

Grace Upon Grace John 1:15-19

15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"

16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. NKJV

Last week we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten full of grace and truth. Several places in the New Testament it talks about His fulness. He is the fulness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9). In Him all the fulness dwells (Col. 1:19).

The idea is simply that Jesus is complete, full, perfect. There is nothing lacking in Him. He is God and therefore infinite in all of His characteristics.

And He is never diminished. I was listening to a preacher the other day and he was speaking of a culture where they would never wish someone a good day. They thought that if you did, that somehow your good day would be diminished by the amount of well being you wished on some else. But as John is going to show us Jesus' fulness can never decrease.

I. Of His fulness we have all received.

A. It is from Jesus that we got all that we have.

1. 1 Cor 4:6-7 that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? NKJV
2. Spiritually we were not mostly full and all we needed from Jesus was for Him to top us off.
3. We were empty, dead, blind, without strength when we came to Him alone from whom we must receive what we need.
4. This included John and the other apostles.
5. It includes every preacher, and parishioner.

B. It is from His fulness that we are supplied.

1. Jesus told the woman at the well, who through much struggle came to the well every day to draw water, that those who believe in Him would have a bubbling spring of water flowing from their lives.
2. John 4:13-14 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give

him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." NKJV

3. The blessings that God has for us are in Jesus Christ and He abundantly supplies.
 - a. Notice that the woman at the well was not told that in the believer would be a well of water from which one could draw, but a spring of water that bubbles up, fills and over flows.
 - b. Like the supply of water for the children of Israel in the wilderness, when Moses struck the rock and river came forth that supplied water to the 2.5 million people there.
 - c. I am come that you might have life and have it abundantly, Jesus said.
 - d. John 10:10 I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. NKJV
 - e. That is what Jesus intends for His people, not that we would struggle along, under the circumstances but that the fullness of Jesus Christ might be in us, full and springing up.

C. Notice also that it is only from Him that we receive.

1. All true spiritual blessings come through Jesus alone.
 - a. Eph 1:3-15 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.
 - b. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him. 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

- c. 13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. NKJV
- 2. You can't get those blessings anywhere else. If you do, they are counterfeits.
- 3. The world may offer limitless avenues to God but only one will get you there. But the truth be known it is only in western civilizations that we believe that every road leads to God.
 - a. The Hindus: “Although this is just a brief synopsis, it is readily seen that Hinduism is in opposition to biblical Christianity on most every count of its belief system. Christianity has one God who is both personal and knowable (Deuteronomy 6:5; 1 Corinthians 8:6), and one set of Scriptures; teaches that God created the earth and all that lives upon it (Genesis 1:1ff; Hebrews 11:3); believes that man is created in God's image and lives only once (Genesis 1:27; Hebrews 9:27-28); and teaches that salvation is through Jesus Christ alone (John 3:16; 6:44; 14:6; Acts 4:12). Hinduism as a religious system fails because it fails to recognize Jesus as the uniquely incarnated Divine and solely sufficient source of salvation for condemned man.” <http://www.gotquestions.org/hinduism.html>
 - b. Buddhism: “In his whole life and in all his teachings the Buddha never said anything about the One God of the desert.” (i.e. the God is the Jew) <http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma3/budgod.html>
 - c. To the Moslem Christians are infidels.
 - d. There is no world religion that thinks Christianity is equally true to itself. So why do the secularist want to force that belief on Christians.

II. And grace for grace

A. Different translations:

- 1. John 1:16 From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. NLT
- 2. John 1:16 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. NASU
- 3. John 1:16 For out of His fullness (abundance) we have all received [all had a share and we were all supplied with] one grace after another and spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing and even favor upon favor and gift [heaped]

upon gift. AMP

- B. The idea seems to be of one grace making a foundation for the grace to follow and that there is a never ending supply of grace.
 - 1. Now remember that grace is the unmerited favor of God toward us.
- C. Some examples:
 - 1. The prodical son. Luke 15:22-24
 - a. Bring out the best robe and put it on him,
 - b. put a ring on his hand
 - c. and sandals on his feet.
 - d. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it,
 - e. let us eat and be merry;
 - f. for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'
 - g. And they began to be merry.
 - 2. That is how God treats us.
 - a. He clothes us with the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
 - b. He put us into the family of God with a royal ring.
 - c. He puts shoes back on our feet.
 - d. He has the fatted calf prepared, He supplies abundantly for us.
 - e. He throws a party.
 - f. He receives us back from the dead.
 - 3. Grace upon grace for the nation of Israel. Ezek 16:4-14
 - a. 4 As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. 5 No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.
 - b. 6 "And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' 7 I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare.

- c. 8 "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord God.
- d. 9 "Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. 10 I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. 12 And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13 Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. 14 Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord God. NKJV

D. But God is not done with us yet.

- 1. Eph 2:7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

III. But how much grace we receive is not the same for all.

- A. How many Christian men there are whose Christian lives at the best are like some of those Australian or Siberian rivers; in the dry season, a pond here, a stretch of sand, waterless and barren there, then another place with a drop of muddy water in some hollow, and then another stretch of sand, and so on. Why should not the ponds be linked together by a flashing stream? God is always pouring Himself out; why do we not always take Him in? A. Maclaren

Notes:

The grace replaced by grace means that every grace received is a capacity for higher blessedness. Thus Christian humility is the condition of Divine uplifting; the knowledge that leads to love is the condition of that higher gnosis that is born of love. The faith that accepts mercy blossoms into the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Reconciliation with God becomes itself transformed into active communion with him; all union to Christ becomes the harbinger of full identification with him, "he in us and we in him." This is the great principle of the Divine kingdom: "To him that hath shall be given." Pulpit Commentary

'We beheld His glory' is a reminiscence that thrills the Evangelist, though half a century has passed since the vision gleamed upon his eyes; but 'of His fulness have all we received' is infinitely and unspeakably more. A. Maclaren