

W417_Grace.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book is number 22 of the series entitled The Form of Sound Words. And the subject for our consideration today is the great word, Grace. We read just before the opening of this meeting. A part of Galatians Chapter three. Aware, he stresses in the first verse is the crucifixion or the cross of Christ. And halfway through he speaks about the tree. Now, when we bring these two together, we we change from law. To Grace. Cursed is everyone that continue is not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. That's the that's. He's waiting for you if you are under law. There's one man in the scripture who was permitted by God to put down these words. Concerning himself as touching the righteous requirements of the law. He said I was blameless. Now there's a man for you. You say, Well, he doesn't want to bother about believing anything. Well, anyhow, he said, but I've flung it all on the rubbish heap that I may be found in Christ. Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Now, that's the difference between being under law and under grace. And if I turn the page of Galatians two, chapter five, he says. Verse three, for I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

[00:01:59] Christ is become of no effect unto you. Whosoever of you are justified by the law. Ye are fallen from grace. So you see, we're already beginning to see that law and grace are in some measure of an antithesis, one over against the other. And so we get works set over against faith. Works are connected with law. Do this, said the law and thou shalt live. The graces. You can't do it. But believe what God has said concerning his son. And of course, that's too simple to say. That's the that's all that it means of the law. And that's all what it means in grace. It gives you some idea of its two great divisions and departments in God's dealing with sinful men. Well, now you'll notice on this chart that we have a few passages set out and let us make them our own before we enlarge any further. First of all, the word grace itself. Caris. Caris. Has to do with the giving of thanks. Will you look at Luke? The first chapter? Just test all these to get them as a sort of vocabulary. Luke The first chapter and the 20th verse. I am not sure as I've got the right verse there by the look of it. My first chapter in the 21st. Well, we'll look at the next one because of our time. Chapter 632 I must try to verify that or somebody can perhaps before the meeting is over.

[00:03:52] Chapter 632 Let's hope we're better off here. Oh, yes. For if ye love them which love you. What? Thank. Peggy, Thank. And of course, it's old English still preserved to have grace before meat. When you say grace, you're really giving thanks. So you see, Grace is in the realm of Thanksgiving. It's suggestive that it's something given to you. So you give thanks for the gift in grace. And then first of all, we are very much concerned with the witness entrusted to the Apostle Paul. And we shall discover that the gospel he preached is the gospel of grace. And the dispensation under which he worked was the dispensation of grace. It will help us to see that this is very peculiarly to do with our own callings. So will you look at the 20th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, 20th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles? This is where Paul called a meeting together to explain to them that one part of his ministry had come to an end. The other part was about to begin, and the second ministry was associated with prison with bondage. So in Acts 20, he says, verse 20, I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you. But I showed you and have taught you publicly and from House to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks. Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

[00:05:38] And now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there. Save that the Holy Ghost witnesses in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me neither count of my life, dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify, the Gospel of the grace of God. That was the way He spoke of the message that was entrusted to him. And it's rather interesting to see that he didn't say to preach the gospel of the grace of God. You say, what's the difference? Well, a person could stand up here and use the words and preach the gospel, and it may be best to somebody, but he himself may not be influenced by it. But if you testify, you bear a witness. Your witnessing that it meant something to you. I think when we preach the gospel like a blind man did once who had had his eyes open, he said, I'm not much of a theologian and you can badger me, you Pharisees, As to problems I can't answer. But one thing I know, whereas I was blind. Now I see. Take it out of that, he said. That's witnessing the gospel and that's the most effective way to do it. So he says, that's the one thing I'm apt to do to witness, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

[00:07:03] Well, then he said a dispensation had been given to him. And you know that the word dispensation, or at least you ought to remember that we've already looked at that in this series. A dispensation is a stewardship. The Greek word made up of a house and its management gives you an idea. And so said the apostle in chapter three. Here he is, the prisoner of Jesus Christ in chapter in Acts 20. He was saying prison was waiting for him. In Ephesians chapter three, he writes as the prisoner. But he hasn't changed his point of view. He says, 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 So the gospel was the gospel of the grace of God, and the dispensation was the dispensation of the grace of God. And you and I have been called by that gospel and live under that dispensation. What a blessing. Grace at the beginning and grace all the way through. So those two words must be those two passages must be kept together. And then I've got a note there. See Chapter three, verse ten RV. So I might as well explain that in case somebody is wondering. And this is verse nine. Rv. You say, well, why have you got so many mistakes there? Well, I'll tell you that this chart was done on a large dining table leaning over, and the wording was ticked in very lightly with a pencil.

