

GRACE & OBEDIENCE

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

Intro: The Bible places a very strong link between grace and obedience.

- A. There are two extremes to avoid when it comes to the relationship between these two.
 - 1. Emphasize grace to the neglect of obedience.
 - 2. Emphasize obedience to the neglect of grace.
- B. We cannot preach one without the other. God's grace is very often accompanied by commands which must be obeyed.

Body:

I. Biblical Examples of Grace Combined with Obedience

- A. Noah (Genesis 6:5-8)
 - 1. Grace (6:8)
 - 2. Commands to be obeyed (6:13-18)
 - 3. Obedience (6:22)
 - 4. Salvation (8:1ff)
- B. Passover (Exodus 12)
 - 1. Grace (12:12-13)
 - 2. Commands to be obeyed (12:3ff)
 - 3. Obedience (12:28)
 - 4. Salvation (12:29-30)
- C. Israel at Jericho (Joshua 6)
 - 1. Grace (6:2)
 - 2. Commands to be obeyed (6:3-5)
 - 3. Obedience (6:12ff)
 - 4. Salvation (6:20)
- D. Blind man (John 9)
 - 1. Grace (9:7)
 - 2. Commands to be obeyed (9:7)
 - 3. Obedience (9:7)
 - 4. Salvation (9:11, 15)

II. Two Important Considerations

- A. In each example, God is the major character.
 - 1. Yes they are stories of real people who did real things, but God is the decisive actor and grantor of deliverance.

2. The people saved did not boast about their actions of obedience. They do not arrogantly talk of their ability to build boats, march around cities, or wash in a pool of water.
 3. We often hear people speaking of “God’s part and man’s part” of salvation. We need to be very careful with such language. While men do certainly have a role of obedience, we need to recognize that it is God who is the major character.
- B. If, throughout history, God has linked grace and obedience to bring salvation, it should not surprise us that He does so in regard to our salvation through Jesus.
1. Mark 16:16 — grace, commands to be obeyed, leads to salvation.
 2. Acts 2:38 — grace, commands to be obeyed, leads to salvation.
 3. God’s deliverance is rooted in His grace, and it combines His instructions which must be obeyed in order to receive it.

III. Maintaining Balance in Grace and Works

- A. We need to tell people of their sin and their lost condition. We need to teach them what to do in order to be saved. We need to teach them about righteous and holy living.
- B. But all of this needs to be founded upon God’s grace.
1. Sometimes our emphasis is on ourselves and our obedience to God’s commands. It may leave the impression that we have to save ourselves, thus leaving out grace.
 2. So we preach hard on self-control regarding lust and desires; we preach hard on greed and materialism, complacency in faith, stagnation in worship, failures of parents, etc..
 3. What happens next? Someone stops attending. We inquire. “I can’t do it” he says. “I can’t live it. I’m not good enough.”
 4. Truth is, he’s right. He can’t live it. None of us can. (1 John 1:5-10; Psalm 103:8-14)
- C. We are not saved *by* our good works, we are saved *for* good works which God will produce as He works in us (Eph. 2:8-10).
1. Yes, we need preaching and teaching on holy and righteous living. Of course! But that teaching must be grounded upon God’s grace and strength working within us.
 2. Christians need to be encouraged that they *can* live in a way that pleases God. That they are perfected *in Christ*, not in *themselves*.

TO MY PREACHING BROTHERS: This sermon is an old, simple sermon. The kind of sermon that we’ve all preached if we’ve been doing this for any length of time, and the kind that we could all preach without any notes. Interestingly, I find that such sermons usually get the most positive feedback from people, and also seem to help people the most. Don’t stray too far away from these type sermons for too long.

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