

# Charis – The Grace of God

(Transcript)

By Warren Zehrung – 4/26/2014

Charis is a word we need to know and understand. It is a good Biblical word that is used many, many times in the Scriptures. The difficulty is that we do not have a good English counterpart for the word – *charis*. It is Greek for grace, kindness, graciousness, favor and many other renditions. But it still has connotations of friendship, love and intimacy.

The primary meaning of **Grace** is "that which gives pleasure or delight." Charis comes from the Greek verb *chairō*, which means "to rejoice." Most often *charis* is like being on the receiving end of love – rather than the one who gives love. It is like being on the receiving end of gift-giving.

The word **grace** is well known by most, yet for many of the brethren the word is mostly off limits because it was not a significant part of our received narrative in the Church of God.

When we were in Worldwide we didn't speak much of **grace** because it is more of the **gentler** side of God's character rather than His **harsher** side. Grace is more about God's **forgiving** side than His **judgment** side.

Grace is **not** a Protestant concept – though some have thought of it in that way. Is grace, as many were taught, merely unmerited pardon for sin—or is there more to it? Let's make sure that we do not have a **limited** concept of God's **grace**.

Yes, Grace is, unmerited divine help given man for his sanctification—set apart for God's special purposes. But, there is so much **more** to the **concept** of grace. What should a Christian know about the Biblical concept of "grace?"

The true concept of grace is misused by the enemies of our true faith—and yet it is so often spoken of by the Biblical writers that we must understand what is being conveyed to us. Grace, by virtue of its spiritual significance is a very **good thing**.

As a young Catholic I memorized the "Hail Mary" prayer. It begins like this, "Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with thee..." I was never taught **what** that grace was that Mary had in abundance. Much of the wording of that Catholic prayer comes from the Gospel of Luke:

## **Luke 1:**

**30** And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found **favor** [*charis*] with God.

"Favor" is a very good translation of the Greek word *charis*, and "favor" retains the fundamental meaning of the word "grace." All the young girls in Israel wondered, "Why?" was Mary chosen to be the Mother of God? Mary was singled out by God who knows all things. The messenger from God told Mary:

## **Luke 1:**

**31** And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and **bring forth a son**, and shalt call his name JESUS.

**32** He shall be great, and shall be called the **Son of the Highest**:

Mary obtained / found **charis** with God. Grace and favor are something to be sought after and greatly appreciated. It is important, especially today, that we understand what grace is.

People in the world are being taught that **grace** does away with God's law—and that obedience and law-keeping means a person is trying to save themselves. That is not true in the least! Protestants are taught that **obedience** to God's law means that a person is trying to **work** their way into heaven... or the Kingdom of God. Not so! This subject of grace needs to be clarified because grace is being used in a very dangerous way to deceive God's people by some.

Joe Tkach in the Worldwide Church of God began to teach, "Be true to you humanity." "God understands how we are – He will overlook our faults."

Charis is not ever selfish, greedy nor does it take advantage. Let me demonstrate the difficulty the King James translators had in conveying the meaning of charis into English. We find this rendition of *charis*.

**1 Peter 2:**

**19** For this is **thankworthy** [*charis*], if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

We want to understand what grace is – so I will substitute the word grace when we find a different word for *charis*. And this is one of the good meanings for grace – here:

**1 Peter 2:**

**19** For this is **Grace** [*charis*], if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

As demanding as it may be—being a **peacemaker** is grace with God. **Gracefulness** is one of God's traits—it should be one of ours. Peter tells us that we are **each** to be good stewards of the **grace** of God.

**1 Peter 4:**

**10** As every man hath received the gift, **even so** minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the **manifold grace** of God.

**1 Peter 5:**

**5-6** God resists the proud, and **gives grace** to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

Peter most likely learned that from the book of Proverbs:

**Proverbs 3:**

**34** Surely he scorns the scorers: but he gives **grace** unto the lowly.

God's grace makes us spiritually rich: Paul put this 'endure grief, suffering wrongfully' (1 Peter 2:19) in this way:

**2 Corinthians 8:**

**9** "You know the **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich [sitting on the throne of heaven in possession of all], yet for your sakes he became poor [on this earth without wealth], that **you** through his poverty might be **rich**."

