

**A STUDY IN GALATIANS**  
**Part 3 – “Grace and Peace”**  
**Galatians 1:4-5**

In our last lesson we saw the use of the phrase “*grace and peace*” by the Apostle Paul. There were three essentials in our study:

- **First, it was significant that Paul used the word “grace.”** Further, grace is the merciful kindness by which a Holy God gives saving deliverance and forgiveness to guilty, undeserving sinners.
- **Second, there is an intentional sequence in the setting of the word “grace” before “peace.”** Grace must always precede peace if it is to be lasting.
- **Third, the source of grace and peace is only from God.** It is through the Lord Jesus Christ, but rooted in the fatherhood of God.

Now the apostle turns our attention to the fact that salvation is by grace through faith. Simply stated it is by the grace of God plus nothing.

*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Galatians 1:3-5 NIV).*

The context is very important to fully appreciate Paul’s insistence on this strong reminder to the church. Teachers had come among the people of Galatia who were trying to add things to this grace. They proclaimed a salvation, which required the observance of certain religious ceremonies as well as certain religious rituals. They declared salvation was Christ PLUS other things. This was very heavy on Paul’s heart. That becomes very obvious in our Scripture today. When he refers to the grace and peace that he desires for his readers, clearly he declares it is the Lord Jesus Christ who alone is the source of salvation. Being the source of this grace is clear, but it must not be overlooked how he became the channel through which the grace of God comes to guilty sinners. Understanding this merely emphasizes the part that grace plays in it.

Almost everything in the entire letter is implied in these verses of salutation. **Today we’ll look at four specific truths.**

**FIRST, THE COST OF GRACE WAS THE DEATH OF CHRIST.**

Jesus was the one “*who gave himself for our sins.*” Paul can never forget that this is the most glorious thought possible. To be saved by grace is to be saved without any cost to yourself. That DOES NOT mean there was no cost. To be saved from sin came at the expense of the life of God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. It is the whole story of the gospel.

You will never comprehend the seriousness of sin until you see it against the background of the Cross. Our sin is so serious that it required the death of Jesus Christ to deliver us from it. The wages of sin is death, and someone had to die for our sins.

In today’s culture we see a tendency to downplay the seriousness of sin. When we set it against the background of the Cross another picture emerges. It is not just a “mistake,” or

“failure,” or “fault.” When the Scripture speaks about sin, it is the father to death. Before God could release us to life, Jesus had to die in our place.

Jesus was not victim in this death however; he was a willing substitute. This is the impact of the verb “gave.” The message is that Jesus voluntarily, freely, at a point in history, gave himself over to death for us. The death on the Cross is uniquely his deed. It is not something someone else did to him, as much as it is something he allowed voluntarily to happen. He gave himself.

We also see the character of this death. Paul uses the preposition “for” as he declares Jesus died. It is the preposition of substitution in the Greek language. The idea conveyed is that Jesus Christ gave himself as a sacrifice for our sins. He died in our place. He became our sin-offering. The concept comes out of the Old Testament practice of “sin-offering” found in Leviticus 4:1-5:3. When a man knew himself to have committed a sin, intentionally or unintentionally, he was required to make an offering for his forgiveness with the priest at the temple. Standing before the priest, he would lean on the lamb, goat, or bullock symbolically passing the sin to the animal. Then the worshipper would watch, as the priest would cut the throat of the animal, catching the blood in a basin. He would watch as the fire of the brazen altar consumed the pieces of the body of the animal and the blood was sprinkled on the coals. He was aware that the animal was dying in his place. This is what Paul presented the death of Jesus. He died on the cross with our sins on him. He willingly took them on himself and he willingly became the Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world.

This is the cost of grace. If Jesus had not come and died on the cross there could not have been any saving grace. Salvation by grace is salvation at his expense!

Do you remember the words to the hymn “All To Christ I Owe”? The words of the chorus are:

*Jesus paid it all,  
All to Him I owe;  
Sin had left a crimson stain,  
He washed it white as snow.*

