**First Step – Teacher’s Guide**

May the people raise you, O God. Then the earth will yield its harvests.

What is Grace?

**The Lord is with you!**

God extends to us His grace by which we receive by faith through Jesus Christ. God’s grace is a gift to us, an unmerited favor because we are His children, and He loves us.

**Introduction:**

Welcome back everyone!

Today’s topic is on what is grace and what does it do?

**MAIN RULES:**

**1. Respect each other’s privacy**

**(Please do not ask for contact number, no business transactions)**

**2. Honor the vision of this church**

**(Please do not promote or invite to other church events and programs)**

**3. Humility and Order**

**(Be humble despite disagreements. Other questions can be discussed after the class)**

We’ve learned who is Jesus, what is the Bible, How to pray and now: how does it all fit together practically?

**Attempt:**

There are many ways to interpret the word grace.

According to Merriam-Webster, it is the “unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration or sanctification.”

Grace in the Hebrew language is known as charis and it is defined as the “unmerited favor of God.”

This means we are not able to earn it or to gain it but rather it is a gift to us that we do not deserve.

SUGGESTED for INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

1. Have you heard of the term “give grace”?
2. What do you think the word means?
3. Why does this concept need to be repeated at church all the time?

**Failure:**

Here are some misunderstandings about grace:

1. Grace is a license to sin
2. Grace is only for the godly
3. Grace can ignore obedience to God
4. Grace is a replacement to working hard
5. Grace will make things easy all the time

However, the truth is, knowing that we have the grace of God unlocks so much more and allows us to see how God views us.

So, what is it about grace that we need to understand?

Firstly,

* + - * 1. You have God’s grace!

1. It is through faith

Faith is the firm persuasion, conviction, trust and belief in the person and work of Christ.

It is personal, not just mental agreement

Luther - indulgence

2. It is a gift from God

Eph 2:8-9

8 For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through **faith** –and this not from yourselves, it is the **gift** of God– 9not by works, so that no one can boast. NIV

With gifts, it is not returnable or revokable but a gift once and for all for us.

Just like it would be insulting to ask the price of the birthday cake when someone lovingly bought it for you.

Grace  charis:

God’s unearned, unmerited and unlimited favor, acceptance, kindness and blessings.

3. Grace is the free favors of God that profusely abound

Questions – so tough – no one can answer

Clear – we didn’t study enough

Choice – complete – sign name – get an A

At the end of his evangelism course he would distribute the exam with the caution to read it all the way through before beginning to answer it. This caution was written on the exam as well. As we read the test, it became unquestionably clear to each of us that we had not studied nearly enough.

The further we read, the worse it became. About halfway through, audible groans could be heard through out the lecture hall. On the last page, however, was a note that read, "You have a choice. You can either complete the exam as given or sign your name at the bottom and in so doing receive an A for this assignment."

Wow? We sat there stunned. "Was he serious? Just sign it and get an A?" Slowly, the point dawned on us, and one by one we turned in our tests and silently filed out of the room.

When I talked with the professor about it afterward, he shared some of the reactions he had received through the years. Some students began to take the exam without reading it all the way through, and they would sweat it out for the entire two hours of class time before reaching the last page.

Others read the first two pages, became angry, turned the test in blank, and stormed out of the room without signing it. They never realized what was available, and as a result, they lost out totally.

One fellow, however, read the entire test, including the note at the end, but decided to take the exam anyway. He did not want any gifts; he wanted to earn his grade. And he did. He made a C+, but he could easily have had an A.

This story illustrates many people’s reaction to God’s solution to sin. Some people look at God’s standard--moral and ethical perfection--and throw their hands up in surrender. Why even try? they tell themselves. I could never live up to all that stuff

Others are like the student who read the test through and was aware of the professor’s offer but took the test anyway. Unwilling to simply receive God’s gift of forgiveness, they set about to rack up enough points with God to earn it.

But God’s grace truly is like the professor’s offer. It may seem unbelievable, but if we accept it, then, like the stunned students who accepted the professor’s offer, we, too, will discover that, Yes, God’s grace truly is free. All we have to do is accept it.

Mal 3:17

They shall be mine, says the Lord Almighty, in that day, I prepare my own treasured possession and I will have grace on them as a man have mercy on his son that serves him. Then you will see the difference, between the righteous and the wicked, between those that serve him and those who don’t.

Last days – God will set a **distinction**

– those that serve, sow

Malachi

Supernatural healing & health

Supernatural restoration

Supernatural harvest

Isa 61:2 Cf. Lk 4:19

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, … (He closed the book)

And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn. N*KJV*

Charles Nieman quoted Thayer

Acceptable δεκτός dektos:

The most blessed time when salvation and the free favors of God profusely abound. Thayer’s Greek Lexicon

God’s Riches at Christ’s Expense

*(G.R.A.C.E)*

Discussion:

Q: How have we been given grace?

Q: Name some things you can do only with the strength of God.

Q: In what area do you feel helpless sometimes?

Pope: This is a great day I had to speak to our people. But first, I wanted to speak to you. In this imperfect world, you may never receive the honour which is due to you. But I wanted you to know that in my heart, I honour you. I talked to you once of the treasures of the Church. Perhaps, I deceived myself. The real treasures of the Church, what makes it imperishable, is that every once in a while, someone comes to it, my son, like you. May the Lord watch over you.

4. You receive what Christ deserves

End of course – distribute exam

Rom 3:24

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, NKJV

Justice: Receiving the punishment for your sin

Mercy: Not punished for our sins.

