

8 July 2018

The grace of God – Pt 4 & final – The body of Christ is to abound in the grace of Christ.

This is our fourth and final study on the topic of God's grace. In our previous teaching we established that – (1) God's grace is conveyed between brethren by words, and (2) God gives grace to each believer according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and (3) churches are given the grace of God to give gifts to those in the body of Christ, and in doing so convey God's grace within the body of Christ. In this study we establish that (1) the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is exceedingly abundant, and (2) following His example we are to grow in grace, abound in His grace and be strong in the grace that is in Christ.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded.

1. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is exceedingly abundant.

"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (1Tim.1: 14).

2. Following His example we are to –

i) grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"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" (2Pet.3: 18).

ii) abound in the grace of Christ.

"Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also" (2Cor.8: 7).

When we abound with the grace of Christ we will sing "with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3: 16).

iii) be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2Tim.2: 1).

An illustration to help apply the teaching to our life today.

Paul suffered that he might preach the gospel of the grace of God to the Galatians (Gal.4: 13), and they "would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me" (Gal.4: 15).

Question to think about.

Remember our question that we asked at the end of our previous topic – what does it mean for us to know the grace of Christ – such that it is sufficient for us in our times of suffering? How can we sum up our answer from this study and our previous three on this topic of the grace of God?

My answer to our question from the scriptures.

When we suffer we have an opportunity to grow in grace, abound in the grace of Christ and be strong in His grace because –

i) Christ's strength is made perfect in our weakness, and when we suffer we are weak, and so we get to know the power of Christ (Rom.1: 4). And given that the grace of Christ is expressed in – the cross, and how Christ gave up His heavenly glory, suffered on the cross for our sin that we might be rich, then when we suffer we either trust in Him, or turn away from Him. When we trust in Him more in our suffering then His power rests on us (2Cor.12: 9).

ii) When we are weak in our suffering we give our brethren the opportunity to bestow upon us the grace of Christ by doing works of charity that make them poor, that we might be rich.

Paul glorified God and knew that the Lord's grace was sufficient for him, that Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness, therefore he glorified God in his infirmities and took pleasure in sufferings, for when he was weak (2Cor.11: 29) then was he strong.

Let us, as members of the body of Christ glorify God in our infirmities, and take pleasure in our sufferings that we may abound in the grace of Christ. Amen!