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SESSION 1 | UNDERSTANDING OUR GOAL: GROWTH IN GRACE

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.” 2 Peter 3.18

Class Overview

Week One: Understanding our Goal: Growth in Grace

Week Two: Christ-like Lives: The Marks of Growth in Grace

Week Three: God’s Provision: The Motives and Means for our Growth in Grace

Week Four: The Local Church: The Context for our Growth in Grace

UNDERSTANDING OUR GOAL: GROWING IN GRACE

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.” Titus 2.11-14

I. The Saving Grace of God

A. Why do we need salvation?

1. The Holiness of God
2. The Sinfulness of Man
3. Humanity’s Guilt

B. What is the nature of God’s salvation?

Grace Defined: *“God’s blessings through Christ to people who deserve his curse.”¹*

¹ Jerry Bridges, *The Transforming Power of the Gospel*. (NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO. 2012) 82-83.

C. How does Salvation Come To Us?

In Christ, our salvation has been finally accomplished.

1. In his life, he fulfilled all righteousness.
2. On the Cross, he bore our sins.
3. On the Cross, he satisfied the wrath of God.
4. In his resurrection, he proved he had defeated the powers of sin and death.

D. What are the benefits of our Salvation?

1. Regeneration: New birth by the Spirit. Ez. 36.23-28; Jn 3.1-8; 2 Cor. 5.17
2. Forgiveness: In Christ, by his blood. Eph. 4.32; Col. 1.14, 3.13; I Jn 1.8-2.2
3. Reconciliation: Right relationship to God. 2 Cor. 5.17-19
4. Justification: Declaration of righteousness before God. Ro. 3.9-8.39; 2 Cor. 5.21
5. Adoption: Brought into God's family. Ro. 8.12-17; 1 Jn 3.1-3

E. Distinguishing Justification and Sanctification

“Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.”²

“Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.”³
Grudem goes on to highlight some key marks of distinction between these two fundamental doctrines:⁴

Justification

*Legal Standing
Once for all time
Entirely God’s Work
Perfect in this life
The same in all Christians*

Sanctification

*Internal Condition
Continuous throughout life
We cooperate
Not perfect in this life
Greater in some than in others*

² Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI.) 316.

³ Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI.) 326.

⁴ *ibid*

II. Wrong Responses to the Saving Grace of God

A. The Pitfall of Legalism:

1. Salvation is all of grace but I must labor to maintain the favor of God. Ro. 8.28-39; Eph. 5.1; Phil. 1.6
2. Salvation is all of grace, but the rest of the work is up to me. Psalm 127.1, John 15.4-5; Phil. 2.12-13

“Legalism is seeking to achieve forgiveness from God and acceptance by God through obedience to God.”⁵

B. The Pitfall of License:

1. Because I have salvation and God’s favor, no more change is needed. Phil. 2.12-13
2. Because I have salvation and God’s favor, I can now live in utter “freedom”, however I want. Ro. 6.15
3. Because I have salvation and God’s favor, all I need now is to simply study my justification. Phil. 2.12-13; Ro. 6.12-14

III. The Solution: Saved and Being Transformed by the Grace of God

A. Positional or Definitive Sanctification: The Bible teaches that in Christ, we are already sanctified/ set apart as holy. He has set us apart unto Himself.

B. Progressive Sanctification: The Bible also exhorts us as God’s children, to grow in grace. As Titus 2.12 says, grace not only saves the sinner, it transforms and trains the believer.

1. *“To renounce”* certain specific temptations and sins
2. *“To live”* out certain qualities of Christ-likeness

⁵ CJ Mahnaey, *The Cross Centered Life* (Multnomah, Sisters, OR. 2002) 25.

This is the consistent teaching and language of the New Testament

- *Romans*: Let not sin reign; by the Spirit, put to death.
- *Ephesians*: Put off and put on; imitators of God as children.
- *Philippians*: *Work* out our salvation with fear and trembling.
- *Colossians*: Pursue maturity in Christ; put to death & put on

Conclusion: The language and imagery of the entire New Testament on this topic is varied but the teaching is consistent: we have been saved by grace and by that same grace working in us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we are to grow in the grace of God.

“It’s Christ’s life, death, and resurrection that sets us free from sin so that now we’re free to stop sinning and obey God; to become progressively more like him; to live in harmony with his worth and excellence. It’s Christ’s cross and Christ’s resurrection that grants freedom from the penalty of sin and freedom from the power of sin; the freedom to begin to obey. It’s at the Cross that God cancels our sins so that we can now conquer our sins by the Holy Spirit. When the cross canceled the condemning power of sin, it did not make our working out of salvation unnecessary, it made it possible and in the end successful.”⁶

C. A Corporate Pursuit of Sanctification

“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may *present everyone mature in Christ*. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” Col. 1.28-29

D. A Personal Assignment

Read through Titus 2.11-14 daily this week. Memorize and meditate on these verses. Pray and ask the Lord for one biblically defined and specific area where you believe the Lord is calling you to be trained by grace.

⁶ Rick Gamache, Sermon: The Gospel and Growth, SGM 2014 Pastors Conference