

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
GOD THE FATHER
PART 6

We are continuing to look at the moral attributes of God the Father in our series on Foundation of Faith! And last time we looked at the attribute of mercy and we saw that God's mercy is unchanging, it is inexhaustible, it is everlasting, it is new every morning, and it just flows naturally from Him. And we saw that God's mercy that He extends to us is that we don't get what we deserve. We deserve death because sin has separated us from God and all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

That is the problem and apart from that, we would not need God's mercy. But we all have sinned and need God's mercy in our lives. And God can extend mercy to us and not diminish or abolish any of his other attributes, like holiness or righteousness and-so-on. And He does this by having our sins paid in full by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, He is the propitiation for our sins, our Mercy Seat you might say and by the shedding of His blood all our sins were paid in full. Because of that God can extend His mercy to us!

And God wants us to extend mercy to others as we see here in the following illustration. We are told,

[My wife], Gail, and I were in an airplane flying to Boston. We were seated almost at the back of the airliner in the two aisle seats across from each other. As the plane loaded up, a woman with two small children came down the aisle to take the seat right in front of us. And behind her, another woman. The two women took the A and C seats, and one of the children sat in the middle seat, and the second child was on the lap of one of the women. I figured these were two mothers traveling together with their kids, and I hoped the kids wouldn't be noisy.

The flight started, and my prayer wasn't answered. The two children had a tough time. The air was turbulent, the children cried a lot—their ears hurt—and it was a miserable flight. I watched as these two women kept trying to help and comfort these children. The woman at the window played with the child in the middle seat, trying to make her feel good and paying lots of attention.

I thought, these women get a medal for what they are doing. But things went downhill from there. As we got towards the last part of the flight, the child in the middle seat got sick. The next thing I knew she was losing everything from every part of her body. The diaper wasn't on tight, and before long a stench began to rise through the cabin. It was unbearable!

I could see over the top of the seat that indescribable stuff was all over everything. It was on this woman's clothes. It was all over the seat. It was on the floor. It was one of the most repugnant things I had seen in a long time.

I watched as the woman next to the window patiently comforted the child and tried her best to clean up the mess and make something out of a bad situation. The plane landed, and when we pulled up to the gate all of us were ready to exit that plane as fast as we could. The flight attendant came up with paper towels and handed them to the woman in the window seat and said, “Here, Ma’am, these are for your little girl.”

The woman said, “This isn’t my little girl.”

“Aren’t you traveling together?”

“No, I’ve never met this woman and these children before in my life.”

Suddenly I realized this woman had just been merciful. A lot of us would have just died in this circumstance. She had found the opportunity to give mercy. She was, in the words of Christ, “the person who was the neighbor.”

- Gordon MacDonald, from sermon
“Pointing to Jesus: Generosity,” preached at
Grace Chapel, Lexington, Massachusetts
(February 22, 1998)

Look at the things, the mess we have made in our lives and God has extended mercy to us, He does not give to us what we deserve and now the Lord wants us to extend that same mercy to others, no matter what kind of mess they are in, no matter how ugly things may be. That is not natural to do, but it is supernatural and that can only come from the Spirit of God working in us and through us. That can only happen in our lives as we surrender, submit our lives to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Now, this morning we are going to focus on the grace of God, another of His moral attributes and it goes right along with the mercy of God as we will see. It is, in reality, the opposite of mercy and yet they do work together! Let's look at this attribute of God and see what the Lord has for us this morning.

2. MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

E. GRACE

As we have seen, mercy is not getting what we do deserve, and that is death, eternal separation from God. On the other end of the spectrum is grace and grace means that we are getting what we don't deserve. We don't deserve eternal life with God, we don't deserve any of the blessings of God, but God freely gives them to us and He gives them to us in Christ Jesus! Maybe you have heard the story of the atheist who proudly shouted out, "If there is a God, may he prove himself by striking me dead right now!" And nothing happened, causing the atheist to shout again, "You see, there is no God!" Another person standing by heard his words and he responded back by saying, "You've only proved that He is a gracious God!" How true that is, He gives to us life and we truly don't deserve it! He even makes His rain fall on the just and the unjust, and neither deserve it!

Regarding the grace of God, listen to what A. W. Tozer had to say. He wrote,

In God mercy and grace are one; but as they reach us they are seen as two, related but not identical.

