

God's Saving GRACE/FAVOR

Part 1



December 24, 2021

Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

KEY WORDS: *Grace, unmerited pardon, unmerited favor, God's grace, God's favor.*

Summary: *Let's understand God's true grace for salvation. (Next sermon will be on "LIVING in God's grace.") Is the primary meaning of "grace" – unmerited pardon, or "unearned favor" – or even deeper still? Hear a full view of grace. With a proper understanding, we'll feel great joy in our walk with God as we grow in intimacy and love for him, while understanding His deep love for us. What's the connection between obedience and grace? Or Salvation and Reward? Have you heard of the "gospel of grace"? As a child of God now, when we sin, are we cut off from God? Does the Death penalty come over us each time we sin? Are you confident of eternal life and being in the first resurrection? Can God be a God of JUSTICE AND also the God of gracious mercy? So much in this sermon!*

NOTE: THE VIDEO has CONSIDERABLY more information than these notes.

*** ***** ***

Welcome to Light on the Rock. I'm glad you're able to join us.

What does a word mean? Some words, we found out as we traveled around, have broad, far-ranging meanings. You might think someone in or from Hawaii saying "**Aloha**" to you, for example might be saying "hello." And perhaps they are. But I found Aloha is much deeper than that. And so is the Hebrew word "**Shalom**" – much deeper than just saying "peace," though that is a primary meaning.

Another expansive word, a very important word, is "GRACE". It goes way beyond "unmerited pardon" or even "favor". God's merciful pardon certainly is a great part of the meaning of grace – but by itself it limits our view of how completely God works with us, long past the pardon. It doesn't completely reveal the blessings of God. Even in the pardoning us, God is pouring out blessing and favor.

So hello everyone. I'm Philip Shields. Welcome to Light on the Rock, our free website where we help people come to know and love our heavenly Father and Yeshua Jesus Christ more – and to love one another more. Be sure to check out part 2 of this message coming later. It helps a lot too if you would register and leave comments. We won't bother you. Or you can give us a "like" or "thumbs up" or let others know about our website as that is the main way we can get these messages out: by word of mouth. Just put your

cursor on the screen video and at the top right you'll see a HEART – click on that to “like”. It also gives you the option to SHARE with others. So feel free please to do that.

I was raised in a church that limited the meaning of “grace” to “**God’s unmerited pardon of our sins.**” But “pardon” can’t explain dozens of grace scriptures! For example:

- We are to “**grow in the grace** and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”
2 Peter 3:18
- **Luke 2:39**
“And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the **GRACE of God was upon Him**” .

How can sinless Christ grow in “unmerited pardon”? Obviously “pardon” is not the appropriate definite of “grace” or “favor” in these verses and in so many others.

Luke 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, **and in FAVOR with God and men.**”

(“Favor” is “charis” – same Greek for “grace”. He would not have increased in pardon! That makes no sense.)

So when I say “FAVOR,” I’m using a word that is frequently from the same Greek word as “grace,” and often translated as either “grace” or “favor” in our Bibles.

Grace or Favor come from the Greek word “Charis” #5485, pronounced “HAR-is”. It means “Favor that causes joy, pleasure, acceptance, gratitude.”

In Hebrew it is “HEN” (#2580) – also meaning “favor, acceptance, and gratitude.”

- **John 1:14b** speaks of Jesus (Yeshua) as being “full of grace and truth.” How could he be full of pardon – unless for others maybe, but the context is in HIM.

John 1:14

“**And the Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of GRACE and truth.”

GRACE of God Defined

A GOOD SHORT stronger definition for “grace” is “the unmerited FAVOR, JOY, kindness, LOVE, and BLESSINGS of God for salvation in Christ, from start to finish. God’s grace TRANSFORMS us, makes us a NEW creation (2 Cor. 5:17)”. The meaning includes God loving you, liking you, being pleased with you.

