

GRACE and MERCY

1 Peter 4:10

10) As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Genesis 19:19

19) Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die.

GRACE:

Grace is the sanctifying doctrinal precept that offers men salvation. From the law of first use, where the word grace is initially introduced in Genesis 6:8, all the way to the very last verse of Revelation, we see the redemptive program of the grace of God working to sanctify and save men.

Grace provided the plan of salvation and exit strategy for Lot and his family in Genesis 19. The angels took them by the hand and led them out of the city, then directed them towards a refuge of safety (v. 16-17). This setting is the perfect picture of grace. Grace provides the plan or way of escape from sin while adding to a man the knowledge, understanding, courage, and manifold abundance of so many other attributes required and anticipated for salvation.

The manifold grace of God is layer upon layer; here, a little, and there a little. It is an unfolding grace. Grace is a teacher, an instructor that leads and guides a man into all truth. Lot recognized in chapter 19 the evidence of saving grace that was made available unto him; "...which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life..." (vs. 19).

By grace are we saved, and that through faith. It is not grace alone, but grace through faith. And we know that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the preached word of God. Saving grace will always provide both the "Word" and the preacher. Godly direction revealed by a godly director is the grace of God bringing salvation.

For how shall they hear the sounds of saving grace without a preacher? How then is saving grace accessed? Through faith. By grace, through faith, the works of righteousness unto salvation are fleshed out daily in our Apostolic Christian lifestyles. We then realize that our faith is alive and authentic.

James admonishes us to "...shew me thy faith..." (James 2:18). Faith without the works of righteousness is terminally dead. Obedience that reflects and cultivates the works of righteousness is our outward response to our inner-man faith. After our obedience are the steps necessary to access the grace of God that He is sovereignly offering us. Obedience through the works of righteousness is our external expression of faith towards the preached word and, consequently, the laying hold on eternal life.

A lifestyle wherein the works of righteousness unto salvation follows our faith in everything we do, and everywhere we go. Grace supplies the vehicle of salvation, i.e., the cross, the church, the 5-fold ministry, the preached Word, and manifold other godly attributes that leads to holy living. In short, Christ dwelling inside of us is the epitome of saving grace.

Grace does not cover us. The blood covers us. But grace hath appeared or has been made available unto all men. However, a man must access saving grace to enjoy the benefits of grace. Again, grace hath appeared unto all men, but not all men have received or accessed grace. Lot could've rejected the outstretched hands of grace and ultimately been lost. God provided the plan and vehicle, but Lot needed faith to believe the Word of God spoken through the angels of God.

Next, his faith needed to produce the fruit of grace through obedience to the redeeming directions being offered. By submitting unto obedience to the divine directive, he could escape the forthcoming prophetic judgments of God. Whenever the instructions were issued by the angels to take your family and escape the city, Lot had to access grace by faith in those spoken words to be saved.

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:8). As with all men, grace appeared unto Noah, and he found it. The word "found" is defined in Hebrew here as "laying hold to." Noah laid hold to the plan being offered. Just as with Lot, Noah also was offered a plan of escape, but he too had to lay hold to it. He had to respond through the obedient works of righteousness following his faith to be saved.

The book of Hebrews reveals a glimpse of Noah laying hold to salvation. "By faith Noah, being warned of God... moved with fear..." (11:7). Faith produces works. Faith always gets busy in the saving business. We are saved by grace that is laid hold to or accessed through faith.

Paul instructs Timothy in this same spiritual arena: Lay hold on eternal life or access the saving grace offered in the New Covenant experience (1 Timothy 6:12, & 19). Lot, Noah, and Timothy's accessing of grace is displayed by a spirit of submission unto obedience. Grace through faith, with works of righteousness following leads unto salvation.

New Covenant saving grace teaches us how to be saved by providing and imparting unto us the understanding, knowledge, and revelation towards a holy lifestyle that denies ungodliness and enables us to bear the fruit of the Spirit. Grace is defined as the divine enabler that engraves the Law of God and the Law of righteousness upon the fleshly tablets of our hearts.

The spirit of the law then is quickened or made alive by grace through faith in His Law. Grace generates spiritual life within the sanctuary of the inner man. The grace that brings salvation offers a life of spiritual power through separation and sanctification from ungodliness in this present world (Titus 2:11-12). Grace also provides an eternal or blessed hope for our tomorrow (v.13). We, too, therefore, must lay hold to this eternal life.

MERCY:

Mercy was holding back the judgments of God. In Genesis 19:22, the angel instructed Lot to make haste, for I cannot destroy the city till you leave. This, too, is the perfect picture of mercy. God extends unmerited favor by holding back the wrath and judgment that is due to us. Grace, as aforementioned, must be accessed through faith. However, His mercies are new every morning. God, by His divine prerogative, pours out new mercies on us daily. We thankfully obtain favor by mercy alone and not any work we have done. It is unmerited favor.

Mercy came running and found us as it were. We like all others before us must find grace, we must access what is appearing before us. But mercy always finds us. As our mediator and High Priest, God through grace provides a mercy seat for us, to allow sinful men access to His holy nature and live. However, it is God's mercy that currently withholds judgement on sinners giving them time to lay hold upon this grace being made available unto them.

Grace is also currently providing a cross for sinners to access the salvation our holy God is offering. With one hand God in His mercy holds back His wrath and judgement in our lives, and through grace with the other hand He saves us from impending judgement by adding to us the divine principles and a plethora of spiritual tools needed to be saved.

Lot understood that he was being offered both grace and mercy. Through grace, God sent the angels. God offered His Word. God led him to a safe place. God provided a city of refuge in Zoar. All the while, mercy was working alongside grace by holding back the impending wrath of God upon him. Mercy found Lot, and Lot found grace.

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