

Amazing Grace

Marian

Scriptures:

Ephesians 2:8-10

2 Timothy 4:1-5

Romans 5

Romans 6

John 14:15

John 21:15-17

Last week Bread of Life pointed us toward the Holiness of God. This week we seek to understand His goodness in loving the world so passionately that He was willing to send His one and only Son to suffer rejection, humiliation, scoffing, pain and even death on a cruel Roman cross between two criminals in order to secure salvation for all who will turn to Him. Ephesians 2:8-10 tells us: "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." Such is the magnitude of love poured out toward sinful mankind by the One who remains the purest and most Holy man who ever walked on earth, that I am left breathless and in awe.

In recent years I've found it disturbing to witness the Grace of God being taught without the balance He has given us in the Scriptures. This erroneous teaching stems most often from a few seemingly successful preachers with worldwide coverage on the God TV Channel. Sadly, from here it can infiltrate into local churches. The Apostle Paul warned about this in his second letter to Timothy 4:1-5. This teaching has led many to believe that since God's Grace is given freely, and there is nothing we can ever do to earn it, then obedience is no longer required because that would be putting ourselves back under Law when we now live under Grace.

The problem with this teaching is that it leads those who believe it to begin to form God into their own image in order to satisfy their own lusts and desires, and this of itself is an abuse of the precious gift of God. It cost Jesus everything He had in order to secure Grace sufficient to cover my sin and yours. The price of my salvation is the cost of His precious blood, and if anything drives me to want to obey Him out of gratitude and love, then one glimpse at such sacrifice will.

GRACE is "God's Riches At Christ's Expense." His Grace is beyond our human comprehension. There is nothing we can do to earn it. No effort of mankind could ever be good enough to receive eternal life with Him. Without the righteousness of Christ, given freely the moment we repent of our sin, we are lost for all eternity.

So how are we to understand the difference between living under law, as the Jews did before Christ lived on earth, and living in obedience under Grace?

I find my answer in the words of Jesus in John 14:15. He told His disciples, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments....." Again in John 21:15-17 we

find Jesus looking at Peter who had earlier denied Him and asking three times, "Peter, do you love me?" Jesus knew that if Peter truly loved Him, then he would WANT to obey Him. Obedience born out of gratitude and love for Him is the polar opposite of obedience that seeks to make itself good enough. Whilst the Law was the standard of righteousness, Grace is the source of righteousness and Love compels us toward obedience.

Prayer: Lord Jesus may I always look at You through the eyes of love and gratitude so that obedience toward You will bring pure joy to my soul. Thank You for sending Holy Spirit to be my guide and my helper - the One who convicts me when I am in danger of straying from Your narrow path. And thank You Father for sending Jesus to die in my place.

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died.
My richest gain, I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride*