

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few weeks we have taken a journey down the ancient paths of scripture in a quest to understand God's original intent. We have explored God's original intent as it relates to creation, redemption, sonship and the church.

As we've traced these ancient paths, it has been an experience that can be likened unto when Jesus spat and touched the blind man. Jesus asked him how he sees and he answered: "I see men like trees". Jesus prayed for him and touched him a second time and the man said: "I see men like men". Accuracy is being restored to our sight through this series.

As we re-read the scriptures, we understand better the heart and the mind of God. I learnt by listening to Randolph Barnwell that one of the greatest hindrances of grasping present truth is our past understanding of truth. As we progress in this series, one of the positions I am taking in my own life is having to allow my Spirit to be teachable. This involves allowing my past understanding on a matter not to influence my ability to capture and understand present truth. This also means that re-reading the same subject again in future can provide me with a new understanding of truth, which does not necessarily mean my current understanding is wrong, but as I grow in the knowledge of Christ I progressively understand more of Him, which moves me into greater accuracy and intimacy with Him.

2. UNDERSTANDING GRACE

Ephesians 3: 7 - 10

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the **administration** of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. **His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.**

In the passage above, Paul mentions two things regarding the working of Grace in his life:

1. Grace is a mystery that was hidden (Ephesians 3:2-5)
2. Paul is clear about the working of God's Grace in his life (To preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches in Christ, and to make clear to all people the administration of this mystery)

The 'accurate administration' of a thing requires one to have a clear understanding of what the thing is, and how it is to be used. If a man finds something that is unknown to him, he may use it any way he sees fit, but he runs the risk of ill administration of this thing he has found.

Ephesians 2:8

For by grace you have been **saved** through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the **gift** of God.

Many, using the above scripture, define grace as "God's unmerited favour". However, this scripture simply highlights one aspect of the work of grace, but does not explain the full definition of what grace is. As such, grace (historically) has been largely defined and understood as an experience we have at the point of salvation.

While this definition (grace as unmerited favour) is not incorrect, it is incomplete. The following scriptures highlight various aspects of the grace of God:

SCRIPTURE	PRINCIPLE
<p><u>2 Peter 3:18</u> But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.</p>	We can grow in grace.
<p><u>James 4:6</u> But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.</p>	Greater grace can be accessed by a posture of humility.
<p><u>Acts 13:43</u> Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.</p>	We experience grace not as an event, but a journey.
<p><u>2 Peter 1:2</u> Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,</p>	Grace increases in us as we grow in the knowledge of God.
<p><u>Titus 2:11 - 12</u> For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;</p>	Grace brings salvation. Once saved, it empowers us to deny ungodliness and live a holy life.

These scriptures do not categorically give us the definition of what Grace is, however they reveal to us that there is more to grace than the unmerited favour we receive at the point of salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the **grace** of God **I am what I am**, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I **worked** harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

Grace It is the very essence of God in us that allows us to BE and DO according to his good pleasure. Grace causes us to BE what God has called us to be and effectively DO what He has called us to do. It is God's divine enablement and empowerment.

3. GRACE TO THE CHURCH

What was Gods intent of the coming of Christ, and His dispensation of Grace to the Church?

Ephesians 3: 10

His intent was that now, **through the church**, the **manifold wisdom** of God should be **made known** to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 4: 7 - 8

But to **each one** of us **grace** has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."

The church, using the grace given to us, is to make known the wisdom of God to all creation. We each (individually) play a part in this (see our previous session on the corporate son).

4. CONCLUSION

- Grace is a mystery that was hidden.
- The working of God's grace in Paul's life was to teach and make clear to all people the administration of this mystery.
- Each one needs to know that there is a specific grace that has been apportioned to us.
- We need to continue in and pursue the growing of this grace.
- The expression of this grace will always be unto a demonstration of the manifold wisdom of God unto the principalities and powers

One of the things we have explored in looking at the original intent series has been that fact that God has brought us out of him to be an exact representation of him in the Earth, i.e. to give Him glory.

Therefore, if and when we truly understand the dispensation of the grace God has apportioned to us as individuals and walk in the fullness of that Grace, we will (in and through that grace) have the power to demonstrate the glory of God to the principalities and powers.
