

GRACE SESSION THREE - GRACE IN THE FUTURE

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2

- A. An introduction to Glorification
- Glorification is the transition of God's children into an exalted, future state of glory.
 - Also, it is called ultimate sanctification, when position and practice are in perfect accord.
 - It takes place when we are in the presence of the Lord through death or His return.
 - Jonathan Edwards, *Grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected.*
 - Romans 8:30, *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
- B. Thoughts concerning glorification
- Charles Swindoll, ... *believers will share the glory the Father gave to the Son. The destiny of all believers is to follow Christ into eternity. Just as Jesus was vindicated through His resurrection, received a resurrection body, and went to be with the Father, so shall all believers!*
 - Joel Beeke, *Glorification represents God's grace transforming the elect to share in Christ's glory permanently, encompassing both body and soul. Within the order of salvation, it stands as the final blessing, completing God's application of redemption through Christ by the Spirit.*
 - M. James Sawyer, *The human spirit experiences glorification at physical death, while the body receives it at Christ's return.*
 - Stanley Grenz, *Believers attain complete conformity to the glorified Christ's image and likeness, freed from both physical and spiritual defects—never again experiencing bodily decay, death, illness, or the struggle with sin.*
 - John Piper, ... *the grace established in eternity's beginning will carry believers joyfully into eternity's future. Eternity will unfold in successive ages, each revealing fresh dimensions of grace's immeasurable riches—a progression that requires endless time because the supply is inexhaustible.*
 - Zane Hodges, *Someday the failures now so painfully evident among those who trust Christ will be forever gone.*
- C. Biblical glimpses into eternity
- Our glorious future
 - ▶ Jesus has prepared a home for us in the heavenly city of God, John 14:2, *In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?*
 - ▶ Revelation 21:15-16, *And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal.*
 - ▶ God's presence was in the Temple but now His presence will be in a city that is 1,380 miles wide, 1,380 miles deep and 1,380 miles high. Is that where Jesus is preparing a place for us?
 - ▶ We will live with our triune God face to face, Colossians 1:13, *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,*
 - ▶ There will be no tears, no death, no mourning, no crying, no pain, 1 Peter 5:10, *And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*
 - ▶ All will be holy in God's glorious presence, 1 Corinthians 15:49, *Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.*
 - Restoration, Romans 8:21, *that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*
 - Re-creation, Revelation 21:1-4, *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*
 - Worship, Revelation 7:9-12, *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."*
- D. Is it too good to be true? No, it is all about grace!
- God will complete His work in those chosen by Him in eternity past
 - ▶ Philippians 1:6, *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*
 - ▶ Alistair Begg, *Since He has been so long about your salvation, will not He accomplish it? Has He from everlasting been going forth to save me, and will He lose me now? It is inconceivable that having carried me in His hand, as His precious jewel, He would let me now slip from between His fingers. Did He choose me before the mountains were brought forth or the channels of the ocean were formed, and will He reject me now? Impossible! I am sure He would not have loved me for*

so long if He had not been a faithful Lover. If He could grow weary of me, He would have been tired of me long before now. If He had not loved me with a love as deep as hell and as strong as death, He would have turned from me long ago. What joy above all joys to know that I am His everlasting and inalienable inheritance, given to Him by His Father before the earth was formed! Everlasting love shall be the pillow on which I rest my head tonight.

- ▶ Jesus paid it all, Hebrews 10:14, *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*
- Our hope is secure, 1 Peter 1:13, *Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*
 - ▶ 1 John 5:13, *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.*
 - ▶ Douglas Moo, *God's intention, Paul emphasizes, is to bring to glory every person who has been justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Our assurance of ultimate victory rests on this promise of God to us.*
 - ▶ 2 Timothy 2:13, *if we are faithless, he remains faithful - for he cannot deny himself.*
- Our gracious God will gather us home
 - ▶ Matthew 24:31, *And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*
 - ▶ 2 Peter 3:13, *But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*
 - ▶ Colossians 3:4, *When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*
 - ▶ 1 Corinthians 15:51-53, *Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.*
- God's future grace will be glorious
 - ▶ Ephesians 1:18, *having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,*
 - ▶ 2 Corinthians 4:17, *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,*
 - ▶ Philippians 3:20-21, *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*
 - ▶ 1 Peter 1:3-5, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*
 - ▶ Romans 8:18, *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

CLOSING COMMENTS ON GRACE

Dependence on grace

- Jerry Bridges, *Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace ... To benefit from the gospel every day, then, we must acknowledge that we are still sinners.*
- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The ultimate test of our spirituality is the measure of our amazement at the grace of God.*

The role of faith

- Faith is not the price of salvation, but gives access to salvation. God's grace through Jesus Christ is the means of salvation.
- John Blanchard, *Grace is not a reward for faith; faith is the result of grace.*

The motivation to serve

- 2 Corinthians 5:15, *and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*
- Jerry Bridges, *Duty or guilt may motivate us for a while, but only a sense of Christ's love for us will motivate us for a lifetime.*

The centrality of grace

- J. I. Packer, *Grace is the sum and substance of New Testament faith.*
- Robert Macafee Brown, *Grace is the most important word in the Protestant vocabulary.*

Grace is an indescribable gift

- 2 Corinthians 9:15, *Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*
- I encourage each of us to think biblically and thank God for His grace: He called us; He placed us into His family; He gives us right standing; He enables us to live for Him; He is sufficient to bring us blameless into His presence. What a gift of grace!

God's motivation for grace

- It is love for you and me.
- God is love - He proved it at the cross of His dear Son.
- 1 John 4:9, *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.*
- The grace of God is all about His nature, love.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Are thoughts of future glory a distraction or a motivation for you in your walk of faith?
2. List 2 or 3 verses that encourage you to hope in God's grace despite discouragement.
3. Are you satisfied with your understanding of grace? Do you have areas in your life where grace needs to replace works?

BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Bridges, Jerry, *The Discipline of Grace*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress published in alliance with Tyndale House, Publishers, 2006.

Hodges, Zane *Absolutely Free*. Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, Zondervan Publishing House, 1989.

Ryrie, Charles C., *The Grace of God*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1975.