methods ranging from relational evangelism, to handing out tracts, bringing others to church to hear the gospel preached and even evangelism through your lifestyle. In some places in the world, the preaching of the word must be practiced with extreme caution and wisdom. However, no matter where we are or what evangelistic methods we employ, we must remember that the preaching of the word is vital. Paul reminds us of this in Romans 10:13-15, "For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'" Someone must always preach the word. In communicating His grace, His precious undeserved gift to the whole world, God has given believers an enormous privilege. Think of yourselves as even greater than Santa Claus! Each and every believer has the chance to be a means of grace. We have the opportunity, actually we are even compelled to do it by God's word, to freely offer the greatest gift in the world to everyone around us. Share the grace of God through His word to those around you.

As we have already seen, the grace of God is not just for the unbeliever. The grace that brings us into the fold of God is equally important to the grace that keeps us there and brings us closer to Him everyday. God uses His word to minister His grace to us throughout our lives. "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for

correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Once again, God's word, just like any other means of grace, isn't a formula to have grace dispensed into our lives as if we can by His grace with a 1 hour quiet time! "No, in giving us grace, God gives us Himself!" (Buchanan, Ordinary Means of Grace, 1) John 1 describes Jesus as the living Word. Jesus came as a living breathing embodiment of all God's word. The scriptures communicate the life and grace of Jesus to us. The life and grace of Jesus points us to all of God's word to bring us closer to Himself.

In earlier lessons, we quickly highlighted how the covenant of God's grace is a major theme that runs throughout the whole of the scriptures. "So, the Word of God to man is a covenant document. It not only contains information about the covenant mixed in with other information. No, it IS the covenant, as even the two major divisions indicate: Old Covenant, New Covenant. So, this is the first way that the Word is a means of grace to us. It is the communication of God's will to us, for us, and about us, in the context of our relationship to him as Creator—and more, as Redeemer." (Buchanan, Ordinary Means of Grace, 1)

We have already read how the word is the necessary for people to hear of the grace of God, Romans 10:14-15, and also how the word is used to sanctify the believer, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Let us now see some of the other God's word is a means of grace in our lives. God's word is His instrument for bringing people to repentance and returning them to Himself, Nehemiah 8:8-9. Acts 20:32 tells us how the "word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." God created and, even today,

sustains the universe by His word, Hebrews 1:1-3. We were born again through the Word and remain in the security based on His everlasting word, 1 Peter 1:22-25.

Before we move on to speak of the sacraments, I want to speak practically about how the word of God ministers grace into our lives. In many churches and Christian groups, the concept of a daily quiet time, or time spent in God's word has been made popular. It is a wonderful concept with scriptural support. However, in some cases, Satan uses the very thing that is supposed to minister grace to our souls to instead bring condemnation. If we miss a quiet time, or even a string of quiet times, for whatever reason, do not believe that God thinks any less of you. As we already learned, your status as a child of God is based on Jesus' work not on your ability to keep a quiet time everyday. Use God's word, not to earn your intimacy with Him, but to daily preach the gospel of God's grace to yourself and lean completely on Him.

Sacraments

There are two sacraments I am referring to as they were the sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ and carried on and further explained by the apostles. Those are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Matthew 28:19, Jesus gave the church the instructions to continue baptism as a lasting sacrament, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," In Luke 22:19-20, "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." We

must continue to do this in remembrance of Him.

There are 2 ways in which the sacraments can be seen. Some look at the sacraments as a physical memorial which points to a spiritual reality. Another view is that within the practice of the sacraments themselves there is a spiritual reality that is being practiced through the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. While the memorialist view is probably the most prevalent today, in the reformed tradition, we should use the already and not-yet paradigm to view the sacraments. In the practice of the sacraments we already participate in the reality signified in the sacraments but not-yet fully or perfectly. The Westminster Confession explains it in this way, "There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other. " (WCF 27.2) However, we must remember not to forget either aspect. God communicates grace to us in the sacraments as a memorial of a glorious truth. At the same time, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God shows us grace by allowing us to participate in spiritual realities through the sacraments.

The sacrament of baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace. It could almost be looked at as the door of the covenant community. In the old covenant, the rite of circumcision (cutting away the flesh) "signified the spiritual reality of cutting away of sin, a change of heart, and inclusion in the household of faith." (Pratt, 1932) However, in the new covenant, spiritually we are baptized into Christ. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul connected the spiritual realities of circumcision of the heart and baptism into Christ. "Dramatically, Paul indicated that in their baptism into Christ, these Gentiles had themselves been circumcised." (Pratt, 1932) In the new covenant, God changed the sign so that it can be practiced by all of

His people, male and female. As a sign, water baptism reminds us that we are covenant people. Baptism also shows us that we share in the death, resurrection, and life of Jesus Christ. Baptism shows us that our life is hid in Christ and our sins are washed away. Baptism is a memorial that aids in our sanctification and Christian life. A topic that has been ignored by many today is the idea of "improving our baptism."