On New Year’s night, 1886, some missionaries were holding open-air services in order to attract passers-by to a near-by mission, where meetings were to be held later. “All to Christ I Owe” was sung, and after a gentleman had given a short address he hastened away to the mission. He soon heard footsteps close behind him and a young woman caught up with him and said: “I heard you addressing the open-air meeting just now; do you think, sir, that Jesus could save a sinner like me?” The gentleman replied that there was no doubt about that, if she was anxious to be saved. She told him that she was a servant girl, and had left her place that morning after a disagreement with her mistress. As she had been wandering about the streets in the dark, wondering where she was to spend the night, the sweet melodies of this hymn had attracted her, and she drew near and listened attentively. As the different verses were being sung, she felt that the words surely had something to do with her. Through the whole service she seemed to hear what met her oppressed soul’s need at that moment. God’s Spirit had showed her what a poor, sinful and wretched creature she was, and had led her to ask what she must do. On hearing her experience, the gentleman took her back to the mission and left her with the ladies in charge. The young, wayward woman was brought to Christ that night. A situation was secured for her in a minister’s family. There she became ill and had to be taken

to a hospital. She rapidly failed and it became evident that she would not be long on earth. One day the gentleman whom she had met on New Year's night was visiting her in the ward. After quoting a few suitable verses of Scripture, he repeated her favorite hymn, "All to Christ I owe" and she seemed overwhelmed with the thought of coming to glory. Two hours afterward she passed away knowing she was ready to meet Jesus face-to-face!

## **SECOND, THE EFFECT OF GRACE IS THE DELIVERANCE FROM THE WORLD.**

Paul says, *"to rescue us from the present evil age."* This is the objective of it all. The outcome of the Cross is our freedom from this present evil age. This statement gives us an important insight into the predicament of sinful man. Not only is he the sinner condemned by the law of God, he is also the captive of the age in which he lives. The word translated "age" means more than just the "world" as some versions translate it. It is all that exists now in contrast to all that will be.

Have you noticed how our world has a strange and captivating power about it? It gets men so entangled that they simply cannot break free. The character of this entanglement is "evil." It creates enmity between us and God and others. The only solution is for us to be delivered from it. The word Paul uses, translated "deliver," is very powerful. It means to rescue, to snatch out, to pluck out, to draw out. It also implies a personal intent on the part of the one who delivers. Here's the thought. Jesus snatched us from destruction for a personal reason. He delivered us so that we might be His people!

## **THIRD, THE EXPLANATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD IS THE WILL OF THE FATHER.**

It was *"according to the will of God and our Father."* This explains everything! It explains why Jesus chose to die for us. We cannot find the "why" within ourselves. In fact the more we get to know ourselves, the more we realize the wonder of Jesus standing in our place on the Cross! There certainly is nothing within us that would merit it. It was the will of God. It was what God wanted.

This reveals something so beautiful about the nature and character of God. So often we hear people talk about "the will of God" in combination with the ugly and mysterious things of life. In fact, if you read your homeowner's insurance policy very closely you will notice that natural disasters are covered under a clause called "acts of God." How tragic that we have lost the real meaning of the phrase. It is used in Scripture to explain the good and gracious things of God. God is not the one who wills the destruction of mankind. He wills the salvation of man. God willed the giving of His Son to die on our behalf on the Cross. Surely when we see this truth, we also see that he is the God of grace.

This statement is also stands in the text as a warning to those who seek salvation by some other means. To try another way is to tamper with God's plan. God's way of salvation is the grace way. It is free salvation at the expense of Jesus Christ. If you attempt to attach anything to this you are running counter to the will of the Almighty God and Father of all. This will explain some of the intensity of Paul's words in the rest of this letter. And, it ought to call to our attention the serious nature of our attempts to add to His plan today.

#### **FOURTH, THE END OF GRACE IS THE GLORY OF GOD.**

If you want to know whether or not a message gives proper emphasis to the grace of God, ask the following question: *“How much credit does it give to man?”* If it gives any credit, or leaves any place for man to receive accolade or glory, it is not grace. The message of salvation by grace devastates human pride. Grace means the death of pride. It declares that man can do nothing to earn salvation that man has nothing with which he may purchase salvation, and that man in and of himself is totally undeserving of salvation. Grace leaves man without anything in which he can boast except God.

**AND THEN THE APOSTLE IS LED TO PRAISE!** He declares, *“to whom be the glory for ever and ever!”* The word used by Paul for “glory” has the definite article before it. This means that all of the glory is to go to God and Him alone. When salvation is all of grace, then all of the praise goes to God. When salvation is all of grace, then all of the praise goes to God.

Can't you imagine the reaction of a man who worked out his own salvation on the basis of his observance of the religious rites and his good deeds? Salvation is all of grace. The truth is that the more we understand the salvation we have in Christ, the more we realize that all we did was receive it as a free gift.

When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time, that is a wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award. But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award—yet receives such a gift anyway—that is a good picture of God's unmerited favor. This is what we mean when we talk about the grace of God.