

Examining Our Mission: Grace: Who, How, and Why Does Christ Save?

1 Timothy 1:12-20

Why is grace important?

- In order to fulfill God's mission we must seek to understand the grace of God in Christ Jesus.
- This morning we are examining the ways that God's grace operates – the means that He uses to achieve His goal.
- *Who* does He save? *How* does He save? And *why* does He save?

Modern Human Beings

- The Enlightenment, 1650-1800
- Science over Scripture
- People over God
- Freedom over Accountability
- Happiness over Responsibility
- Subjective over Objective
- Moral Relativism
- No Absolute Truth
- Convenience over Commitment
- Pride over Humility



Four Propositions

- Humanity still needs God today. He is what our hearts are truly hungry for.
- God must find us, because we cannot find Him.
- He must accept us on the basis of grace because we surely cannot earn His favor.
- He is wiser than we are and must lead us back to the purpose of our original creation.

1 Timothy 1:12-20

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. ¹³ Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴ The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

1 Timothy 1:12-20

But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. ¹⁸ Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well,

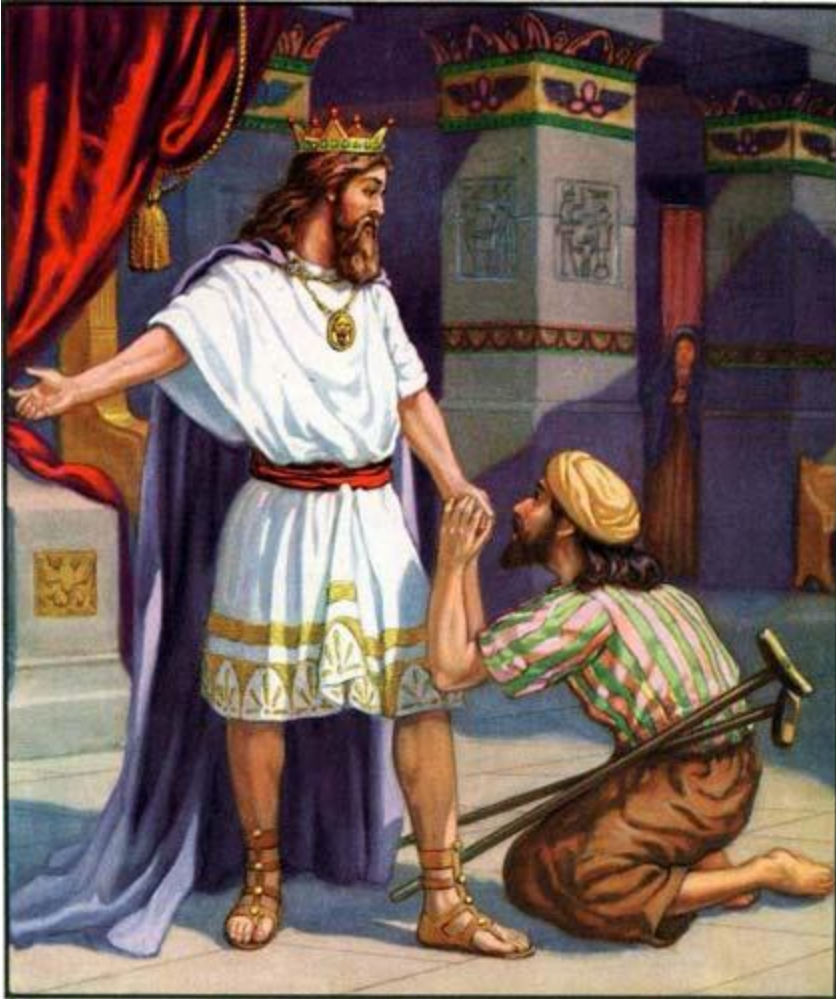
1 Timothy 1:12-20

¹⁹ holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. ²⁰ Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

1. Who does Christ save?

- “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.” (1 Tim 1:15)
- Christ saves those who cannot save themselves
- Example 1: Paul, the former persecutor of the church, a violent man. But still saved by grace.
- Example 2: Timothy, prophecies made about him while he was still a child, weak and unimpressive.
- There is nothing we can do or must do to make ourselves “save-able.”

Mephibosheth, a picture of grace



- 2 Samuel 9:1-13
- Grace is granted on behalf of another
- Grace lifts the weak to a high position
- Grace gives generously
- Grace secures this position

2. How does Christ save?

- “The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and the love that are in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 1:14)
- He saves on the basis of His grace: the cross, the resurrection, His intercession for us, His return
- He saves through the proclamation of the message of salvation – this is the medium. Romans 10:17
- He saves through the conviction and conversion of His Spirit, God’s personal touch. John 16:8-11, Eph. 1:13-14
- He saves through our faith – this is the means through which we receive salvation. Eph. 2:8-10

C.S. Lewis' Testimony



- Oxford Scholar, atheist
- Friend of J.R.R. Tolkien, "The Hobbit," "Lord of the Rings"
- "I know very well when, but hardly how, the final step was taken. I was driven to Whipsnade one sunny morning. When we set out I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did."

C.S. Lewis on Christ

“A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

3. Why does Christ save?

- He saves because He loves. John 3:16
- He saves to display His mercy before angelic hosts in heaven. Ephesians 3:10-11
- He saves to release us from the enslavement to sin to live in the freedom of the Spirit. John 8:32-36
- He saves that we might bear witness to His grace and live for Him. Isaiah 49:6
- He saves that we might know Him and be with Him forever. John 17:3
- He saves us that we might be made complete, not fragmented but complete and whole. John 10:10

Hymenaeus' Shipwrecked Faith

- They preached a man-centered message, Christianity without Christ
- They preached a Christianity without Conversion
- They preached a Christianity without Morality or Accountability
- They preached a Christianity without the Resurrection
- They preached a Christianity without Hope

Our effectiveness as a church...

The success of our church to accomplish its God-given mission will depend on how well we understand and on how highly we value the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Hot dogs and the gospel



The Lingering “Enlightenment”

- 1650-1800: a change in Western philosophy
- Spinoza, John Locke, Voltaire, Isaac Newton
- Also called the “Age of Reason.” The freedom to use our own intelligence
- Move for democracy, public education, human rights, elevation of man
- Move against aristocracy, organized religion, class identification, oppressive politics
- Lingering results: the exaltation of humanity and the lowering of God’s status

The Darkened Enlightenment

- The tendency to believe in science rather than in Scripture – in reality science and Scripture are not necessary opponents.
- The tendency to elevate people and de-throne God – in reality many movements of the 1800's and 1900's were very evil and promoted moral relativism
- The tendency to believe that we have resolved all mysteries – in reality we have not resolved all the problems of the human spirit, especially the problem of evil.
- The questions are: Can man live without God? How can we find God? How does God accept us?
- Why does God bother with us?

President John Adams' Warning

“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passion unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”