Q.167. How is baptism to be improved by us?

A. The needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others; by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism, and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavoring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body. (WLC, 167)

Even though baptism happens only once in our lives, and many may not even remember their baptism, it is something that should be considered throughout our lives.

The spiritual reality of baptism is the connection to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and admittance into the visible covenant community. While it signifies the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and our union with Christ, there is a way in which God, by His grace, uses our baptism to communicate these realities to our soul.

As the sacraments are biblically explained, they become visible signs of the gospel. The Holy Spirit communicates the spiritual realities of the gospel through the sacraments and through the scriptures. This ministry of the Holy Spirit through the sacraments and the word is a

means of grace in our lives. The Holy Spirit reveals God's promises of the gospel through His word and the sacraments and we, by faith, claim these promises of grace.

The Lord's Supper, or communion, signifies Christ's death for us by the bread and the wine. It also signifies our dependance on God's grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The setting of the Lord's Supper, with the body of Christ, signifies that we are unified in the covenant community through one head, Jesus Christ. The Lord's supper is a valuable memorial in that it is repeated frequently. As a side note, I believe that churches should seriously consider and pray about the frequency of this sacrament which powerfully speaks about the grace of God to all those who partake in it and also to those who witness it.

The spiritual realities of the Lord's Supper are a participation in the banquet of the Lord and in Christ's body and blood. In the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit takes our hearts to dine with Christ. Spiritually we feed on Christ's body and blood. "Calvin expressed it best, regarding the meal, when he said: believers partake of 'bread in the mouth, and Christ in the heart.'"

Prayer

As a means of daily and even throughout the day grace, prayer is our lifeline. Baptism is once in our lives. The Lord's Supper is once a week at the most. The Word can be read everyday, but prayer is something we can do continually. "Rejoice always, **pray without ceasing**, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Prayer is a means of grace because it communicates God's grace to us. Prayer is not just

how we ask God for what we need. Prayer bends our hearts and our will to God. The more we seek God in prayer, the more our hearts become centered on His will. This is expressed in how Jesus taught us to pray. "Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9-10) Or more to the point, Psalm 37:4 teaches us, "Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart." When we are delighting in God (it stands to reason that we are talking to God if we are delighting in Him), God's desires become our desires. He places our desires within us, and they are His will.

Prayer is also one of the best and clearest ways we can act out our dependance on God's grace. How can you ask God for forgiveness of sins without relying on God's grace? How can you ask God for your daily bread without remembering that He is your daily provider? Prayer is a living confession of our need for God to act graciously toward us.

God's word, the sacraments, and prayer are the ordinary means of grace. These are some of the clearest and main ways that God communicates His grace to us. However, these aren't the only ways that we learn about His grace to us. In my life, I know that my marriage and relationship with my son teaches me so much about God's grace to me. We can see God's grace to us in creation and in the world all around us. Look for His grace. Be consumed with His grace and lean on it in everything you do.

Lesson 6 Questions

1. According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, what are the three ordinary means of grace?
2. (WSC #89) How is the word made effectual to salvation?
3. (WSC #91) How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?
4. (WSC #98) What is prayer?
5. What does it mean to grow in grace?
6. How should we understand the word "means" in the phrase "means of grace"?
7. How does prayer help us to grow in grace?
8. How does the 'already and not-yet' paradigm relate to the sacraments?
9. What verse in Romans explains the necessity of the word of God for people to come to salvation in Jesus Christ?
10. Explain one way, besides the ordinary means of grace, how God communicates His grace to you?

LESSON SEVEN: GRACE IN THE CHURCH AND GRACE TO THE WORLD

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."
(Matthew 18:23-35)

In this parable, the gracious King gives grace to the wicked servant who then refuses to show the same grace to the person who owes him a much smaller debt. In the end, the wicked servant was thrown in jail and made to pay off his whole debt which he would be unable to do. Some could see this as evidence that we could lose our salvation. However, that would fundamentally change the grace of God. The wicked servant wasn't saved by grace and then had that grace taken away due to his wickedness. No, the wicked servant never accepted the full offer of grace from the King. The King's offer of debt forgiveness was something that not only forgave the servant, but offered to change him. The servant no longer needed to be ruthless with those who owed him money because his much greater debt had been forgiven. He was now free to act with kindness, mercy, and love with those around him.

