

Text: Heb. 13:25

Title: "Grace in Hebrews"; Part 1.

Time: 11/13/2016 am

Place: NBBC

Intro - I believe that Hebrews was written in A.D. 64 by Luke from Rome, shortly after the death of Paul, to Jewish Christians in Palestine. As we have studied the book together, we have seen how concerned the author is that his fellow Christians not apostatize back into the Judaism that the Lord had saved them out of. Understanding some of the history of that period and place helps us appreciate the amount of pressure that a Jewish Christian would have felt to return to apostate Judaism.

Two years earlier (A.D. 62), the Jerusalem church had lost its pastor, James, the brother of the Lord, to martyrdom by stoning at the hands of the Jewish Sanhedrin. Jewish nationalism was fomenting in the mid 60's A.D., and it ultimately led to the rebellion of Jerusalem against Rome in A.D. 66, just two years or so after this letter was written to the Jerusalem church.

In that same year, Christians left Jerusalem for a town called Pella, located in the hills east of the Jordan River. They did so remembering the Lord's prophecy in Matthew 24 about the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem, which warned people to flee the city when they saw the armies approaching. The war that ensued lasted four years, brought an end to 1.1MM Jewish lives, produced 100,000 Jewish prisoners of war, and ended with the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. Not one stone was left upon another, just as our Lord said, as Romans dismantled the building to strip every nook and cranny of its gold covering.

The Lord gave this church this letter to prepare them for this future, to warn them that going back to their life of Judaism before salvation in Christ was not the answer it appeared to be. And the last thing this letter says to these believers with this need is a very simple prayer: "Grace be with you all." In a world like that, in a place like that, in a time like that, facing a temptation like that, grace is what was needed. Who knows what our future holds? What we can be sure of, however, is that we will all need the answer to this prayer for grace to face it.

Our message title is "Grace in Hebrews" this morning, and I want us to see six ways in which the prayer, "Grace be with you," must be answered in our lives.

But first we need a definition of the word grace. It occurs 8 times in Hebrews, and it simply refers to any blessing from God that comes to us freely, something that we do not deserve and could never earn, but something that we can possess as our own simply by receiving it by faith.

I. We must be saved by grace (2:8-10, 14-15).

Ill: I think there are seasons of life when the taste of death is more real to us than at other times. We have been in a season like that. Next week I have two funerals to attend for two beloved mothers. I watched what death did to them. I feel the pain of how death has taken them from us. Death certainly has potency or a power, and that power has an awful taste.

Appl: This passage tells us what God has done about this awful reality called death. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to destroy him that has the power of death, the devil (v. 14), and to deliver those in bondage to the fear of death (v. 15).

This He did through His own death (v. 14). In order to destroy the one who destroys with death and to deliver those who were destroyed by death, Jesus had to taste death for every man (v.9). He died our death for our sins, so that we can have His glory, His life and righteousness (v. 10).

“He hell in hell laid low,
Made sin, He sin o’erthrew,
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death, by dying, slew” (S.W. Gandy quoted in Bruce).

What caused Him to do all this for us? It was the grace of God. All of that provision of Christ’s death for our salvation was a blessing given freely, which we do not deserve and cannot earn, but that can be ours by simple faith.

Is that salvation yours by simple faith this morning? Have you been saved by grace? I do not ask whether you live in a Christian home, whether you attend a Christian church, whether you believe certain Christian doctrines, or whether you have done good or bad. I ask you, have you been saved by the grace of God in the death of Christ? Can you remember the day you received by faith the blessing of salvation in the death of Christ freely given to you? He tasted death for every man by the grace of God. The gift is free for every man to receive. We must be saved by grace, and I pray you are this morning. If not, you can be.

II. We must pray for grace (4:15-16).

Appl: Our text in 13:25 is a prayer, “Grace be with you all. Amen.” There is a place where prayers like that are heard, and that place is the throne of grace. Verse 15 speaks of the feeling of our infirmities and temptation in all points, and verse 16 speaks the time of need. Our lives are filled with

infirmities, temptations, and needs, and it can seem as though what we face is chaotic and completely out of control. But there is a throne of grace, so nothing we ever face is out of His control. He rules and reigns over the affairs of men, and that sovereignty is characterized by grace – blessings that are free, undeserved and unearned, and received as our own possessions by simple faith.

