

I. FALSE TEACHING AND THE MESSAGE OF GRACE

- A. One of the great pressures in the End-Times will come from false teachers within the Church as prophesied by 2 Peter 2 and Jude (parallel passages). The most common area of false teaching is that which perverts biblical understanding of the grace of God.

For certain men have crept in unnoticed...ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny...our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4).

- B. False teaching on grace empowers compromise and passivity as it gives us false confidence before God. It perverts God's grace by reducing the message of grace to receiving forgiveness without repentance and seeking to make people comfortable with God while continuing in their sin.

There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly (subtly) bring in destructive heresies...² Many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed (ridiculed).³ By covetousness they will exploit you (manipulate) with deceptive words...¹³ They are...carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you...¹⁴ They have a heart trained (experts in greed) in covetous practices...¹⁸ For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error... (2 Pet. 2:1-3, 13-18)

- C. The Scripture prophesies of spiritual compromise in the Church in the End-Times. Some believers will depart from the faith as their consciences are progressively seared.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron... (1 Tim. 4:1-2; cf. 2 Thes. 2:3-5; 2 Tim. 4:3-4)

- D. False teachings on grace lead to either lewdness or to legalism. Neither is Biblical Christianity and both will lead to spiritual bankruptcy.

II. WHAT IS GRACE?

- A. Grace is God's goodness, favor, and power which He bestows on people. It cannot be earned (It is unmerited). It is simply received by faith (Eph. 2:8-9)

- B. Grace is different from mercy and forgiveness. Mercy grants us God's forgiveness, grace imparts His power and peace frees us from fear (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4). All three are expressions of the unmerited favor of God.

To Timothy...grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father. (1 Tim. 1:2)

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:16)

- C. Grace imparts God's enabling power (to our inner man to walk in righteousness and to function in ministry). This is not saying that we grow in forgiveness, but in God's power

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 3:18)

- D. To receive grace is to receive God's power (supernatural enabling) which includes insight (revelation, wisdom), desire (for God and for righteousness) and authority in ministry (anointing).

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith Rom. 12:6 (cf. Eph. 4:7)

III. DISTORTING THE GRACE OF GOD

- A. Paul raised up churches according to the grace of God that had been given him. This grace can be rejected, disregarded, and misapplied. We must not take God's grace in vain (1 Cor. 15:10).

1 Cor. 3:10, 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.¹⁰ According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

2 Cor. 6:1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

- B. In what sense must we resist striving and in what sense must we embrace striving? To answer this wrong is to walk in legalism (engaging in spiritual activities to earn favor from God) or licentiousness (lacking moral restraints). We must avoid both.

IV. RECEIVING THE GRACE OF GOD

- A. God gives grace to the humble

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6; cf. Rom. 12:3; 1 Pet. 5:5; Prov. 3:34)

- B. Grace is released to those who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen (Eph. 6:24).

- C. The things of God, including salvation and grace, are received by faith (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 5:2)

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8).

- D. Grace is received with our spirit (Gal. 6:18; cf. Philemon 1:25).

Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. (Gal. 6:18)

- E. Grace, the Word of Christ, and singing. Grace is released as the word of Christ dwells in us. We sing to the Lord as we realize the grace of God in our hearts.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16)