
What's So Amazing About Grace? Episode #204

So the extended title for today's episode is, What's so Amazing About Grace; If you have to ask you just don't get it? We're continuing our experiment for the New Year, trying something different and that is the introduction of these Faith Friday Podcasts where we focus on our spiritual foundations type material.

If you're not into that stuff or don't like that part of the show than you probably won't be pleased with today's episode, because it's all going to be about faith matters. If you don't want to hear that than skip and listen on Monday or, maybe stick around and get an idea of what I really think and what many others think, who follow Jesus. You may be surprised to find out that you fit right in.

Let's jump right in.

Spiritual Foundations

Sometimes I am asked, because I emphasize grace so much when I talk about the gospel, when I talk about Jesus, when I talk about His grace, how we're totally forgiven for past, present and future sins and that we're not bound to follow a bunch of rules, codes of conduct and so forth and that I don't think we're called to be judgmental and carry picket signs. We shouldn't be known for what we're against we should be known for what we're for.

When I emphasize grace, as a Christian and follower of Christ, I get asked usually by Christians, Ray, why are you so hung up on a basic teaching, a basic doctrine like grace? What's so amazing about grace? Didn't you go to Sunday school and hear all this stuff while you were growing up as a Christian? In this episode I'll share a few things...

- Why a revelation of the true gospel of grace is so important to you.

- The secret to living without fear of death.
- Why you can be sure the Lord is with you no matter what you've done.
- How to know that you're not out of fellowship with God.
- The reason and nature for something I call schizophrenic Christianity and what we must do about it.
- The hidden factor that can rob you of your ability to receive God's goodness, blessings and His favor in your life, and
- What exactly is your part in the relationship with God?

We often hear that God has grace but you have to do your part. Really, what would that be? These are the things we'll talk about in today's episode.

Let's start with I John 2:12 where John, the Apostle writes, 'I write to you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.'

So when I talk about grace the thing I focus on the most is the forgiveness of our sins, that Jesus came to the earth, became a human being and died sacrificially so that He could pay the price of our sins and we could be blameless in the sight of God, we would not have to pay the penalty for sin, we could be forgiven of sin. Then we're totally forgiven, not just of our past sins, but also the present ones and the ones we haven't even committed yet.

This throws people off sometimes because they think that sounds like you're saying it's okay for me to keep sinning, like I could get away with it. Well, as scandalous as this may sound, you can. You will. We do. That doesn't mean that I'm endorsing sin and saying you can go out and do whatever you want to... kill people, rob, steal, get addicted to pornography, drugs, etc... do whatever you want it's okay its covered under grace. That's not what I'm saying. I am saying that we are completely forgiven past, present and future.

Think of it this way. If being forgiven for your future sins throws you off, just remember that all of your sins that you have committed up to now in your life and that you will commit in the rest of your life on earth, they've all been forgiven. They were all future sins when Jesus was sacrificed on your behalf.

This is a good question. I'm not trying to denigrate the asking of this question, we should be asking, why it's so important that we understand and have a revelation of God's complete forgiveness of us? How does that help

me walk in His favor? There are three main reasons I want to emphasize in today's show.

1. If you don't have the confidence of knowing that all of your sins have been forgiven, than you're very salvation is always going to be a tenuous thing. It's always going to be uncertain for you. You're always going to wonder if you're really saved.

I know someone who grew up in a traditional, mainline Christian church and this person struggles with this. We'll call this person John, and of course, that's not his name, but it will be easier to identify with. John is constantly worried that maybe he's lost his salvation, because he knows what sins are. He knows he's not supposed to commit them, yet he does occasionally sin. So he worries that he's not always forgiven, that he's not prayed up, as he would say.

I was brought up in the tradition that taught that you are forgiven but you're saved by grace through faith not by your own works, as it says in Scripture. Almost all Christians will agree with that Scripture. Then they'll follow up and say that doesn't mean that you don't have to be good or holy, you do you have to follow the rules. That's thinking under the law not under grace.

I was taught that if you commit a sin today then you have to hit your knees and beg God for forgiveness for that sin. You're not really asking Him for forgiveness unless you feel a lot of deep remorse about it. Think of the fear that created. I was always constantly praying every time I messed up, every time I sinned as a young man, a teenager especially. I was caught in this trap of thinking, what if I don't pray about this right now what if I get hit by a car, I'm going to go to hell. That's terrible!

This is reason number one that it's important we understand out total forgiveness under grace, because if we don't we will not have any confidence that our sins have been forgiven and we'll even doubt our own eternal security.

2. If you think that your sins were not completely taken care of by Jesus at the cross, than you are never going to feel comfortable enjoying His presents.

Because, you're never going to be sure that He's on your side, whether He's angry with you, whether He's waiting to punish you for your failures, whether

He's about to whack you on the head for doing something bad. God is not angry with you. The Scripture says, we as believers were not made for wrath, we were not appointed for wrath. We are no longer to be concerned with falling under God's wrath, because that was taken care of at the cross. If you don't feel that it was taken care of. If you feel that your sin can put you out of place with God and make Him angry with you, then you're going to feel unworthy all the time because you're constantly going to be looking at your conduct, your thought life and you'll never really have the boldness to be with God in His presence or ask Him for the things that are in your heart or to believe that He'll want to give you those things, believe that he'll want to answer your prayers, believe that He'll want you to be successful.

3. If you don't believe that Jesus has already forgiven all of your sins, including the ones that have yet to happen, that means that whenever you fail you're going to feel that you're out of fellowship with God.

I was taught this explicitly as a child. I was taught, when you sin, until you make things right with God you're going to be out of fellowship with Him. You won't be able to feel His presence. You won't be able to hear His voice. He's not going to listen to your prayers. You're cut off from God. That's a horrible thing to teach because it's not true it's anti-biblical, because it leads us to a place of, instead of relying on God on His grace and favor to overcome our sins and failures, we're going to be constantly thinking about our sin and that's what we'll be conscious of.

Trying to be remorseful. Trying to grovel and beg our way back into God's favor and it's as if we're telling Him the sacrifice He made on the cross was really meaningless, because every petty little sin I can commit overcomes that sacrifice. It negates it. It cuts me off from fellowship with you. How do we know when we've had enough remorse or have done enough groveling and had enough sorrow that we can now be back in fellowship with God? How do we understand that that has taken place? How long does it last?

This puts us in a terrible space of insecurity and fear. We're afraid of God's wrath, His punishment. If you fall into this cycle than you're going to be engaged in what I call schizophrenic Christianity. Schizophrenic because we don't know who we really are. We tell people, you can be saved by receiving the free gift of grace from Jesus. He's paid the price for your sins, you can't earn His forgiveness.

You can't merit His forgiveness, but he'll give it to you freely as a gift. We tell them that and then once we get them in, so to speak, then we start telling them they need to clean up their life. You need to stop smoking, stop drinking and you shouldn't be going out for poker night. You shouldn't use those words I've heard you use. Your attitude isn't right. You need to come to Sunday school and serve on this or that committee and we have an entire list of things they have to do, works they have to do to keep their salvation.

So schizophrenic, sometimes we feel like we're in fellowship with the Lord and everything is right with the world. We feel His grace, His favor and His presence. Other times we feel as though we've been cast into the outer darkness. We are schizophrenic because we tell people God is love and then we walk up and down in front of abortion clinics with picket signs or we walk up and down places where we know we'll encounter people who are gay and we say things that indicate God hates them.

Nothing could be further from the truth. God loves all of us. It doesn't say that God so loved the church that He gave His only begotten Son. It says, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whoever would believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Then it goes on to say in the rest of that verse... for He did not come into the world to condemn it He came into the world to save it.

The question then is, do we want to be schizophrenic Christians? Do we want to be in this constant cycling of feeling insecure where we're always slipping and sliding in and out of God's favor? Because really, all these feelings that we have like that, depend on our opinion of our behavior. Is our opinion perfect? Can we be sure we're even right? Here's the good news we can know biblically from Scripture. God does not judge us based on our behavior.

