

Abundance of God's Grace

Eph 3:19 – *“to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge;”*

2 Cor 9:15 – *“Thanks be to God for is inexpressible gift;”*

1 Pet 1:8 – *“joy that is inexpressible;”*

Phil 4:7 – *“peace of God, which surpasses all understanding”*

There are things regarding God - his nature, his abilities, his blessings—which we cannot fully grasp nor fully verbalize. There are things regarding God upon which we cannot place a boundary, a limit.

Isa 55:8-9 *“my ways are not your ways...”*

The Abundant Grace of God

I want to point out the abundant nature of God's character and blessings in Ephesians 2. Look at these verses:

“rich in mercy...great love” (v. 4);

“immeasurable riches of his grace” (v. 7)

There is never a time where God would say, **“Oh, I would forgive you if only you hadn't done...”** I've heard all my life that there is an Unpardonable Sin? Folks – **There is no such thing.** The only thing for which we cannot be forgiven is that for which we have not repented and asked God to forgive. If we get to a point where we deny that God will forgive us and do not seek His forgiveness, then we may not be forgiven. But even then – how big is God's Grace and Mercy?

Think of the song we sometimes sing, “His Grace Reaches Me”. “Deeper than the ocean and wider than the sea, is the grace of the Savior for sinners like me...Higher than the mountains and brighter than the sun, it was offered at Calv'ry for ev'ry-one...Now I'm under his control and I'm happy in my soul, just to know that his grace reaches me...”

The apostle Paul was fully aware of the abundant nature of God's grace in 1 Tim 1:12–16 *“I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.”*

Paul is saying, “If you want an example of how far the grace of God reaches, look at me.” God's grace is abundant—very, very abundant. Is it unlimited? No! It is not! We do a great injustice to the topic of grace—and to those lost in sin—if we explicitly state (or leave the impression that) God's grace is unlimited.

The Lost

Jesus understood the limited nature of God's grace:

Mt 7:13–14 If God's grace is unlimited the broad path would be empty.

Mt 25:31– 46 If God's grace is unlimited, there would be no separating.

Mt 24:44 – The words *“Therefore you must also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect”* would be meaningless. All could simply respond by saying, “We are ready” that is—if grace was unlimited. So, how can grace be so abundant *and* still be limited?

The Saved

Romans 6 – Let's look at the chapter “in reverse.”

v. 23 – wages of sin – death; free gift (i.e. grace) – eternal life

vv. 15–18 – Grace does not dismiss obedience. Obedience does not negate grace. Here’s why this is so important. **First**, there is much confusion about the relationship between grace and obedience. The Bible places them together; people have tried to separate them. Second, the relationship between the two shows grace is not unlimited. It is abundant. It is not unlimited. Should we—as recipients of God’s grace—continue in sin. God forbid! **Third**, there is a standard—an objective truth—to which we must comply. It is the standard of truth in which the grace of God abides. **Fourth**, we need to understand it is God who has set the boundaries of his grace. God’s grace saves us from sin. It does not provide a license *to sin*.

Too often, those who have chosen to step outside of God’s boundaries will say something like, “Well, I guess I’ll just have to depend upon God’s grace.” Anybody and everybody who is saved depends upon the grace of God! However, we can in fact sin to a point where we leave the grace of God behind.

1 Cor 9:27, 1 Cor 15:1-2, 2 Cor 6:1

God saves us *from* sin, not *in* sin—Heb 5:9. To knowingly live in sin and appeal to the grace of God is either a serious misunderstanding of grace or, at least, a misrepresentation of it.

Now, none of us are *free* from sin (1 Jn 1:10). But, we can and must be faithful. Where is the definitive line of faithfulness? I can’t tell you. In other words, where is the line that divides faithfulness and unfaithfulness in God’s sight?

One: I don’t know. God/Christ is the one to make that determination.

Two: Why would we even want to know? We don’t want to walk near that line. We want to strive for faithfulness. Two Volcanologists Katia and Maurice Kraft were killed in 1991 in a pyroclastic flow. Maurice said when asked why they were going back up the volcano, “if I died tomorrow it would be fine because I’ve seen so many eruptions.” Well, he unfortunately was a prophet in this case. They died that day. They just got too close and they paid the consequence.

Paul warns us to flee from sin. Don't go near it. Don't get so involved that you don't realize the kind of danger you are in.

Since none of us are free from sin, we all need to work on remaining faithful in our relationship with Jesus in having those sins forgiven. In 1 John 1:7-9 tells us to walk in the light; confess our sins; and seek God's forgiveness. If we do those things John tells us that God is just and righteous to forgive us every trespass. Because we're Christians and we deserve it? **NO** – because the blood of Jesus has been applied to our soul through obedience to the gospel and God's grace is that abundant!!

I may not be able to tell you where the line of faithfulness begins, but I can tell you where the grace of God **begins**. It begins upon one's initial obedience to the Gospel.

Closing

God's grace is abundant. We cannot out-sin the grace of God in terms of committing a sin which God will not forgive.

However, His grace is **not unlimited**. We can out-sin the grace of God in terms of failing to respond to his Word and thereby choosing to remain in sin. And, we can "sin our self" out of the grace of God by departing from faithfulness to his will.

God has established boundaries of grace. However, whether we are within those boundaries or not depends on our decisions and actions.

So, where are you?