

Week 3 – Embracing Grace: Grace in NT (Handout)

When the Old Testament was translated into Greek (LXX) the words shifted a bit

rahem (compassion) → was often rendered **oiktro** – GK (merciful)

hen (favor) → most often rendered as **charis**-GK (grace)

hesed (steadfast love) → was often rendered as **eleos**-GK (full of mercy)

emet (faithfulness) → was often rendered as **alatheon** –GK (truth).

Like the OT passage of Ex 34:4 which links **hen-hesed-rahem** together, we find the same pattern in several NT usages of this word group.

- Eph 2:4 – links God’s great love, mercy, grace, and salvation.
- Hebrew 4:16 – links mercy and grace with God’s throne.
- 1 Tim 1:14 – links grace, mercy, and love.
- The phrase “grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ” became a common form of greeting in Paul’s letters and also 1&2 Peter. The same sentiment is used in prayers to send missionaries (Acts 14:26; 15:40; 20:32)

Grace in the Gospels

It is surprising that the word grace appears only a handful (4-12 depending on version) times in the gospels and only in Luke and John. In Luke, the idea of grace appears in Mary’s magnificat (Lk 1:46f) where Mary proclaims, “*My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant....*” In Luke 2:40 the writer says, “*And the child [Jesus] grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him.*”

- What does it mean for the grace of God to be upon Jesus?

The use of grace in John is concentrated in the opening chapter in verses 14-17 that state,

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’” From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.”

Both the Law and Jesus represent a revelation of God’s grace...one blessing after another demonstrating the fullness of God’s grace. The idea of “grace and truth” here trace back to the famous Ex 34:6 passage where God declares his own name. The idea is that God himself, the compassionate and gracious God, abounding in love and faithfulness...has been revealed in bodily form in the person of Jesus Christ. What Moses could not behold, we have seen in Jesus.

- If the word “grace” is not used by Jesus or the Gospel writers, how does grace and truth come through Jesus Christ?
- How does Jesus reveal grace and love to us?
- What is the difference between a written revelation and a living revelation? In what ways is one superior to the other?

The Message of Grace

Acts 4:33 - “... much grace was upon them all.”

- What is “grace” associated with in this verse?
- What does the phrase “much grace was upon them all” referring to?
- What synonyms might you substitute for grace in this verse?

Acts 6:8 - “Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power,...”

- What is grace associated with in this verse?
- What do you suppose it means for Stephen to be “full of grace and power”?

Acts 11:23 - “...he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God...”

- What “evidence” would reveal the “grace of God” to Barnabas?

Acts 13:43 – “...and urged them to continue in the grace of God”

- Since the people Paul and Barnabas are speaking with are both Gentiles and Jews, what does it mean that they encouraged them to “continue in the grace of God”?

Acts 14:3 – “...confirmed the message of his grace by ... miraculous signs.”

- What needed confirming about the message? How was it confirmed?
- What is the nature of the opposition to Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13-14?
- What does the phrase “message of his grace” mean in this context? What other message of Jesus would there be?

Acts 14:26 – “...Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God...”

- Rephrase “where they had been committed to the grace of God” from this verse.

Acts 15:11 – “... it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved,...”

- Read 15:6-12. What does the phrase “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” mean in this section?

Acts 18:27 – “...was a great help to those who by grace had believed.”

- How is the phrase “those who by grace” used to identify or distinguish them from others?

Acts 20:24 – “task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.”

- What is Paul referring to when he says, “testifying to the gospel of God’s grace”?

Acts 20:32 – “to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up...”

- How is a person committed to the “word of his grace”?
- How does this “word of grace” build a person up?

Peter / Paul see their ministry as messengers of God’s Grace

- Eph 3:2 → The administration of God’s grace is entrusted to Paul as a messenger
- 1 Pet 5:12 → Peter confirms that what he wrote is the “true grace of God”

The expansion of the gospel blossoms into fruit & thanksgiving

- 2 Cor 4:15 → Preaching the message extends God’s grace and results in thanksgiving;
- Eph 1 → notice the connection between receiving grace and praise
- Col 1:6 → “gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth”