

Grace in Abundance

Chapter 1 of Romans deals with the heathen; chapter 2, the religious man; chapter 3, all of mankind. All unregenerate men are under the dominion of the sin nature. When the Bible talks about sin in the singular, it is not referring to acts of sin. In most cases it refers to the nature of sin. You do not just commit sins. There is a root cause for sin. The acts and deeds are merely symptoms of the sin nature. All men are under the dominion of the sin nature until they are born again. Then they are under the dominion of Christ. When you are born again, you do not lose the sin nature, but you can be temporarily under its power. At any one moment you are either under the power of the Spirit or under the power of the flesh; one or the other. You can not be in-between. Now just because you are under the power of the flesh does not mean that you are not still under the dominion of Christ. You are. You are just no longer controlled by Him. Remember when you got born again? Remember how you floated, bubbled, and fizzed for a few days? You thought you had it made! "Glory to God! My problems are over!" After two or three days, you came down, and your feet hit the ground. You still had some of the same problems. You were still tempted in the same areas. No one ever said that you would not have any more troubles. In fact, the Bible says, ***"Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."*** (Psalm 34:19.)

Union with Christ is similar to marriage in the natural. When you first get married you are one flesh. But real unity and real power in a marriage does not start until you become of one mind. That is when the real molding and shaping comes into the marriage—the real power in the Christian life is when you take on the mind of Christ. You become one mind with Jesus, and begin to think like Him. How does that happen? By learning about Him. He loves you! And so He is always giving out. What is that called? Grace! Grace started when you got born again. But that is only the beginning. There is more grace where that came from. James chapter 4 and verse 6 says, ***"But he giveth more grace."*** More grace than what? More grace than when you got born again. Grace continues every day of your Christian life. How do you get hold of God's grace? Through faith. That is what chapter 4 of Romans, verse 16 means

when it says, "**..it is of faith, that it might be by grace.**" Grace and faith go hand in hand. It is knowledge that produces faith. So it all comes back to knowledge. The more knowledge of the Word I get, the more faith I receive. The more faith I receive, the more grace I can appropriate.

We need to distinguish between grace and sovereignty. God is sovereign, but He is also a God of grace. Do not confuse the two. What God gives in grace, you must appropriate by faith. What God does in sovereignty requires nothing of you; He is just going to do it. There are many things in the Word that God does sovereignly, such as the ministry gifts. You can not believe your way in or out of a ministry gift. It is God's sovereignty. "**God has set some In the church...**" You do not set yourself in the Church. God places you in the body where it pleases Him. There are many things in the Word of God, though, that you can believe for. What He provides in grace is available to everyone. Sovereignty is as He chooses; as He wills. There are many things in the Word that are totally up to God, such as the gifts of the Spirit. Can we desire the gifts? Amen! But you can not pick the ones you want. The Holy Spirit decides which spiritual gifts you will operate in. The Holy Spirit sovereignly gives to each one of us as He wills.

The rapture is according to God's sovereignty, also. He is just going to do it. Our faith will not push it off five years from now or bring it any closer. You can not believe the Millennium away. It will happen! It is just going to happen! God has already stated it in the Word. "Well, I believe that one of these days the devil is going to be saved." It will not work! You can only believe for what the Word says you can believe for. So what am I talking about when it comes to grace? Salvation is of grace, not sovereignty. That is where the hyper-Calvinists have gone wrong. They have taken salvation out of the realm of grace. They claim that God saves whom He desires to save and tough luck for everyone else. If you were predestined for hell, that is just too bad. But you see, salvation is not part of God's sovereignty. It is of His grace. If it is of grace, then we have to appropriate it by faith. That way the promise is secure to all the seed.

Healing is also according to God's grace, not His sovereignty. He has not predestined you for heating or not for healing. He offered it through the cross. The cross is the extension of God's grace. It was sovereign that Jesus went to the cross, but all the

provisions from that are of grace. It is provided for everyone. When they brought all the sick to Jesus, He healed them all. Meaning what? Healing is for everyone. The same thing is true with prosperity. He wants us to abound in His grace. God did the most for you in salvation. He did the most He could possibly do. What does He do after salvation? Much more! He is the only one that can do more than the most.

Let us begin in Romans with the last verse of chapter 4, ***"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."*** When Jesus arose from the dead, He saw all men justified. Justification is God's grace to you. Did you know God sees the whole world justified? 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 19 says, ***"...not imputing their trespasses unto them..."*** God's grace came and put salvation right in front of you. If you are not born again, you can not point a finger at God. All you have to do is reach out and receive it. That is the way it is with every promise and provision in the Word of God.

Romans chapter 5, verses 1 -2 say, ***"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand..."*** Once you are born again, you enter into a whole new realm of grace. Salvation is past truth; you are in present truth. You are growing with the Lord. You got in by grace and faith. Now you stand by grace and faith.