I believe this could be in the top 3 most important topics I’ve ever covered. It’s so important that we get grace right—I mean God’s true grace and how it’s *really* taught in scripture. I hope you hear some new angles today that will bring you a joyful response.

Again, Grace come from #5485 “CHARIS” in Greek. The Greek word is a silent c- and really pronounced like “HAR-is.” You see the spelling “charis” and it’s the root for our English words charity and charisma. But it’s pronounced correctly “HAR-is.”

It means “the FAVOR that causes joy, pleasure, acceptance, gratitude”
Hebrew: #2580 HEN – “ favor, grace, acceptance.”

God’s true grace is far more than just God’s pardon. “Favor” is a better choice than “pardon.” Otherwise a LOT of verses about Yeshua, Mary, and the church, just don’t make sense.

John 1:17b also says “...grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

Grace/Favor is SO important and central to everything about God that – do you know – the Bible actually **says Paul taught “The GOSPEL of the GRACE/favor of God”?** You’ve heard of the “gospel of the kingdom, gospel of Christ, gospel of peace” – but how about the “gospel of God’s grace”? That’s how important it is!

Do YOU or your fellowship love God’s grace so much that you all speak often of **the “Gospel of Grace”?** Think on this. I even had a minister tell me there’s no such statement or scripture until I read it to him. Are YOU aware of such a scripture?

Paul came preaching the kingdom, he preached Christ, and he preached the gospel of Grace. So should your church, your fellowship – and so should YOU.

Acts 20:24

“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, **to testify to the GOSPEL of the GRACE of God.**”

And the very next verse adds descriptions of what that gospel includes:

Acts 20:25

“And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom **I have gone *preaching the kingdom of God***, will see my face no more.”

What else did Paul say he preached? On your own, also read **1 Corinthians 15:1-9**.

Acts 28:30-31

“Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, **31 *preaching the kingdom of God* AND teaching the things which *concern the Lord Jesus Christ*** with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”

So they’re all meshed together – Jesus, the Kingdom of God, and the gospel of grace. There’s no kingdom without grace, or without Jesus (Yeshua). The gospel of John speaks a *lot* about Yeshua. Yeshua spoke a lot about who he was and his mission, especially in the gospel of John. The Seven “I am” statements Yeshua preached about himself.

Today’s focus is God’s Grace for SALVATION. Next time will talk about God’s Grace for everyday life.

IF we MISUNDERSTAND GRACE... 2 extremes

IF we misunderstand, we risk several extremes. Here are 2 common extremes on God's grace:

- **Jude 4 – WARNING us about those who are turning the grace of God into license to sin** because they say there's always enough grace to cover you. The way God provided GRACE is so precious and deep, that He won't take lightly those sinning without much thought. I will **not** be preaching "you can sin, and not feel bad about it, because grace covers you." (See **Romans 6:1** -after Romans 5:20-21)

We must always feel remorse and repent when we sin and break any of God's law – but shouldn't MOPE and stay depressed. DAVID shows that example when he deeply repented in **Psalm 51**, but by the end of that same prayer, he is praising God! So sin is serious and we must repent and turn back to God and accept the joy of his salvation. But we can't take sin lightly, like Jude 4 speaks of.

Jude 4

"... **ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness** and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

"license for immorality" – NIV "licentiousness" – NASB

The fact is: we have to grow and fight sin and let God's perfection start to be evidenced in us. IN a recent sermon, I made clear *it is GOD'S perfect perfection he gives us by His grace*, and *not* by *our* hard work to *become* perfect ourselves, as we'll never get there ourselves.

I quoted **Hebrews 10:14** several times in the sermon:

"For by one offering, **He** (Christ) *has perfected forever* those who are being sanctified."

We can't just wallow in sin and casually think God's grace will cover us anyway.