As mercy is God's goodness confronting human misery and guilt, so grace is His goodness directed toward human debt and demerit. It is by His grace that God imputes merit where none previously existed and declares no debt to be where one had been before.

Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines Him to bestow benefits upon the undeserving. It is self-existent principle inherent in the divine nature and appears to us as a self-caused propensity to pity the wretched, spare the guilty, welcome the outcast, and bring into favor those who were before under just disapprobation [an expression of strong disapproval]. Its use to us sinful men is to save us and make us sit together in heavenly places to demonstrate to the ages the exceeding riches of God's kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

We benefit eternally by God's being just what He is. Because He is what He is, He lifts up our heads out of the prison house, changes our prison garments for royal robes, and makes us to eat bread continually before Him all the days of our lives.

Grace takes its rise far back in the heart of God, in the awful and incomprehensible abyss of His holy being; but the channel through which it flows out to men is Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. The apostle Paul, who beyond all others is the exponent of grace in redemption, never disassociates God's grace from God's crucified Son. Always in his teachings the two are found together, organically one and inseparable.

- A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, pp. 93-94

Please understand that grace is not given to us because we deserve it or it would not be grace. God gives grace, favor or kindness without regard to worth or merit and He gives it to us in spite of what we deserve. And folk's, none of us deserve anything from God but He freely gives it to us and as we have seen, He gives it to us in Christ Jesus! Let me share a few Scriptures with you and you will see what I mean.

In Ephesians 2:4-10 we are told, **“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”**

Notice the point Paul is making here. How are we saved? Some would say through baptism, or confirmation, or church membership, or keeping the Law, or being good, or living by the Sermon on the Mount, or giving to those in need, or communion and the list can go on! No, that is not how you are saved. You see, dead men, spiritually dead men can't have faith, it is only by God's grace or unmerited favor that He bestows upon us. The only thing we have added to the work of salvation is sin, God did the rest by saving us and our salvation is only found in Christ and it is through Christ's finished work that grace is given to us!

Paul put it this way in Romans 6:23, “**For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” Thus, the basis is grace, the means is faith and it is a work of God! In other words, ***IT IS THE GOSPEL OF GRACE!***

In regards to grace, listen to this story and you will see how God sees us and how we should really see ourselves and the reality is, it is the grace of God that makes us beautiful, that saves us! We are told,

The most jarring TV commercial of 1999 didn't say a word. It simply shows a series of people who have one thing in common - a nasty injury or scar. There's a cowboy with a huge scar around his eye, and something wrong with the eye itself; a fellow with a bulbous cauliflower ear; another with horribly callused feet. There's no explanation at all, simply the Nike swoosh and “Just Do It.”

The ad has been analyzed and criticized widely as being incomprehensible and extreme. But the key to the controversial commercial lies in the background music. Joe Cocker sings, “You are so beautiful . . . to me.”

To these athletes - the wrestler with the cauliflower ear, the surfer with a shark bite, the bull rider blind in one eye - their injuries are beauty marks. And to their fans, these athletes are beautiful because of their scars. “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” says Mike Folino, the ad's creator.

God's grace is just as jarring and controversial. Our beauty is found not in us, but in him. He looks down at us - injured, blind, and scarred - and sings, “You are so beautiful . . . to me.”

- Jim Congdon

You see, we are not beautiful because of ourselves, but because of what God has done for us and to us. He makes all things beautiful in His time. William MacDonald, in speaking of the grace of God, said the following:

To seek to earn, merit, or purchase salvation is to insult the Giver. Imagine yourself invited to a banquet in the White House by the president of the United States. You are seated at a table that is filled with the choicest foods. Every effort is made to give you a most enjoyable evening. At the end of a lovely visit, the president stands at the front door to bid you good-bye.

What do you do? As you leave, do you press a dime into his hand and say, “Thank you very much for your kindness. I have enjoyed the evening very much. I realize it has cost you a lot of money, and I want to help you pay for the meal”?

Is that the proper response to his kindness? On the contrary, it is a rude and insulting gesture. So it would be with God’s grace.

- William MacDonald, The Grace of God

Now if our salvation was based upon works then we could boast about what we have done to be saved, and that would be ugly. But it is a work of God and all we can do is boast in what He has done in our lives! Think about it if you are struggling in this area, thinking you have to do this and you have to do that to maintain your salvation. If you add anything to grace, does it improve on grace? Absolutely not! If you add anything to grace does grace still exist? Absolutely not because now you are owed eternal life, God is in debt to you, you earned it. I guess you can say, “You did it the old fashioned way, you worked for it!” But that is not what the Bible says, that is what religion says!

