

The True Grace of God

David Halbrook

If you are interested in understanding grace, you should read the book of 1 Peter. He closes the letter saying that he had exhorted and testified *that this is the true grace of God in which you stand* (5:12), so everything in that book teaches us about the true grace of God. When you read this letter, you'll learn about Jesus' resurrection, the reality of heaven, fulfilled prophecies, God's people being a holy priesthood, obeying the government, proper dress, baptism that saves, the sin of intoxication, hospitality, and God's plan for leadership in each congregation. God's grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and live godly (Titus 2:11-12). God's grace makes this saving knowledge available and by faith, built upon solid evidence, we accept God's offer by accepting His teachings (John 12:48; 15:10, 14).

False grace exists when man changes what God offers, such as religion without a resurrected Savior, faith with no evidence, man-made priesthoods, little teaching on proper dress, or salvation before and without baptism. Do you know any religious groups offering "God's grace" in these ways? Beware—this is not the true grace of God, according to the apostle Peter.

Editor's Note: Surely you know someone interested in the subject of grace! Use our article in *Arkansas Weekly* to encourage others to search the Scriptures, understand the true grace of God, or at least think about spiritual things. Grace may be among the easiest topics to use to begin a spiritual conversation—use it to spread the gospel.

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians among us.

Is anyone willing to fill the signboard by the road during October? (Eph. 4:16)

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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Why Forgive?

Joe R. Price

The world is an unforgiving place. Worldly people view compassion as weakness and vengeance as strength. The opposite is true. On the cross the great Son of God said, "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*" (Lk. 23:34). Far from being weak, Jesus showed great strength of faith and character in this extreme moment of pain. He calls on us to follow His example (1 Pet. 2:18-24).

And, we can. It is not easy to forgive those who sin against us (Matt. 6:14-15). Yet, faithful Christians follow the example of Jesus by faith, putting on a heart of forgiveness and "*forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do*" (Col. 3:13).

To forgive (*aphiemi*, Matt. 18:21; *apoluo*, Lk. 6:37) means "to send away, to let go, to keep no longer, to release" (*Thayer, Strong's*).

Understanding why we must forgive will help strengthen our resolve to be like Jesus. Why should we forgive?

We forgive because God commands us to forgive. Then Peter came to Him and said, "*Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?*" Jesus said to him, "*I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven*" (Matt. 18:21-22). We cannot be faithful disciples of Jesus and yet refuse to forgive sinners. We are living proof of God's loving forgiveness. Shall we be so unlike Jesus as to refuse to have forgiveness in our hearts and actions toward those who sin against us?

The fact that God commands us to forgive does not mean God is pressuring us to forgive. Far from it. It means forgiveness is an act of loving faith in Jesus: "*If you love Me, keep My commandments*" (Jno. 14:15). And again, "*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome*" (1 Jno. 5:3). We obey the command to forgive because we love Jesus.

We forgive in order to be like God. God is *"the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments"* (Deut. 7:9). God's loving kindness (grace) prompts Him to forgive sinners (Eph. 1:7; Titus 3:4-5). (Truly, sinners must repent in order to receive His forgiveness, Lk. 17:3; Acts 8:22; 1 Jno. 1:9. Here we are discussing forgiveness from the giver's point of view.) Unless there is grace in the heart, forgiveness will never be extended to others.

We forgive those who sin against us because we want to be like God. We intend to forgive in the way He forgives us. The parable of the unforgiving servant teaches that our heavenly Father forgives us out of compassion, and we must do the same (Matt. 18:21-35, 27, 33). Paul wrote, *"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you"* (Eph. 4:32). It is the calloused person who refuses to have compassion and forgive *"from his heart"* (Matt. 18:35). This person will not be forgiven. We are able to forgive by devoting ourselves to being like our Father in heaven.

We forgive so that we can be forgiven. Jesus was very plain about this. Unless we forgive others we will not be forgiven:

"Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Lk. 6:37).

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mk. 11:25-26).

When teaching how to pray, Jesus said to ask God *"to forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"* (Matt. 6:12). If we do not, then we will not be forgiven (Matt. 6:14-15). This is a clear and unambiguous standard by which to assess our own forgiveness as disciples of Christ.

It is a sin not to forgive! Christians who will not forgive others like Jesus on the cross can only expect the eternal torment reserved for sinners (Matt. 18:34-35).

We forgive because it is also good for us. Not only does forgiveness bless the one being forgiven, practicing it also frees one's heart from bitterness, malice and anger (Eph. 4:31-32). Forgiving others rejoices the heart through obeying the Lord (Psa. 19:8). Forgiveness engenders restoration and renewal, and brings refreshment to the soul.

God's forgiveness is offered to all in His Son, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). Christ calls on us to forgive as we have been forgiven. *"Be imitators of God"* and forgive one another when complaints arise (Eph. 4:31-5:2; Col. 3:12-13).

<http://goo.gl/U4dgpD>

The Lord's Supper

Jesse Fleming

Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Lk. 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-30

Some things we see in these verses:

Proclamation
Confession
Remembrance
Communion
Thanksgiving
Examination
Anticipation
Memorial

While these things are true, we must remember that the observance of the Lord's supper is the memorial of our Lord's death. It is a memorial service.

We must be especially careful to avoid doing the thing the Corinthians were guilty of in not properly discerning the Lord's body. We must not do anything that would distract the worshippers attention from the memorial.

What did Jesus do when he instituted the Lord's Supper:

He gave thanks for the bread, broke it and gave to the disciples.

He gave thanks for the cup, gave it to the disciples.

Jesus' Baptism and Ours

David Halbrook

People give many reasons for rejecting the Bible's association between baptism and remission of sins. Some claim that since Jesus' baptism was not for the remission of sins, neither is ours. But His baptism was not intended to be the same as ours. Notice:

- * did Jesus' baptism add Him to the body? Does ours? (1 Cor.12:13)
- * did Jesus' baptism add Him to Christ? Does ours? (Gal. 3:27)
- * did Jesus' baptism save Him? Does ours? (1 Pet. 3:21)
- * was Jesus baptized into His death? Are we? (Rom. 6:3)
- * was Jesus baptized for the remission of sins? Are we? (Acts 2:38)
- * was Jesus baptized to wash away His sins? Are we? (Acts 22:16)

Clearly Jesus' baptism was different than ours. Therefore, by faith, *arise and be baptized and wash away your sins calling on the name of the Lord* (Acts 22:16).