

Glorious Grace

by Thomas Bradbury

The sermon emphasizes the glory of God's grace, which is the manifestation of His sovereignty and love in salvation, and the love of God for the Beloved, Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Luke 18:7, Romans 11:5, Ephesians 1:6, 2 Timothy 1:9, Titus 2:11, Titus 3:7

Topics: "Divine Grace", "Salvation Through Christ"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches about the all-encompassing grace of God, emphasizing that in every epistle of Paul, grace abounds and is essential for salvation and acceptance in the Beloved, Jesus Christ. He highlights the jealousy of the Apostle Paul over this grace and the need for allegiance to the King of grace. Bradbury delves into the significance of Christ as the Beloved, emphasizing the Father's love for Him and His role as the Sovereign Dispenser of grace. He concludes by exploring the concept of being 'accepted in the Beloved,' showcasing how grace, unmerited favor, and salvation through Christ are central to the believer's standing before God.

Transcript

"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1:6)

It would be a very profitable pursuit to go through the epistles of Paul, those inspired writings which have come to us from his pen by the grace and goodness of God, to discover in one of them where grace is lacking, where grace appears not. The time would fail me to set before you the numerous portions crowding upon my mind and proving the futility of such a search. In every epistle we discover "Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding" grace which is glory in the bud, grace which appears in all its perfection in eternal glory, for glory is grace in full bloom. It is the enjoyment without interference or intermission of "THE GOD OF ALL GRACE," of Christ the King of grace, and of the Spirit of grace, without Whom there is no knowledge or understanding of the mind and will of the Father, or of the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. This knowledge is all of grace from first to last, from the first opening of the heart for the reception of the incorruptible seed of the word, to the last display of saving grace outside the gates of glory.

You will notice how jealous the Apostle was over this grace, and over the allegiance to the King of grace of those to whom he wrote. You will see also how zealous he was in publishing the grace of God in that gospel which he styled, "THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD." (Acts 20:24) By this gospel "THE

WORD OF HIS GRACE," (Acts 20:32) the good seed of the kingdom, is communicated to the heirs of grace and glory, as you see in 1 Peter 1:23-25: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, Which liveth and abideth for ever....And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you." Now, this morning, I have looked at our precious text, and marked well all that God has been pleased to reveal to me therein. I have turned it over in my mind to enjoy that fullness of truth God has been pleased to reveal in it, and the more I have looked at its wonderful truths, the more I have increasing beauty. Not simply grace in itself, but grace in its attendants and associations, grace in what it has done and accomplished.

I do not think I can do better than first of all speak of Him, without Whom grace is impossible in experience and enjoyment. All communications of grace to the heart of any member of the spiritual body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are by Him alone. It is a blessed thing for us to know by the witness and seal of God the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the King of grace, the Sovereign Dispenser of grace in covenant oneness with His Father and ours. Now look at the way He is introduced to our notice in the portion before us "THE BELOVED."

That is a title which finds a place in the heart of every sinner born of God, every soul in love with Jesus Christ, everyone that can say from the ground of the heart, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Where Christ is not beloved I desire not to stay. And mark you, when I say this, I mean the Christ of the Scriptures "THE CHRIST OF GOD." Not the Christ palmed off upon the Christless multitude by Christless preachers around us. These cry, "Lo, here is Christ, or there;" but Christ says, "Believe it not." (Matt. 24:23) Our Christ is the Anointed in eternal, unchanging oneness with those who are anointed by the Holy Ghost in and with Him.

What is the meaning of the word of Christ? Turn to John 1:41, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." Margin, The Anointed. The Messiah of the Old Testament is the Christ of the New. See how He proclaimed Himself as such from Isaiah 61:1, in the synagogue of Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor," (Luke 4:18) When He preached from these words the sovereignty of grace in election, didn't the people love Him?

Yes, so much that they would have murdered Him if they could. The very same spirit is rampant today; and were it not for His sovereign restraining power, there is no telling where we should be before long. Thanks be to His great and holy Name for the revelation given of Him in His exaltation in this very chapter. God has "set Him at His Own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet."