[00:08:43] And then I was so worried and troubled that I didn't get a great flood of red all over the place or black that I sometimes wrote the biggest nonsense, not realizing what I was writing, it was all done. And if you say how shocking you write one of these charts yourself and never tried it, and you'll see how many times you'll put a thing down that you didn't intend. That's not an excuse. It's only just telling you the fact. So it ought to be in verse nine. And I suppose it looked a little bit like verse ten by the time I looked at it and I was clean, forgot what I was writing in order that it didn't make a blot, you see. So verse nine, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. Now the word fellowship in the Greek language is Koinonia and starts with k o i, and the word dispensation is the word oikonomia and starts with o i, k. And so when we begin to compare manuscripts, we find the most reliable manuscripts. And the older ones, instead of saying fellowship of the mystery, say, dispensation of the mystery. But if anybody's upset about it.

[00:09:55] All right, keep to the authorized version. You'll still come to the same place, or there you'll go another way round. That's just to make that plain. Now we'll see that

grace is a basis upon which the Apostle was inspired to erect his great structure. Romans The third chapter. Romans The third chapter. In the first chapter. He had said that all had sinned. He comes to the same conclusion in chapter three. Only now he includes both Jew and Gentile that are all under sin. And then having said in chapter one that the power of the Gospel was in verse 17, that therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. He now brings it back again in chapter three and says verse 21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference, 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. Being justified freely. The word is translated in John's gospel. They hated me without a cause. Freely without a cause. So you can say being justified without a cause. And then it says by his grace and says that is the cause. Would you say are two different causes? There is no cause in you.

[00:11:50] The whole cause was in him. You look away from yourself and you'll only be distracted if you look within your own heart and look at your own doings. But if you look away to him, you will see that there is the cause of all God's love to you focused in Him. So it says being justified freely by His grace. I remember hearing Sir Robert Anderson many, many years ago, of course, saying that he was speaking to a Roman Catholic friend and he said to this Roman Catholic friend, he says, You and I say the same words, We believe in justification by faith. But he said, there's one passage in the epistle of Titus, so says being justified by grace. And that's what you don't believe because you make faith a work. You've got to work for your justification. But he says justification is by grace through faith. So we see that that's a basis that we do well to remember. Now that's the passage you see. Titus Chapter three seven. So I think we better turn to it just to see. And of course, I mentioned Sir Robert Anderson because he was the head of the CID and he was supposed to have a critical mind and to test everything before he believed it, as he said he did. Titus three. So look at verse four. After that, the kindness and love of God, our savior toward man, appeared not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy.

[00:13:20] He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that being justified by His grace. We should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Justified.

Because if you're not careful, some person may think that you're paid, as it were, by God, for being good in believing Him. Faith merits nothing. Surely if God is true and God is right. The only thing you should do is to believe in. You haven't merited anything by that. In fact, we have to believe one another in order to make any deal with one another and live in a society. But he says this is justification by grace and it's through faith because it's not merited or earned in any shape or form. Well, now I'm going to quote that passage. Romans 4:16 We'll turn to it. And you see that the reason why these two are joined together. Romans 4:16. In Romans four, he's dealing with the faith of Abraham. And Abraham is picked out as the one who believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now we'll look at verse 13 for the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law, be heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of none effect because the law worketh wrath for where no law is, there is no transgression.

[00:15:07] Therefore, it is of faith that it might be by grace to the end. The promise might be sure. Look at those steps. Those three. It is a faith. Why? That it might be by grace. Why? To the end. That it might be. Sure. Why? That? Because if we left it resting on anybody else, it would be unsure. Not one of us would attain salvation. So you see it needful for us to stress and value this one great key word of Paul's ministry. That's Romans. The 14th chapter and 16th that it might be. Well, now see its relation to works. Why we have Romans in front of us Chapter 11. Chapter 11. He's speaking about the problem that was agitating the minds of the believer. And some think that Romans 11 is the reason why he wrote the epistle to the Romans. He started off writing this, but he had to go back and back in order to open his epistle and address them. And he got off on the subject of sin and its justification. But there's a possibility that this was the center of it from which the rest radiated. He says. I say, then hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

[00:16:32] God hath not cast away his people, which he foreknew. Well, now he moves down. And he says in verse five. Even so, then, at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. What a moment. He says that he wants to make sure that those who listen to him realize that grace means grace and not merit. That remnant was not there because they were better than someone else. They are a remnant according to the election of grace. Election is God's choice. God's choice, not

yours. So he stresses it by putting it two ways round. And if by grace, then it is of no more works. Otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace. Otherwise, work is no more work. And if you read that verse too many times, you'll get it so mixed up you won't know whether it's work or grace. So watch your steps if you read it in public. But you see, he's put it two ways. Grace and works cannot go together in the sense of in meriting. They only go together in the sense of outworking. I wonder whether that's the next thing we shall see. Oh yes, it's relation to works before salvation is that they're kept kept separate. Well, now there is a school of teaching which keeps them separate afterwards in the sense, well, we're not saved by being good. We're not saved by our works.

