



The Source of Grace

By

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God is the Source of Grace. We must understand God to understand Grace.

God is the Source of Grace. A simple statement, but one that would take a lifetime to explain. It is a statement that brings understanding and meaning to experience. It lifts hearts and minds and gives purpose to all who believe. The people of the earth who have it would not exchange the Grace of God for a millionaire's fortune, because it is a fortune: a spiritual fortune. The Grace of God is worth more than this world and this life can ever give.

God is the Great Creator. All good things come from Him. One of those good things is His Grace. Whether you call it grace, gratia, gratus, grati, charis, racon, or any other language, the meaning is basically the same. Grace is "a showing of kindness, a favor done without expectation of return, an act of mercy." Most of us have probably experienced grace at some point in our lives. Someone has shown us kindness. Someone has done us a favor without expecting anything in return. Someone has been merciful toward us. Human beings have a capacity for grace. But no human has come close to expressing the Grace that God has shown us. The grace people show others is but a drop in the ocean in comparison to the Amazing Grace of God!

All of God's qualities are wrapped up in His Grace: His Holiness, His Truth, His Righteousness, His Justice, His Goodness, His Love, His Mercy. In "Synonyms of the New Testament," Archbishop Trench wrote this about God's Grace:

"It is hardly too much to say that the Greek mind has in no word uttered itself and all that was at its heart more distinctly than in this."

His Holiness

God is Holy. He is absolutely Holy. He is Perfect in every way. No imperfection is found in Him. He is far above all His creation in His Holiness. He is the Source of Holiness. Understanding His Holiness is the first step toward understanding His Grace.

“I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. I am the Lord who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.” Leviticus 11:44-45

“You are not able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God.” Joshua 24:19

“Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this Holy God?” 1 Samuel 6:20

“Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his holy mountain, for the Lord our God is holy.” Psalm 99:9

“He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name.” Psalm 11:9

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Proverbs 9:10

“To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?’ says the Holy One.” Isaiah 40:25

“I will make my holy name known among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the Lord am the Holy One in Israel.” Ezekiel 39:7

“I Lord, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One ... Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.” Habakkuk 1:12-13

God is called “Holy” scores of times in the Old Testament. It is the song of angels in heaven:

“I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’” Isaiah 6:1-3

The Old Testament teaches that everything belonging to God was and is Holy: Heaven, His Throne, His Words, His Mighty Arm, the ground where Moses met with God, the altar in the tabernacle, the garments of the priests, the turban of the priest, the furnishings the priests used, the temple, the camp of the Israelites, the Sabbath, the guilt offering, anything Israel

gave to God, Jerusalem and Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Anything that is God's is Holy because God is Holy.

This causes people a problem. God is Holy, but they aren't. In fact, they are unholy. They are distanced from God and God from them because of His Holiness and their unholiness. This is a great problem. How can a Holy God Who is Perfect and Who cannot and will not tolerate imperfection associate with an unholy people?

“Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things.” Isaiah 59:1-3

Though written almost 3,000 years ago, the words of Isaiah sound as fresh as a nightly television newscast. We are and will continue to be a people of sin. Our minds are filled with thoughts of sinning. Our days and nights are filled with acts of sinning. We are a sinning people. We are an unholy people. How can we ever know the Holy God when we are so sinful, so evil, so far from Him?

His Truth

God is Truth. He is True in His Person, His existence, His Knowledge, His Power, and His Glory. His Life is Truth. His Actions are Truth. His Words are Truth. God is the Source of All Truth. He is the foundation of All Truth.

God does not lie. There is no untruth in Him. Everything He is and does is Truth. We can believe everything He says. We can trust everything He does. We can depend on everything He promises. He is Truth.

“Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth.” Psalm 31:5

“I, the Lord, speak the truth; I declare what is right.” Isaiah 45:19

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth...For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” John 1:14, 17

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

Jesus spoke the words “I tell you the truth...” scores of times. He was Truth and spoke truth. The religious leaders of Israel told the people lies. Jesus stood in stark contrast to them because He told the truth.

God does not hold back. He doesn't try to be popular by skimming over the problems between Him and humanity. He doesn't try to make things sound better than they are. He tells it like it is. He calls sin, sin. He makes it clear that His Word is Truth and anyone who says otherwise is a liar.