I teach – as Paul, Peter and John repeatedly do – that being called to salvation *leads us to WANT to PLEASE God, to obey him* because we love Him; to do good works – not just for salvation, get this, **but as a result of salvation. We are saved by Grace (Eph 2:8-9) FOR good works (Eph. 2:10)**. Christ will be in us, and he will want to live as he did before: OBEDIENTLY. Let's say it this way: *Good works is a solid consequence of salvation.*

(bonus scripture) **Hebrews 5:9**

"And having been perfected, He (Christ) became the author of *eternal salvation to all who OBEY Him,*"

So I do not teach that we can do as we please because of grace (**Romans 6:1-2**). In fact, if we continue to focus on living after the carnal flesh, we shall DIE, Paul says. **Romans 8:5-6, 13. When we truly believe in Christ and focus on him, God's favor transforms us over time (2 Cor. 3:17-18).**

Many will say to Yeshua "But didn't we do mighty **works, miracles** and wonders in your name?" and He will say to them, "I never KNEW YOU, you who practice lawlessness" (**Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV**).

Beware of basing your confidence in a minister because of his miracles. The great False Prophet of the end time working with the Beast political power, will be able to even call fire down from heaven and do incredible miracles, but it will be by Satan's working! (**2 Thess 2:8-10; Revelation 13:13-17**)

So the first bad extreme is minimizing obedience to God's law because of the way they teach grace, ending in a life of immorality and license to sin.

- **The 2nd EXTREME – common in the Church of God groups** who were associated with Herbert Armstrong, is that **their definition of grace focused exclusively on "unmerited pardon."** True grace certainly ***includes*** "pardon" but can't be limited to it.

What's the result of limiting "grace" to "unmerited pardon"? Not experiencing the full JOY and peace of God's true grace and God's SALVATION. Always feeling we'll never "make it" into God's kingdom, or feeling so depressed and joyless as they know they still stumble in sin and fall short of true righteousness. So many feel God is not pleased with them and that they're totally failing. They don't feel God would ever say he was "well please" with them.

Among many sabbath-keeping groups, the **understanding on God's grace is so often performance based, perfection based.** I mean **OUR performance, OUR perfection** – and you'll see that is so off base. They wonder how God could possibly be pleased with them, or like them, with all their faults that remain.

True grace/favor does include being pardoned for sins, but it goes so much further: it includes God's acceptance of us, his joy and blessing on us as his children. He wants to transform and change us into his image.

I think the Church of God folks – and many Hebrew Roots folks too – understand the HEAD knowledge of grace, but somehow still feel unworthy to be live out their lives as believers with JOY and confidence.

Trying to find peace and joy in OUR performance-based living means that person does not yet know God's true Grace he offers.

They know better – but they keep looking at their performance, instead of having faith in Yeshua's performance and God's GRACE.

It's not how we do, but how well Yeshua did and is doing again in us.

I heard one even teach on salvation that "WE do the best WE can, and then GOD makes up the difference."

Do you think that? That's NOT grace by FAITH, by BELIEF and trust in Christ. That's salvation by your own best efforts or performance. (Note: the video will have more

discussion throughout. I recommend you watch video).

That is a teaching on grace that says WE have a big part in SALVATION – by what WE do. It's foreign to scripture.

100% SAVED BY God's GRACE – NOT OUR WORKS

Notice the emphasis on God's love and kindness – all part of grace and divine FAVOR as we read Ephesians 2:4-10 here, but we focus on verses 8-9.

True grace is all about GOD granting us salvation, entirely HIS doing – and with us humbly receiving it and believing in Christ. God gives grace to the HUMBLE (1 Peter 5:10).

Even the most wicked King AHAB received some grace from God when he humbled himself, fasted and mourned and walked in sackcloth (1 Kings 21:25-29). (details in the video) Notice the many references to God's traits of love, mercy, kindness...all part of full understanding of true grace.