Grace: Receiving God’s unmerited favor and releases tremendous blessings despite our imperfection.

**Illustration**:

Imagine that there is a teenager who drove his father’s car into your gate and damaged it.

The teenager is underage and is reckless and he is not very responsible.

What would you have done?

We can see the distinction between law, mercy and grace in how your response is:

Credited with His Righteousness!

**Law**: You have to pay for it. But you can’t.

**Mercy**: You don’t have to pay for your punishments.

**Grace**: Not only you don’t have to pay. I will help you with all that I have.

Grace will always be compassionate and comes from a place of love, even when it comes to correction. However, there is no sugar-coating of words.

Law requires righteousness from sinful man, but grace supplies His righteousness to those who have faith in Christ.

**Application**:

(Teachers, please use your own illustration if you have)

One time, my niece was playing with my dog when the dog became too playful and began biting her. She cried out for help. Immediately both her parents came to rescue.

Do you think they would stop to do an assessment as to whether she is “worthy” for help?

Asking questions like:

-have you done your homework?

-did you clean your room?

-were you well-behaved today?

No, they would save her!

SUGGESTED for INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

1. Has anyone showed you grace before? Would you mind sharing on it?

2. What’s the difference between law-conscious and grace-conscious?

3. Why do we pay so much attention to the grace of God?

And so secondly, having known what is grace, we now ask:

* + - * 1. What does grace do?

1 Cor 15:10

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them - yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. AMP

Grace transforms from inside out

Rom 7:4

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law (Torah) through the body of Christ, that you may be married (intimate relationship) to another -- to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. NKJV

**Explanation:**

Why is GRACE so powerful - Grace is a person.

He didn’t come to give more laws and principles on correct living

He gave us Himself and transforms us from the inside out.

Grace doesn’t encourage more sin to be committed. In fact, it deters it.

Rom 6:14

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. NKJV

Mosaic Law demands

Grace supplies

The mosaic law has many requirements, and we are conscious of how many things we need to do right, we get distracted with it.

However, with grace, it gives room to God to supply and give the solution before the problem arises.

When we are law-conscious, we would become frustrated remembering all the things that we need to do right, becoming calculative and comparing with others.

We inadvertently also begin to focus more on our effort to earn our salvation or to get our prayers answered instead of relying on God’s grace to provide.

The Mosaic Law conscious leads us to think as such:

Praying, reading or fasting more would make God grant every single prayer request

If things go wrong, God is punishing me for a sin

I am not blessed because I did not do enough for God

If I mess up, my salvation will be at stake.

**Illustration**:

(Teachers, please use your own illustration if you have)

Take for example a young person who has messed up and got into great debts and into a lot of trouble. One they found themselves sin prison with no way out.

However, their parents and friends work hard to get a lawyer to fight for that young person. When he is free, he will no longer approach life the same again.

He would be thankful because a great sacrifice has been given for him.

**Application:**

(Teachers, please use your own illustration if you have)

When we are grace-conscious, we become more attuned to the grace, blessing and compassion of God.

We in turn become more loving with our actions and words because we have experienced the love of God in our lives.

Discussion:

Q: How can we receive the grace of God?

Q: In what way can relying on God’s grace give us rest?

Q: What if there are people that do not receive the grace of God?

SUGGESTED for INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

1. Have you met someone who is harsh and someone who is graceful?

2. Do some people take longer than others to understand the grace of God?

* 1. Benediction

Num 6:24-26

The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord cause his face to smile on you and be gracious to you;

the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.’

Chose

* 1. Article I

The 5 Solas of the Grace Reformation

Sola Scriptura: Scripture Alone

Sola Gratia: Grace Alone

Sola Fide: Faith Alone

Sola Christus: Christ Alone

Soli Deo Gloria: God’s Glory Alone

At the time of the Reformation, the medieval church also believed Scripture had authority, that people needed to have faith in Christ, and that grace was necessary, but they missed the “only” (sola) part.

**1. Sola Scriptura** (scriptures alone), emphasizes the Bible alone as the source of authority for Christians. Only the Bible was inspired by God (2 Peter 1:20-21) and was God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Anything taught by the Pope or tradition that contradicted the Bible is not acceptable.

Sola scriptura also fueled the **translations** of the Bible into the ordinary language of the people so that the good news of Jesus Christ could be read by the ordinary people.

**2. Sola Fide** (faith alone), emphasizes salvation as a free gift, not our good works. The Medieval Church of the time emphasized the use of indulgences (donating money) to buy status with God even after the person has died, while in ‘purgatory’, a halfway house between earth and heaven.

It was the sale of these indulgences that was the catalyst for Luther’s writing of the 95 theses, voicing out against such practices.

Sola fide states that salvation is a free gift to all who accept it by faith. Salvation is not based on human effort or good deeds.

**3. Sola Gratia** (grace alone), emphasizes grace as the cause of our salvation. Salvation comes from what God has done rather than what we do. Eph 2:8-9

**4. Sola Christus**, (Christ alone) emphasizes the sole role of Jesus in salvation, not human priest as intercessors.

Reformers mphasized Jesus’ role as our ‘high priest’ who intercedes on our behalf before the Father. “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Jesus is the One who offers access to God, not a human spiritual leader.

**5. Soli Deo Gloria**, (solely for God’s glory) emphasizes the glory of God as the goal of life. It is not focused on the Mosaic laws.

The very purpose in our living, our goal, is to glorify the Lord. “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Cor 10:31