One writer summed it up like this. He wrote,

Many struggling Christians understand they have been saved by grace, but they still want to pay Him back with good works. Some even think this is necessary to remain saved. The Bible teaches neither.

I heard a pastor explain it this way: “God’s love for us flows from His character, not ours; it is not dependent on anything we have done or will do.” He continued, “In fact, if you do nothing to serve Him the rest of your life, He will not love you any less.”

One listener reacted somewhat negatively. She could not comprehend that kind of grace. Later she confessed that she felt she had to earn God’s love and acceptance. In time she was able to accept God’s unconditional grace.

After accepting this truth, she found that she still wanted to serve Him, but her motivation was different. She served Him because she loved Him, not to earn His approval.

This is certainly a liberating truth. God isn’t keeping score. We can’t pay Him back for His grace. No amount of good works can pay the debt of love we owe.

There is no ritual involved. He loves us and draws us to Himself. We love Him and serve Him. Balancing the scales of indebtedness has nothing to do with it, either before or after we are saved.

You can’t do anything to make Him love you any more. And you can’t do anything to make Him love you any less.

- Charles F. Stanley

In John 1:15-17 we are told, **“John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”**

Keep in mind that there were very rigid Laws that could never save a person, they only showed us that we were sinners separated from God, it pointed us to a Savior, the Law pointed us to Jesus! It was not that the Law was bad or the Law was wrong or the Law was unfair, it was that we could never keep it to the standard that God required of us, and that is perfection. Thus, Jesus extends to us His inexhaustible grace as we come to Him. Paul makes this point in Galatians 3:23-26 where he says, **“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. Sons and Heirs For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”**

And if you think the Law can truly save you, think about this verse in Galatians 2:21, **“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”** In other words, if we truly could be saved by the Law, why in the world did God have to become flesh, dwell among us, die on the cross of Calvary for our sins and rise from the dead on the third day? It would be foolish, it would have been empty, there would be no point to it if keeping the Law could save us!

And if you really want to live by the Law you will die by the Law, as James 2:10 tells us, “**For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.**” You see, you could keep 612 of the 613 Laws that are there and that would be an excellent percentage! It would be 99.8% and at that level, that would be awesome! But, as I have said, that is not the standard that God has set. It is not even 99.9999999%, it is 100% keeping the Law 100% of the time and anything less is missing the mark that God has set for us. Thus, we need God’s grace and we need to praise the Lord for God’s grace or we would all be in trouble!

Again, listen to what A. W. Tozer said about grace as we continue looking at this issue of God’s grace. He wrote,

We must keep in mind also that the grace of God is infinite and eternal. As it had no beginning, so it can have no end, and being an attribute of God, it is a boundless as infinitude.

Instead of straining to comprehend this as a theological truth, it would be better and simpler to compare God’s grace with our need. We can never know the enormity of our sin, neither is it necessary that we should. What we can know is that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

To “abound” in sin: that is the worst and the most we could or can do. The word *abound* defines the limit of our finite abilities; and although we feel our iniquities rise over us like a mountain, the mountain, nevertheless, has definable boundaries: it is so large, so high, it weighs only this certain amount and no more. But who shall define the limitless grace of God? Its “much more” plunges our thoughts into infinitude and confounds them there. All thanks be to God for grace abounding.

We who feel ourselves alienated from the fellowship of God can now raise our discouraged heads and look up. Through the virtues of Christ's atoning death the cause of our banishment has been removed. We may return as the Prodigal returned, and be welcome. As we approach the Garden, our home before the Fall, the flaming sword is withdrawn. The keepers of the tree of life stand aside when they see a son of grace approaching.

- A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, pp. 95-96

And let me share this with you because I believe it is important for us to understand and I have touched on this a little this morning, but listen to what the Scriptures are telling us here in Romans 1:7. We are told, **"To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."**

As you read this verse here in Romans you see that Paul is writing to the saints who are in Rome and some people, because of their theology that they have been taught, picture Paul writing to dead people. Obviously that makes no sense, you don't write to dead people! But, in their minds, what they have been taught is that a saint is someone who has lived a godly life and after they die, there are certain criteria that has to be met and then they will be made into saints! Folks, Paul is not writing to dead people, but to Christians who were living in Rome and they are saints. The Greek word is HAGIOS and it speaks of being "set apart" or "sacred." That is something that God has done in us and not what we have done.