Ephesians 2:4-10

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great LOVE with which He *loved us*, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (**by grace you have been saved**), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

7 “that in the ages to come He might show **the exceeding riches of His GRACE in His kindness** toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 “**For BY GRACE you *have been saved through faith*, and that NOT of yourselves; it is the GIFT of God, 9 NOT of works**, lest anyone should boast. [not based on our performance]

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **FOR good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

God's salvation through grace is entirely HIS work, **GOD'S GIFT** to us without us having to earn it. *If we had to earn it, that would be works and a debt God owes us.* A gift would no longer be a gift if we have to work for it or earn it.

As God brings us to salvation by his grace, in our love for God we seek him, obey him, and do works pleasing him, as a natural consequence of his goodness. Good works actually prove we are changing and being saved, v.10.

**WHY THE DISCONNECT – thinking we earn our salvation?
TOO MANY CONFUSE SALVATION AND REWARDS.**

Salvation is 100% God's GIFT. Salvation means being given eternal life and saved from the 2nd death, the death penalty for our sins. It's NOT based on what we do **except to accept God's call to repentance**, fully repent, and BELIEVE in Jesus Christ as our LORD and Master.

We cannot work or pay for a gift, or it's no longer a gift.

SALVATION IS NOT a REWARD. It's a gift. Salvation is – in spite of our forgiven sins – 100% God's **gift** to us of eternal life and joy in Christ (**Romans 6:23**)

Paul made it clear – it's one or the other; it's either grace or works. It's GOD's working and doing entirely, and not ours.

Romans 11:5-6 ESV

“So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by GRACE. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.”

REWARDS: now this is not salvation. There are numerous scriptures that say we are **rewarded by our works – by what we did with what we were given. Again, REWARD is not salvation. We are rewarded by our performance. But again – that's not salvation but rewards.**

“Reward” is what we will DO and what we will BE for all eternity, based on what we DID with God's spirit.

Revelation 22:12

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and **My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”**

Do you remember **the parable of the talents – amount of money** to work with? (**Matthew 25:15-28**) Some were given 2 or 5 or 10 cities based on their works. *That's reward – not salvation. Salvation is God's GIFT. Rewards is what you've earned – but it's not salvation. Reward has to do with what we'll be and what we'll be doing for eternity.*

Salvation IS being granted eternal life. Reward is what you will be doing for eternity.

*Paul says we're building – in our works – either with gold, silver, and precious stones, which cannot be burned up, or with wood, hay, and straw. (**1 Cor. 3:9-15**—please read it). HOW are you building? With Gold, silver, and precious stones – or wood, straw?*

1 Corinthians 3:14-15

“If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a REWARD. If anyone's work is burned, HE will suffer loss; **but he himself will be SAVED, yet so as through fire.”**

So your good works will give you a great reward and position in God's kingdom. But getting you into God's Kingdom with eternal life is God's free GIFT of salvation. What you will BE and what you'll DO for eternity is reward – based on your works. **Don't mix up the two and you'll be fine!**

When we mix reward and salvation is when we start feeling bad, as we know we fail and sin still from time to time.

CAN GOD'S GRACE COVER ALL HORRENDOUS SIN?

So again, WHAT is GRACE? It's SO much more than God's forgiveness or unmerited pardon of our sins.

Grace is God's underserved love and goodness; God's favor for all of us, God's forgiveness, God's blessings, power, help of God to us – that TRANSFORMS us, PREPARES us for eternity.

Look what it says about our Savior. His coming brought grace upon grace, like wave upon wave. God's grace will cover any sin.

John 1:16-17 NIV

“From the fullness of his GRACE we have all received one blessing after another. 17 For the law was given through Moses; **GRACE and truth came through Jesus Christ.**”

When you come to believe in Christ, it won't matter what you've been or done. God's grace is sufficient to cover you.

And if you really understand Grace, YOU will also extend God's grace to sinners who have turned to God, or you yourself will not be forgiven.

There is NO SIN a person can commit that is bigger than God's grace* (except totally rejecting the working of the Holy Spirit in us and turning permanently from God in the “unpardonable sin.” That's a conscious, permanent rejection of God when we know better). *If you're hearing this sermon, I assure you, you have not committed the unpardonable sin.