Yes, rich spiritually! God's grace is expressed in so many different ways. There are some people who live a lie – and believe that they can gain – by taking advantage of another's grace. They believe that the New Testament concept of "grace" allows Christians not to worry so much about sin in their lives because all has been forgiven and covered—nailed to the cross—as it were.

Grace does not mean that God loves you so much that He forgives everything—allowing one to take advantage of people and situations and still remain in His good stead.

Grace does not give anyone an upper hand to get around God's way of doing things—grace is not a "free pass" to continue in sin. Paul made that clear when he asked rhetorically:

**Romans 6:**

**1-2** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that **grace** may abound? Absolutely not!

The thinking that Paul is confronting here is, "The more sin the Lord has cause to forgive—the greater His grace is." Large churches act as though, through grace, they are exempt from the strictness of obedience—when they are doing the Lord's work.

That concept of "license to sin," is literally an ecclesiastical grant to sin. No church or administration is ever above God's Law. Some ministers in the big churches think that they can bend God's laws to get the job done. They think that "Grace" allows them the latitude of violating the intent of God's Law for benefit and gain.

They believe that what they are trying to accomplish is so important—they can **infringe** on others – and God will wink at their shenanigans and **grace** their mischief.

We will see in a moment that today's ministers are not the first religious men to use grace for illicit purposes. These ministers believe that **grace** allows them to be above the law – and that there is no need to repent – or by extension – that the number of members is **so important** – they do not need to teach repentance and faith.

Brethren, that is **not** what God means by Grace. God never **violates** the intent of His principles and laws – and it is always wrong if we attempt to do so. **Grace** never nullifies God's law. God's **grace** is necessary for us because His law **is** eternally binding.

That is why we must repent and have faith. We must voluntarily submit ourselves to God, admitting our wrong-doing, and stop sinning. Then we must be baptized under water as an outward expression of our repentance and come up out of the water – faith.

**Romans 6:**

- 3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
- 4** 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.
- 5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Grace means that God knows our frame and **graciously** forgives us when we continually strive with all our might to walk in His ways—making salvation possible.

**Charis** can have the meaning of **advantage** – even wrong advantage over others. Here is an example of **Grace** / Charis used in a **negative** sense:

**Acts 25:**

- 2** Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,
- 3** And desired **favor** / **grace** against him [get the goods on Paul], that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait [ambush and way-lay him] in the way to **kill** him.

Grace, is much more than 'unmerited pardon.' That definition is insufficient to explain God's grace. Grace is, however, the **undeserved favor** of God's intervention in one's life.

**Grace** is God's generous forgiveness of past sin and the taking away of the penalty – but **grace** is **also** the **opening** of our minds to recognize what sin is, and **God's grace** gives us the capability to repent of sin. Our process of conversion requires repentance. We must choose to obey God – but it is not within us to repent. It also requires an act of God's **graciousness**.

**Romans 2:**

- 4** ... knowing that the goodness of God leads us to repentance?

No one decides to repent of his sins on his own – that only takes place by the **grace** of God. When we repent of breaking God's laws, and receive God's grace, which is made possible through the sacrifice of Christ, we are pardoned. We are no longer under the penalty of the law – which is death.

God's grace is the free and undeserved gift of forgiveness and reconciliation to God the Father through Jesus Christ. Being under grace means that we are continually receiving God's goodness, favor, blessings, sustenance, intervention and interaction – in short, God's divine love.

A Christian believer comes under the grace of God through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is through **grace that** the true believer's sins are forgiven and the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to him, making him righteous in God the Father's sight.

Grace is God's love and concern for those of us who accept His invitation to enter into a relationship with Him. How important is **grace**? It is first mentioned in Genesis 6 where mankind certainly needed **God's grace**.

**Genesis 6:**

- 5** And GOD saw that the **wickedness** of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only **evil** continually.

**Genesis 6:**

- 7** And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repents me that I have made them.
- 8** But Noah found **grace** in the eyes of the LORD.

The New Testament would see a much greater grace than Noah's grace of being saved from the flood. Without God's grace there is no salvation, no Children of God, no Christians, and no **eternal life** in the Kingdom of God for us. Our **salvation** is indeed the most wonderful expression of God's **grace**. And **eternal life** is the greatest act of **grace** that God has for us.

### **Romans 6:**

**23** ... the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grace is a true spiritual reality that we must grasp correctly. We need to understand the relationship of **faith** to **grace** and other "religious sounding words" that get bantered around. God's **grace** is absolutely essential to our **salvation**—we do not do it ourselves.