This is like Jesus' offer to us. Jesus' gracious offer to us is Lordship. Following Jesus Christ as our Lord isn't a condition that we must meet to get the rewards of forgiveness and

eventually heaven. Jesus as Lord is the grace that we are offered. Living under Christ's Lordship is a gracious blessing. Any attempts that we might make to accept the forgiveness and mercy of God and shun His Lordship is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer coined as "cheap grace." The thing about cheap grace is that isn't grace at all. God's grace saves us, bestows His favor on us, makes us His children, and equips us for good works. It frees us from slavery to sin to joyously live a life of servant-hood to Jesus Christ. Cheap grace is a lie. Let us strive for the better gift which is grace and freedom in Christ to follow Him.

One of the principle ways that Jesus wants His people to follow is to display the same grace that He showed us to the world around us. The church, the body of Christ, is to display grace. This is where grace can get really difficult. God's grace to us should guide how we relate to others, both in the church and outside of the church.

In this lesson we will examine how grace should work in all of our relationships. We will look at what Jesus taught about grace to unbelievers as well as grace to our brothers and sisters. Sometimes it is easy to be gracious, but it can be extremely difficult. Showing God's grace to the people in our lives is something that truly takes a monumental work of grace in our own lives. Let's ask God to work that grace in us.

Dear Heavenly Father, I confess that it is not natural for me to show grace when I feel wronged. I confess that so many times I harbor grudges and ill-will towards the people around me. Please change my heart, O God. Please forgive me for my ungraciousness. Lord, please open the eyes of my heart once more to your amazing grace to me. Please fix my eyes on Jesus my Lord, who died on the cross to pay for my sins. Help me to rightly see

any wrongs committed against me in comparison to awful things I have done against you. God I thank you for your grace. Please make me more like you, please supply me with the grace to freely give to others. In Jesus' holy and gracious name I pray. Amen.

Grace in the Church

Grace to other believers, this should be the easy one to master. After all, we are all supposed to be working off of the same set of principles. Of course we will mess up, but I extend grace to you and you extend grace to me, and everyone is happy! However, it doesn't always work out like that. Often, the wounds and hurts we receive from fellow believers are the hardest ones to let go. After all, we have higher expectations of our brothers and sisters.

If I met a person on the street for the first time and he lied to me, I wouldn't think much of it. Where I live, if I go shopping in the market, I know that when people see my what face the price automatically goes up a few dollars. It doesn't matter that I earn the same and many cases a much lower salary than the locals around me. The perception is that white foreigners are rich and so they should be charged more. I don't get angry when this happens, in fact I expect it to happen and I have learned to enjoy bargaining. However, if someone in the church, or even worse if a fellow missionary were to take advantage of me, that hurts. It is much harder to forgive that kind of action because our expectations are higher.

My example of this is when one of my fellow workers gave away our house at a prayer meeting. The university where we all worked together provided our housing. After a bad situation in an apartment off-campus, we were given housing on campus. It was an older apartment, but it was pretty big and great for hosting lots of guests. We loved living there and

loved having people in our home. One afternoon, my partner teacher, my wife and I prepared lunch to host 60 of our students in this apartment. The next week, I was called into the office and told that my house was needed for another family and my family needed to get ready to move out. What happened is that my partner teacher had been in a prayer meeting after being in our house. She heard about a particular family coming to the school with certain needs and decided that our place would be perfect for them. That meant we were moving! When I went to tell my wife the news, I tried to immediately remind both her and myself that we should accept this news with praise and thanksgiving to God. I said that He is in control and we are to praise Him even for what seems like a trial. Yet, to be honest, neither of us felt like praising God just then, we felt hurt and angry. It took a long time to forgive this person and it took even longer to stop being overly cautious in our dealings with her. I don't like what she did or the way that she handled it, but the truth is that she gave away something that wasn't even mine. It was an apartment that I was allowed to live in. I didn't own it. Yet, I have taken God's own creation and perverted it, misused it, and ignored His part in providing it, and still He has forgiven me. How much more should I forgive this person.

In the parable about the gracious King and the wicked servant, Jesus is teaching how we should treat our brothers and sisters. Verse 35 say, "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." God expects grace in His Kingdom. The grace comes from Him, but it is meant to flow through every single relationship under the banner of the Kingdom of heaven. It is important to realize that grace is difficult, even within the church. There is always the possibility that, even though you act graciously toward someone, they won't return the same grace towards you. You might forgive somebody of a wrong and they might come back and do the same thing to you again. We

want to hold onto our grudges and the faults of others because we feel it might protect us from any future pain they might cause us. However, we must trust that God has a better life in mind for us. God wants us to be a part of community characterized by "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23a) His plan for us isn't a wall that protects us from hurts, it is a freedom and love from which we can enjoy fellowship and community.

Even when it hurts, trust that God's way of grace is better. Even when you don't see grace returned, trust that God is working in the lives of other believers. Offer your relationships up to Him in prayer. Trust God, depend on His grace by extending grace to others.

Grace to the World

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'

(Luke 10:30-35)

While the parable at the beginning of the lesson addressed the relationship to brothers and sisters, this parable is about how we treat everyone else in the world. Jesus was explaining the scope of the word neighbor in the commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27) According to Jesus, your neighbor is everyone. The world is your neighbor, love them!

Grace to the world has its own difficulties that are different from extending grace towards our brothers and sisters. The individual wrongs and hurts don't seem quite as bad coming from an unbeliever. Often we don't expect as much from them. Just this past week, my bike was stolen during the night. I just bought the bike new 2 weeks ago but honestly, I wasn't that upset about it. If I later found out that a fellow Christian had stolen the bike I would probably be very upset at first, but I don't think that is the case! I know that those things happen here and I didn't have expectations that nobody here would ever do that. I have already forgiven the nameless person who stole it!

Yet there is a much harder type of person, or group of people to show grace. I, and many others in the church have difficulty communicating grace to those who openly flaunt sin or oppose the work of Christ. I know that where I come from the gay community is seen as a group of people who openly flaunt a godless lifestyle. Among Christians, this group is often referenced with disdain and condemned for their practices. They present a problem because we don't want to offer them cheap grace. The church can't be faithful to God's word and at the same time excuse the sin of homosexuality. However, just like the good Samaritan, there are those in the church who have reached out to individuals in the gay community in love, truth, and grace.

God calls the church to bring the free offer of grace to the whole world. I would encourage you to examine your own church and your own culture. What group is the hardest for you to reach out to? What group is the most opposed to you? What group is easier for you to condemn instead of offering grace and the Lordship of Jesus Christ? Start by reaching out to

individuals from that group, pray for them, love them, show them grace and watch what God will do!

The other difficulty in showing grace to the world, is that our words and our doctrine are more often than not, overshadowed by our lives. Non-Christians don't care first and foremost about what we say but about how we live. Especially if we are reaching out to them with the offer of the gospel of grace, our entire lives become a showcase before them. They will analyze our interactions with them, with our family, with our other friends. To show grace to the world around us, we must be a living display of God's grace.

Some of my friends work in places where to openly preach the word of God would land them in prison immediately. Some of them have made the choice to preach and go to jail. Others have made the difficult choice to stay and display God's grace through their lives. The people around them know that they are Christians. They constantly test my friends' integrity and resolve. They find ways to test their commitment to the faith. Yet, these friends have made the commitment to stay in this area and preach the gospel of grace with their lives. It is extremely difficult and they long for the day when they can openly preach. Until that day, they are preparing the soil with lives of grace.

How can you prepare the soil around you? How can you preach the gospel of grace to those around you even when you are not saying a word? Follow the example of the good Samaritan Love your neighbor as yourself. Love them in more than word, love them with a life of grace.

Lesson 7 Questions

1. What did Dietrich Bonhoeffer call the idea of God's grace without His Lordship?
2. What is one reason that a misdeed coming from a brother or sister in Christ might hurt more than from someone else?
3. How does our forgiveness through Jesus help us to forgive those who do us wrong?
4. In the church community, are we safe from pain caused by those around us?
5. According to Galatians 5:22-23, how should the church, led the Holy Spirit, relate to each other?
6. Who does Jesus define as our "neighbor" whom we should love as ourselves?
7. Should people openly and defiantly living in sin receive the offer of grace from God? Why or why not?
8. Does grace compromise the truth of God that the church must stand for?
9. Give an example of how one can express grace through their life, without specifically preaching the gospel in words?
10. In what way is the grace of God connected to the Lordship of Christ?

LESSON EIGHT: FAITH IN FUTURE GRACE

Isaiah 40:6-8 "A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."

What empowers us to live lives of grace, submitted to God, acceptable to Him? As believers, we have been delivered from the slavery of sin. Read Ephesians 2:1-10 for a treatise on this. We were dead in the clutches of trespasses and sin. We had no choice but to follow ways of Satan and this world. Yet, even from that state, God saved us by His grace to give us new life in Jesus Christ. This new life is in stark contrast to the old life controlled and dominated by sin. In this new life, we are prepared and equipped for good works in the power of Christ Jesus.

Sin's domination over those who are in Christ is over! It is finished. Yet as any believer can attest, sin's influence certainly hasn't gone away. We are still influenced by the desire to fall into all kinds of sin. At times we do fall. We succumb to whatever temptation or lie that enticed us away from God's will. Yet, always, God's grace freely calls us back to Himself through the forgiveness Jesus Christ bought His people on the cross.