One translation of Romans 5:20 says “grace super abounded.” *No one can out-sin the ability of God's grace to keep working with us.*

Romans 5:20-21

“Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. **But where SIN abounded, GRACE abounded much MORE,**
21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

As someone comes to Christ and God in heaven, but had been a prostitute, or thief, or drug dealer, or vicious terrorist – **is there enough grace?** You bet.

How about for **a murderer, or rapist, or child molester?** You bet there's grace that super abounds for anyone and everyone who confesses his sin before God and humbly asks for God's mercy AND FAVOR.

Would you SIT in church beside someone you know was previously evil whom God is calling? Would you visit in their home with them? Or – would you pass, preferring “better” company?

And even when we children of God now still sometimes sin – GRACE continues to super-abound to us as well. We must fight sin viciously. We must use God's spirit in us to obey God's commands. But when we fail, and stumble in sin, there's plenty of grace to cover us.

WHY is GRACE still NEEDED even AFTER receiving God's Spirit?

God's Holy Spirit is usually given with laying on of hands. Cornelius' household was an exception, for example (**Acts 10:44-48**). God gave his Spirit before they were baptized.

After we receive God's spirit, why do we still need grace? Because we will ALL still sin, even as Paul, in **Romans 7:15-21**, admitted he still sinned. God's favor is essential even after conversion and having already received his grace and salvation when we first repented.

But again, key point: Grace is not just about forgiveness! Grace is about God showing us his blessings, his desire and love for us, His favor and kindness and goodness – AND, get this, His power to TRANSFORM us, which I'll cover much more in the next sermon.

All of that is also grace/favor. We need God's favor to make us a NEW CREATION in Christ (**2 Cor. 5:17**). There's no NEW creation without ongoing favor/grace.

Holy Spirit is God's very presence, it's HIM coming into us.

- **Begets us as God's very own children** into his family by his incorruptible Seed, the Holy Spirit (**1 Peter 1:23**). God's love for his family and children is profound. Yeshua says, "show them that you love them as you have loved me" (**John 17:23**).
- **Holy Spirit gives us God's POWER (Acts 1:8)** to walk and live in God's spirit and to help fight sin if we seek and accept that power minute by minute, though we still sin. Even Paul still sinned – though he was an apostle (**Romans 7:14-21**).
- God's holy spirit also gives us God's own **divine NATURE (2 Peter 1:4)** – but God does not remove our own carnal fleshly nature.

So now we have TWO natures (Gal. 5:16-17; Rom. 7:21-23) and they are constantly at war inside us. God's new nature in us vs our old carnal fleshly nature. The nature we feed and listen to is the one that grows dominant. God's spirit overcomes sin in us if we follow God's lead. We must NOT RETURN to the old nature's way of life! We no longer desire to sin, and our sin record is dissolved – but we still have a proclivity to sin even with God's spirit. Paul refers to "that which I HATE I still do" (Romans 7:15-16).

- **God's spirit and his FAVOR gives us his MIND**, which was in Christ Jesus. (Phil 2:5).

What happens when God's children with Holy Spirit sin, after baptism?

- **Are we no longer God's children each time we sin? Of COURSE we remain a child of God (Prodigal son – discuss on video).** He remained a

SON in spite of how bad he was. **Luke 15:11-32.** (more in the video) Don't ever think you've lost your position as God's son or daughter because of some horrible sins you've done. Repent, come back to God, and you'll be celebrated back. In fact our Good Shepherd Yeshua will personally seek you out and goad you to return.