### **Ephesians 1:**

**7** In whom [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the **riches of His grace**;

It is not **what** we know, **who** we know. or our **own** righteousness that will bring us to the doors of the Kingdom of God.

### **Ephesians 2:**

**8** For by **grace** are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

**9** Not of works, lest any man should boast.

### **2 Peter 3:**

**18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Paul typically starts his letters to the churches with the phrase "**Grace** to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Brethren, In the same way, we can grow in God's good graces – of we can **fall out of favor** with God – fall out of **grace** with God. Paul writes in:

### **Galatians 5:**

**4** Christ is become of no effect unto you [Paul is speaking to those who believe that they **earn** their own **salvation** apart from Christ's sacrifice], whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are **fallen from grace**.

If it were not for God's **grace** – we would have no faith at all. Are we thankful for God's gift of faith?

### **Romans 12:**

**3** For I say, through the **grace** given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as **God has dealt** to every man the **measure of faith**.

It is by God's goodness and **grace** that we have salvation. The very first thing to come up in my research was this: "Grace Communion International" – founded in 1934 by Herbert W. Armstrong as a religious broadcasting radio ministry named Radio Church of God, the Worldwide Church of God...

That is a lie! Herbert W. Armstrong did not found anything vaguely resembling "Grace Communion International." Joe Tkach, his son and others destroyed the Worldwide Church of God in an **apostasy** that devastated the lives of tens of thousands of faithful brethren – all in the name of **Grace**.

Grace, is a multifaceted word, showing many aspects of God the Father's gracious love as mercifully manifested through Jesus Christ. Grace is thanks... Grace is acceptance – as in being accepted, of finding acceptance, or being made acceptable.

But **Grace** is never lawlessness or the liberty to sin. **Grace** means: That which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, favor, acceptance, and kindness granted. **Grace** is the "Divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life of a Christian."

Grace is the absolute expression of the **loving kindness** of God to mankind.

Grace also means: God's divine, gracious, favor and blessing; gracious care, **help**, goodwill, benefit, gift, goodness, benefaction and endowment.

Through **grace** God gives us mercy and "help in time of need." God's throne is a **throne of grace**.

#### **Hebrews 4:**

**16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the **throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy, and **find grace to help in time of need**.

It is important to have a good grasp of this concept of Grace because it occurs over 140 times in the New Testament. Grace is God's generous forgiveness of past sin in our lives and the taking away of the penalty – but it is also the opening of our minds to recognize what sin is, and the ability to repent of sin. A Christian believer comes under the **grace** of God through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins.

Through **grace**, the true believer's sins are forgiven and the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to him, making him righteous in God the Father's sight. Through, Jesus Christ, God's gift of **grace** is granted to us so that we may spiritually grow up unto Him - Christ in us, the hope of glory!!! We can **grow** in God's good **graces** – and we can also fall out of favor with God. In Acts 20:24 Paul calls the Gospel – the **gospel of the grace of God**. Paul gives this example:

#### **Ephesians 1:**

**7** In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His **grace**.

#### **Ephesians 2:**

**5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by **grace** ye are saved).

Through His grace, God grants spiritual gifts to His people for His purposes and the benefit of the brethren.

#### **Ephesians 4:**

**7** Unto every one of us is given **grace** according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Our past guiltiness is removed by the grace of God.

**Romans 3:**

**24** Being justified freely by His **grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Through **grace** God allows us to enjoy a relationship with Him – we are reconciled to Him.

**Romans 5:**

**2** By whom also we have access by faith into this **grace** wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God...

**Romans 5:**

**15** But not as the offence, so also is the **free gift**. For if through the offence of one [Adam] many be dead, much more the **grace of God**, and the **gift by grace**, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

**Romans 5:**

**17** For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of **grace** and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one - Jesus Christ.

**Grace** is God's gift of salvation granted to sinners for their salvation. Grace is the free and unmerited favor of God as we find in the salvation of sinners and the bestowing of blessings. We can **grow** in grace.

**Luke 2:**

**52** And Jesus **increased** in wisdom and stature, and in **favor** [grace] with God and man.

**Luke 6:**

**32** For if ye love them which love you, what **thank** [*charis*] have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

**33** And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what **thank** [*charis*] have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

We also see Grace expressed as thankfulness in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul said:

**1 Corinthians 15:57** But **thanks** [*charis*] be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our being **thankful** for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is **grace** toward God – thankfulness to God.

