

The Gospel of Grace

Introduction

The gospel did not first explode through the world because the powerful understood it. It spread among the humble, the poor, the outsiders, and the ordinary — not because they were better, but because they were empty enough to receive.

Grace as Gift, Not Wage

At the most basic level, grace is gift. The Greek word commonly translated “grace” is *charis*, a word that can also carry the meaning of gift, favor, generosity, and kindness.

Tim Mackie and BibleProject note that *charis* is the word for both “grace” and “gift,” and that the related verb *charizomai* means “to give a gift” or “to forgive.”

This matters because when Paul says we are saved by grace, he is saying salvation does not belong in the category of wages. It belongs in the category of gift.

A wage is owed.

A gift is given.

A wage comes because of achievement.

Grace comes because of generosity.

This is why Paul says in Ephesians 2:8–9 that salvation is “not your own doing” and “not a result of works.” Grace removes salvation from the realm of human achievement and places it entirely in the generosity of God.

But this does not make grace cheap. Grace is free to the receiver, but it is costly to the giver. The gift of grace is given through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Supporting verses

Ephesians 2:8–10 — Saved by grace through faith, not by works.

Romans 4:4–5 — Wages are owed, but God justifies the ungodly by faith.

What are the Gifts of Grace

In Scripture, grace gives us:

1. **Jesus Himself**
God's greatest gift is His Son.
John 3:16; John 1:14–17
2. **Forgiveness**
God removes our sin and guilt.
Ephesians 1:7
3. **Adoption**
God brings us into His family as sons and daughters.
Ephesians 1:5–6; Romans 8:15
4. **The Holy Spirit**
God gives us His Spirit to live in us.
Ephesians 1:13–14; Galatians 3:2–5
5. **Spiritual gifts**
God gives us gifts to serve others.
Romans 12:6; 1 Peter 4:10
6. **Calling and purpose**
God gives us a role in His mission.
Ephesians 3:7–8; 1 Corinthians 15:10
7. **Endurance**
Grace helps us keep going through suffering.
1 Peter 5:10; Philippians 1:29
8. **Inheritance**
Grace makes us heirs of God. We receive a promised inheritance, not because we earned it, but because we belong to Christ.
Ephesians 1:11–14; Romans 8:16–17; Galatians 4:7
9. **New bodies**
Grace does not only save our souls. God will raise and transform our bodies to be like Christ's resurrected body.
Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:42–49; Philippians 3:20–21
10. **New creation**
Grace ends with God making all things new. We are not just forgiven people escaping the world; we are redeemed people waiting for a renewed creation.
Romans 8:19–21; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1–5

Grace Given Without Regard to Worthiness

One scholar on grace is John Barclay. In *Paul and the Gift*, Barclay argues that in the ancient world, people **did** believe in grace and gifts, but they often assumed that the best gifts should go to worthy recipients.

In other words, ancient people did not always think gifts were given randomly. A good gift was often considered fitting when it was given to someone who deserved it, someone noble, honorable, loyal, or socially worthy.

Paul's gospel radically disrupts that expectation.

Barclay describes Paul's understanding of grace as gift given "without regard to the worth of the recipient."

That is crucial.

God does not give Christ to the worthy.
God gives Christ to the unworthy.

God does not search for impressive people and then gift them with salvation.
God gives Christ to sinners, enemies, outsiders, and the spiritually dead.

This connects directly to 1 Corinthians 1:26–29, where Paul says not many were wise, powerful, or noble. The point is not that God hates the educated or the wealthy. The point is that grace refuses to let worldly status become the foundation of salvation and belonging.

Grace creates a community where the only ground of belonging is Christ.

Supporting verses

Romans 5:6–10 — Christ died for the ungodly, sinners, and enemies.

Application

Grace is God's unconditioned gift in Christ, given without regard to human worth, rooted in God's generous character, revealed through the cross and resurrection, received by faith, creating justification, participation, liberation, holiness, and a new community where boasting is ended and Christ alone is the ground of belonging.