If we have been saved and changed by grace, if we are new creations no longer under the domination of sin, why do we still do it? The power of sin's influence in you and I lies in what it promises. All of us are naturally wired to make choices based on what will make us happy or satisfy us. Even choices that don't seem like that really are. For example, if I choose to pass

over a bowl of ice cream to eat something healthy, it is the promise of health that is more satisfying to me at that moment than the promise of really tasty bowl of ice cream (I almost always choose the ice-cream though!) When we sin in anger or hatred toward somebody, it's because we believe that we will be more satisfied by being angry at that person than by loving and forgiving that person.

All sin offers some kind of benefit or reward that entices us to follow. Yet, the benefits of sin are always temporary. There is no sin in this world that leads to lasting and permanent fulfillment and satisfaction. The alluring promise of sin always fails and leaves us worse off than we were before. Sin's promise is like mankind, it withers and fades. It is like the verse in Isaiah that we started this lesson off with, "The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass." (Isaiah 40:7) Sins promise is a lie, it will not endure.

God in His grace, has given us something to counter sins alluring yet temporary promises. The next verse in Isaiah compares the temporary nature of this world with the eternal nature of God's word. "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." (Isaiah 40:8) God's word is forever. His promises are certain. They are the opposite of sin's temporary lies. They are eternal truth. When tempted with the allure of sin, God's eternal promises are the antidote.

Pastor John Piper wrote a book about relying on God's promises in our daily struggle with sin. The title is, *Future Grace*. The premise of the book is that one can live a radical Christ-centered life not by just looking back in gratitude to what God has done in our lives, but by

looking forward in faith to God's amazing promises of faith.

In this lesson, leaning heavily on Pastor Piper's book, we will examine how faith in future grace helps us to follow God in different situations today. In particular, we will examine how faith in future grace helps to counter the temptations toward anxiety, pride, impatience, covetousness, bitterness, lust and despondency. We will also look at how faith in future grace is a lifeline to those who are suffering for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Dear heavenly Father, please help us to take hold of your promises. Holy Spirit, please minister to our souls through the eternal word of God. Please forgive us for when we discard Your truth for temporary lies. Open our eyes to see the fleeting pleasures of sin in comparison to your eternal, satisfying, and pleasing word. Please give us the grace now, to live by faith in the grace you promise us in the future. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Future Grace v. Anxiety

Anxiety, or worry, is a tricky sin because nobody enjoys worrying. Worrying isn't a happy or pleasurable state. Yet sadly, it seems that we are drawn to anxiety about a number of different things because it seems better to us than the alternative, which is trusting God! We spend so much of our lives making sure that we are in control of everything around us. When we are faced with something over which we have no control, it leads to anxiety. We worry when we can't control other people decisions or emotions, we worry when we can't control the weather. We worry about unforeseen accidents. We worry about situations we don't know the outcome of. We worry because we don't trust God's sovereignty.

God has promised us grace and we can lay hold of those promises to combat anxiety in our lives. "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Matthew 6:31-34)

God promises to provide our needs. It doesn't mean we can just sit back and not do any work, but it does mean that we don't need to be anxious about what we have. When we are faced with the unknown situation, hasn't God already promised, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) Don't worry about outcomes you can't control because God is the one who is in control. Sometimes we are faced with danger and even persecution, God promises us grace so that we don't need to worry. "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?" (Psalms 56:3-4) God understands that we will have concerns that arise within us, yet we have a choice besides dwelling on those concerns and being consumed with worry, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6-7)

Future Grace v. Pride

"The pleasure of pride is like the pleasure of scratching. If there is an itch one does want to scratch; but it is much nicer to have neither the itch nor the scratch. As long as we have the itch of self-regard we shall want the pleasure of self-approval; but the happiest moments are those when we forget our precious selves and have neither but have everything else (God,

our fellow humans, animals, the garden and the sky) instead." (Lewis, 256)

Jesus warns us how ridiculous it is when someone thinks too much of themselves. This inevitably leads to humiliation. Jesus likens this type of person to someone who comes in and takes the place of honor at a banquet only to be removed by the host when someone more important comes along. As C.S. Lewis exclaimed we have the tendency toward proud boasting in ourselves when we mistakenly think that we are worthy of it. We are put to shame when someone else comes along with something more worthy of praise and honor than ourselves. The apostle Paul said, "God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:28-31)

God gives us promises of future grace which give us even more incentive to look past ourselves and boast only in the glory of God. "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12) We don't need to wallow in hurt pride when we are reviled by others. Our temporary pride is worthless compared to the joy of the great reward in heaven that God has in store for us. Once again, 1 Peter 5:6 speaks to our situation, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you..." Live in humility rather than pride, so that at the proper time God will exalt you. The alternative to this is what Jesus described when the master of the banquet will have to lower the person

who already thinks too much of themselves.