[00:17:59] It doesn't matter what we do as long as we believe and live a sort of a reckless walk and witness. That's a trap. A travesty of truth. Oh, no, he says works have got their place. This is rightly dividing the word of truth. If you put works first, it's wrong. If you don't have works afterwards, it's wrong. So should we look at the next passage? Ephesians two, verse five. Ephesians two. Verse five. Now in Ephesians we are in the in the epistle that the Apostle has given the great calling, which we rejoice in. And he says here. Verse four, that 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. And then he puts in brackets by grace. Are you saved? He stops himself. Is he? And it's good sometimes to be so overwhelmed with the thing that you stop yourself. This is almost like some of the meetings when they somebody yells out, Hallelujah, you know, don't do it. Many times, friends, because it might upset the tape recording. But if there's a little echo in your heart sometimes that's good. So he stopped himself as if by a gracious agent and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace.

[00:19:26] Oh, look at that. When we begin to think of what just grace by itself is brought us. What will be the exceeding riches? Well, what would be the riches of his grace? And then what is the exceeding riches of his grace? And you know, the word exceeding is the word that means. Well, to exaggerate. It's the word hyperbole. It's a polite way of saying you're telling a lie. But not when God speaks. Here we have exceeding riches of grace in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus. For by grace, you are saved. You see, you get all that and more coming in. If you're saved by grace. For. By grace.

Are you saved through faith And that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. So first of all, you stop there. You say, you see, this gospel of grace has no relation to works at all. Say, wait a minute, friend. It has no relation to works as a root and a ground and a beginning. But if you think of it as a tree. Planted in your garden and you go down, you say, this is the Cox's Orange Pippin, or they're lovely apples. Oh, dear, Oh, dear. And then you look and there's nothing on the branches. Nothing but leaves, that's all. Well, there's something wrong, isn't there? Now, works are also associated with the idea of fruit. And if there's never any fruit, you might wonder if there's something wrong with the root.

[00:21:01] So he says not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship created in Christ. Jesus unto good works are not out of good works. Oh no, but unto good works. So don't be afraid of good works. Friends, if you're a believer, the more the better. But never put it in the base on the ground of being a reason why you're saved. You're not saved because of your good works for you haven't got any, but you are saved that you may produce them to the glory of God. And while we have this passage out in one point, that may have been a puzzle to you. Verse eight for great by grace Are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Have you met the person who has read that verse? He says, Faith is the gift of God. Well, if God doesn't give it to me, I can't believe so. Why am I held responsible? Have you met it? Well, what's the answer? There is an answer, but the answer has to be noticed by the original words, not merely on the surface. You know that words in the Greek language, unlike English, many words are masculine. Many words are feminine, which have nothing to do with whether they're male or female. For instance, Christ is the head of the church. Cefaly is feminine. Tony is a feminine word.

[00:22:29] And if you know your language, if you know if you could write in French, my aunts as some pains down the garden will you know, some of those words are masculine and some of those words are feminine. See? Well, here it is again. The word that the word that does not agree with the word faith. The word faith is feminine. The word that is neuter. And Paul didn't make a grammatical mistake. So what he said was this the grace by faith, salvation, that parcel, that is the gift of God. The grace by faith, salvation. The whole scheme of it is the gift of God not arising from works, lest any man should boast. We may have to come back to that a bit more carefully at another time. Well, then. It's rather suggestive that of all the terms that the Apostle Paul might have

picked out as a specimen of his signature. I wonder whether you could have a sort of a little quiz of people's character. They all go into a big stationers and they all pick up the fountain pen to test it. You know, you write something and then when you're done, you look and look at this whole list of things on the paper. I wonder what different things we'd write. Come do a little scribble some sign their name, some you know. Well, what is the apostle done to give an evidence that he had written an epistle? Would you like to see two Thessalonians? Two Thessalonians and Chapter two.

[00:24:05] First of all, will show you the reason why this had to be. Two Thessalonians two Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto Him that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us as at the day of the Lord Day of Christ. Our version is at hand. Now you see, he says. By a letter as from us. Well, it's evident that somebody had written an epistle. Pretending to come from the apostle Paul, but teaching evil, teaching and deceiving them. So he says, I want you to remember that every time I write an epistle, I sign it. Now, does every evidence by looking at the last few verses of the epistle to the Galatians that Paul wasn't a very good writer? When you see some of the the manuscripts of the New Testament written by a trained slave, the lettering is wonderful. But if you could see the writing of the Apostle Paul, it had been looked more like a spider with ink on his legs walking over the manuscript for he said, When I was with you, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me if it had been necessary. But he takes the pen from the hand of the amanuensis who was writing it, and he says, See, with what large characters are written unto you.

