Things Grace Does

dwh

Many know that grace is connected with salvation. Even so, it seems that many today have a very narrow view of God's grace. People frequently think it is unconditional, think that once it is received it can never be forfeited, and think that grace has nothing to do with doctrine. But these common beliefs (and others) are wrong. Let us look at some things the Bible says that God's grace does or is connected with.

GRACE TEACHES. So says, Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness & worldly lusts..." The word "instructing" is Strongs # 3811 and means to train, educate, discipline (including punishment), chastise, instruct, and learn. It is common for people to view grace as something far removed from doctrine, much less from "discipline", punishment or chastisement. It may, therefore, be very hard for some to understand how God's grace can possibly be connected to such "negative" things.

Consider this - God's grace instructs us to deny ungodliness & worldly lusts. God's grace also instructs concerning consequences for sin, including brotherly attempts to correct and bring repentance. This is how grace "disciplines" or "chastises" us. Read Hebrews 12 about the "chastening of the Lord". See that those that God loves chastises, refines & corrects. He does this so that they will repent and be better, rather then persisting in sin and ending up in Hell. Now, isn't that gracious of God to deal so patiently with us? As it is written, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." (Ps. 103:10)

GRACE DIVIDES & OFFENDS. "Long time therefore they tarried there speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare his word, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers, to treat them shamefully and to stone them, they became aware of it, and fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about: and there they preached the gospel." (Acts 14:1-7) Here we read of the instructive grace of God, the word of His grace.

Since God's grace brings salvation, we would think that everyone would be willing to receive His instructions. Yet, as we see in Acts 14, some do not agree with what God's word says. In fact, sometimes people get so upset that they become divided and even try to harm those who speak "the word of His grace". Hard to imagine? Maybe, but it is true. In fact, this is seen time and again in the New Testament.

If we do not understand why grace offends some, then perhaps we do not yet have the correct understanding of what grace is according to the Bible...

GRACE PRODUCES FAITH. Acts 18:27 says that Apollos "helped them much which had believed through grace:" (Acts 18:27). Since grace is instructive, educational and is manifested as "the word of His grace", it will naturally lead to & produce faith. This is exactly what Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing" and "hearing by the word of God." God's gracious word is the source and ground of correct faith. We may "believe" many things, and believe them sincerely; but if it is not founded & grounded in God's word, then it is incorrect faith and contrary to God's grace.

GRACE DWELLS IN US. "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, filling up the day. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. In all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts, to the Lord. And always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God the Father, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason also, since the day of birth, even as long as He was strong, He did eat and drink in the house of his father, and gave thanks for all things. And when He had eaten enough, He arose and went to His disciples, and said to them, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes; yea, Father, for so it was well pleased in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto Me by My Father. And no man knoweth the Son, save the Father, and whosoever seeth the Son seeth the Father also." (Col. 4:16) Since grace is instructive, educational and is manifested as "the word of His grace", it will naturally lead to & produce faith. This is exactly what Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing" and "hearing by the word of God." God's gracious word is the source and ground of correct faith. We may "believe" many things, and believe them sincerely; but if it is not founded & grounded in God's word, then it is incorrect faith and contrary to God's grace.

GRACE RESISTS FALSE DOCTRINE. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." (Heb. 13:9) Many today think that "doctrine" doesn't matter that much. Many think that we may hold different doctrinal beliefs, but that we should all get along anyway. Yet, this passages say that "different and foreign doctrines" are not what we are to be carried about by. Instead, God's instructive grace will establish us in the Truth and help us to resist being led astray by false doctrine. For example, God's gracious word instructs us about meats, saying that all meats are clean (Rom. 14:14). Thus, when someone says that certain meats are spiritually unclean we are able to resist that different and foreign doctrine because we know the Truth. Another example is when people "justify" various forms of adultery. Knowing the God's instructive grace equips us with Truth so that we may properly resist being led into sin & reject false doctrine.
GRACE HAS CONDITIONS. "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Rom. 4:16). Salvation is by grace through faith. And the faith described here that saves is the kind that Abraham had. What kind of faith did Abraham have? One that had "steps" to it (Rom. 4:12).

Note another passage: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." (Eph 6:24)

To whom is grace applied here? Yes, grace is available to all mankind (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2); but who are those who actually become partakes of it and are benefited by it? Those who sincerely love the Lord. What did Jesus say shows true love for Him? "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14:15) and "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (John 15:10). Clearly, these statements express conditions.

GRACE CAN BE ABUSED. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4) This one doesn't need much explanation. Some abuse God's grace by saying it allows them to commit sin and still be right with God. Such is not God's grace, but a perverted and false grace.

GRACE CAN BE LOST. Paul said we have access into God's grace, but a perverted and false grace. GRACE HAS CONDITIONS. "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Rom. 4:16). Salvation is by grace through faith. And the faith described here that saves is the kind that Abraham had. What kind of faith did Abraham have? One that had "steps" to it (Rom. 4:12).

Note another passage: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." (Eph 6:24)

To whom is grace applied here? Yes, grace is available to all mankind (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2); but who are those who actually become partakes of it and are benefited by it? Those who sincerely love the Lord. What did Jesus say shows true love for Him? "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14:15) and "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (John 15:10). Clearly, these statements express conditions.

GRACE CAN BE LOST. Paul said we have access into grace by faith (Rom. 5:2). He also said that it is something to "stand" in (5:2) and be "stedfast" in (5:3). What if we do not stand in it or remain stedfast in it? What if, for example, we "stand" in (5:2) and be "stedfast" in (5:3). What if we do not grace by faith (Rom. 5:2). He also said that it is something to GRACE CAN BE LOST. Paul said we have access into God's grace, but a perverted and false grace.

GRACE CAN BE ABUSED. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4) This one doesn't need much explanation. Some abuse God's grace by saying it allows them to commit sin and still be right with God. Such is not God's grace, but a perverted and false grace.

GRACE CAN BE LOST. Paul said we have access into grace by faith (Rom. 5:2). He also said that it is something to "stand" in (5:2) and be "stedfast" in (5:3). What if we do not stand in it or remain stedfast in it? What if, for example, we "stand" in (5:2) and be "stedfast" in (5:3). What if we do not grace by faith (Rom. 5:2). He also said that it is something to GRACE CAN BE LOST. Paul said we have access into God's grace, but a perverted and false grace.

GRACE CAN BE ABUSED. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4) This one doesn't need much explanation. Some abuse God's grace by saying it allows them to commit sin and still be right with God. Such is not God's grace, but a perverted and false grace.

GRACE CAN BE LOST. Paul said we have access into grace by faith (Rom. 5:2). He also said that it is something to "stand" in (5:2) and be "stedfast" in (5:3). What if we do not stand in it or remain stedfast in it? What if, for example, we "stand" in (5:2) and be "stedfast" in (5:3). What if we do not grace by faith (Rom. 5:2). He also said that it is something to