

GOD'S GRACE AT EPHESUS

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God has used human language to reveal his divine will, a sufficient and effective means to accomplish this important task (1 Cor. 2:6-16). For many years I have looked for the one word that describes the content of each book of the Bible. For instance, the word “beginnings” best describes the content of Genesis, because this book is about the origin of man, sin, and salvation. The word “faith” comes to mind for the book of Romans, the very heart of the book. The word “perversion” is central in the book of Galatians (Gal. 1:6-8). The word “grace” comes to mind for the book of Ephesians; Paul makes this point in every chapter. We thrill at Paul’s statement “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8, 9). Notice the various passages highlighting God’s grace.

First returning to Jerusalem, Paul met with the elders of the church at Ephesus on the island of Miletus (Acts 20:17) and recounted how he had worked with them in teaching the gospel (20). He emphasized his life was not worth anything, unless he used it for doing the work God had assigned to him, i.e., informing others of the gospel of God’s grace. Paul’s preaching about the grace of God had established the church at Ephesus. When Paul preached the Gospel of God, he preached about the grace of God.

Second, the grace of God grew out of God’s eternal purpose. Notice such passages as Ephesians 1: 7, and 9, which emphasize the working of God in their midst--his eternal purpose, a plan of mercy, decided upon ages ago, before the world began.

A third point of grace is the Ephesians had learned of Jesus Christ through the gospel Paul preached. Paul admonished them not to live as the unsaved with closed hearts full of darkness (4:17, 18). He explained the unsaved are far from the life of God, having shut their minds against Him and could not understand His ways, because their hearts were calloused by a life of sin. The wicked care not about right and wrong (19) and will stop at nothing, as they are driven by their evil minds. Then Paul boldly proclaimed, “But this is not the way you learned Christ” (20)! They must remember what they have heard.

Fourth, “For by grace you have been saved through faith” (2:8). The Ephesians must continue in and depend upon this grace. Paul hastened to add, “and this is not your own doing.” In other words, the gospel came from God, not man. A “man-made” gospel would not look like, nor bear fruit, the divine gospel produces. In his arrogance and pride man would believe he could save himself—a definite impossibility!

Fifth, Paul commended the Ephesian elders “to the word of his grace” (Acts 20:32), as he did not expect to see them again. He knew others needed to hear this gospel of grace and planned to carry this message to regions beyond them.

The word “grace” and the book of Ephesians go hand in hand. Look what we have learned about grace—it is a relationship with God we do not deserve, but desperately need. God’s grace is amazing?