

The Gospel of John

Grace, Mercy, and Endless Love

John 19:16-22

INTRODUCTION:

Last week we looked briefly at how the scriptures, both the books of the old testament and the books of the new testament, are in complete harmony with each other despite the fact that the 66 books were written by over 40 different authors over a period of 1500 years. The old testament pointed to a Messiah that was to come to be salvation for mankind. Messianic prophesies were written so that when the Messiah came, he could be identified. In the new testament we see how Jesus fulfilled those prophesies.

When we read and understand the scriptures it becomes very clear that, although they were written by men, they had to be inspired by God. When you look at the prophesies both in the old and new testament and see how Jesus fulfilled them perfectly, it becomes perfectly clear that He truly was the Son of God. The odds of one man being able to fulfill all of the prophesies concerning the Messiah was impossible. **Jesus was the prophesied Messiah!**

What was God's plan of salvation for the world?

It was to send His Son to the world to teach us concerning His kingdom and to die on the cross as a perfect sacrifice for all mankind. John describes it in chapter 3.

John 3:16-20 (NASB)

16 “For God so **loved (endless love)** the world, that He **gave (grace)** His only begotten Son, **that whoever believes in Him shall not perish (mercy), but have eternal life.** **17** For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be **saved** through Him. **18** He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. **19** This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. **20** For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

Throughout scripture we see that God is truly in charge of everything that happens in this world even when everything seems to be going awry. He uses the evil schemes of men throughout history to accomplish His own purposes. **He used the worst thing that men ever did to accomplish the greatest thing He ever did - the salvation of His own people.**

Jesus knew what He was facing. Yet He was willing to suffer the cross in order to fulfill His Father's will and bring salvation to mankind.

Matthew 16:21-23 (NASB)

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. ²² Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You." ²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

Although the disciples had been told of Christ's death, they were not willing to accept it. This was a horror beyond belief that their Messiah would be killed. They just did not understand the significance of the event. But it was to become clear to them when Jesus rose from the dead. This was an event that had been planned by God since before the beginning of time. Although it was prophesied in the old testament, it was concealed. Even Satan did not understand. He thought by crucifying Christ, He had won the war. Mankind was now his. But in reality, it was this very event that caused him to lose the battle.

John 16:20 (NASB)

²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.

When Jesus died on the cross the disciples wept and lamented because of the physical suffering of Christ. But when He rose from the dead they realized that He had to die physically in order to spiritually suffer for sin in our place under the wrath of God. The Jewish leaders and the people who cried out "crucify Him" thought they were doing a favor to God. In their mind they were eliminating a blasphemer Who claimed to be God. When, in reality, they were actually crucifying the Son of God. They had no clue that they were being instrumental in fulfilling scripture and accomplishing God's plan of salvation. Had they have known, they would never have put Jesus on the cross. That is one of the amazing things concerning the cross. God's plan was carried out by the very ones who disbelieved.

Stand and Read Scripture

John 19:16-22 (NASB)

¹⁶ So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified.

¹⁷ They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between. ¹⁹ Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS." ²⁰ Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin *and* in Greek. ²¹ So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" ²² Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

Prayer

You might wonder. How could God love us so much that He was willing to send His Son into the world to die on a cross and save us from our sin?

That is a good question isn't it. We have all sinned. We are lives are very ugly when compared to God. As I mentioned last week, God could have chosen to destroy all of us. He almost did back in Noah's day.

Genesis 6:3a, 5-8 (NASB)

³ Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever..."

⁵ Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

And guess what? He destroyed the whole world by flood. But because of His grace, mercy, and unending love He saved Noah and those in the ark. God also knew that there would be descendants of Noah who would remain faithful and serve Him. He also knew that if He sent His Son there would be some who would be willing to believe, "take up their cross, and follow Him". Thus through grace, mercy, and unending love, He sent His Son.

Through God's **unending love** for us, He gives us **grace** and **mercy**, but they are not the same. **Grace gives us blessings that we do not deserve. Mercy withholds punishments that we do deserve.** Let us look at each of these blessings.

BODY:

I. GRACE.

The gospel message is the good news of God's grace. So it is important to know what grace is and how it affects our lives.

To fully understand grace, we need to consider who we were without Christ and who we become with Christ. We were born in sin and we were guilty of breaking God's laws. We were enemies of God deserving of death. We were unrighteous and unable to rid ourselves of the sins that we had committed. Spiritually, we were unclean and dead. Our souls were in peril of everlasting punishment.

But then came grace.

