

Our Christian Faith



Holy

Yahweh

Hell

Law

Preservation

GRACE

Have you ever wondered why should God even bother to concern himself with us human beings at all? King David wondered the same thing. He wrote, "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"¹ In the grand scheme of things we are totally dependent on the one eternal almighty God² for apart from him nothing can exist or would continue to exist.³ He created the world in the beginning.⁴ In his good time he imparted our spirits and gave us life.⁵ He hand-fashioned us in our mother's wombs.⁶ He supplies our bodily needs and satisfies the desires of every living thing.⁷ But with the fall into sin, he is also the source of everything essential for our salvation. In eternity he chose some to be saved.⁸ He planned and accomplished our rescue by sending his Son to take our place under his law, to fulfill its commands completely, to suffer and die for our sins, and conquer the grave.⁹ He guided the course of history so that his saving gospel in Word and Sacrament could find you and by his Spirit's power change your heart to believe in Jesus and be saved. He promises to preserve and protect your faith¹⁰ until he leads you to the heaven, which he has prepared for you.¹¹ Were one to put all this data through a cost-benefit analysis, God bears ALL the expense, and WE reap all the benefits.¹² As incredible and up-side-down as it is, God the Creator and Savior of all does everything for our eternal benefit.¹³

But WHY would he do this? Why does he show humanity such undeserved favor? Why does he send rain on the righteous and the wicked? Why should he forgive our sins and be patient with us day after day? Human reason searches in vain for an answer to this question because in our experience favor comes as a result of either what we've done to earn it or a pre-existing relationship that compels kindness, but neither of these explain God's compassionate disposition towards us, especially since our first parents rebelled against him, plunging our whole race into hostility towards God.¹⁴ No, there is nothing in us or about us that should inspire God's favor.

So why does he treat us so? Scripture's answer to this question is GRACE. Grace is that free over-abundant entirely undeserved favor directed from the heart of God to us that is totally independent of us and own worthiness. The Bible reveals that the ceaseless source of God's grace is Jesus Christ and his self-sacrifice on the cross whereby we are made his forgiven and holy children, beautiful, beloved, and precious in his sight.¹⁵ But in

¹ Psalm 8:4.

² 1 Corinthians 8:6; Acts 17:25.

³ Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3.

⁴ Genesis 1.

⁵ Ecclesiastes 12:7; Deuteronomy 32:39.

⁶ Psalm 139:13-16.

⁷ Psalm 145:15.

⁸ Ephesians 1:4-5.

⁹ Galatians 4:4.

¹⁰ John 20:28-29; 1 Peter 1:5.

¹¹ John 14:2-3.

¹² Some might say God gets our praise and glory, but that is hardly something God needs. In timeless eternity he existed without it. Rather, glory and praise are entirely his due as the Creator and Sustainer of all things in heaven and earth.

¹³ Romans 8:28.

¹⁴ Titus 3:3; Ephesians 2:1-3.

¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians 1:20; Romans 8:38-39.

a mystery of mysteries, God's grace for us did not begin when we were born or two thousand years ago when Jesus died, or even when Adam and Eve first sinned and ruined everything. The LORD is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. Before time began he knew exactly what was going to happen, knew how humanity would turn against him, and how Jesus would certainly rescue us from sin and death. In the timelessness of God his Son was already as good as sacrificed—he is “the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.”¹⁶

In other words, God's foreknowing of our redemption in Christ propelled him to go through with creating creatures he knew would fall. It is Jesus' sacrifice alone that has kept God showing humanity his kind and fatherly face all this time, and because God's grace springs from what Christ has accomplished at the cross, we can be certain that it is constant and forever sure. We can't change it. We can't ruin it. We can't earn it. Whatever our earthly circumstances, God's grace surrounds us and is infinitely available to you and me every day.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1.) What automatic response does God's free grace in Christ work in your heart—praise, prayer, wonder, a desire to serve him? Set aside time this week to complete that loop.

2.) At one time or another all of us have believed the lie that we need to earn God's favor. How does that lie poison our motivation and our attitude towards God? How does grace lift that weight and renew our relationship with him?



PRAYER:

Dear Father in heaven, help me to see and believe that your grace for me in Jesus is truly boundless and everlasting. Then fill my heart with holy joy that I may serve and worship you for your unlimited kindness to me! Amen.

¹⁶ Revelation 13:8.