

God's Grace Is Free But Not Cheap

In John 1:14-17, John records the following about our Lord:

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

The word "grace" simply means "unmerited favor" — favor that one receives which is undeserved and unearned. The idea of grace being "free" means that it became available to us without cost to us (Ephesians 2:8). However, it does not mean it was without cost at all, for it cost God plenty to offer it to us without charge (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9). Grace is indeed priceless, but Someone else paid the price because we couldn't afford it. With these thoughts in mind, let us look at some aspects of what grace costs:

1. **Grace is Costly Because It Cost God The Life of His Son.**

The church was purchased with the blood of God's Son (Acts 20:28). We "have been bought with a price." (1 Corinthians 6:20) "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8)

2. **Grace is Costly Because It Calls Us To Follow Jesus.**

We are permitted the privilege of choosing the way of grace and become disciples of Jesus. To be a disciple means to follow after the Teacher. To follow Jesus means to put His kingdom and righteousness first (Matthew 6:33). The cost of discipleship means that we must put other things second, third, etc. Another cost associated with discipleship is picking up and bearing a cross of self-denial (Matthew 16:24).

3. **Grace is Costly Because It Condemns Sin.**

Grace justifies sinners — not their sins! Grace does not make lying, adultery, or greediness any less sinful. What it does freely offer is conditional forgiveness. All have sinned (Romans 3:23) and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). While grace brings the potential for forgiveness to those under this sentence of death, we must continue in the grace of God (Acts 13:43; cf. Acts 14:22), "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts" (Titus 2:11-13).

Grace is indeed free, but it is not unconditional. If it were, then everyone would be saved. But it is conditioned upon our response to it. In the Bible, our response to God's grace is called "faith" (Romans 10:17). This is why we are said to be "saved by grace through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). Let us praise God each day for the gift of His wonderful grace, and let us properly respond to it by being obedient to His will (Matthew 7:21; cf. Luke 6:46; James 1:22).

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