In fact, the words “**to be**” are in italics because they do not appear in the original text. Thus, this verse should read, “**you are called saints**” you are not becoming saints! And as I have said, we are only saints because of what the Lord has done in our lives, the gift He has given to us and thus, if you are a believer, you are a saint! Think of it like this. There was a little boy that attended a church that had beautiful stained-glass windows depicting St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John. One day, when asked in Sunday School class, “What are saints?” he answered, “They’re people who the light shine through.” That is what we should be, letting the light of Christ shine through us!

Then Paul speaks of the Siamese Twins of the New Testament and what we are focusing on here this morning, at least one of them but they do go hand-in-hand and they are Grace and Peace! Paul uses the Greek greeting of CHARIS and the Jewish greeting, SHALOM, linking both Jew and Gentile together into the family of God. The word “**grace**” speaks of getting what we don’t deserve, and in this case it is eternal life when we should get death because of our sins. The word “**peace**” speaks of rest. The thing is, you will never find Paul speak of the peace and grace of God, never in that order, why? Because you can’t experience the peace of God until you first know the grace of God in your life, you have made peace with God through Jesus Christ!

And please notice that this grace and peace is “**from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**” Why is that important? Because Paul is showing us the equality of Jesus with the Father. If Jesus was just a man, or like some say a god, it would be absurd to list Him as an equal with the Father. But He does and thus, Jesus and the Father are one, they are equal!

Let me share this story with you to show you what God has done, in a sense, for us. We are told:

Lou Johnson, a 1965 World Series hero for the Los Angeles Dodgers, tried for 30 years to recover the championship ring he lost to drug dealers in 1971. Drug and alcohol abuse cost him everything from that magical season, including his uniform, glove, and the bat he used to hit the winning home run in the deciding game.

When Dodger president, Bob Graziano, learned that Johnson's World Series ring was about to be auctioned on the Internet, he immediately wrote a check for \$3,457 and bought the ring before any bids were posted. He did for Johnson what the former Dodger outfielder had been unable to do for himself.

Johnson, 66, who has been drug free for years and a Dodger community relations employee, wept when given the gold ring. He said, "It felt like a piece of me had been reborn."

Countless Christians can testify to a spiritual rebirth as a result of the price that Jesus paid on the cross in their place. He did for them what they could not do for themselves.

- Preaching Today

May we not forget that and we see this spoken of many times in this epistle or letter to the Romans by Paul, the grace and mercy of God extend to us through Jesus Christ. May we be people who let the light of God shine through us and touch the lives of others, may we light up their lives! Again, listen to what Paul said here, "**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**"

And here's the thing about grace, and I will sum this up for you and then close. First of all, according to Ephesians 2:8-9, we are ***SAVED BY GRACE!*** Listen to what Paul tells us here. He wrote, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

This is where it all begins; we are saved by God's grace, unmerited favor towards us, not by works but by faith in Jesus Christ. It is not about what we have done or don't do, it is about what He has already done and we receive it into our lives. This is a gift that God has given to us and thus, our boast is in what He has done – not what we have done. The only thing we have added to salvation is SIN! You see, you can't earn your way into heaven, all you can do is receive it by faith, asking Jesus Christ to be Lord and Savior of your life. You are ***SAVED BY GRACE!***

Let me illustrate this for you with this true story. I think it will drive home the point for you. We are told,

When a pastor named Michael was still in seminary, he took a required course in “clinical pastoral education.” Each seminarian was assigned to be a chaplain in a hospital or other institution, and one night each week was on call for emergencies. Late one night, the phone rang, and Michael was called to Alexian Brothers Medical Center in the Chicago suburbs. (I worked at Alexian Brothers Medical Center in their ICU/CCU and open-heart unit for 10 years).

A 16-year-old girl had been driving at night with friends, and she had backed into a light pole. The pole had broken off and then fallen forward, crashing down onto the car. A 12-year-old friend in the car had been severely injured; in fact, she was brain dead when she arrived at the hospital. Michael walked with the 12-year-old's family as they went through the wrenching process of realizing the truth and allowing the life support to be removed.

The following morning, Michael visited the hospital room of the 16-year-old driver. Physically, she was recovering well, but emotionally, she was distraught knowing that her actions had killed her friend. "I'm going to be like a daughter to her parents," she told Michael. "I'm going to go over to their house every day and baby-sit for them. I'll wash dishes for them every night. I'll go over there every week and mow their lawn."