- **Do we incur God's WRATH each time we sin, all over again? NO.** We've been spared God's wrath by Christ taking our sins. God is not pleased with any sin we commit – but we are his children now. (Discuss) See Romans 5:9

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

"...you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even **Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.**"

It's like the way we react to our own children's offenses and carelessness. We may be a bit upset at them at first, but soon we bring them back to understand we're a good father. We don't just love our children now and then – but all the time. **If you did not have a good father as you grew up, you will have a harder time understanding this. God above, is now your father.**

- **Do we have to face the death penalty of sin after we have God's spirit – each time we sin?**

By God's great favor and true grace -- NO! The death penalty is not placed on you again by any new sins, once you are a spirit-filled child of God. You've passed from death to life! **John 5:24.**

There's no "**double jeopardy**" with God. You've been proclaimed innocent by what Yeshua did. You've been cleansed. There's no sin record now – it's been expunged. The blood of Yeshua covers those sins too, as we sin, he cleanses us.

And Jesus does not die more than once for anybody. **He died once, for all people who accept him, for all time.** (Study **Hebrews 7:27; 9:26 – 28**). ALL your sins are washed away and continue, ongoing tense, to be washed away as we sin.

1 John 1:7

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, **and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from ALL sin.**"

- **Is God's favor only for those who always live righteously and don't sin? NO.** There now is NO condemnation for us (**Romans 8:1; John 3:17-18**), or anyone who is in Christ, but who still stumbles in sin, as Paul said he still sinned sometimes. The statements of "no condemnation when we believe in Christ" are in context of occasional sin, as Paul admitted, in Romans 7. *So quit feeling condemned every time you sin.*

And Romans 8:3-4 needs to be preached much more.

Romans 8:1-4

“There is therefore now NO condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did **by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: **HE** condemned sin in the flesh,**

4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be FULFILLED in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit”.

We children of God still have to deeply REPENT of sin each time we sin, but we do not come under a new death penalty again. DON'T WALLOW in past sins, whether it was 30 years ago or 3 days ago! Christ dies only once for our sins. His death covers us forever. And there's no double jeopardy for our forgiven sins! And neither do we need to mope for ages over forgiven sin.

(Video discussion of **Psalm 51** prayer of repentance of David, who was opening his broken heart in repentance but by the end of his prayer praises, glorifies and thanks God... and moves on. Please read Psalm 51.)

When we become children of God we are not cut off from God every time we sin – for we're told NOTHING can separate us from the love of God, remember (**Heb 13:5; Romans 8:33-39**) once we are begotten into the family of God. God Most High becomes our loving Daddy in heaven who adopts us into his very family as His child, and he loves you like he loved Jesus (John 17:23). **For us now, it's not like it was in the Old Testament -- where sin cut sinners off from God (Isaiah 59:2; Jeremiah 5:25).**

GOD'S GUARANTEES BY HIS INDWELLING SPIRIT

Sealed by God's spirit, we are guaranteed salvation and eternal life!

Ephesians 1:13-14

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, **the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were **sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,****

14 who is the GUARANTEE of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

Do we believe Yeshua's words below that we've passed from death to life?

John 5:24

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word **and believes in Him who sent Me HAS EVERLASTING LIFE, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."**

John 3:36

“He who believes in the Son **HAS everlasting life**; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Too many of us believers CLAIM to believe these words, but we don't ACT like we believe it. God – who sees the end from the beginning – says we HAVE eternal life, as good as done! But we don't FEEL in our hearts the JOY we should be feeling that we shall NOT come into judgment and have passed from death to life.

All of that is stated in a way that it's already certain. Do you believe these words of Jesus? We SAY we do, but too often ACT like we don't and so many live in fear of eternal failure instead of claiming the victory.

Do you believe with CERTAINTY that you have eternal life? Do you KNOW and FEEL like you are a NEW CREATION in Christ? Do you have no question at all that you WILL be in the first resurrection? DO YOU BELIEVE Jesus?

Then you are understanding God's commitment to finishing what he started in you – and are understanding God's wonderful FAVOR, or grace, for you too.

But if you don't know all that, you're probably very works or performance oriented. Knowing you don't measure up perfectly all the time, you feel like a loser. But that means you're not understanding God's true grace.