Future Grace v. Lust

The temptation to lust offers very immediate temporary satisfaction. It can offer physical satisfaction or emotional satisfaction, but it is always temporary. Not only is its satisfaction fleeting, but it is destructive. Lust is so dangerous that Jesus tells us, "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell." (Matthew 5:28-29)

Peter explicitly tells us that the promises of future grace are a way of escape from the dangers of lust. "...by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire." (2 Peter 1:4) Other translations read, "because of lust." When we are tempted by the fleeting pleasures of lust, consider the much greater promises of God. Don't be like the child who was so focused on playing in a small mud puddle that he missed the whole playground that was in front of him. God's promises are better than the fleeting pleasures of lust. God's promises are always good, while lust in the end leads to destruction.

Don't settle for fleeting pleasures, desire what is best. When tempted by lust think on God's promise of joy and pleasure. "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:11) Consider how

Moses looked forward to the reward from God to flee the fleeting pleasures of sin. "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward." (Hebrews 11:24-26) God's promises are forever and they are the best, the word of our Lord stands forever!

Future Grace and Suffering

This last section isn't titled *Future Grace v. Suffering* because suffering isn't a sin. Righteous men and women suffer everyday. Suffering for Christ's sake is an affliction that God has turned into a privilege. God has promised both present and future promises of His grace to those who suffer for His name's sake. The promises are so great that those who are suffering are even told that they can rejoice in their suffering on account of the promises of God toward them.

Some of the promises toward the suffering offer present benefits. "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1:2-4) The trials of those who are suffering strengthen their faith in the present. Perhaps the most meaningful present promise is that of greater understanding of and participation in Christ's suffering. "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you

are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." (1 Peter 4:12-14) A dear brother of mine once told me how true this promise is for the here and now. In university he became a follower of Christ. He was the only one in his family to follow Jesus. The others were all quite committed atheists. At first they just thought he was silly, but as his faith became more and more central in his life, they began to mock him and tried to dissuade him from his new faith. One time he explained to me with delight how well he understood the passages where Jesus' brothers and the people in his hometown mock him. He had the opportunity to share in the sufferings of Jesus and he was closer to his Lord because of it. Not only does he have the future promises to look forward to, but God gave my friend the grace of intimacy with Himself because of my friend's sufferings.

The future promises of grace are also a very real help to those who are suffering. "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:17-18) This is not a promise only for those experiencing light affliction. The point is that all affliction, even suffering to the point of death is light and momentary compared to the glory God promises in the future. In Revelation 2, God promises the church in Smyrna that they are about to suffer. God tells them not to fear because the resurrection of the dead is a real and glorious promise. He will give those who suffer, even those who die for His name, the crown of life.

Conclusion

All of God's promises are better than sin. He is gracious in providing His Holy Spirit to lead us

in the way of righteousness. The Spirit ministers to us through the word of God which is full of His promises of future grace. Choose the best. Follow God with all your heart and with all your soul. Reject the fleeting and destructive pleasures of sin and embrace the eternal, holy, good, pleasing, and gracious promises of God.

Lesson 8 Questions

1. Recite one promise of future grace from scripture to help you battle anxiety.
2. Recite one promise of future grace from scripture to help you battle pride.
3. Recite one promise of future grace from scripture to help you battle lust.
4. Recite one promise of future grace from scripture to help those who are suffering in the name of Jesus.
5. How does faith in future grace help us to fight against temptation?
6. What is the root of anxiety or worry?
7. Should a Christian boast in anything? If yes, what?
8. Generally, what enticement does sin offer when tempting the Christian?
9. How are God's promises in direct contrast to the pleasures offered from sin?
10. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in using the promises of future grace to fight sin?

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Lesson 1 Answers

1. Loving-kindness, steadfast love, kindness, or goodness.
2. *Hen* is used to when speaking of a superior showing favor to an inferior. *Hen* is used when God is showing grace to humans.
3. It can also be used to communicate the divine or superior power that equips the one who is receiving the favor.
4. Undeserved, unmerited favor of God which also equips the recipient with whatever God sees fit.
5. Our election is based on God's saving grace. Both grace and election have to do with a gift that is undeserved.
6. The covenant of grace is a central theme that is found throughout all the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.
7. Human societies are founded on punishment and reward based on a person's own works. The recipient of God's grace undeservedly receives the favor of God based, not on their own work, but on the work of Jesus Christ.
8. Grace is receiving favor that we didn't deserve. It is humbling to rely on someone else without any chance to ever pay back what you've been given.
9. The first covenant was a covenant of works given to Adam before the fall.
10. The second was the covenant of grace. It was necessary because, "Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant..."