Michael gradually helped her realize the truth that no matter what she did, she could never replace their daughter. She could never do enough to make up for her actions. All she could do was ask for forgiveness and hope that the parents would find it in their hearts to forgive her.

The parents who lost their daughter, amazingly, did forgive this girl. She was set free from trying to pay back a debt she could never repay no matter what she did.

In our relationship to God, we have sinned so greatly that nothing we do could ever make up for it. But there is a way out: God is willing to forgive us.

- Kevin A. Miller, editor and author, Wheaton, Illinois

So we have been ***SAVED BY GRACE***, period!

Secondly, as Christians, according to Romans 5:1-2, we ***STAND BY GRACE!***
 Again listen to what Paul had to say here. We are told, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”**

After we are saved by grace we then stand in grace. What does that mean? I believe it is the supporting structure of our faith. You can't stand if your legs are weak or broken or handicapped, or if you could it would be very unstable. And yet, as we stand in the grace of God we can stand strong, it brings joy to our lives and a certain hope that God will complete the work that He has begun in us and brings us to glory with Him!
 We ***STAND BY GRACE!***

It is as this following illustration shows. We are told,

A traveler describing an ancient volcano which he visited, tells of a cuplike hollow on the mountain summit full of lush vegetation, and that, where the fierce heat had once burned, lay a still, clear pool of water, looking up like an eye to the beautiful heavens above. How many a man, who before conversion was a fiery death-dealing volcano of sin, has by the grace of Jesus become gentle and beautiful, reflecting in his measure the heavenly peace and loveliness.

- Practical Bible Illustrations from Yesterday and Today

You see, we can explode in the flesh or we can stand in the grace of God and stand strong! And thus, we ***STAND BY GRACE!***

Then, according to I Corinthians 15:10, we *SERVE THROUGH GRACE!* Paul reminds us in this verse, **“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”** Or as The Amplified Bible puts it, **“But by the grace (the unmerited favor and blessing) of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not [found to be] for nothing (fruitless and without effect). In fact, I worked harder than all of them [the apostles], though it was not really I, but the grace (the unmerited favor and blessing) of God which was with me.”**

It is not about our ability but our availability before God. God used a donkey in the Old Testament and God says, “I can use Joe!” You see, we are just the instruments that God works through and we don’t deserve it but by God’s grace He will enable us to do what He has called us to do. In other words, we *SERVE THROUGH GRACE!*

Folk’s, may our service to the Lord be based in His grace that He extends to us and we extend to others as this story illustrates for us. We are told,

John Wesley and a preacher of his acquaintance were once invited to lunch with a gentleman after the service. Wesley’s preacher friend was a man of very blunt speech. This well-meaning man, while talking with their host’s beautiful daughter, who had been profoundly impressed by Wesley’s preaching, noticed that she wore a number of rings. During a pause in the meal he took hold of the young lady’s hand and raising it, called Wesley’s attention to the sparkling gems. “What do you think of this, sir,” he asked, “for a Methodist hand?” The girl turned crimson.

The question was extremely awkward for Wesley whose aversion to all display of jewelry was well known. With a quiet, benevolent smile he looked up and simply said, “The hand is very beautiful.” He had not denied the implied rebuke but had taken the sting out of it. The young lady appeared at evening worship without her jewels and became a firm and dedicated Christian.

- Illustrations of Bible Truths

May we not forget that! It is easy to pick out the faults of others, but it is better to extend grace to them and see what God can do through that grace. You see, we *SERVE THROUGH GRACE!*

Not only that, but according to II Corinthians 12:9, we are *SUSTAINED BY GRACE!* Again Paul tells us, **“And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”** And again we see The Amplified Bible put this verse like this, **“But He said to me, My grace (My favor and loving-kindness and mercy) is enough for you [sufficient against any danger and enables you to bear the trouble manfully]; for My strength and power are made perfect (fulfilled and completed) and show themselves most effective in [your] weakness. Therefore, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities, that the strength and power of Christ (the Messiah) may rest (yes, may pitch a tent over and dwell) upon me!”**

If we truly could do it on our own, then we would not need God, and we touched upon that in our last point. But Paul's point is clear, God's unmerited favor towards us, something we don't deserve, He gives to us and even though we may be weak, He will see us through, and He does! We are ***SUSTAINED BY GRACE!***

