

“ADJ - Grace of God Part 1” (3-13-22)

Introduction: Paul’s personal letter to Philemon of Colossae - a personal application of God’s Grace

1) Grace - available to all

Paul’s Letter . . . some context:

- Written & delivered at the same time as his letter to Colossians (compare: Philemon & Colossians 4:7-18)
- Additionally - Ephesians was most likely a circuit letter to this area - Ephesus, Laodicea, & Colosse all in the same region

Philemon 1-3, 10-12 (ESV)

(1) Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved fellow worker (2) and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house: (3) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . (10) I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (11) (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) (12) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.

Paul’s Letter . . . involves 3 very unique people:

- **Paul** - a Jewish Pharisee, now a prisoner (probably in Ephesus) for his faithful witness to Jesus
- **Philemon** - a Gentile Roman citizen of some wealth, now hosts the church in Colossae in his home
- **Onesimus** - a bondservant (slave) to Philemon, and now a fellow believer and convert of Paul’s

Consider these very different people - and Grace has touched all of their lives!

Ephesians 2:1-3 (ESV)

(1) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins (2) in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— (3) among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Note: We are all in need of Grace! No matter our background, position, or choices - we are dead, and stuck dealing with the effects of the flesh, the world, & the devil (note all 3 are mentioned).

- Whether I was very “religious” or “successful” or a total “mess” before Christ - I was lost & dead!
- Don’t minimize your testimony in comparing it to others, whatever your story we are all in the same boat!
- The significance of Grace is most clearly seen when we realized how great the odds are stacked against us!

Ephesians 2:4-7 (ESV)

(4) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— (6) and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Note: Grace is - the “But God” intervening on our behalf!

- Now those who were dead are made alive - together - by Grace!
- And that Grace continues to unfold & be revealed in our lives in immeasurable ways . . .

2) Grace - an unfolding gift (see: Ephesians 2:7 - The immeasurable riches of Grace)

Philemon 4-7 (ESV)

(4) I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, (5) because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, (6) and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. (7) For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

Note: Receiving Grace and allowing it to permeate our lives changes everything!

Don't be confused - Grace is for all, and when we receive & respond to Grace, it changes us all!

Philemon's Love for God and Faith in Jesus have so touched his life, that he now comforts other believers (including Paul) with this gift of Grace. Take note . . .

Signs of a grace-filled life:

- Others are refreshed by you! (joy, comfort, love, faith)
- My "knowledge" of this immeasurable Grace grows

Ephesians 2:7-10 (ESV)

(7) so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Note: Grace is a gift received, that grows & expands in us as we live by faith, leading to a new way of life . . .

3) Grace - a way of life

Philemon 8-14 (ESV)

(8) Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, (9) yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— (10) I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (11) (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) (12) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. (13) I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, (14) but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.

Note: Grace - is an invitation to grow in love by learning & practicing loving well

Philemon 15-17 (ESV)

(15) For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, (16) no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. (17) So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me.

Note: Grace - restores & redefines relationships through the power of forgiveness & fellowship

Philemon 18-21 (ESV)

(18) If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. (19) I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. (20) Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. (21) Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Note: Grace - looks like Jesus, it loves sacrificially at great cost! (forgiveness always has a cost!)

Philemon 22-25 (ESV)

(22) At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you. (23) Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, (24) and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers. (25) The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Note: Grace - sets us in good company with the flawed yet redeemed & faithful people of God!

Conclusion: God's grace is available to us all, as it unfolds in glorious ways in our lives, so that it becomes a new way of life for us - difficult (even costly) yet richly rewarding!