Not simply under His control in His hands, but all to be subdued under His feet. "And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church." (Eph. 1:20-23) Not only the Head over all that the church possesses, but all things through infinite space at His command for His body's sake, the church. See how this is revealed to us in the way He revealed Himself to John in the Isle of Patmos, "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev. 1:17,18) Christ is the open way to glory.

Christ turns the key of hell upon all who enter that dark door. Think of this any of you who know not God's Christ, those who enter that dark place will never return whatever good intentions they may have. The rich

man in hell desired that Lazarus might be sent to testify to his five brethren that they should come not to that place of torment. Mark well the answer he received, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham." The Arminian Nay is ever heard in hell's dark regions, while God's Yea, a transporting sound, ever delights the ears of the glorified up yonder.

Listen to God's answer to the ignorer of His word, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:27-31) When Lazarus of Bethany was raised from the dead, did the Jews believe? Their folly was greater still, for they sought to kill the raised Lazarus and his Living Lord. Shortly after that they killed the Prince of life, but He rose again from the dead. Did they believe in Him? Not until the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, effectually wrought in them on the day of Pentecost the conviction that He Whom they had crucified and slain was Lord and Christ.

But to the subject "The Beloved." Whose Beloved? The Beloved of the Father. This we see in Prov. 8:29-31, "When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as One brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." With the very same love with which the Father loved the Son, the Son loves each and every one of those given to Him by the Father in the counsels of eternal love. Come with me to Isaiah 42:1, "Behold My Servant, Whom I uphold, Mine Elect, in Whom my soul delighteth." All the delight the Father has in the Son of His love He has also in all His elect and predestined sons and daughters. Come to the New Testament Scriptures, and mark well the utterances from the opened heavens, when the Spirit of God descended and abode upon Him, "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17) Again we have this announcement of the Father's appreciation of, and delight in, the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ amid the glories of the transfiguration, as recorded in Matt. 17:5, "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Read through the gospel of John and mark well the precious declarations of the Father's love in His dear Son, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." (John 3:35) "For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel." (John 5:20) "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." (John 10:17) The Father knew Christ so well as to trust Him with the salvation, preservation and glorification of the whole election of grace. We love those we can trust, and we love to be trusted. The Father was not concerned as to the confidence He reposed in the Shepherd of the flock for the salvation of the sheep. I love these words of the Good Shepherd, "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep." (John 10:15) This is a knowledge of mutual delight. That of the Father in the Son is ineffable. That of the Son in the Father is inexpressible to human ears because of the weakness of our conceptions. We shall have to leave this short-sighted state before we can know that which to us down here is unknowable. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Cor. 13:12)

Look at Paul's declaration in Col. 1:13, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." That is the marginal rendering, which I like. There we have and enjoy a kingdom of eternal love, and all in Jesus Christ Whom He loves unceasingly. Before I came here this morning, I read a few chapters ending with John 17, and in the sixteenth I was bound to pause and admire the marvellous love of the Holy Ghost to the Christ of God. Pure unselfishness ever characterizes Him. He is so much in love with God's Christ that He seeks not notice for Himself. Yet He

contends and energizes mightily in all the vessels of electing mercy, that Incarnate Love, the object of the Father's supreme delight, shall live and reign in them unrivalled. Thus we see Jesus Christ the Beloved of the Father, the Beloved of the Holy Ghost. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. 5:5) Thus Christ becomes the Beloved of the church all the world over. I mean by "the church," not the Romish Confederacy, though I believe that God has His hidden ones in the midst of that vast mass of superstition, idolatry, and blasphemy. God saves whom He will, and where He will, without asking the permission of Protestant free-willers or enthusiasts. He says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (Rom. 9:15) The Lord graciously preserve us from that Protestant pride which plumes itself above Divine Sovereignty. True benevolence and true liberality are found alone in the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which the masses of professing people hate, and, hate a sovereign God they do. But look here! The Church. Not the Church of England, not a dissenting denomination, not a clique of separatists; but the Church of the living God, the members of the spiritual body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the sheep redeemed with His most precious blood, the living stones in the temple of eternal love. Many of these never belonged to any religious organization. To what church did the dying thief belong? To what rites or ordinances did he submit? I love to be found in his company, redeemed by blood, washed from all filth at the same fountain, and clothed in the "nothing amiss" of the Dear Saviour dying by his side. That is what I like, to know that I stand justified in the "nothing amiss" of the Covenant Surety from His mother's womb to His Father's throne up yonder. This is His perfect righteousness, His spotless obedience, not merely in, but unto death, for "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered," (Heb. 5:8) and in that suffering obedience we, as members of His body, stand perfect and complete, "accepted in the Beloved."

Look through the book of Solomon's Song, and notice the deep breathings and ardent desires of the bride for communion with her Loving Bridegroom. See how her whole soul longs for Him, not for something that belongs to Him, nor for any particular phase of divine truth revealed in type or shadow, nor for the sight of Him in one office at the expense of another. Nothing will satisfy the true church of God but Christ Himself in all that the Father made Him to her in covenant before the world began, and in all that He makes Him now in the hearts of His people by the power of the Holy Ghost. Prophet to teach, king to rule, priest to intercede and bless. Listen! "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." (Num. 6:24-26) Do you like that? Yes, when it comes warm to the heart from His grace-filled lips. See how the bride admires His varied graces and beauties in detail, and then listen to the utterances of her heart as she beholds Him in all His grace, grandeur, and glory, "My Beloved is the Chiefest among ten thousand." That is good; but there is something better. What is it? "He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend." (Songs 5:10-16) The Father, the Spirit, and the church, are one in their love to Christ. The Papist may extol the glories of Mary; but the Spirit-taught Protestant delights in the beauties and glories of Jesus shining in the experience of Mary, while his heart abhors the thought of Mary appearing between him and the Father's Christ, the One Object of his spiritual affection. We may talk about the love of the Father, and of the Spirit, and of the church; but where are we now personally in the presence of God? What have we to say concerning God's Glorious Christ as He is revealed in the portion before us? What does the very pulsation of our heart say concerning Jesus Christ as He appears in His majestic mercy? Of Him we say, "This is my Beloved." To Him we adoringly cry, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." (Ps. 73:25) Beloved of my heart because of that sweet truth uttered by dear John Kent,

"Preserved in Jesus when

My feet made haste to hell"

I should have gone post-haste to hell, as sure as I am here, were it not for the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus, the Son of His love.

"And there should I have gone,

But Thou dost all things well;

Thy love was great, Thy mercy free,

Which from the pit delivered me."

How was it that in 1837 my heart was first smitten with the charms of Jesus Christ in the pure and precious gospel which flowed from the adoring heart and eloquent lips of Patrick Joseph O'Leary. It was all of His grace that I listened to truths so great, grand and glorious, and by these very truths preserved from the paths of the destroyer, and delivered from ten thousand ills which surrounded me, and affected me too, in such devious ways that I cannot tell you. Some are very fluent in reciting their filthy, fleshly experience, but if I were to tell you mine I might go on until you all took flight. It is not in preaching experimental self, but in preaching Christ Jesus the Lord that sinners indeed are drawn to love Him. By the preciousness of His truth I have been in dangers defended, from distresses delivered, from spiritual pride preserved, in honours thrust upon me, humbled; in blessings abounding, ballasted, kept by the power of God. And these mine because He superintends the whole, not because of anything I have done, or do. If His voice of love could be heard from the skies, saying, Lovest thou Me? What would you say? I could not for the life of me say No; but Yea, Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee. And God knows I do. Though, as I have told you many times, I am awfully ashamed of the coldness of my love to Him.

