

Faith Matters – # 22 – “God’s Grace” – October 22, 2017

More than 125 times, the word “grace” is mentioned in the New Testament. So it is important for us to know that grace is God’s gift of forgiveness. It is granted despite the fact that we don’t deserve it, and have not earned it. In fact, it can’t be earned. Grace is what Scripture refers to as a “free gift”¹. Grace opens the door for us to receive – not work for – but simply receive other gifts in addition to forgiveness. Some of those gifts are the ability to lead, to heal, to teach, to speak various tongues, to help others. But the greatest of these, as Paul explains, is love².

What is so objectionable about grace in the thinking of many people is that the harder you work to acquire it, the less likely you’ll receive it. We tend to value most highly what we have worked hardest for, or personally paid most dearly for.

We have been trained to believe that if you study and obey God’s commandments, you’ll earn total acceptance by God. That is, through the works of the Law. But since Jesus Christ fulfilled the works of the Law for us, we are no longer under the Law, but under grace³.

The Greek word for grace is Χαρις. Not surprisingly, the Greek for “thanks” is the same word. Just as Χαρις comes **to** us from God, so Χαρις goes **from** us to God as we are grateful for God’s gift.

I can imagine Paul writing to us here at Erskine, saying, “I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace that has been given to you in Christ Jesus⁴. Now it’s up to us to accept the gift of grace, God’s forgiveness, to celebrate it in our worship, and to live it in our daily thanksgiving.

¹ Romans 5:15; 2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 3:7; 4:7. ² 1 Cor. 12 & 13. ³ Rom. 6:14. ⁴ 1 Cor. 1:4

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