

THE SCROLLS

Grace is Greater Than | Various Scripture

Life Lesson

God's grace doesn't just save you—it sustains, shapes, and secures you. You aren't left to carry your faith alone. As Judge, God has already settled your past through Christ. As Father, He is actively working in your present, even through discipline and struggle. And as Creator, He faithfully holds you together for your future, even when you feel weak or weary. This means your life isn't defined by striving, fear, or failure but by being pardoned, transformed, and upheld by God's grace. Stop living as if everything depends on you, and start resting in the truth that everything depends on Him.

Examine Scripture

Psalm 7:11; 9:7-8

Is. 42:3

**Romans 1:18; 2:5-6; 3:23, 26;
7:14-19; 8:15**

2 Cor. 5:21

Ephesians 2:8; 5:17

Colossians 1:17

Titus 3:5-7

Hebrews 9:27; 12:5-6

Grace Changes Everything

As we have learned in this series, grace is defined as "unmerited favor." It is tempting to stay at the surface of this concept, like looking only at the edge of an endless ocean. The Puritan Thomas Brooks writes, "Grace is a ring of gold, and Christ is the sparkling diamond in that ring." Another Puritan, John Flavel, writes, "Grace is to the soul what health is to the body." Grace is an unfathomable ocean. It is the purest gold setting for Christ's glory. It is the very breath of life in our souls. In other words, God's grace is deeply multifaceted, touching every part of His nature and our lives. To truly understand this grace, we need to see it through the different roles God takes in His relationship with us.

The grace of God is like a harmonious symphony played in three connected, yet distinct movements. Although heard in different motifs, the same melody of grace resonates in various ways, allowing us to experience God's grace anew each day. As a judge, God's saving grace frees us from the penalty of sin. As a father, God's sanctifying grace frees us from the power of sin and molds us into the image of Christ. And as Creator, God's sustaining grace keeps us safe until the day we are finally freed from the presence of sin. In each role, His heart toward His people is overwhelmingly good, endlessly patient, and unfathomably kind.

Saving Grace: God as Judge

In the grand courtroom of eternity, God sits as the just and immutable Judge. Theological and biblical integrity require that a holy God cannot simply ignore sin; doing so would undermine His justice. The scales must be balanced. The Law has been broken, sin has entered the world, and man's insidious rebelliousness demands a verdict of guilty. (Psalm 7:11) reminds us that "God is a righteous judge and a God who shows his wrath every day." In (Ps. 9:7-8), we read, "But the Lord sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for judgment. And he judges the world with righteousness; he executes judgment on the

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nations with fairness.” As judge, God must rule against sin and rebellion.

How does He rule? What is the verdict? Paul reminds us in (Rom 2:5-6): “Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God’s righteous judgment is revealed. He will repay each one according to his works.” In (Rom. 1:18), Paul tells us the target of this wrath: “For God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.” And leaving no doubt in our minds, he reminds us that no one is exempt from the wrath of God because “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, we must face judgment: “And just as it is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment” (Heb. 9:27).

Yet, it is precisely here, against the dark backdrop of our rightful condemnation, that the brilliance of saving grace shines brightly. The goodness of God as Judge is not shown when He sets aside His justice, but when He satisfies it Himself. In the awe-inspiring mystery of the gospel, the Judge steps down from the bench, takes off His robes of judgment, and takes the place of the condemned. Through the cross of Jesus Christ, God bears the full weight of His own righteous wrath. This is the saving grace of God!

There are two aspects of saving grace. First, it is the grace of substitution. A corrupt judge lets the guilty go free without punishment; a good judge ensures the penalty is paid. The sheer goodness of God is shown in that He loved us enough to bear the painful cost of our acquittal. As Paul writes, “God presented him (Jesus) to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so that he would be just and justify the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26). Second, there is the grace of justification. In salvation, God declares the sinner righteous, not because we have earned it, but because Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us. We are “saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift” (Eph. 2:8). Paul writes in (Titus 3:5-7): “He saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.” Again, in (2 Cor. 5:21), Paul writes, “He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” John Bunyan beautifully describes this justification: “Grace can pardon our ungodliness and justify us with Christ’s righteousness; it can put the Spirit of Jesus Christ within us; it can help us when we are down; it can heal us when we are wounded; it can multiply pardons, as we through frailty multiply transgressions.”

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Sanctifying Grace: God as Father

Once the gavel falls and we are declared righteous, the courtroom doors do not simply open to the streets; they open straight into God's household. The Judge adopts the pardoned criminals, and His main relationship with us shifts to that of a loving Father. In glorious redemption, the Father runs to the prodigal, clothes him in a new robe of righteousness, and prepares a feast at His table.

Now, as Father, God's saving grace flows to the saved as sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace is the relentless, patient work of a Father who loves His children too much to leave them as He found them. While justification is an instantaneous legal declaration, sanctification is a lifelong familial process. Paul boldly declares, "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father!'" (Rom. 8:15).

One aspect of sanctifying grace is the grace of discipline: "And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons: My son, do not take the Lord's discipline lightly or lose heart when you are reproved by him, for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and punishes every son he receives" (Heb. 12:5-6). Discipline is not often discussed in the context of grace, but in itself, discipline is grace. It is the grace of the chisel, shaping away the hardened, sinful edges of our character to reveal the image of Christ underneath. Jonathan Edwards writes, "Grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected." In other words, grace is not just a positional work but a sanctifying work to perfect the grace we received at salvation. As the Puritan Thomas Watson writes, "God's rod is a pencil to draw Christ's image more distinctly upon us."

The goodness of God as Father is evident in His lasting patience. We stumble, rebel, and falter, yet He does not reject us. He continually gives the Holy Spirit to comfort, guide, and empower us. The Puritan theologian John Owen warned against the illusion of cheap grace, reminding us of the Father's ultimate goal for His children: "He leads none to heaven but whom He sanctifies on the earth. This living Head will not admit of dead members." His grace transforms our current affections just as surely as it secures our eternal destiny.

Sustaining Grace: God as Creator

As we walk the challenging path of sanctification, our strength often fails. We are finite, fragile, and prone to exhaustion. There is a constant struggle within us: our spirit versus our flesh: "For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want" (Eph. 5:17). Even Paul describes his own weariness in this ongoing battle against the flesh: "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold as a slave under sin. For I do not understand what I am

Personal Reflection

1. When I think about God as Judge, do I truly grasp the weight of my sin? How does that deepen my gratitude for His saving grace through Christ?
2. In what areas of my life am I resisting the Father's sanctifying work, and how might His discipline actually be an expression of His love for me?
3. How do I usually respond when I feel the tension between my flesh and the Spirit, and what would it look like to rely more intentionally on God's sustaining grace in those moments?
4. Do I tend to see God more as one role (Judge, Father, or Creator) than the others, and how might an unbalanced view influence my relationship with Him?
5. When I feel tired, discouraged, or spiritually dry, do I trust that God is actively holding me together—or do I live as if my faith ultimately depends on my own strength?

Commentaries

Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament
Edited by Kenneth Barker

New Bible Commentary Edited by D. A. Carson

Various Writings from Puritans
(Bunyan, Brooks, Edwards, Owen, Watson)

Mt. Zion's Mission

*Mt. Zion Baptist Church exists to
MAKE, MATURE, and MULTIPLY
disciples of Jesus Christ.*

doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate. Now if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with the law that it is good. So now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. For I do not do the good I want to do, but I practice the evil I do not want to do." (Rom. 7:14-19).

On our own, we become tired and more prone to sin. Here, we must rely on sustaining grace, rooted in the reality of God as our Creator. The God who spoke the universe into existence, formed the galaxies, and designed the intricate details of the human cell is the same God who personally sustains your faith. He is not a clockmaker who wound up the universe and then stepped away; He is the active Sustainer of everything. In Him, "all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17), including our faith during struggles and doubts. When the dark nights of the soul come, and our grasp on God begins to slip, sustaining grace ensures that the Creator's hold on us remains firm. The Puritan William Secker summed up this sustaining grace perfectly: "Though Christians be not kept altogether from falling, yet they are kept from falling altogether." The highest goodness and grace of God as Creator is shown in His tender attention to the small details of our lives. The Almighty God bends down to support the bruised reed and fan the flickering wick (Isaiah 42:3). When we are completely exhausted, His sustaining grace breathes new life into our weary bones.

Viewing God's grace through a single perspective causes us to overlook the incredible security He offers to those saved by grace through faith. His grace is not fragile or frayed; it is an unbreakable chain built in eternity. It covers our past, transforms our present, and guarantees our future. Since the Judge has already declared us righteous, the eternal punishment for our sin is decisively broken. Because the Father is actively working in our hearts, the daily struggle with sin is steadily being overcome. And because the Creator holds our fragile faith together, we are confident that one day sin will be completely eradicated forever.

This threefold grace eliminates human boasting and removes all despair. From the cosmic courtroom to the family dinner table, and all the way to the new creation, we are fully surrounded by His goodness—pardoned, adopted, and held tightly until the very end.

"A true Christian is a monument of free grace." - Thomas Watson

"A little grace will bring your soul to heaven, but a great deal of grace will bring heaven to your soul." - Thomas Brooks