[00:25:36] He's appealing to them because that's what they did in the Hebrew manuscript. Some words stand out with large letters. Some of you have seen the scroll of Esther that we've had here that you opening it and suddenly you see letters about four times the size. Just to set out the names of the Sons of Ham. And they were all hanged on the gallows. And Paul knew that method. So he said, See, with what large letters I'm writing unto you. Now, he says at the end of chapter two of Chapter three, rather of two Thessalonians, verse 17, The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle I write like this. And to this very day. Everybody's signature has got something individual about it. So much so that when once it's been accepted by a bank, they just look at it and out comes the money, you know, flying out. Of course. And you can get yourself in a terrible trouble by signing things that you

haven't read your signature to this very day. Thousands of them all having distinct characteristics. Now, he used the word grace to draw that attention. I like like this the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Now, if you look at Paul's epistles, 14 of them. No, I'll say 13 of them. Every one of them have got the word grace.

[00:27:06] It may be grace be with you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Be with your spirit. It's always grace with you. Now. I said 13, didn't I? Because some people, they say, well, we know Paul didn't write Hebrews. We don't know who did, but we know Paul didn't. So will you look at Hebrews? I'm afraid if I said we won't bother to look, you would be looking. So we will. Hebrews last chapter. And see whether he's got the word grace in his signature. Yes. So, dude, all them that have the rule over you and all the saints, they admittedly salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen. He's used that signature elsewhere. But you may say. But you're not going to tell me that nobody else used it. It would be a common thing. No, but if you look at James, which is next to you, you'll see that he doesn't use a signature like that. Nothing there, neither. Peter. No, John. And you may say, well, would he do it if he was writing merely a private letter to Timothy? Well, let's have a look, shall we? Or suppose you think of a private letter like Filemon just before Hebrews, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. But it's there, isn't it? And Titus, what about Titus? Grace, be with you all. Amen. Shall I say? Oh, yes, I know Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, and I've seen his signature.

[00:28:50] He's drawn my attention to it. And God saw to it that nobody else would put that very ordinary ending to any epistle that was written to the churches until John came along, when everyone else was dead and wrote the book of the Revelation. And then Gracie said there, but that nobody would think Paul wrote that, of course. So we've got now the signature to Hebrews. Now the development of this word carries gives us that very precious word accepted in the beloved. I've got two references here, Luke 128 I hope I'm right over this. And the angel came unto her and said, Hail thou that are highly favored. The Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women. That was the address of the angel to the Virgin Mary. And he Angel said, You are highly favored. Well, now let's come to Ephesians, where this word comes again. Now, that's not speaking of the Virgin Mary, that's speaking to those of us who have believed this and are members of the Body of Christ. Ephesians Chapter one, verse six. To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. Let's read it again to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us highly favoured. Any

objections? Sure. Reassignable We now have this calling all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Boldness of access raised together with him, seated together with him.

[00:30:37] Ultimately to be manifested with him in glory. If we are not highly favored, who are? So we're not losing anything when we translate it freely accepted in the beloved. All right. Highly favoured in the beloved. Yes. And grace at the bottom of it all. You see whichever word you use. And then we have the word to forgive. I suppose you know the word pardon is the word forgive. Is it? Ring a bell? Don? Don, to give donation? Yes. And the word forgive means you forgo all the claims that you have a right to. That's what God has done. He has pardoned. He has forgiven. He has put them all away. He's making no claim on you. They've been settled. Settled for you. So we've got this word translated. Forgive. Translated freely. Give. Romans the eighth, Chapter 32. Let's see that for this may be the basis of the of the forgiveness that we have. Romans eight, verse 31, What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all. How shall he not with him also freely Give us all things. Freely Give. Through the offering of Christ. Now that same word is used of you and me in the epistle to the Ephesians. Away. We have it in chapter four, verse 32. And be ye kind one to another tenderhearted, forgiving one another. This is not the word forgive that comes in chapter one when it speaks of God's forgiveness.

[00:32:38] That word that is used there is to set free. In whom? We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins that is releasing you from a bondage. Now, I couldn't release anybody from a bondage, but I could act graciously to them because God has acted so graciously to me. You see? So the forgiveness of God is one thing. And my forgiveness of you and your forgiveness of me is another thing. But it's an echo of it. And surely that's something that we should aspire to. So be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Be ye. Therefore, imitators mimics of God as dear children. We sometimes say, aren't these children mimics? Look what they're doing. You could hear yourself, can't you? Speaking when they heard you say something. Well, that's what God is waiting to hear and waiting to see that we should be imitators of God. Well, let's just run over this wonderful word, Grace. And I trust that we shall realize that we are indeed debtors to grace. That we could never save ourselves if we lived as long as Methuselah. We can only be saved by grace. And after saved by grace, we should then be gracious as a

consequence. Next time we meet together, we shall have a word that grows out of this the charisma or the spiritual supernatural gifts that were in the early church. But that is another story.