

Grace

1-25-15AM

"What have you done?" These were the words of God upon entering the Garden and seeing (but perhaps not discovering) that man had corrupted himself and the creation in Genesis 3:13. What we may not realize is that when Adam sinned, God had 2 choices: He could utterly destroy humanity (which would be the simple and rightful decision), or He could prepare an expensive plan of redemption (the more costly and complicated solution to the problem). We are aware that He chose to redeem us (even before the creation of the world, e.g. Ephesians 1:4). We need to know that this decision is what the Bible refers to as GRACE.

If this decision is what we call Grace, we also refer to the way God views our sins in this term as well. Ezra understood this when he was praying for the people of Judah in Ezra 9:6-13. He called God's decision to restore them "Grace".

This leads us to some very important questions about Grace: How do we receive it? Is it conditional? Is it earned?

There is a parable that can greatly help us to understand the divine bestowment of Grace. We typically refer to it as the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32. In that parable, the Father's acceptance of the son's return is Grace. First we see that the Father allows us to leave. Second, we see that in the Father's Grace He does not enter into the world in pursuit of His lost son (consider I John 1 and fellowship). He cannot enter into sin; it was required that the son should leave sin in order for Grace to be received. We need to realize that Grace is a lit road to God, but it is NOT a spotlight where God follows us along in our sin. The Father cannot see or hear us when we are in sin (John 9:31). Grace is that path we travel to the Father, and Grace is the acceptance we find when we meet the Father.

In this case, was Grace free (was it earned)? The son thought he would have to earn his place with the Father, but when the Father saw him, the son was not expected to earn. Was it conditional? The son did not receive Grace when he came to himself; it was only when the son had returned that Grace was given. Thus, Grace is clearly conditional to our repentance.

Understanding Grace:

- Grace is God's answer to our sin
- Grace is FREE and CONDITIONAL
- We pursue Grace; it does not pursue us

How do we obtain Grace? By hearing and believing: Romans 10:17 AND by a Confession of Faith: Acts 8:37 AND by Turning from sin (Repentance): Luke 24:47 AND in Baptism for salvation: 1 Peter 3:21