

Crossroads Baptist Church
January 8, 2006 10:00
Romans 1: 5-7
Romans #3

“The Gift of Grace”

I. The Mediator of our Gift is Jesus Christ.

The grace of God comes to us through one medium ... Jesus Christ.

He says in verse 5, "*through whom* we have received grace." In other words, God's grace has come to Paul through the Lord Jesus Christ who was born as a son of David and was raised as Son of God in power.

There is no grace toward sinners apart from the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Verse 5 says plainly that God gives grace "through him," referring to "Jesus Christ our Lord" at the end of verse 4.

“There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ”
I Timothy 2:5

“There is salvation in no other else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

So grace is a reality that comes from God; and comes through Jesus and his work for us. It is not something we have a right to. Jesus obtained it for us. We get it freely because of the obedience and death of another.

II. The Gift of our Mediator is Grace.

Grace is a very precious reality. The word is used 155 times in the New Testament – over 100 of them in the writings of Paul, and almost a fourth of those in Romans (24 times). You cannot comprehend this book if you don't comprehend grace. We will see it again and again. It is at the heart of the book and the heart of the gospel and the heart of God.

But when we talk about grace today, the average person would say grace is the beautiful movement of an ice skater. Then they might say grace is a short prayer before meals. And finally, they might say grace is undeserved kindness.

Others have said:

Mercy is we didn't get what we deserve;

Grace is we get what we don't deserve.

What we see here in verse 5 is that the grace of God is that which cleanses us from sin and calls us into service. He called us to salvation and apostleship. It is inconceivable to Paul for one to have said he had received grace at salvation and not be involved in ministry.

III. The Gift is Received by faith

Since grace then is a gift and its not God's response to our deserving or meriting, then we can't do anything to receive it. The gift comes by faith.

Romans 4:4 Paul says, "Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited according to grace, but according to debt" (my translation). In other words, grace is not what you get when you work for somebody: that's what he *owes* you. Grace is never owed. It is always a free bonus from the overflow of goodness.

Therefore grace is always received through faith, not earned by works. "If it [election] is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace." Grace would not be grace if you earned it by your works. We receive it through faith. By simply welcoming it as a gift and relying on it.

IV. The Resulting Affect of Receiving such a Gift

A. We are obedient to the calling

Read verse 5 and at the end, put your calling in the place of the “apostleship.” Apostleship was Paul's, not mine and not yours. You might put, "Through Christ I have received grace and the teaching role." Or: grace and singing. Or: grace and studentship. Or: grace and singleness. Or: grace and widowhood. Or: grace and motherhood. And what you should mean is: God has freely given me forgiveness and the power to do a calling, and fulfill a role which I accept by faith.

There is not a role in life that can be lived the way God wants it lived apart from enabling grace. Being a godly mother or being an apostle is impossible without the power of grace. So when Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 15:10, that all his apostolic labor is by grace, you insert your own calling: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." The decisive, enabling power for all ministry and all service is God's grace.

Why does all true obedience come from faith? I hope you can see the answer if you compare what I have said so far about grace and faith. God gives grace as the power and the enabling for service, which means that grace is the power and enabling of obedience. So all true obedience is done in the power of grace, not our own power.

But how do we receive and rely on grace? The answer is "by faith." So you can see why all true obedience is the fruit of faith. It's the fruit of faith because God's grace is given to enable obedience, and faith is the way we rely on that grace, and so obedience is the fruit of that faith.

It is not faith plus obedience equals salvation. No, it is an obedient faith equals salvation. True faith is verified in obedience. That's why the Bible constantly says that Jesus is Lord, that Jesus is Lord, that Jesus is Lord because that demands submissive obedience. There's no faith without obedience. There has to be obedience for faith to be genuine.

B. We give God all the glory

The ultimate goal of all God's dealings is that his name (or the name of Christ, who is his image) would be known and admired and cherished and praised above all other realities.

Verse 5 says that the aim of Paul's apostleship is "for the sake of the name" – that the name of Jesus (which stands for his character) might be known and loved and treasured and exalted and glorified.

Now this is why God makes all our salvation and all our ministry and all our obedience dependent on his grace and makes all our salvation and ministry and obedience the fruit of faith in grace – because the giver gets the glory. If our ministry and all our obedience is by grace through faith, then God gets the glory and we get the help. If Paul relied on himself to serve as an apostle, and if the effect of his ministry was to bring about the obedience of works, not the obedience of faith among the gentiles, then the name of Christ would not be praised, Paul would be.

Paul serves Christ by the grace that Christ served Paul. Its all about Him!!