"The Beloved." He gives us many opportunities of expressing our love to Him. Many here, no doubt, express it now. Some will seek a quiet spot to breathe out their love to Him, but if they heard a footfall on the threshold, or a turn of the handle of the door, they would be up in a moment, with no desire for unhallowed intrusion. Love to Jesus is frequently sighed when it cannot be spoken or shouted. The proud professor can shout out his profession ignorant of the groanings of the mourners in Zion. Where are we? May the Lord in His gracious goodness try our heart and know it, and teach us the way of everlasting life and love through the groans, sighs, sorrows and sufferings, the broken heart and wounded spirit of the Father's Beloved. The Father loved Him none the less when He hid His face from Him, not a bit. An earthly father's love to his child is none the less when His face is hidden from view, or far away. To know this in respect to our Heavenly Father's love to His Son Jesus is encouraging to our faith and spiritually healthful in every way. The more child-like our faith, the better. Faith, not in mere creeds, clear views, deep experiences, or strong convictions; but faith in a living and loving Jesus Who has captivated our heart with His love, Who has robed Himself with light for His people as a garment. True faith is like its Author, living and loving, and centers in Him Who brings His loved ones into happy liberty, into the enjoyment of Him "Whose service is perfect freedom."

"Accepted in the Beloved." I like that word "accepted." To me there is something very blessed in the sound of it. It indicates that I through grace have come to the Father, and that the Father in richest grace has come to me. The Father's coming to me, and my coming to the Father is only in the Beloved. There is no

other way of salvation, access, or acceptance to me, or honourable to the Father, but the Beloved Himself. In Him I appear in the eyes of the Father just exactly as He appears. This is just what God has made me in Him, which you will find in the very word which flowed from the Apostle's pen. That word is "graced" made graceful in the Beloved. The gracefulness of the Beloved is yours and mine. And not only so, but there is not a grace which the Father committed to His charge for you and me before all worlds, but we are brought into the intelligent apprehension and experimental enjoyment of the same in His own good time and way. All that the Father gave to the Beloved? Yes. For you must ever remember that the word "all" at the commencement of John 6:37, is not masculine nor feminine, but neuter. It means not only all the persons chosen by the Father in Him to salvation, life, and glory; but all the grace, all the promises, and all the words needful for communication and communion between the Father and His living children. This we learn from John 17:8, "For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." When Christ comes in the power of the Holy Ghost to a redeemed sinner's heart, He brings with Him the revenues of grace, the covenant promises, the spiritual blessings, the words of life and love of the Father's providing, and to which the redeemed sinner is entitled by oath, promise, and blood. Of such a sinner Jesus says, "I will in no wise cast out." But Satan and the world will point at the inconsistencies and shortcomings of sinners so signally loved and provided for, and demand their expulsion; but Jesus is ever faithful to His word, "I will in no wise cast out." With sins of His people Jesus has nothing to do but to keep them out of sight. O, that we all were more like Him. We are too apt to canvass the failures and falls of our brethren, bring them out to view, and make the weaklings feel their distance. This did not Jesus. This brings its own reward. We ourselves cannot say, "Not guilty," but frequently have to bow our heads with shame and experience agony of soul before Him. Did Peter deny Jesus? Jesus did not deny Peter. Peter cursed, Peter swore, and that was about all Peter could do when left to himself, but the Lord left him not utterly, but turned with a look of uncomplaining love, when Peter went out filled with godly sorrow, and wept bitterly.

"To the praise of the glory of His grace," or, "to the praise of His glorious grace" "wherein He hath made us," accounted us, constituted us, dealt with us as the Beloved, and graced us with all His mediatorial beauty, comeliness, humility and righteousness. But look at that expression "His grace." Grace. What is it? It will take us all our time to tell what it is. But we who have experienced it can tell something of what it has done. When grace moves the heart the tongue would sound forth its praises. But what is grace? It is simply unmerited favour to the unworthy. Did you notice these words just now? "Go before us, O Lord, in all our doings with Thy most gracious favour." That is very sweet and precious to me. Sometimes favour is mercy to the miserable, or patience to the rebellious, or compassion to the sufferer, or pity to the needy, or grace to the unworthy. I love that expression, "the pitifulness of Thy great mercy." Every phase and feature of this favour you and I need. It is all love, and we cannot have too much of it. It is the love which God has in His heart for His people as He beholds them like Himself, perfect, pure, holy, righteous, graced, accepted, wholly in Jesus Christ, never apart from Jesus Christ. Grace is favour to the unworthy, to those who do not deserve it, to those who court damnation. I speak feelingly here, according to truth, according to the Scriptures.