Paul points out the problem that people have with God's Truth in his letter to the Roman Christians:

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them ... They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.” Romans 1:18-19, 25

People choose to sin. They choose to exchange God's Truth for lies. God is Holy. We are unholy. God is Truth. We choose to believe lies. This carries a severe penalty.

“You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth ... But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil; first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.” Romans 2:1-2, 8-9

Wrath. Anger. Trouble. Distress. Does that sound like the actions of a Gracious and Loving God? Yes, it does, when we understand God's Holiness, Truth and Righteousness.

His Righteousness

Righteousness is the character or quality of being right. God is Right in everything He does. He never does wrong. He never makes a mistake. He never takes a wrong turn. He never makes a wrong decision. He's always Right! His Word is True and His Decisions are Right. God is the Source of Righteousness.

“O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure.” Psalm 7:9

“The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.” Psalm 145:17

“And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me ... They will say of me, ‘In the Lord alone are righteousness and strength.’” Isaiah 45:21, 24

“...but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:24

“But, O Lord Almighty, you who judge righteously and test the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you I have committed my cause.” Jeremiah 11:20

The Bible teaches us that God’s judgments are righteous, that His Laws are righteous and that His righteousness endures forever.

“Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever. Psalm 111:3

“Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.” Psalm 112:3

An important point about God’s righteousness is to remember that Jesus Christ was Righteous in everything He did and said. The Old Testament prophesied that the Messiah would be: The Lord of Righteousness, The Righteous Servant, The Sun of Righteousness, and be Clothed in Righteousness. It claimed the Messiah would: Love Righteousness, Judge in Righteousness and Reign in Righteousness.

Jesus Christ is the prophesied Messiah of Israel. He fulfilled all the prophecies of righteousness.

“You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God has raised him from the dead.” Acts 3:14-15

“You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him...” Acts 7:51-52

Jesus always does Right. That is His Nature. He is God. He cannot do wrong. He can only do Right. He is Righteous in His Thoughts, Righteous in His Words, Righteous in His Actions. He is Righteousness. Therefore, what He does in dealing with the sin of humanity is Right. His Judgments are Right. His Righteousness is Just.

His Justice

Justice is what happens based on what's right. A good judge will prescribe justice based on the laws of the land. If the legislators have been wise in their passage of laws and penalties for breaking those laws and the judge follows the law, justice prevails. The right thing is done.

God is Holy. He's Perfect. He's True. He's Right. And He's Just. God's judgments are based on His Flawless Character. Therefore, He always prescribes Justice. He can't do anything else because of His Perfection. God would be less than perfect if He was not Just. He is Perfect, therefore, His Decisions are Just.

“He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.” Deuteronomy 32:4

“For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.” Psalm 11:7

“The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.” Psalm 33:5

“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.” Daniel 4:37

“The Lord within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame.” Zephaniah 3:5

That sums up perfectly the problem the human race has with God and the problem God has with people. He is Righteous. We are unrighteous. He does no wrong. We do no right. He dispenses justice every day, but that does little to stop us. The human race continues in its sin. “The unrighteous know no shame.”

It seems like a stalemate, a dilemma, a hopeless situation. God cannot have a relationship with sinful humanity because His Righteousness and Justice demand their punishment. He made the laws and the penalties for

breaking those laws. He can't be Holy and Just if He doesn't follow through on His Word. People cannot have a relationship with God because they are at odds with Him and far from Him. They are wicked. He is righteous. It might be the end of the road for us all, except for one thing: the Goodness of God.

His Goodness

Do you remember the childhood prayer, "God is Great, God is Good, Let us thank Him for our food?" It's true. God is Great. He is Good. God is the Source of All Goodness.

"Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O Lord. Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways."
Psalm 25:7-8

"Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him." Psalm 34:8

"You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you." Psalm 86:5

"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." Psalm 100:5

“Praise the Lord, Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.” Psalm 106:1

God’s Actions are consistent with His Character. He is Good. Therefore, He does Good things. One of them, probably the most important to us, was send us a Message of Goodness. We know it as “The Gospel.” It means “Good News.” The Good News is that God Loves us and Gave us His Most Precious Gift.

His Love

Love is a word most people don’t understand. They confuse it with lust or some other selfish emotion and action. God placed real Love at the top of His list of Laws. Love is the highest priority to Him.

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:37-40

What a stunning statement! “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Tens of thousands of words and centuries of living and dying hang on “Love”. Why is Love so important to God?