It's not our righteousness that's in question, it's no longer in question we have become the righteousness of God in Christ, as Scripture says. We are righteous. If the enemy of our souls, Satan, and yes I believe he's an actual personality, an actual being; if we listen to what he would tell us then we would not believe that we are perfectly righteous, we would believe that our righteousness and salvation are dependent upon us. That is not true.

All of this may sound like it's theological time, and first of all, we all have a theology whether we know it or not. The question is, are you conscious of it? Are you conscious of where you got it? Did you get it from the Bible or from

what someone else said? I will always tell you, never just accept something that I say about God or Jesus or salvation or eternity. Don't listen to some random guy on the Internet and take him at his word, do your homework.

If you believe the Bible is the word of God, firstly, if you don't believe it then none of this makes any sense to you at all so you might as well listen to another show, unless you're intrigued and feeling something tugging at your heart saying there's something here that's meant for me. If that's the case then step in closer and listen, because if we believe the Bible is the word of God and that it's true, then we have to accept what it says. So open it up and read it for yourself.

John wrote, 'I write to you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.'

Your sins are forgiven, it's done. The work of Jesus is finished. Before He died on the cross He proclaimed, it is finished! The price was paid. He was resurrected from the dead. He arose, spent time with His disciples, gave them their assignment and then He became glorified at the right hand of the Father in Heaven.

When we don't believe that we have been perfectly forgiven and when we believe that we have to earn the affection and favor of God and a relationship with Jesus based on our behavior, He is ready to bless us and give us favor, to make us a success in life and that means different things for different people. Don't get hung up on that. Unbelief in His finished work robs us of every bit of that. It robs us of being able to receive His goodness and blessings, His unmerited favor, which is what the word grace means. It translates at unmerited favor.

We don't have to do anything else to become more qualified. You don't have to be a "good" Christian. You don't have to learn and memorize Bible verses. You don't have to study a certain amount of the Bible. You don't have to go to a certain number of services every week. You don't have to raise your hands a certain height during worship time at church. None of that qualifies you. What qualifies you is the cross of Christ.

That's the main message of the New Covenant, it's grace. Grace is not a teaching or a doctrine, it is the gospel. It is the good news. The good news is that God has opened the door and said come in, be family, be accepted. I

put my stamp of approval on you and credited your account with righteousness.

So what must we do to overcome this feeling of falling in and out of God's favor, of not being certain of our total forgiveness? It's simple. Meditate on what God has to say about your sin in the New Covenant. The New Covenant is based entirely on grace. The New Covenant is also known as the New Testament. It's the New Covenant between God and man. It's based entirely on God's grace.

What's your part? There's nothing for you to do other than accept. Your part is just to have faith in Jesus. Your part is just to believe that you're totally forgiven for past, present and future sins. Your part is to believe that through Jesus you are 100% loved and worthy to receive all of God's blessings. That is your part. That is why you need to get a revelation of your forgiveness and when I say that I mean, you need to meditate on this, think about it, read about it, pray about it and put it on your lips. Read the Scriptures that tell us these things are true. Read the New Covenant, especially the gospel of John.

If you're not familiar with Scripture and need a good place to start, that is a great place to start, the gospel of John.

Here's something you can jot down and repeat to yourself frequently throughout each day.

Thank you Lord that I am completely forgiven and free to enjoy all of your blessings through the finished work of Jesus.

Say it under your breath, say it to yourself, meditate on it and that's how you get a revelation of God's grace and forgiveness and that's why it's important to you.

What do you think, do you like these faith Friday episodes of the Ray Edwards Show? Is this something you want to hear more of? Please let me know if you want them to continue. I don't want to provide you with something that's not serving you.

But, if you feel served by this and you want to keep hearing them than give me some feedback either in the comments on the website at

RayEdwards.com/204 or subscribe to the show in iTunes using the iTunes podcast app from Apple. That's how we get ratings credit in the charts.

Meanwhile, I pray that you continue to meditate on God's grace and His forgiveness for you, and be happy about it it's good news, that's why it's called the gospel.

Until next time, I pray that God continues to bless you and that He keeps on doing more for you than you can ask or even possibly imagine. Peace to your house.

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