

What is Grace? - Grace and our salvation

Introduction:

- The word "Grace" is very important word in our lives as Christians
- "Grace" generally refers to a free gift or courteous goodwill
- The word "Grace" comes from being "graced" with something, or something being bestowed on you or given to you
 - i.e. The teacher graced me by allowing me to re-take my exam
- In Christianity, "Grace" refers to a free divine gift or divine contribution (The divine role in the life of man)
- "Grace" simply means a divine help that is sent to us
- "Grace" is a free gift we received from God, It is like a magnetic field that surrounds us
- Any gifts or talents we have are considered "grace" that we received from God
 - "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them:*" Romans 12:6
- Everything we do in our lives and even our salvation is connected with God's grace.

Examples of "graces" in our life:

- The first grace we received is the grace of "being" ... existence
- Another grace is being created in the image and likeness of God
- Having a family is a grace from God
- The food on table and the drink in our cup are considered from God's grace
- Therefore whenever something good happens in our lives we say by "God's grace"
 - I arrived from my travel
 - I passed the exam
 - I was sick and now I am healed
- Even in our greetings we say "peace and grace"
- We are surrounded by God's grace every second of our lives
- We live in the *covenant of grace*

Grace and our Salvation

- In the beginning
 - When God created Adam and Eve, He surrounded them by His grace.
 - Describe their initial state, being like children
 - God's grace covered them
 - As a result of Adam's sin, Adam and Eve lost God's grace, hence they felt naked

- Describe their state after the sin being exposed to corruption and sin
- This state continued throughout the Old Testament
- People longed and desired for God's grace and they could not find it
 - The righteous people wanted to live righteously and overcome sin but they were not capable of doing so without God's grace
- Then the Lord gave the law through Moses
- The Law did not help but on the contrary showed that the individuals are even more transgressors "sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" Romans 7:13
- Even though the law was good, it revealed how sinful man is.
- Therefore, people needed divine intervention - righteousness became impossible to achieve without an aid
- In the New Testament
 - Now comes the new testament - St John in his gospel says "For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."
 - The beginning of the grace of the new testament is the incarnation
 - Because we needed a divine intervention - the Lord was incarnate
 - Following the incarnation, the whole economy of salvation is a grace from our Lord Jesus, His Crucifixion, His Resurrections, His Ascension, blessing and renewing our nature
 - Righteousness is now attainable - However, not by ourselves but with God's grace
 - We live in the *covenant of grace*

How are we saved? (Grace and works)

- The points under this title can be found in these two articles:
 - <https://www.suscopts.org/messages/lectures/soterlecture4.pdf>
 - <https://www.suscopts.org/messages/lectures/soterlecture11.pdf>
- Some people thought that God did everything for us to be saved so we do not need to work
- Some people thought that man can attain righteousness without depending on God in anything (Pelagianism)
- In Orthodoxy, salvation is a collaboration between God and man. God gives grace and man responds to this grace and does good works
- St Augustine said "**God created us without us: but He did not will to save us without us**"

Biblical examples:

- The War with Amalek
- The Miracle of Feeding the Multitudes