Grace always has respect to unworthiness, as mercy has respect to misery. When the unworthiness of the sinner is known and felt by the searching power of the Holy Ghost, and the piercing testimony of eternal truth, misery is experienced and the cry ascends, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." (Ps. 51:1) It is pleasant to notice the plea for pity and the assurance of its coming in Ps. 40:17, "I am poor and

needy" that sounds doleful "yet the Lord thinketh upon me" that is delightful "Thou art my help and my Deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God." This is grace expected and grace enjoyed. Again, what is grace? It is favour to the unworthy. Let me run over a few Scriptures which teach what it is. It is ever contrary to human merit, and is hateful to the Pope and all his following. See how blessedly Paul sets forth God's grace in every one of his Epistles. Turn to Romans 11:5,6, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." That is conclusive, exclusive too, putting out of doors all thought of works and merits in salvation matters, while the child of God enjoys a clean standing "accepted in the Beloved."

Where and when was grace given? Ask John Kent

"We'll sing the vast unmeasured grace,

Which, from the days of old,

Did all His Son's elect embrace;

As sheep within His fold."

See! "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. 1:9) There you have it! High in the heights of glory, the Father began with us in the Son of His love, there He graced us in the Beloved, there He blessed us with all spiritual blessings, there we were predestinated unto the adoption of children, there this glorious climax to which all heavenly things are hastening was anticipated, there was fixed upon "the one, most sure, divine event, to which the new creation moves." "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ." (Eph. 1:10) There is no mention here of persons or things outside of Christ. Gracious election is gracious redemption. "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. 1:7) Grace is the expression of JEHOVAH's riches to you and me.

Again, "Being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:7) Justified from all things gratuitously. Called by grace. "When it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace." (Gal. 1:15) Paul gloried in being led by grace, preserved by grace, taught by grace, succoured by grace, upheld by grace, sweetly sustained by grace when otherwise perdition must have been his lot. Grace reigned in every point and particular of the Apostle's experience.

But human nature will object to all this. Have we not to believe? Well, if you are blessed with regenerating grace you will believe, and yours will be "the faith of God's elect." (Titus 1:1) You remember that Apollos though mighty in the Scriptures needed to be taught the way of God more perfectly, yet, "he helped them much which had believed through grace." (Acts 18:27) Believing in Christ is God's gracious gift. (Phil. 1:29) But must I not repent? Why, bless you, if you are one with a once broken hearted Saviour, you cannot help but repent. A sight of the suffering Lamb on Calvary will turn your back upon the world and fill your heart with godly sorrow. Must I not pray? If grace has claimed possession of your heart pray you will. Do not think that praying is loquacity, verbosity, or, a parade of flowery language. No. Prayer at times rises no higher than, "Lord, help me" "Lord, save me" "I am so troubled that I cannot speak." Look here", And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him." (Luke 18:7) Yes, He shall, for they

are blessed with "the Spirit of grace and supplication," (Zech. 12:10) Who exercises them with thoughts of love and peace, only to be enjoyed in oneness with their Gracious Intercessor. Does not grace destroy the necessity for good works? The merit-monger, the legalist, and the Pope say so; but they all lie together. Listen! Grace bringing salvation brings to God a peculiar people who are zealous of good works. (Titus 2:11-14) "As the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (Isa. 65:22) What are the days of a tree? Spring with its buds, Summer with its bloom, Autumn with its fruit. To the days of eternity the good works of God's graciously saved people shall be enjoyed. When they stand before the great white throne and shall have forgotten all the good works they wrought in His Name; He will remind them of their service rendered to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and those in spiritual captivity, and they shall enjoy them with Him to the ages of eternity.

May the Lord bless us with richer and increasing supplies.

"Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding,

Ransom'd souls the tidings swell;

'Tis a deep that knows no sounding,

Who its breadth or length can tell?

On its glories

Let my soul for ever dwell."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/thomas-bradbury/glorious-grace/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net