



**GRACE**



OR

DISGRACE



**Things To Come Mission, Inc.**

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# GRACE OR d-i-s-g-r-a-c-e

No word in the Bible is used and misused more than the five letter word, *grace*. Approximately 90 times Paul writes *grace* in his 13 epistles to the Church which is the Body of Christ. But it is evident that through present-day misuse of its meaning, *grace* is too often *d-i-s-g-r-a-c-e*.

Actually the word comes from a verb "chairō" meaning "cheerful or happy or well-off." When used as a noun it becomes "a benefit, favor or gift" and this is the Biblical usage, referring to God's benefit to man. We often join it to the word *free* when speaking of salvation, i.e. "freely by His *grace* we are saved." Accordingly *free* is connected to *free-*

*dom*, and some derive: "Since we are saved by *free grace*, we are free to live as we please and to do as we please!" And this is the low point where *grace* becomes *d-i-s-g-r-a-c-e* because of a misunderstanding of *salvation, grace, free, and freedom*.

What is salvation by *grace*?

Before salvation, we are sinners, destined for the Lake of Fire and the Second Death. We are not God's children but are part of Satan's large family. What does *grace* do? It washes sin away. It pays the penalty for the sin and it brings you from the family of Satan to the family of God. All you do is receive *salvation* by faith. "Simple," you say. Yes, it is simple, however, very difficult. To accept this *grace* means you accept this totally new relationship

and you agree to leave the old relationship. In the past you were the child of Satan, and his will you freely did; now you have agreed to accept God's offer and become His child and follow His will. You have done this by faith and it is His grace that has opened the door.

So now you are a child of God and belong to His family! Does this mean that you are free to live as you please?

### *As You Please?*

Positively not! Follow this illustration. You find a boy wandering on the streets, dirty, homeless, and seriously sick. By grace you accept him into your home, wash his body and offer him a place in your

home as your son. Does this mean that this little fellow may now break the windows, talk back to you, and go and come as he pleases? God forbid. It means that this boy, if he accepts your offer, also accepts the rules of the home and agrees to live under those rules. Before he accepts, he must fully understand what his responsibility is as a son in your home.

Many accept Christ without fully understanding what it means to be a son of God. And when they find out there is a firm discipline in God's household, they back out of the offer. The Armenian says the man was saved and lost; but more factually, he never was saved. He never accepted Christ including sonship in His household. He never accepted Christ

because his understanding was limited, and once he fully understood what salvation required, he rejected and thus rejected salvation. One cannot accept sonship in a family without accepting the house-law or dispensation under which the household functions. We live under the Dispensation of Grace, but to say there is no law and order under Grace is to deny the Word of God. Paul in all his epistles constantly makes demands of those who are called the children of God. He rebukes most strongly those who disobey the dispensation of the Household of Grace. Paul stresses our "privilege" (a grace) to be able to live in this household under the demands of the house-law. As earthly fathers discipline the children of their households, so God disciplines the children of His household.

Discipline must be meted out to those who disobey. And the act of disobedience precludes rules and responsibilities possible of being obeyed or disobeyed.

### *A Parable*

A young Filipino from high in the mountains didn't have much education, but he did find a U.S. magazine one day. Opening the magazine he marvelled at all the fascinating advertisements about the U.S. He read about this great free land. "How wonderful to be a citizen of that country!" he thought. So from that day on he toiled on his farm night and day, saving every centavo he could.

Finally he journeyed to Manila to the Office of the Ambassador of the United States of America.

He walked into the office and poured all his hard-earned money on the desk, proclaiming: "I want to be a citizen of the U.S.! Is this enough money to buy that citizenship?" The Ambassador smiled but shook his head and said, "If you brought all the money in the Philippine National Bank, you could not buy citizenship in the U.S." Then the Filipino declared, "I will work for you day and night for ten years if you will permit me to become a citizen of the U.S." The Ambassador laughed heartily and still shook his head, "If you worked for me FOREVER you could not become a citizen of the U.S."

Then the Filipino begged, "Please, Mr. Ambassador, how can I become a citizen of the U.S.?"

The Ambassador handed him a form and instructed him, "U.S. citizenship can neither be purchased nor worked for, but if the President of the U.S. will show grace in your case, then you can become a citizen freely."

The jubilant Filipino filled out the form and gave it to the Ambassador, but one long year passed before the large envelope arrived at his farm with the letter telling the man that he could immigrate to the U.S. to become a citizen. How thrilled he was! With all haste he arrived in Manila and boarded the SS President ocean liner and sailed for the new land.

