

The Basics of Grace

Part 1: The Gospel

This course is meant to be an overview of some of the fundamentals of the Christian faith, with an emphasis of understanding them in the context of the time period we are living in today, the dispensation of grace. We want to explore what is significant and unique about this time period and what it means to us as Christians to live today in an age that is characterized by Grace. For some this material may be new, for some a review; to all it should be fascinating as we discover the manifold wisdom of God. (Layers of understanding. Analogy of science—macroscopic and microscopic.)

- I. What is the Gospel?
 - a. Gospel means “good news.” God has many gospels, but there is a specific, unique one for us today
 - i. Old Testament Law (Exodus 19:5-6)
 - ii. Gospel in “the Gospels” (Matthew 19:16-21 additions rf: Luke 3:3, 18:18-22, John 3:36)
 - iii. Gospel at Pentecost (Acts 2:37-38)
 - iv. Paul’s Gospel--unique (we’ll cover in more detail in other lessons)
 - 1. Unique in nature (Acts 16:31, Romans 3:20-26)
 - 2. Unique since was a secret. (Ephesians 3:4-6, Colossians 1:25-27, contrast with Luke 1:70)
 - b. Salvation-the foundation. One of the unifying themes of the Bible is man’s depraved state and his need for God. This understanding is unique to biblical Christianity.
 - c. Many-faceted. “the manifold wisdom of God.” (Eph 3:10). Both simple enough to be understood by a child and so complex that a lifetime of study will not exhaust its understanding.
- II. Salvation
 - a. The Foundation of the Gospel
 - b. Basic Elements of Salvation
 - i. Our Condition. We are sinners and sinful, incapable of saving ourselves. The sin nature we inherited from Adam separates us from God and causes us to sin. (Jeremiah 17:9, Psalm 14:1-3 (also 53), Romans 3:10-12, 3:23, Romans 5:12-21) This understanding is unique to Biblical Christianity.
addn’t rf: Romans 6:17,20 (servants of sin)
 - ii. Our Just Punishment.
 - 1. The penalty of sin is death—physical, spiritual, “second.” (Genesis 2:17 (spiritual), 3:19 (physical), Romans 1:32, 5:12, 6:23, Ephesians 2:1; Revelation 20:14 (second death))
addn’l rf: Ezekiel 18:4, Romans 7:5, 8:13, I Corinthians 15:21-22, Colossians 2:13, James 1:15. Spiritual death may

not seem very significant but separation from God is a terrible thing. The reality of that will be manifested after the final judgment. Think of the pain of separation in our human relationships.

Even the unsaved do not currently feel the full effects of separation from God because God is still present in creation (Romans 1:20, Colossians 1:17). When the unsaved are completely separated from God's presence, they will feel the full effects—just like Jesus did on the cross (Mark 16:34).

2. Sin itself is destructive. The effects of sin are never good. (Mark 7:21-23, Romans 1:24-31, 6:21, 7:5) Contrary to the world's idea, those living in sin are not having fun.
3. Sin deserves God's punishment. (Romans 2:8-9, Ephesians 5:5-6, II Thessalonians 1:7-9 (also speaks of separation), Revelation 20:11-15)
- iii. Our Savior. God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty of our sin and to conquer sin and death. (Romans 3:24-25, 5:6-11, Colossians 1:14 and many more)
- iv. Our Salvation. This is a separate point because Jesus Christ is only our Savior if we trust in what He did for us. (Romans 3:22, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 1:13) (Watch the prepositions; modern translations change them.)
- v. Our Standing. Because of Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross, we have the righteousness of God—we are made perfect in God's sight. We are no longer separated from God; we are considered sons of God. In fact, we are literally made one with Christ. This is just an overview; we will look at more. (Romans 3:22-26, 8:14-17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:6)
- vi. Our Hope. This life is not the end. Jesus Christ's finished work at the cross (death, burial, and resurrection) defeated sin and death. We look forward to the rapture and to eternal life with God. (Romans 6:23, I Corinthians 15: 19-22, 51-58, Colossians 3:4, I Thessalonians 4:14-18, Titus 3:5-7)
- vii. Our Security. Once we are saved, we can never lose it. We did not earn it in the first place. It is God who saves and "keeps" us saved. (Romans 8:35-39, II Corinthians 1:22, 5:5 (earnest of the Spirit), Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30)
- viii. Our Life. This we often call the Grace Life. It means: how does our salvation and the truth of God's Word live itself out in our lives. We will discuss this issue much more in the weeks to come

III. What Comes After Salvation?

- a. This is the exciting part. To learn about God, His “eternal purpose,” “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” His purpose for us, the Body of Christ, and about how those things affect our lives (Ephesians 3:17-19). We will discuss this issue much more in the weeks to come.
- b. Next Lesson: the foundation and source of our beliefs: the Bible