Lesson 2 Answers

1. The believer is counted as a child of God. John 1:12-13, "But to all who did receive him,

who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

2. Jesus is God's son, the second person of the trinity. Matthew 3:17, "and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

3. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

4. Matthew 3:17, "and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

5. It is taken from Psalm 2:7 "I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."

6. It is taken from Isaiah 42:1, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.

7. Yes, Jesus was perfectly obedient. Philippians 2:6-8, "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

8. The believer is hid in Christ. Therefore, Jesus' status is the status of those who are found in Him. As long as Jesus is the Son, the believer will always be a child of God.

9. Yes, God's love for Jesus Christ is eternal and unchanging. This means that if I am in Christ, God's love and acceptance of me is eternal and unchanging as well!

10. Hid in Christ means that our status before God is completely wrapped up in Christ. We have been give a new record, the record of Christ, a new heart, the heart of Christ, and new Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.

Lesson 3 Answers

1. God's covenant promises to Adam and Eve came just after the fall into sin at the garden of Eden.
2. God was gracious to delay the penalty of death for their sin. Not only that, but he gave them the promise of an heir who would crush the head of the serpent.
3. The covenants all contain different promises and have a different emphasis. However, they are all part of one overarching plan of God to redeem a people for Himself. Each successive covenant reveals more and more about this plan until all the promises are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.
4. God detests sin. He judged the whole earth by flooding it because of the sinfulness of mankind. Because of God's perfect holiness, sin must be punished.
5. After a severe judgment of sin on the earth, God promised Noah He would not repeat the same judgment, even though mankind continued to be sinful. God promised patience toward mankind.
6. The sign of the Noahic covenant, the rainbow, is a drawn bow pointing up towards God indicating that He will suffer the punishment of sin if He fails to keep His promise to Noah.
7. Adam and Noah were both the only families on earth when God made His covenant with them. Therefore, the covenant applied to all of their descendants. However, the covenant with Abraham was the first time that God chose a specific people for Himself out of all the earth.
8. The three main promises are for the land of Canaan, the offspring to fill the land (a son for Abraham), and the promise of relationship with God.
9. Abraham's descendants will be blessed by God and therefore be a blessing to all nations. This is a specific promise with its fulfillment in Jesus.

10. In Genesis 15, God put Abraham into a deep sleep and He walked through the animals that were cut in half all on His own. He ratified the covenant without Abraham indicating that He would be split apart just like those animals if He failed to keep His promises to Abraham.

Lesson 4 Answers

1. Exodus 6:6-8, "Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.' "

2. No, God declared that the people of Israel were already in the covenant before He gave them the laws and regulations.

3. People mistakenly see all the laws and regulations of the Mosaic covenant as a legalistic way to perform and earn favor from God.

4. Not one of us is able to fully keep God's laws and commandments. Our inability to do so shows us our need of God's grace.

5. The sacrificial system established in the Mosaic covenant once again establishes the need for sin to be punished and the grace of God to accept a substitute on our behalf.

6. The Mosaic covenant is a preparation for life in the promised land which was promised to Abraham. Also, the tabernacle is a continuation of God's promise to be a God to Abraham's descendants.

7. God's promise of David's royal line is forever.

8. This promise is now fulfilled in Jesus who is our true King for all the rest of eternity in the line of David.

9. Jesus is a King who requires submission. We have received the necessary grace to submit to Him as our Lord and King and follow Him in obedience.

10. God promises David a King from his line will rule forever and that his son will build the temple in which God will dwell and the people of Israel will worship.

Lesson 5 Answers

1. Jesus and the new covenant is the fulfillment of all the old covenant promises.

2. The new covenant fulfills the Adamic covenant by bringing forth a seed which crushes the head of Satan even though Satan did bruise his heel.

3. It fulfills the Noahic covenant and the Abrahamic covenant ideas of God taking the retribution on Himself for a broken covenant.

4. It fulfills the Abrahamic covenant promise of a seed that is a blessing to all the nations.

5. It fulfills the Mosaic covenant by keeping the law, putting forth a living embodiment of The Word, and bringing to completion all the animal sacrifices that pointed forward.

6. It fulfills the Davidic covenant by setting up a true king in the line of David who will sit on the throne for eternity!

7. The new covenant is different to the old covenant in that it isn't a shadow of things to come. It is present reality because Jesus has already come. The signs and seals of the new covenant are different and the scope of the new covenant is more clearly to all the nations of the world rather than just Israel. It is the same because it concerns the same promises of redemption that God has pointed towards in His covenants. The new covenant clearly fulfills many of the signs of the old covenant.