God through grace offers us forgiveness of our sins. He reestablishes the pure relationship with Him that we lost through sin. He fills us with Christ's righteousness and removes our sin. He promises us His Holy Spirit to reside within us. He promises us eternity in heaven in the presence of His glory.

All of this is contingent upon us believing that Jesus was the Messiah, accepting His offer of salvation, and placing our faith in His sacrifice, and serving Him.

The Bible repeatedly calls grace a "gift".

Ephesians 4:7 (NASB)

⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

This is an important analogy because it teaches us some key things about grace:

First, anyone who has ever received a gift understands that a gift is much different than a loan. A loan requires that the monies are repaid or the borrowed items are return to the owner. The fact that grace is a gift means that **nothing is owed in return**.

Second, there is no cost to the person who receives a gift. A gift is **free to the recipient**, although it is not free to the giver, who bears the expense. The gift of salvation costs us sinners nothing. But the price of such an extravagant gift came at a **great cost** for our Lord Jesus, who died in our place.

Third, once a gift has been given, ownership of the gift has been transferred to us. It is now **ours to keep**. When a gift changes hands, the giver permanently relinquishes all rights to take the gift back. God's grace is ours forever.

Fourth, in the giving of a gift, the giver voluntarily forfeits something he owns, willingly losing what belongs to him so that the recipient will profit from it. The giver becomes poorer so the recipient can become richer. We see this **generous and voluntary exchange** from Christ to us in...

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NASB)

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

Finally, the Bible teaches that grace is completely **unmerited**. The gift and the act of giving have nothing at all to do with our right to receive it.

In fact, the Bible says quite clearly that we don't deserve God's salvation.

Romans 5:8-9 (NASB)

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that **while we were yet sinners**, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, **having now been justified by His blood**, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

II. MERCY.

Grace gives us blessings that we do not deserve. Mercy withholds punishments that we do deserve.

Jesus gave us a the parable of the prodigal son to show us how mercy works.

Luke 15:11-24 (NASB)

¹¹ And He said, "A man had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them. ¹³ And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. ¹⁴ Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving *anything* to him. ¹⁷ But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" ²⁰ So he

got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'²² But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet;²³ and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate;²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.

We, like the prodigal son have all sinned. We do not deserve to be accepted back into the family. But, in mercy, God chose to withhold the punishment we deserved. He sacrificed His perfect Son to cancel the debt we owe due to our sins.

III. ENDLESS LOVE.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son also gives us an illustration of our heavenly Father's unfailing love for His wayward children. The son spent his inheritance on prostitutes and wild living. Soon he has spent everything. He becomes so destitute that he longs to eat the slop assigned to the pigs. Finally, he comes to senses and returns to his father.

Joy, love, and tender compassion filled the father's heart at seeing his son return home. Immediately, the father throws a party in celebration. All is forgiven. This father is a brilliant picture of our joy-filled Father in heaven when one sinner repents.

Luke 15:7 (NASB)

⁷ I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

God patiently waits for lost sinners and He pours out His unfailing love and compassion on them when they return home.

"For God so loved the world"...

How strong is God's love for His own?

Romans 8:38-39 (NASB)

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The supreme example of God's unfailing love was to send Jesus Christ to die for us even before we committed the sin and knowing we would commit them. The entire Bible expresses the unfailing love of God. The Lord is faithful, even when we are not. Since the beginning of time, undeserving sinners, prone to wandering and wickedness, have been the objects of His grace, ever-renewing mercy, and unfailing love.

John 15:13 (NASB)

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

CONCLUSION:

God uses the evil schemes of men throughout redemptive history to accomplish His own purposes. **He used the worst thing that men ever did to accomplish the greatest**

thing He ever did - the salvation of His own people. God sent His only Son to pay the penalty for our sin so that we can be reconciled back to God.

Despite our sin, God provided grace and mercy for us through His Son. This was the ultimate love story written in blood on a wooden cross some two thousand years ago.

Fifty days after Passover, Peter was preaching on the Day of Pentecost and many of the Jews finally believed and realized that they had actually killed the Son of God. They were "pierced to the heart" and asked the question "What must we do to be saved".

Acts 2:36-42 (NASB)

³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus **whom you crucified.**”

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, **“Brethren, what shall we do?”** ³⁸ Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” ⁴¹ **So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.** ⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

The Lord is faithful, even when we are not. Since the beginning of time, undeserving sinners, prone to wandering and wickedness, have been the objects of His grace, ever-renewing mercy, and unfailing love.

Do you believe? Your eternity with God depends upon it.

He is Lord!