



Justice, Mercy, and Grace

JUSTICE

When you receive what you deserve.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 3:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

MERCY

When you don't receive what you deserve.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

Ephesians 2:4-5

GRACE

When you receive what you didn't deserve.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should."

Ephesians 2:8-9

JUSTICE – MERCY – GRACE

"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 18:13

The publican deserved JUSTICE. He asked for MERCY. He was justified by GRACE.

Gift of God and Works of Men

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

To some this verse rules out man doing any thing to receive the gift of God. Such a conclusion is the result of (1) isolating these two verses from the context and (2) of not understanding the use of the words “gift” and “work.” [SEE FULL CONTEXT ON THE NEXT PAGE.]

Gift: Something that is bestowed voluntarily and without compensation. **Work:** Physical or mental effort or activity directed toward the production or accomplishment of something. The two words are not necessarily antagonistic to each other.

GIFT AND WORKS

Things one must do to receive the Gift of God:

Hear the Good News of the gift of God. (*mental activity*)

Romans 10:17

Believe the Good News. (*mental activity*)

Mark 16:15-16

Repent of sins. (*mental and physical activity*)

Luke 24:47

Confess Jesus as the Son of God. (*mental and physical activity*)

Romans 10:9-10

Submit to baptism for the remission sins. (*mental and physical activity*)

Acts 22:16

Be a faithful disciple (learner and follower). (*mental and physical activity*)

Philippians 2:12

Personal involvement is always part of the process of receiving a gift. Each person has the ability to accept or reject what God has graciously done.

ILLUSTRATION

In teaching a Bible class I held up a twenty dollar bill and said to one member, “This is a free gift. Just come up and take it.” He chose to come and accept the gift. After he had returned to his seat with the twenty dollar bill, I asked two questions: (1) Was it a gift? And (2), did he do anything to receive it? The class answered “yes” to both questions. Then I asked, “If he had to come up and take it from me did that negate the fact that it was a gift?” The answer was obvious. “No!”

So it is with the free gift of God. The Father gave His Son, His Son gave His life, the Holy Spirit gave us the message. One needs to take hold of what has been given, and that requires mental and physical activity (which is the definition of “work”). One’s mental and physical activity in no way negates the fact of it being a gift. God’s mercy was the basis for the act of offering the gift. Man’s faith is the basis for actions that make it possible for him to receive the gift.

A FINAL WORD

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out [mental and physical activity] your salvation with fear and trembling.

Philippians 2:12

Grace and faith are not necessarily antagonistic to each other.

What God has graciously done and what man must faithfully do work together harmoniously.

FULL CONTEXT
Ephesians 2:1-10

ALL DEAD IN SIN

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, [2] in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. [3] Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

BELIEVERS MADE ALIVE

[4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), [6] and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

**SAVED BY GRACE
THROUGH FAITH**

[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; [9] not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

TO WALK IN GOOD WORKS

[10] For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.



WORD STUDY

enhance your
Bible knowledge

CORBAN

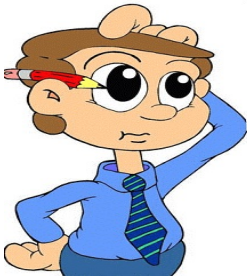
A Hebrew word adopted into the Greek of the New Testament and left untranslated. It occurs only once. It means a gift or offering consecrated to God. Anything over which this word was once pronounced was irrevocably dedicated to the temple. Land, however, so dedicated might be redeemed before the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 27:16-24).

Our Lord condemns the Pharisees for their false doctrine, inasmuch as by their traditions they had destroyed the commandment which requires children to honor their father and mother, teaching them to find excuse from helping their parents by the device of pronouncing "Corban" over their goods, thus reserving them to their own selfish use.

– Easton Bible Dictionary

He [Jesus] was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH'; but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),' you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."

MARK 7:9-13



Ponder This

Top Heavy (Head Too Big)

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Romans 12:3

PRIDE WAS THEIR DOWNFALL

HAMAN

So Haman came in and the king said to him, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

Esther 6:6

HEROD

On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them. The people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"

Acts 12:21-22

DIOTREPES

I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church.

3 John 1:9-10

MAY PRIDE NOT BE OUR DOWNFALL

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

Proverbs 16:18



Pearls from Proverbs

Hold Fast, Do Not Let Go!

WISDOM

*How blessed is the man who finds wisdom
And the man who gains understanding.
For her profit is better than the profit of silver
And her gain better than fine gold.*

*She is more precious than jewels;
And nothing you desire compares with her.*

*Long life is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and honor.*

*Her ways are pleasant ways
And all her paths are peace.*

*She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her,
And happy are all who hold her fast.*

Proverbs 3:13-18

INSTRUCTION

Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live."

Proverbs 4:4

*Take hold of instruction; do not let go.
Guard her, for she is your life.*

Proverbs 4:13

F.Y.C. is a monthly publication by Ron Adams.
Articles written by others are duly noted.
Bible references are from the NASB except where
another translation is referenced.
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