Just one month later in Los Angeles, California, he went directly to the most gigantic super-market

he could find. In he marched with a large "sacko" and began taking the good things from the shelves and loading the sack. He thought, "This is too good. I am free in a free country. Just think, everything free—a democracy—no rules or regulations!"

However a store detective suddenly tapped the busy Filipino on the shoulder and said, "What are you doing with all those things?" The Filipino retorted, "I'm taking these home. I'm a citizen of this free country and it is all by grace and no works and no money—everything is free." He proudly offered the detective his papers signed by the Ambassador and officials. The detective took the man aside and advised him: "Yes, this is a free country, and you have entered by grace, and you are a citizen, and no

one can take it away from you. But when you accepted citizenship in this country, you accepted all the rules and regulations of the U. S. government. The U.S. is a free country and it offers many privileges, but it also has laws and orders. If you are going to benefit from the fine things in this country, you will have to work hard. There is a reward for all who work hard in this country, but if you don't follow the rules and you don't work, you will suffer losses and you will be punished by the government. You won't lose your citizenship, but neither will you enjoy life like those who obey and work hard."

Then the Filipino understood what grace and freedom mean.

The application of this over-simplified parable is

obvious. Every civilized human has heard of the grace of God, though many yet seek to pay and work for grace. Once salvation by grace is clear, an entrance is gained into the widest tableland of His abundant privilege, yea, into more of His grace. Our first attempt is to stuff as much as we can into our selfish interest bag. But all believers who exercise conscience begin to perceive that these privileges are extended to others also—others in the Body of Christ—and even those not yet in the Body of Christ.

### *The Gospel of Good Works*

We are saved by grace, not good works; but grace teaches us good works.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live

soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Titus 2:11-12.

In Titus 2 and 3 Paul preaches no works once dealing with salvation, but five times good works to those who are already the children of grace: "to do...maintain...be zealous of...good works." In Ephesians 2:10 Paul confirms we are born (into God's family) unto good works. We do not live under the Dispensation (government) of Law, but under the Dispensation (government) of Grace. To deny rules and regulations is to deny government. It is wrong to murder, steal, worship idols, commit adultery, get drunk, under our house-law. It is not wrong because the Mosaic LAW teaches it is wrong, but because GRACE teaches it is wrong.



## A Promise

One day our Father will gather together all of His children. He will reward those who obeyed the rules and responsibilities of grace. For the disobedient and irresponsible no reward awaits, only loss. Our Father will judge His children at the Bema-Seat of Christ. Some would picture Heaven as an army barracks in uniformity, but God never reveals such. For the faithful son who has forsaken personal goals and pleasures to serve faithfully in the Father's household, a more than compensating reward is prepared. For the delinquent child who slept except when enriching himself at the expense of the rest of the household, a holocaust looms—yea, judgment by fire! The reward of suf-

fering saints is reigning with Christ. Because all do not suffer for Christ, all will not reign with Christ.

Does it pay to serve Jesus? The songwriter replies: "It pays to serve Jesus; it pays everyday." A great many children serve this world for a corruptible crown, yet some prefer to serve their Lord for an incorruptible crown. Herein lies a choice, but with the choice comes the ultimatum---a "tinsel" crown of earth or a "sterling" crown of heaven?

Which?

One says, "I do not serve because of reward." Paul warns us to run to win the prize! We despise the reward of God if we will not run for it. So often it is declared (not without pride), "Never mind the reward, as long as I am saved!" This is to

despise the prize God holds in His hand, and more accurately, to despise the Awarder of the prize.

Is the prize of God worth running for? Often the same man who despises the prize of God is nonetheless striving day and night for the prize of the world! He cannot obtain both. If he gains down here, he is surely going to lose up there.

"But," men say, "there are many fine wealthy Christians: who have wealth down here and will have riches up there." Will they? Only one way can a man be spiritually wealthy: to invest in spiritual banks, become poor that others may become rich. If a man has wealth, then his responsibility, if he seeks reward in Glory, is to invest his wealth in the Lord's work or use it to produce funds specifically intended

for the Lord's work. Again we note what Paul says in 1 Tim. 6:17-19:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

And what did Christ tell the rich young ruler? If he was not willing to become poor for Christ, he was not worthy to be rich in Christ.

Because some believe they are living under GRACE and free to live and spend as their heart desires, the Church suffers under many burdens.

Is this GRACE? It is D-I-S-G-R-A-C-E.

