

God is Gracious

Our God is... (Part 3)

Exodus 34:5-7

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Exodus 34:5-7

Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."¹

"Character of God: Exodus 34:6-7"

- Video by Bible Project (6:05)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxwzq1PJIIM>

The Gracious God

- *hanun* - gracious²
 - To show grace; to show favor
 - *hanun* is an action word
 - Compassion is a feeling word. Grace is an action word. Compassion is what God feels towards you. Grace is how he acts towards you.
- God feels (compassion), and God acts (grace).
 - "The Hebrew words for compassionate and gracious appear almost exclusively with one another in the Bible."³
- What is grace?
 - Grace is showing favor, especially to those who don't deserve it.
 - Jen Wilkin - "Justice is getting what we deserve. Mercy is not getting what we deserve. Grace is getting what we do not deserve."⁴
 - "Unmerited favor"
- The Grace of God in the Old Testament
 - Exodus 22:26-27 - If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets, for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else shall he sleep in? And it shall come about that when he cries out to Me, I will hear him, for I am gracious. (NASB)

¹ All biblical references in this document are taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise indicated. *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

² John Mark Comer, *God Has a Name* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 131.

³ "The Uniquely Biblical View of Grace," BibleProject, <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/the-uniquely-biblical-view-of-grace/>

⁴ Jen Wilkin, *In His Image: 10 Ways God Calls Us to Reflect His Character* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 72.

- *Psalm 103:8-13* - He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: **8** The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. **9** He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; **10** he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. **11** For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; **12** as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. **13** As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.
- *2 Kings 13:22-23* - Hazael king of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz. But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence.
- *Psalm 86:15-16* - But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. Turn to me, and be gracious to me; Oh grant Your strength to Your servant, And save the son of Your handmaid. (NASB)
- We're saved by God's grace. This is at the core of the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.
 - *Ephesians 2:4-9* - **4** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5** made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. **6** And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7** in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **8** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— **9** not by works, so that no one can boast.
 - *Titus 2:11-14* - **11** For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. **12** It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, **13** while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, **14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
 - *Titus 3:3-8* - **3** At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. **4** But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, **5** he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, **6** whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. **8** This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in

God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

- This is a deeply personal passage of scripture to me.
- When I was about 20 or 21 someone challenged me to read the book of Titus 25 times. I had been a follower of Jesus since I was a young child. I loved God. I wanted to follow Him, but I never fully understood grace. Reading Titus those 25 times caused me to experience somewhat of a second conversion. My past sins had tormented me. I really thought the love of God for me was like walking on a tightrope. If I stumbled even in the slightest I would perish. I thought that I had to have understood the Bible perfectly, and if I got just the smallest doctrine wrong or act of worship wrong, I risked losing it all. But when I came to this section, it was like a huge weight lifted off of my chest. I could stop striving. I could rest in God. For the first time in my life, I could rest in God. Learning about grace was truly liberating.
- You were saved because of God's grace. You can not save yourself. You can not pull yourself up by your bootstraps. You can not "out good" your sins.
- The only hope you have is Jesus.
- The gift of salvation through God's grace is freely given to you, but it is not free. It cost a lot. It cost God His Son. It cost Jesus His life.
- The price has already been paid. Come to Him. God wants to give you His grace. It's who He is.

How does Jesus exemplify the grace of God?

- We have and will point this out every week of this study on the characteristics of God: Jesus is the clearest picture of God we've got. "[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God...in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (*Colossians 1:15, 19*). God is like Jesus. Jesus is like God. Jesus is God. Jesus is God's Son. If you want to know what God looks like, look at Jesus. This means that if God is a gracious God, Jesus perfectly exemplifies the grace of God.
- Jesus is the most gracious person ever.
- What are some specific examples from the life of Jesus when He was gracious?
 - He calls us to love and pray for our enemies. (*Matthew 5:44*)
- Jesus served people who could not repay Him.
 - The main custom in the time of Jesus was to invite people to your parties and dinners who would in turn invite you to their social events.
 - *Luke 14:12-14* - **12** Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. **13** But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, **14** and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

- Jesus is full of grace.
 - *Exodus 33:18* - Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."
 - *John 1:14, 16-17* - **14** The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth...**16** Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Our Response to the Gracious God

- Rest in the grace of God.
 - *Exodus 33:13-14*
 - [Moses speaking] "If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."
 - The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."
 - Some of us are tempted into thinking and living like we earn favor with God.
 - You do not earn favor with God. Stop striving. Rest in God.
- We have and will point this out each week in this study on the characteristics of God also: God created humanity, all people, in His image (*Genesis 1:27*). This means we were created to be like Him, and are to live into God's intent for our lives. God is gracious. This means we're to strive to be gracious like Him.
 - *Colossians 4:6* - Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.
 - Who in your life needs grace right now? What opportunities will you have to show grace tomorrow? How do you plan to show grace this weekend? Who is someone in your life who needs help right now, and will unlikely be able to help you?