

Series - God's Grace

2. God's grace – for ourselves

"The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God". (Ex. 34:6)

Read Exodus 34: 4-14 (To focus upon God's grace from our Bible passage it would be helpful to see it within its context and reading 33: 12-23 does set the scene.)

Let's look at verse 5. God descends and physically stands with Moses. In the Bible story, this hasn't happened since 'walking in the garden with Adam'. What do you see as the importance of this for Moses and the Israelite nation? And for us all as the faithful people of God?

Verse 6 -7. In ancient times to learn a person's name was to have access to a person's character, their very essence. God now expands on his earlier name "I am who I am" (3:14) now making plain his character. One commentary on this passage proposes that this is best understood as God saying "I am he who is there (for you) – really and truly present, ready to help and to act" (*Lasor/Hubbard/Bush*). Moses hasn't exactly been 'a good boy', nor has the Israelite nation, yet God demonstrates his character (verse 10 +). How is this relevant for us today?

In the second part of verse 7 God says he punishes. Do you see this as compatible with his other characteristics he lists? Can a God who punishes also be an all-loving God?

Read 2 Timothy 1: 6-14

Verse 9 speaks directly of God's grace and today's focus. We have all 'fallen short', but God, in his mercy (grace), chooses not to punish us but gives us a role working with him for his purposes. What joy! All through this passage Paul is showing Timothy how his understanding of God's grace has influenced his attitude and direction to life. What examples can you find? For you today, do you find this encouraging or discouraging?



In the second part of verse 9 and in verse 10, Paul directly connects the giving of grace with Christ Jesus. Can you make a connection between Christ Jesus and a just God?

Verse 13-14. How do we ourselves follow the advice Paul here gives to Timothy? What practical things should we be doing?

Twice in this passage Paul mentions 'ashamed'; asking Timothy (and readers) not to be ashamed of him because he is a prisoner (low end of the social spectrum), and stating he is not ashamed of his beliefs. Is this advice relevant for us today? Do we need to change any current practices?

Prayer *Father, you are kind and good. It is impossible for anyone to deserve what Jesus has done for us all. Your grace is free, undeserved, and unconditional. There is nothing I can ever do to repay you for all you've done and all you continue to do in my life. I humbly thank you and, with your Spirit's help, may I live these coming days for your glory. Amen.*

(Bible used = NIV 2011 translation)

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