Seven times in Paul's message on giving in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, we hear the word *grace*; and he is saying it is *grace* to become poor that others might become rich! It is hardly feasible that one can toil for the purpose of stockpiling filthy lucre in this world and then expect to reign with Christ in the world to come! Not when the work of the Lord over the whole world is held back by lack of funds! Grace teaches us to deny ungodly lusts. Yet the children of God do lust after every worldly refinement to conform to the world's changing standard

Is this GRACE? It is D-I-S-G-R-A-C-E.

### *An Appeal*

Beloved, let me speak from the heart. The world is spiritually on the scrap-heap for want of the

Saviour. "Untold millions still untold." Why? Because we continually misuse grace. Picture the revolution if Christian folks cared for the lost. Would not every personal comfort be considered excessive and too expensive? Would the sacrifice altar be devoid of offerings or would it be aglow with sparkling jewels laid there at the feet of Jesus? Would we not also see heaped on that altar houses, lands, autos, TV's, luxurious gowns and suits—oh the "abundance of things!" Also clinging there might we not see the children of God stripped and humbled, pleading, "Lord, send me." Would this not be scriptural GRACE manifested?

Christian leader, have you led the way to that altar? You may need to volunteer first that others

may follow. God's first desire is not what you have, but YOU. You are His tool to reach an unconverted world for Christ. That life insurance policy could be converted to real life assurance for a lost African. That savings account could be used in saving many Bolivians from hell. The money from the sale of that TV could be used to show many Filipinos the Light. That extra auto in the garage could be turned into transportation to Heaven for some weary Indian. That large house could be exchanged for a home in Heaven for a lonely Brazilian. That cozy lounge chair could be used to sit some longing Korean in the Heavenlies. All those extra clothes in that bulging closet could clothe lost Greeks in the righteousness of God. That vacation money could bring rest to the benighted Hollander. All that extra

furniture could furnish an Argentinian's mansion in the heavens.

These sacrifices would be mere ornaments on the altar; the supreme sacrifice is your body, the essential raw material God needs in the formation of His Body, the Church. Through 1 Corinthians we learn that the organism called the Church is to suffer TOGETHER, which organism includes Filipinos, Indians, Greeks, Chinese, every variety of mankind, many of whom are now suffering as members of this same Body. Can we revel in material and spiritual privileges while our brethren are underprivileged in these same spheres?

### *A Parallel*

Dear little Jack was given the most tantalizing, tummy-tempting pie for Christmas. For a long

time the child could do nothing but hold the pie high, delighting in just the pure aroma and beauty of it—such a gift—a whole pie, all for Jack. He delicately carried his prize to a quiet, secluded corner to be completely private. Nothing concerned him but the sheer glory of his PIE...HIS...ALL his. He could not resist the temptation to poke his chubby thumb right into the center of that luscious pie to taste the sweetness hidden there. He took great succulent bites and then even some delicious licks around the edge. Not for a childish moment did he bother to think of anything but Jack. If he had looked about he would have been surprised to see other corners with other childish occupants, and then all around them great hordes of dirty, ragged urchins painfully

watching as the privileged darlings greedily wolfed THEIR pies. "After all," each thought, "this is my pie. I did not earn it or pay for it—it was given to me for my Christmas pie." He began to singsong his favorite poem:

Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,  
Eating HIS Christmas pie.  
He stuck in his thumb and pulled out a plum,  
And said,  
"WHAT A GOOD BOY AM I!"

Need the illustration be explained further? When the fellow humans of this world are lingering round us with envious eyes, watching us selfishly stuff ourselves with the spiritual blessings (and the material blessings), let us grow up out of our Horner corners to reflect His GRACE not D-I-S-G-R-A-C-E!

"Lord," I would ask of Thee,  
"Where will the heathen be...throughout eternity?"

"Lord," I would ask of Thee,  
"Where will the heathen be...who never heard of Thee?"

"Lord," I would ask of Thee,  
"Will those poor heathen be...cast to the fiery sea?"

"Son," I would ask of thee,  
"What will your answer be...  
When I ask this of thee...  
Why lived thee for self, not Me?  
Doomed heathen called for thee!"

"Son," I would ask of thee,  
"What will your answer be...  
When at My Throne you see...  
Heathen who looked for Me...  
But you failed to let them see?"

"Son," I would ask of thee,  
"Will you be judgment free...  
Ignoring My call to thee...?"  
ALAS, for the heathen be...  
LOST in the blazing sea!