Verse 2 goes on to say, ***"...and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*** There are a lot of people today, that just do not understand what hope is. Many teachers say that hope is off in the future, as opposed to faith which is now. So you are not supposed to say, "I hope so." It has actually come to the point where if you even mention the word hope, someone is ready to put their hand over your mouth. Actually there is almost as much in the Word of God on hope as there is on faith. Hope is a tremendous word. ***"...rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*** This hope of the glory of God is our distant hope; the hope of the Church for the rapture. Jesus is coming back for us. This is one of the basic doctrines of the Word of God. The Bible says that we should know it, and teach about it. We rejoice in that hope of the glory of God. It has been the long-

term hope of the Church for centuries. But if He does not come back tomorrow, my short-term hopes are still going to come true. If He does not come back this year, that is fine. He might come back next year; I am still going to live in health until it happens; I am still going to live in prosperity until He comes.

Verse 3, ***"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also..."*** This verse does not say that you glory for tribulations. You glory in tribulations, but God gives you provision in them so you can come out on the other side. It is not trials and afflictions that make you strong. If it were the trials and afflictions that made you strong, every Christian would be strong because we all face them. It is the faith you use in them that makes you strong. The devil will try to overload you with temptations and trials, but you have the sword of the Spirit. I would not be as strong as I am today, if I could not look back on some battles that I came through. I came out of each battle stronger than when I went in.

All of us are facing tests. They may be small right now. Maybe you just came through one. Believe me, there are more coming. Your whole life is a series of tribulations and victories. Do not focus on the tribulations; focus on the victories. When a trial comes along, I know that God is going to bring me through. He has brought me through every one before. Why should He stop now? The weapons of our warfare are more than adequate to handle all tribulation that comes along.

Verse 3 goes on to say, ***"Knowing that tribulation worketh patience."*** The word for worketh here actually means "work out." It says in Philippians chapter 2, verse 12, ***"...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."*** The same Greek word is used here. Your salvation is on the inside of you, but you need it to be worked out to the outside where people can see it. Tribulation comes along to get character that is on the inside of you to manifest itself on the outside. You need patience, for example, to be manifested in your daily life. What is it that brings it out so that you can put it to use in the outside world? Tribulation. Tribulation is not good, but God can work it for your good. As you walk in the knowledge of God's Word, the tribulation and pressure you are facing now will be a stepping stone and not a stumbling block.

Verse 4, **"...And patience, experience; and experience, hope..."** When patience finally has it's perfect work in you, the manifestation comes. The Bible calls it experience. That is your testimony of victory. First you set the goal out before you: "I need finances." You find out what the Word of God says about getting the finances you need. You put your faith out for it. Persecution and trials come along. But it only causes patience to come out. Pretty soon, the finances come in. You are so excited that you set another goal. Soon, you are going from victory to victory.

Verse 5 says, **"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad In our hearts; by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."** The words "shed abroad" are a poor translation. They actually mean, "to be poured out." This is not love that is poured out of you, it is love that is being poured out of the Holy Spirit into you. Trials and persecution come and produce patience. All this time God keeps pouring out more love. When the temptations and trials become greater, God's love also becomes greater.

Verse 6, **"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."** When did God first display His love toward you? When did He first display His grace toward you? When you were without strength.

Verse 7 continues Paul's thought, **"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die."** That is one thing that we do not often think about. When it comes to Jesus, we all would lay down our lives, but...scarcely. We would have to think about that for a minute.

Verse 8, **"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."** Now, when it came to Jesus, you would lay down your life with little hesitancy. What if you just pulled someone off the street who you knew was unsaved and had alcohol on his breath. Would you die for him? No way! But, God did that for you when you were yet a sinner.

Verse 9 says, **"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we**

shall be saved from wrath through Him." God's wrath was displayed against you when you were a sinner. God's wrath is displayed toward the world out there because they are rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ. Once you become His child, you no longer face His wrath. The Bible says you have not been appointed unto wrath. God does discipline and chasten you in His love, mercy and tender kindness but, He does not pour His wrath out on His children.

Verses 10 and 11 go on to say, ***"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."*** The word atonement does not appear in the New Testament. This is a mistranslation. The word here is reconciliation. It means, "the bringing of peace". At one time God's wrath was displayed toward you. But when Jesus went to the cross, He bore the wrath of God. Now you have been born again. You have His peace; the peace which passes all understanding. There is no way you can comprehend His peace. It is so far reaching. God came and removed the barrier between God and man. If you ask most people, they will tell you that the barrier between God and man is sin. The Bible says, ***"He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us."*** The barrier is not sin. Jesus became sin. The barrier between you and eternal life is Jesus. What are you going to do about Him? Sin is not the issue in salvation. Jesus is the issue in salvation. Sin was put away once and for all on the cross. The only thing that keeps a man from eternal life is, "What about Jesus?" The whole issue is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. The barrier has been removed! You have been redeemed. You have been reconciled. You have been brought back to God. You have been made righteous. You were once under the dominion of the sin nature, but now you are under the dominion of Christ! Glory to God!

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