The New Covenant teaches

- we are a new creation in Christ (**2 Cor. 5:17**). Do you feel and see newness?
- That, - like Paul – we confidently look forward to the crown of righteousness (**2 Tim. 4:8**)
- are eager to see Yeshua returning in glory (**Hebrews 9:28**), it says 'APART FROM SIN, for salvation' – and know you'll be in the 1st resurrection.

We also have the promise that once we are in Father's hand, NO ONE and nothing can take us out of his grasp, unless we ourselves decide to quit on God. ONCE you accept Christ and God as your FATHER, you're pretty secure.

John 10:27-29

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. **And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.**

My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; **and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.**”

Once God has you in his hand, He's not going to lose you! He may have to put some of us through some fiery trials to wake us up, but in the end, we'll be there – saved. He won't lose you!

2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that **in him** WE might become the righteousness of GOD.”

Romans 10:9-10

“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and BELIEVE in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be SAVED.”

GOD'S JUSTICE WORKS PERFECTLY ALSO WITH GOD'S GRACE

We all probably have SOME righteous deeds in our lives. But even THOSE don't count for salvation. The perfection God requires – as I explained in my sermon on “GOD'S perfection for us” is HIS perfection.

God actually calls OUR righteousness just so many filthy rags. The Hebrew actually is “menstruous rags.” I won't apologize for language GOD chose to use to make a very graphic illustration.

Isaiah 64:5 CJB (verse 6 in our Bibles)

**“All of us are like someone unclean,
all our righteous deeds like menstrual rags...”**

So even *our* own “righteous” deeds had to be washed away in Christ as well, as they don't measure up to God's perfect requirement of his perfection.

So God poured on to Yeshua – his own son – EVERY SIN ever committed in the world – as his sacrifice takes away the SIN of the WORLD (John 1:29).

But, having our sins washed away only applies to those who BELIEVE in him, accept, and surrender to him as Lord and Savior of your life.

John 3:36

“He who BELIEVES in the Son HAS everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Now let's shift gears: How would you feel if an angel told you that GOD would send his Son Yeshua tomorrow to talk with you personally? And you have God's spirit, let's say. How would you feel? Confident, or condemned? If based on how righteous and zealous you've been the past 6 months – condemned? We may know **John 3:16, but do you know John 3:17 and 18**, in Yeshua's own words to Nicodemus? Would he condemn you?

John 3:16-18 NKJV

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did NOT send His Son into the world TO CONDEMN the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

***18 "He who believes in Him is NOT CONDEMNED*; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”**

God didn't send Yeshua to condemn you. So you've got to believe that too. He wants everyone to be saved. And so we've got to become far less critical and condemning of the world too. We're not friends of the world, but neither are we condemning of them.

Let's circle back to 2 Cor. 5:21 – that God's son became SIN for us, and we become, IN Christ, the very perfect righteousness of God.

So all our buckets of sins were emptied on Jesus *including any of your OWN imperfect righteous deeds* because they were filthy rags in God's sight. (I'm talking about when you "came "to Jesus" prior to your baptism and laying on of hands). But even as we sin going forward, Christ's blood continues to cleanse us from our sins (1 John 1:7).

Now you're washed from ALL your sins in the blood of Christ, your debt PAID IN FULL, and your "bucket" empty. Then Yeshua's perfect righteousness is GIFTED to you (Rom 5:17). Yeshua's account of his perfect righteousness is now in *your* account. God sees Jesus' own perfect goodness on you now. ALL by God's FAVOR/GRACE.

Then GOD said to you and all who believe in His Son –"You're forgiven. You're clean now. Welcome to my family-- the House of God, dear child. We're *celebrating* your presence with us, as I beget you by my Holy Spirit, guaranteeing My Promises to you."

We read **Ephesians 1:13-14** earlier – Holy Spirit is the GUARANTEE of our inheritance to the praise of His glory.

Now here's the part where we fall to our knees, faces on the ground and praise God for his loving kindness, patience, and favor.

