

## Grace, Gratitude & Glory

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Scripture Reading: [2 Corinthians 4](#)

### Introduction

[2 Corinthians 4:15](#) **For all things are for your sakes**, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

This is a statement of one who has experienced the grace of God in his life. Paul has a deep knowledge, understanding, experience and appreciation of the grace of God. He is known as the "Apostle of grace." But before Paul became an apostle he persecuted the Church and Jesus Christ.

[Acts 9:1](#) And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, [2:](#) And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Then according to his own testimony ...

[Galatians 1:13](#) For ye have heard of my conversation (manner of life) in time past in the Jews' religion, **how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:**

Paul violently persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. But the grace of God changed Paul!

[Galatians 1:15](#) But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and **called me by his grace**, [16:](#) **To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen;** immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

[23:](#) But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past **now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.** [24:](#) And they glorified God in me.

Paul encountered Jesus Christ whom he persecuted. He was radically transformed **from a persecutor to a preacher**. The grace of God transformed Paul, and he spent the rest of his life living for Christ, for the gospel ministry and the advancing Christ's kingdom.

Paul, speaking of his own gospel ministry to the Corinthians, declares that his ministry is by God's mercy. His ministry is a clear proclamation of the Gospel of grace without dishonesty, craftiness, and deceit. He was willing to endure hardship and persecution and even the threat of death for the gospel ministry.

Here in verse 15, Paul explains that the reason that he faced all that he did to proclaim the gospel. All his preaching, all his labor, all his service, all his suffering, are all for their sakes and ultimately to the glory of God.

How is it that proclaiming the gospel to the people brings glory to God? This verse explains it to us. Three words - **grace**, **gratitude** and **glory**. Paul understands that these three words are inter-related and interconnected.

My prayer and aim this morning is to help us understand **what gratitude is, what produces gratitude** and **what is the ultimate end of gratitude**.

I want to be a grateful person, not only on Thanksgiving Day. We often think of thanksgiving as a national holiday, or something we give routinely before meals, or something our parents tells us to do when somebody does us a favor. But being thankful goes deeper.

### **I - Grace**

[2 Corinthians 4:15](#) For all things are for your sakes, that **the abundant grace** might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

Paul uses the word **abundant**, which refers to increasing or spreading. Ministering the gospel for their sake helps to extend God's grace to more and more people. Through the clear proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ that God's grace spreads.

Here is a clear mark of a person who has been touched by the grace of God. Grace received and realized produces **a desire to see others to experience the grace of God** in their lives.

### **What is this grace that Paul is speaking of?**

Grace is the undeserved favor. It is favor that God shows to people who do not deserve it. It is a gift given to someone who has not done anything to earn the gift.

When your employer hands you your pay check on pay day - that is not grace because you worked for it. You know that and that is why you do not send your employer "thank you" card every pay day.

Grace would be handing your pay check when you did not show up for work for the whole pay period. You did not work for it so you do not deserve it.

But grace is much more than that. **Grace is not simply undeserved** favor, grace is actually **ill-deserved** favor. Grace is a gift given and not just to one who does not deserve it, but is **given to someone who deserves the opposite**.

This is the burden of Paul's ministry, that he endures all things for the gospel's sake that grace may spread to more and more people. People who deserved judgment may receive grace. Why is Paul concerned and dedicated that grace may abound? Because when people experience grace,

the response is thanksgiving. Grace produces gratitude, which leads us to the second word I want us to consider - **gratitude**.

## **II - Gratitude**

Here we need to clarify what gratitude is.

### **1. Gratitude is more than giving thanks**

When someone does nice things to us or gives something to us, the only appropriate thing to do is to say, "Thank you!" But it is possible to say, "Thank you" without being grateful at all.

When our employer gives us our paycheck, we say "Thank you", don't we? Even though we know we are entitled to it because we worked for it. Why do we say thank you, even though we really do deserve what we are receiving? We say, thank you **out of courtesy**. We are trying to express **honor** and **respect** toward our employer. So we say, thank you for the pay check even though we have work for it.

There are times we say thank you, not out of gratitude but out of courtesy, our of respect and honor. So, gratitude is more than saying, "Thank you".

*Give thanks with a grateful heart  
Give thanks to the Holy One  
Give thanks because He's given  
Jesus Christ, His Son.*

### **2. Gratitude is more than enjoying the gift**

Gratitude is more than being pleased with the gift. It is more than being glad that you got something you wanted.

This Christmas many children will received gifts from their parents and they will be happy about the gift and they will enjoy the gift and they may even say thank you for the gift. But if the focus is **more on the gift** and **not on the giver** then there is no true gratitude. If the child's delight is in getting the gift and not on the giver then there is no true gratitude.

Unfortunately, this is even true with the gift of salvation. God gives us the free gift of salvation, forgiving all our sins for which we are happy and glad, which we should. But if we are not careful, many times we find ourselves **happy in things we have received**. We are happy that our sins have been forgiven that we don't have to go to hell and that we are going to Heaven. We delight more in the gift and than in the Giver. If we do this, we are failing to give the gratitude that God deserves for His gifts.

*Thanksgiving is nothing if not a glad and reverent lifting of the heart to God in honor and praise for His goodness. ~ Robert Casper Lintner*

### **3. Gratitude is a response to grace**

Gratitude, has a very close relationship to grace.

2 Corinthians 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace (**charis**) might through the thanksgiving (**eucharistian**) of many redound to the glory of God.

The Greek word for thanksgiving or gratitude is built on the word for grace: **charis** becomes **eucharistian**; grace becomes gratitude.

**Grace produces gratitude.** It increases in direct proportion to this underserved favor. The more ill-deserved favor that is given to us the more gratitude that we give back to God.

God acts in grace toward us and we respond in gratitude toward Him. **Gratitude is not something you can artificially work up.** We cannot just say, from now on, I will be a grateful person. It operates in the realm of **cause and effect.** Gratitude is the effect. Grace is the cause.

When people experience and acknowledge the grace of God in their lives, they naturally give thanks. Paul understands that as grace extends to more and more people, more and more people would give thanks to God.

### **III - Glory**

2 Corinthians 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many **redound to the glory** (doxan) **of God.**

Gratitude glorifies the Giver. Gratitude glorifies God. The ultimate goal in all we do is for the glory of God. We are undeserving and ill-deserving sinners before God and yet recipients of God's amazing grace. And when we respond to this grace with heartfelt gratitude, God gets glory. Psalm 50:23 **Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me:** and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

This is why Paul said at the beginning of this verse, **For all things are for your sakes.** This is what I live for, my life, my ministry, my doctrine, my suffering, is all for your sakes, that you too might experience the grace of God, the many more would experience the grace of God, because experiencing the grace of God will produce gratitude and gratitude glorifies God.

Hebrews 12:28 **Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace** (charin), (let us show gratitude) **whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:**

### **Closing Challenges**

According to Paul in Romans 1, there are two things that paganism are known for; there are two things that characterize of an unbeliever - **idolatry** and **unthankfulness.** Only grace can change this.

Romans 1:19 **Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20: For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly**

seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21: Because that, when they knew God, they **glorified him not as God, neither were thankful**; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22: Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23: **And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things**. 24: Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

## **What is the cure to ingratitude?**

### **1. Regeneration**

Ask God to make you a new person.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11: He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12: But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

### **2. Meditation**

Even as Christians, we need to be constantly reminded that we are the recipients of amazing and indescribable grace. Paul speaks of this indescribable gift in ...

2 Corinthians 8:9 For ye know **the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**, that, though he was rich, **yet for your sakes** he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

If you and I are to be people filled with gratitude, it is essential that we meditate on God's Word, and in this case, on the grace of God. The more a person realizes how undeserving and ill-deserving he is, the more grateful he would be to God.

Now, having received the abundant grace of God, **may we spend our lives spreading that grace** to more and more people. And as grace extends to more and more people, may it increase gratitude to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, **that the abundant grace** might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen!

Happy Thanksgiving Day!