God is Love. God is the Source of Love.

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” 1 John 4:7-8

This is an interesting statement, but what is love? How can we know whether we love or not? God defined Love this way:

“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” 1 John 4:9-10

God is Love. It makes sense that He would be the One to define it and express it perfectly. We learn from His Example. God shows us what real Love is and what we should do with it. It is from God’s Love that we experience His Mercy.

His Mercy

God’s Mercy is His Goodness and Love shown towards people in deep trouble; people who have no way out. That’s everybody. We are all in trouble. Paul explained it this way:

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those

who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.”

Ephesians 2:1-3

Not a pretty picture: sinful human beings, dead in transgressions and sins, unable to do anything but mindlessly follow the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air. The human race is, frankly, an object of God’s wrath. We’ve already seen that God is Holy and Just. He will punish anyone who breaks His Law. Everyone breaks His Law. That means everyone is an object of God’s judgment and wrath. What’s to be done? Is there no one to rescue us just before we fall off the cliff and perish forever?

Yes, there is Someone!

“But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions.”

Ephesians 2:4

This is a most remarkable statement. Even when we were dead in transgressions, God’s Love combined with His Mercy to make us alive with Christ. We didn’t do anything. We didn’t say the right thing, do the right thing, go to the right place. We were dead in transgressions and sins. D-E-A-D. That means “not alive.” Even though we were not alive spiritually, even though we couldn’t and wouldn’t do anything spiritually to bring ourselves out of death, God Loved us and showed us Mercy.

This is not the first time God's Mercy showed up to save the day. He's always been Merciful. God's been rescuing dying people for a long time.

“And the Lord said, ‘I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’” Exodus 33:19

“For the Lord your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers which he confirmed to them by oath.” Deuteronomy 4:31

“The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him.” Daniel 9:9

“But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.” Nehemiah 9:31

“Go, proclaim this message toward the north: ‘Return, faithless Israel,’ declares the Lord, ‘I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,’ declares the Lord, ‘I will not be angry forever.’” Jeremiah 3:12

“Away from me, all you who do evil, for the Lord has heard my weeping. The Lord has heard my cry for mercy; the Lord accepts my prayer. All my enemies will be ashamed and dismayed; they will turn back in sudden disgrace.” Psalm 6:8-10

These are just a “few” of the many examples of God’s Mercy. His Love and Mercy come together in a most exciting way to bring about the rescue of the dead and dying. It is what makes up God’s Everlasting Quality of Grace.

His Grace

Now we come to the Grace of God. The sound of the words is music to a believer’s ears: the Grace of God. It is music because it is our salvation. It is our life. It is our hope and future. The Wonderful, Amazing Grace of God!

God is the Source of Grace.

Jesus Christ, as a child, was endowed with God’s Grace.

“And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.” Luke 2:40

Jesus entered His earthly ministry filled with God’s Grace.

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

God’s Grace flowed through Christ to all of us.

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” John 1:17

The entire human race benefits from God’s Grace. It’s obvious His Grace is for believers, but what about unbelievers?

“Though grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness; even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil and regard not the majesty of the Lord.” Isaiah 26:10

God’s Grace allows people to be born, grow up, live their lives and make a choice. The very fact that people are allowed to live is based on the Grace of God. Everything we have is because of God’s Grace. The Apostle Peter said it well in his first letter.

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” 1 Peter 2:2-3

The word “good” is *chrestos*. It comes from the root word for Grace and means “gracious, good, kind.”

“Grace” is *charis*. It comes from the word *chairo*, “to rejoice, be glad.” That’s exactly what the Grace of God does for a person. It fills them with joy and gladness. *Charis* causes joy and pleasure. It is a favor done without expectation of return. It is the absolutely free expression of God’s loving kindness.

God demonstrates His Grace through everything He does. Grace is based on Who He is. He is Holy, Truthful, Righteous, Just, Good, Loving and Merciful. God's Grace proceeds from all that. His Feelings of Grace and Actions of Grace are based on His Perfection.

God is the Source of Grace. He is the One Who makes it. He is the One Who gives it. He introduced Grace into the human existence when He created the heavens and the earth. The first man, couple and family experienced God's Grace up close and personal. The Grace was powerful enough to deal with all their problems. Grace can meet all our needs as well.

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