Grace is something that the brethren share and propagate **among** one another.

**Acts 2:**

**46** And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

**Acts 2:**

**47** Praising God, and having **favor** [*charis*] with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

**Joseph** was given **charis / grace** by the Lord in Pharaoh' sight.

**Acts 7:**

**10** And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him **favor [grace]** and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

That means that it was a direct act of **intervention** on God's part to make Joseph look good in Pharaoh's perspective. And anytime God acts – it is a miracle. God works miracles in our lives as well. It is the same with King David:

**Acts 7:**

**46** [David] Who found favor [grace] before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

**Luke 2:**

**40** And the child Jesus grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the **grace** of God was upon him.

In other words, God the Father was very well pleased with Jesus. For sure, **charis** was not used here to mean **unmerited pardon** for sin in this case, since Jesus was always without sin.

**John 1:**

**14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of **grace** and truth.

**John 1:**

**16** And of his fullness have all we received, and **grace for grace**.

Grace for grace means Grace on top of grace - **ever increasing grace**.

**John 1:**

**17** For the law was given by Moses, but **grace** and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Receiving the knowledge of the goodness of God is **Grace** in itself: The Grace of God in verse 17 shows that Jesus **brought** better promises - **salvation and eternal life**.

**Acts 4:**

**33** And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and **great grace** was upon them all.

Phrases like **Great Grace** and abundant Grace show the increased **graciousness** of God in resurrecting Jesus from the grave -> our hope of the resurrection as well. The knowledge of God's Truth is a precious gift – a precious **grace** given to us. We must be extremely careful to never use this **grace** for **self promotion** or to take advantage of others in any way.



Men like Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8) accepted the doctrine of “**grace**” for the forgiveness of sin, but he turned the grace into license to sin with impunity. These heretical men still plague God’s people today:

**Jude :**

- 4** There are certain men crept in unawares, [this applies today as well] who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the **grace** of our God into lasciviousness, [license to sin] and **denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Grace does **not** do away with the need to keep God's commandments. God's grace is used in all these different but **related** meanings.

But the New Testament shows **grace** in a new and higher sense to describe what God is doing for all mankind. This should show us show we are to feel about all humanity as well.

God's plan of salvation for all mankind is **so kind**, so merciful, so unwarranted, so powerful, and so thankworthy that it is the **greatest grace!**

Grace [*charis*] is an all-encompassing word for the entire process of conversion of **bringing** many sons and daughters to **glory** - that is being accomplished through God’s Spirit. (Hebrews 2:10)

God’s grace is necessary because all of us have sinned and come short of that **glory of God.** (Romans 3:23)

Jesus Christ paid our penalty for sin, which is death. Christ's sacrifice is the supreme expression of divine **grace** that we do not deserve. God's **grace** toward us is shown by His **calling** us to be His children – ultimately in His divine family. Unless God in His **graciousness** had called us and opened up our minds to His understanding, we could not have understand His purpose (John 6:44, 65). Paul put it clearly:

**Galatians 1:**

- 15** , God... called me through His **grace.**

The very fact that we can understand God’s Truth is because of God's **grace.** When we are truly under God's grace, we are striving with all our might to obey God's commandments. Notice how God’s **grace** brings salvation.

**Titus 2:**

- 11** For the **grace of God that brings salvation** hath **appeared** to all men,

This **grace** of God that brings salvation - is better **grace** than that of Noah’s day – where the flood enveloped the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. (2 Peter 3:6)

“The **grace** of God that **brings salvation**” is a synonym for Jesus Christ coming on our behalf.

**Titus 2:**

- 12** Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;
- 13** Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;
- 14** Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

We have our work cut out for us: God's Spirit gives us the help we need to develop Godly character. Paul said:

**1 Corinthians 15:**

- 10** By the **grace** of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the **grace** of God which was with me.

God's grace is the total process of our salvation. His Grace is a fantastic promise.

**1 Peter 5:**

- 10** But the God of **all grace** [all good things], who hath called us unto his **eternal glory** by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.
- 11** To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- 12** ... this is the **True Grace** of God wherein ye stand.

End Charis – The Grace of God