So our life's bucket OF SINS was washed away, *forever* (not like man's criminal system) – and God says to us, "LIVE, because of my Son Jesus, LIVE, and I will remember your sins no more." (**Heb. 10:16-17**)

Then when God looked Yeshua's bucket of sin or goodness – it was NOW, on that Passover day on Calvary 2000 years ago, full of sin from you and me and the whole world... and so God's judgment to his Son 2,000 years ago was:

"Son, YOU have incurred my WRATH for all this SIN that you've taken on yourself and is on your record now. I'm furious over all this sin against my holy law. My JUSTICE requires YOU pay the penalty for all that sin on you, and the penalty is death by execution. I cannot show you any mercy for I am a just God. *YOU have to die by painful EXECUTION, Son, for the wages of sin is death.*"

God served his JUSTICE on his Son on your behalf but served MERCY and perfectly cleansed our record because God's Son paid our debt in full.

SO GOD is PERFECTLY JUST. DEATH for your sins had to be exacted – paid in full by Yeshua, Son of God – for you, forever.

God is also perfectly MERCIFUL – giving you his GRACE; your sin debt paid in full by his son Yeshua and now seeing Yeshua's perfection over you.

I hope you're loving Abba Most High and Yeshua your Savior more than ever before. I hope you're seeing "grace" as a catch-all word for God and his LOVE – even for sinners like us.

And so it was, on that DARK Passover day 2,000 years ago on a hill outside Jerusalem, that God's wrath was poured out on Jesus because of you and me and the world – but YOU and I were no longer condemned.

"IN Christ," get this, you and I will NEVER again be condemned as Romans 8:1 and John 3:18 says, even as and even when we still stumble in sin.

And when we see Yeshua in person, and he shows you and me the holes in his hands/wrists and heels and gaping hole in his side – we will fall to the ground, and worship. **"MY LORD, MY GOD"** we will say, as Thomas did (**John 20:26-29**). But don't wait to see it. Believe now.

Romans 5:8-11

"But God demonstrates His own LOVE toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, having now been justified [MADE right] by His blood, WE shall be SAVED from WRATH through Him.

10 "For if when we were enemies we were RECONCILED to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be SAVED by His LIFE. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through *our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*"

So God's Grace is truly AMAZING, as the popular hymn Amazing Grace says. It is MY story. It's YOUR story, how God through Jesus Christ "saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see."

Are we STILL as amazed by God's grace as when we first began? We must never forget this was OUR story. We must never lose our first love and our understanding that we NEED God's amazing, saving GRACE. Even ten thousand years from now, as the song ends, *"we've no less days to sing God's praise, than when we first began."*

There can be no boasting or bragging in the kingdom of God. It's ALL about God and Yeshua the Messiah, and their unmerited loving FAVOR on us.

And we know the message of being forgiven but we need to learn the message that Grace is also about receiving GOD'S amazing love, his unearned favor, his blessings – *even though* we still stumble in sin from time to time.

There's MUCH more coming in the next sermon – LIVING BY GOD'S FAVOR.

- How Abba was working profoundly with you long before you realized it. In some cases, even GENERATIONS before you.
- How God was goading us to come to him ... in his love.
- How we must also EXTEND and share grace to others, or grace won't be extended to us.

- What do we do with the old carnal nature? Do we try to convert it, or kill it?
- What really happens to all our sins when we come to Christ?
- How we can finally find JOY in being a NEW CREATION – by understanding God's favor, even though we still sometimes sin.
- How we must see how God *really* sees us, as his beloved Son or Daughter? Would God say that about YOU, in his divine favor for you?

Share this message with as many as you can.

And remember, grace is about the LOVE of God. His favor, he likes you, loves you, accepts you, guarantees you'll be in his kingdom. He guarantees he won't lose you as John 10 says. And in his favor for you, will help you be HIS new creation. Grace is probably the best single word about God I know, as it encompasses God's love, mercy, favor, blessings, acceptances.

CLOSING PRAYER.