Do You Understand Grace? (Summary)

I. Introduction:

A. Grace might be the most misunderstood word in the entire Bible. Some believe grace means that it doesn't matter what you believe – God will accept you. Others believe that grace excuses all sin. Still others say salvation is by grace alone; obedience is not necessary. But what does God's Word really teach about this all important word?

B. The Word "Grace".

1. The usual definition of grace is "unmerited favor." That is probably too narrow a meaning of the word. Vine's Expository Dictionary defines it as, "That which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favorable regard . . . on the part of the bestower, the friendly disposition from which the kindly act proceeds; graciousness, loving kindness, good will."

2. In the time of Homer (several centuries before Christ), it meant "sweetness" or "attractiveness." It can also include the idea of "rejoicing."

3. In the New Testament, the Greek word is translated variously to words such as "grace", "thanks", "favor", "pleasure", "benefit", and "joy".

4. As we've seen, the word has a broader meaning than is supposed.

II. What grace has done and will do.

A. **Grace appeared to all people.** (Titus 2:11) "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,*".

1. As Simeon said in Luke 2:29-30, "*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,*".

B. **Grace instructs.** In Titus 2:11, the grace of God that bringeth salvation comes, and then in verse 12 (what does grace do?) "*Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*"

1. God's grace is connected with knowledge; it comes teaching us.

2. (John 6:45) "*It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*"

3. (1 Cor. 1:18) "*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*"

4. (Rom. 1:16) "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*"

5. The power of salvation that grace came to give us is in the preaching of the gospel.

6. **Denying ungodliness...** (in Titus 2:12) We are taught by grace do deny ungodliness and to live righteously in this present world. This refers to the denial in one's life of irreligion. Salvation is promised to the religious persons who seek and find the true way of the Lord. The person who boasts that "I am not religious" has already forfeited the grace of God as it pertains to him. Such persons have "fallen short of it".

   a) Heb. 12:15, "*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*".

7. The sins of the flesh must be rejected. Even the apostle Paul "buffeted his body" to bring it under subjection to the will of Christ. 1 Cor. 9:27, "*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*"

8. **Grace justifies.** (Rom. 3:23-25) "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*"

C. **By grace God revealed His plan for man's salvation.** (Eph. 3:1-5) "*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*".

D. **Grace raises believers to a new life.** (Eph. 2:4-6) "*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*"

1. The same thought is in Romans 5:10 where our being enemies was the existing state from which we were reconciled to God.

   a) Rom. 5:10, "*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*"

2. **By grace ye are saved** in Eph. 2:4-6... In this Paul referred to salvation from past sins and induction into the kingdom of Christ. The apostle Peter mentioned this as salvation from one's "old sins".

   a) 2 Pet. 1:9, "*But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*"

   b) Through baptism we are already saved from our past sins, but we must continue faithful to the end; for the Saviour says in Rev. 2:10, "*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: <u>be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life</u>.*"

   c) Eph. 2:8, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*"

   d) God's whole plan of salvation is His gift to us, but we have to act upon its conditions before we can receive it.

III. Grace includes obedience.

A. **Grace does not exclude law.** Everyone is subject to the law of Christ.

1. (1 Cor. 9:20-21) "*And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.*"

B. "*To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.*

1. The law of Christ is also called the "Law of faith."

   a) Rom. 3:23, "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*"

b) Law of works was a reference to the Old Law of Moses. Paul says we now are to live under the Law of Faith which He has given us.

c) Gal. 3:23-24, "*But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*"

d) Rom. 10:17, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*"

C. **Grace must be conditional.**

1. Rom. 6:14-18. "*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*"

2. (Rom. 6:1-4) "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*"

3. Recall that it is by God's grace that we are raised to walk in a new life. We are made alive.

a) (Eph. 2:4-6) "*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*"

b) Have you been saved from your past sins?

IV. Conclusion.

A. This lesson has shown us that God saves man by grace when man obeys by faith.