Once again listen how this can be illustrated for us. We are told,

Careless drivers often push their automobiles beyond their designated capabilities, and the poor vehicle chugs and chugs until the motor finally dies. Daring and foolish engineers will put too much pressure on their boilers, or try to force more power from an engine than it can provide. But our Master guarantees that tasks shall be balanced with the precise strength we possess. He knows our frame: He remembers that we are dust (Ps 103:104). He will not be less merciful to us than the merciful man is to his beast. He knows the exact pressure we can stand, for He has made us; He knows the utmost load we can lift, and will not suffer us to be tried, tested, above what we are able (1 Cor.10:1). He is a Faithful Creator, because He is an abiding Sustainer.

- Practical Bible Illustrations from Yesterday and Today

You see, there is no way we can do it on our own and thus, the Lord knows exactly what we can do, how much He can push us you might say because we are sustained by His Grace. We need to remember that fact, it is not about us, but about Him and what He is doing in our lives. Thus, ***GRACE SUSTAINS US!***

Then, according to Ephesians 4:29, ***GOD CAN MINISTER GRACE THROUGH OUR SPEECH!*** Listen once again to what Paul has to say in these verses. We are told, **“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”** And once again I like the way that The Amplified Bible puts this verse, **“Let no foul or polluting language, nor evil word nor unwholesome or worthless talk [ever] come out of your mouth, but only such [speech] as is good and beneficial to the spiritual progress of others, as is fitting to the need and the occasion, that it may be a blessing and give grace (God's favor) to those who hear it.”**

What does that mean? What comes flowing out of our mouths can build up, edify; or tear down, destroy. It can extend the grace of God to people or condemnation to them. I find it amazing how people speak of God to others, and at times we may all be guilty of this. But we are harsh, judgmental, condemning, and yet look at the grace, the unmerited favor He has extended to us. Now He wants each of us to give that to others. Be a channel from which the grace of God can flow through and minister to others! ***GOD CAN MINISTER GRACE THROUGH OUR SPEECH!***

And lastly, according to II Peter 3:18, ***GOD GIVES GRACE TO GROW!*** Peter puts it like this as he tells us, **“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”** And The Amplified Bible has this to say, **“But grow in grace (undeserved favor, spiritual strength) and recognition and knowledge and understanding of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (the Messiah). To Him [be] glory (honor, majesty, and splendor) both now and to the day of eternity. Amen (so be it)!”**

I like that and I need that! Now how in the world can we grow in God's grace? I don't think Peter is talking about by our doing good we can receive more of God's grace and by being bad we will receive less. God's grace, His unmerited favor is a constant towards us. We don't deserve it. Then what is Peter talking about? I think he is speaking of us being more aware of our sinful lives compared to a holy and righteous God and the more we see that, the more we realize how much God has extended to us His grace. It is freely given and all we must do is receive it by faith! Yes, God loves us just the way we are but He also loves us so much that He won't leave us like we are! But please remember that God's grace towards us doesn't change but we, as we grow can see how awesome it really is, how rich it is, how deep it is, and we will continue to see this as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ***GOD GIVES GRACE TO GROW!***

In regards to grace, the grace of God, listen to what Spurgeon had to say. He wrote, “I know not a word which can express the surprise and wonder our souls ought to feel at God’s goodness to us. Our hearts playing the harlot; our lives far from perfect; our faith almost blown out; our unbelief often prevailing; our pride lifting up its accursed head; our patience a poor sickly plant, almost nipped by one night’s frost; our courage little better than cowardice; our love lukewarmness; our ardour [warmth] ice - oh, my dear brethren, if we will but think any one of us what a mass of sin we are, if we will but reflect that we are after all, as one of the fathers writes, “walking dunghills,” we should indeed be surprised that the sun of divine grace should continue so perpetually to shine upon us, and that the abundance of heaven’s mercy should be revealed in us.

Thus, **THE GRACE OF GOD!**

Now as I close and I mean that, we have seen last week God’s mercy or that God does not give us what we deserve, death, eternal separation from Him. We have seen this morning His grace or that God gives to us what we don’t deserve, eternal life, blessings and-so-on. Folk’s, if that does not cause us to love Him even more, then nothing will. You see, the more you get to know Him the more you will love Him and that is my desire as we look at God the Father, that we would truly love Him more and more as we grow in Him!