What specifically are those blessings we find in prayer before this throne of grace? We find God's mercy, and we find God's grace. So often these are not what we are looking for in our prayers. We want something done to others, not ourselves. What causes us to know that we need God's mercy and God's grace? Is it not our infirmities, our temptations, and our needs? Each time God hears our prayer and strengthens our infirmity, each time He enables us to resist that temptation or find forgiveness for succumbing to it, each time He meets our need, it is an act of His mercy and grace upon us. So do you and I pray? Do we sense our need for and dependence upon God's mercy and grace enough to pray? Perhaps we are not infirm enough, tempted enough, or needy enough to understand that we must pray for God's grace.

If we are prayerless, we cannot expect the grace of God to be with us as we need it to be. Begin the day in prayer. Join your brothers and sisters in Christ for prayer together. Take time to pray as a family. Some day when we stand before that throne of grace, we will wonder why we came there boldly so rarely when our need for God's grace was so great.

III. We must obey the Spirit of grace (10:28-30).

Appl: Those last two words of v. 30, His people, are critical to understanding what our author is referring to in this

chapter. He is speaking of willful sins that believers commit (v. 26). Specifically, the sin of this passage is the failure in the life of a believer to obey three commands: (1) draw near (v. 22); (2) hold fast without wavering (v. 23); and (3) consider other believers by not forsaking assembly times (vv. 24-25). When a believer lives this way, the author says it is like trodding underfoot the Son of God, counting the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace.

Ill: The sin of my kids seems especially troubling to me for some reason. It is one thing if, during a basketball practice for instance, one of my players disobeys a command and mouths off to me instead. Honestly, I do not care about that situation the way I care about it should my son Kent be the perpetrator of such a response during practice. I feel compelled to correct, admonish, nurture, and discipline Kent in a way I do not feel compelled to do for my other players. Should he disobey and mouth off, his error would seem particularly troubling to me.

Appl: I think our passage indicates that our Lord is especially offended when our disobedience as His children does despite to the Spirit of grace. That verb, to do despite, means to insult out of arrogance and pride. It is really the opposite of grace, which is all about condescending and humbling yourself to meet the need of another without cost to them and at great personal sacrifice to you. This is what the Spirit does for us. He is the Spirit of grace. When we disobey the commands of the Word of God, we treat Him with the opposite of how he treats us. We arrogantly insult the Spirit of grace. So we must obey the Spirit of grace.

Conclusion: Our text this morning is a simple one, "Grace be with you. Amen." I hope that is your prayer for me; that is my prayer for you. We do not know what the future

holds, but we know that we are going to need God to answer this simple prayer in our behalf. Is God's grace with you? We must be saved by grace, and when we are not even death itself can touch us. We must pray for grace, and when we do the resources of the throne of grace are at our disposal to strengthen our infirmity, conquer our temptation, and meet our need. And we must obey the Spirit of grace. He humbles Himself to minister to us for our good. We must humble ourselves to obey His will. God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.

Our closing hymn, "Grace 'Tis a Charming Sound," was authored by a 18th century dissenting pastor in England, Philip Doddridge. He wrote many others, not in our hymnbook, one of which is entitled, "Father of mercies, send thy grace." It is a prayer that expresses very much what I think our author wanted to say to these Hebrew believers:

1 Father of mercies! send thy grace,
All-powerful from above,
To form, in our obedient souls,
The image of thy love.

2 Oh, may our sympathizing breasts
The generous pleasure know,
Kindly to share in others' joy,
And weep for others' woe!

3 When the most helpless sons of grief
In low distress are laid,
Soft be our hearts their pains to feel,
And swift our hands to aid.

4 So Jesus looked on dying men,

When throned above the skies;
And 'mid the embraces of his God,
He felt compassion rise.

5 On wings of love the Savior flew,
To raise us from the ground,
And made the richest of his blood
A balm for every wound.

May His grace be with us all. Amen.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching