

GRACE THROUGH PAUL'S EYES

INTRODUCTION:

- A. If there is a theme upon which Paul dwelt extensively, it is the subject of grace.
- B. He taught grace, as "unmerited favor from God, bestowed freely but conditionally upon those who love and submit to God Rom 3:24; Rom 5:15-18. Note the instances of "free gift ... by grace."
- C. He wrote of the function of grace: Tit 2:11-14.
 1. Grace teaches men how to live in this world v 12
 2. Grace builds the hope of the return of Christ; grace that surrounds the saved as a people for God's own possession v 13
 3. This was Paul's abiding theme that occupied so much of his writing
 4. Grace is the motivation to be zealous of good works as God's own special people v 14
- D. Theme of Paul's writings seems to be his new life in Christ 1Cor 15:10 – He claimed grace "bestowednot in vain."
- E. In the expression, "the grace of God," Paul describes the gospel in its essential and most comprehensive sense Acts 20:24.
- F. Try to see with Paul's eyes, what the grace of God means.

DISCUSSION

I. HIS CHRONOLOGICAL THINKING

- A. Mention of grace brought Paul back to own conversion 1Cor 15:8-10
 1. He remembered his past v 9.
 2. It humbled him v 9
 3. It moved him to work more abundantly v 10
 4. It made him realize the greatness of God's power in the grace he received. ". . . yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." v 10
- B. He returned to his earliest days Gal 1:15
 1. Knew he was "separated" -- chosen for a special task
 - a. Discuss Acts 26:15-18 -- his first encounter with the risen Savior he had rejected.
 - b. Was called "by grace" -- but later said calling comes via the gospel 2Thess. 2:14 -- there is no difference, it is the gospel of grace that calls all sinners to turn from their sins.
 2. His calling was to preach Eph. 3:8

3. At the crux of his explanation of the great mystery, the dispensation (stewardship) from God given him to preach-- he breaks into a self-accusing memory of what he had been.

- C. Grace called him to self-appraisal 1Tim 1:12-16 a sinner "....of whom I am chief" (Present tense)
 1. God's grace became to him larger and more precious at the very thought of his own life.
 2. His life is an example of the power of God's grace

II. HIS PERSONAL THINKING

- A. Never of grace as an unconditional covering of sins of any kind Rom 6:3-5
 1. Thought not only of grace given freely, but as a gift that must be obtained through faith and obedience 1Tim 1:13; 2Cor 6:1.
 2. Salvation by grace through faith requires works Gal 5:6; Eph 2:8-10.
- B. Paul associated being baptized into Christ with being saved by grace (Ephesians saved by grace, but were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Acts 19:1-5.
- C. Paul conceived of grace that is greater than our sins.
 1. No matter how deep in sin a person may sink, he can take heart--Paul was "chief of sinners" and was saved.
 2. The only limits to the saving power of grace is man's own will. God gives -- does not force reception Jas. 4:6; 1Pet 5:5.

III. THE MEANS OF OBTAINING SALVATION BY GRACE

- A. Faith -- Eph 2:6-8 -- note "by grace through faith."
 1. Faith is man's response to God's offer Rom 10:9-10.
 2. God's gift is salvation through Christ 2Cor 9:13.
- B. Obedience -- Works Gal 5:6.
- C. Continued Faithfulness -- Rom 5:1

CONCLUSION:

- A. When men and women are saved by grace, grace triumphs over sin and takes the throne sin has usurped in the hearts of men Rom 5:21.
- B. Christian living as seen through Paul's eyes is a "state of grace," a life lived in the radiant sunshine of God's unmerited favor.
- C. Ask yourself--how much stands between me and the reception of this wonderful gift?