8. Jesus introduced the idea of the new covenant during the passover meal, which we now celebrate as the Lord's Supper. Luke 22:20, "And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."
9. (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.
10. (Romans 8:29) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Lesson 6 Answers

1. WSC #88 states that word, sacraments, and prayer are the ordinary means of salvation.
2. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.
3. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.
4. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.
5. Growing in grace means to become more dependent on God's grace in our lives.
6. "Means" does not mean that grace is purchased or earned in any way. God simply uses certain things as tools to communicate the truths of His grace to us. These are His means of grace.
7. Prayer is the most practical way to show our dependence on God's grace. We take all of our anxieties and needs to Him for provision and our praises to Him in thankfulness.

8. In the sacraments, by God's grace, we participate in the spiritual reality they represent. However, we don't fully experience these realities until the coming Day of the Lord.

9. Romans 10:13-15, "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

10. These answers will be personal so a number of different examples are acceptable as long as they have valid explanations.

Lesson 7 Answers

1. He referred to forgiveness without Lordship as "cheap grace."
2. We tend to have higher expectations of our Christian brothers and sisters because they should be living by the same standards as us.
3. We have been forgiven of far greater offenses through the death of Jesus Christ than anything the people around us can do to us.
4. Absolutely not, even in the church people hurt each other and sin against each other. This will be true until we are fully sanctified and glorified.
5. (Galatians 5:22-23) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
6. In the parable of the good Samaritan Jesus expands the definition of neighbor to be anybody in this world whom we have the chance to love.
7. Yes, the offer of grace is for the whole world. Jesus said, "And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." (Matthew 9:11-12)

8. True grace does not compromise truth. True grace offers the free grace of God and the wonderful freedom from slavery to sin under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

9. Many different examples are acceptable here.

10. Grace offers Christ's Lordship to those who are in bondage to sin. God's forgiveness is coupled with the power and the desire to follow Jesus as King.

Lesson 8 Answers

1. "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

2. "God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:28-31)

3. "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:11)

4. "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

5. Faith in future grace gives us an eternal and better option when we are tempted by the destructive fleeting pleasures of sin.

6. The root of anxiety is a lack of trust in God. We worry because we want to be in control,

but God gives us the opportunity to cast all our cares upon Him.

7. Yes, a Christian should boast, not in themselves, but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Galatians 6:14)

8. Sin offers a temporary pleasures or satisfaction. However, these temporary pleasures always fade and lead to destruction.

9. God's promises offer true pleasure and satisfaction while those offered by sin are only lies and counterfeit. Also, the pleasures offered from sin will only last temporarily, while the joyous promises of God are eternal!

10. We must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit in the fight against sin. He is gracious to us as He ministers to us the word (the sword of the Spirit) to expose and destroy the lies of temptation.

EXAM

The exam is administered in week in the final week. It is comprised of 20 questions taken from the questions at the end of each lesson. Students should be told that the exam will be based upon those questions. Half a point is given for each correct answer.

1. Besides undeserved favor, what other concept does the Greek word *charis* introduce?
2. What definition for God's grace is being used for this course?
3. What is counter-cultural about grace?
4. After coming up from baptism by John the Baptist, what does God the Father declare about His Son Jesus?
5. Does God the Father love Jesus always? Why is that important for me?
6. What is gracious about the Noahic covenant?
7. What are the three main promises of the Abrahamic covenant?
8. How did God indicate that He is willing to take the punishment for sin in the Abrahamic covenant?
9. What is the central point of the Mosaic covenant?
10. What implications does Jesus' royalty have on those of us who have received His grace?
11. How does Jesus fulfill the Adamic covenant?
12. How does Jesus fulfill the Mosaic covenant?
13. (WSC #89) How is the word made effectual to salvation?
14. What does it mean to grow in grace?
15. (WSC #98) What is prayer?
16. Give an example of how one can express grace through their life, without specifically preaching the gospel in words?
17. In what way is the grace of God connected to the Lordship of Christ?
18. Recite one promise of future grace from scripture to help you battle anxiety.

19. Recite one promise of future grace from scripture to help you battle lust.

20. Should a Christian boast in anything? If yes, what?

BIOGRAPHY

Paul S. was born in Rome, Ga and grew up in the Southeastern United States. Even though he grew up attending church, he became a Christian at the age of 18 while attending Valdosta State University. In university, Paul S. began to take an interest in foreign missions and went on several short-term mission trips.

In 2002, he took his first trip overseas to Bangkok, Thailand. This convinced him of God's call to serve overseas as a missionary. In 2003, he graduated with a Bachelor's of Science from the University of North Florida. One week after graduation he was on a plane to China to go and serve as a missionary associate in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for one year.

While in China Paul S. felt God confirm his calling to missions and he met his future wife, Andrea. 2 years later Andrea and Paul S. were married and returned to East Asia together. They now have a growing family and a growing ministry in a creative access nation in East Asia. Paul S. received some theological education from Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando. He is currently working towards his Master's degree and Doctor of Ministry through Miami International Seminary.