

How Firm is Your Foundation?



October 4, 2022

Lesson Five

Introduction

Isaiah 40:28: Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

Fathom means to understand something difficult after much thought. So, why are we trying to understand and know God better if it is unfathomable?

Because Jesus told us:

John 17:3: Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Because God has chosen to partially reveal himself to us.

John 1:18: No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Every attribute of God is fully found in Jesus Christ, and God has made him known! Everything true about God is true about the Triune God. So: **Know Jesus, Know God!**

The more we get to know God, the more we should feel like Isaiah did after he “saw” the Lord:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” (Isaiah 6:1 – 5)

Augustine wrote: “Since at all times we should be praising him and blessing him, and yet no words of ours are capable of expressing him, I begin by asking him to help me understand and explain what I have in mind and to pardon any blunders I may make. For I am as keenly aware of my weakness as of my willingness” (*None Greater*, Barrett, p. 27).

So far, we have tried to understand these attributes of God:

- God is solitary
- God is infinite
- God is omniscient
- God is supreme
- God is immutable
- God is sovereign



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The Holiness of God

Isaiah 6:3: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Revelation 4:8: Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come.”

What does “holy” mean from a biblical understanding?

Exodus 15:11: Who among the gods is like you, LORD? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

1 Samuel 2:2: There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.

God’s holiness is splendid, beautiful! No other attribute is referred to as beautiful or splendid.

Psalms 29:2: (ESV) Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

Psalms 96:9: (ESV) Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

All his works are holy.

Psalms 145:17: The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.

Isaiah 5:16: But the LORD Almighty will be exalted by his justice, and the holy God will be proved holy by his righteous acts.

His law is holy.

Romans 7:12: So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

Because God is holy, he hates sin.

He forgives the sinner, but he never forgives sin. Sin has to be paid for, for he hates sin and it can never come into his presence.

God hates sin so much that he turned his back on Jesus hanging on the cross when he became sin.

Psalms 22:1 – 2: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.

Mark 15:34: And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

2 Corinthians 5:21: God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Here is one description of sin in the Bible:

Galatians 5:19 – 21: (ESV) *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

God hates sin because:

- Sin separates us from him.

Isaiah 59:2: “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.”



- Sin blinds us to the truth.
Galatians 6:7: “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”
God hates sin for the same reason that light hates darkness and truth hates a lie.
- Sin enslaves us and will eventually destroy us.
Romans 6:16: Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?
- Sin lessens our love for him.
1 John 2:15 – 16: Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. ¹⁶For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

How do we respond to God’s holiness?

As believers, we should hate sin as does God.

1 Thessalonians 5:5: You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

1 Peter 2:9: But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

We are exhorted to be holy as God is holy.

1 Peter 1:15-16: But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

Question: Do we hate sin as we should? Do you hate sin in your own life as you should?

We reverentially fear God because he is holy.

Psalms 99:5: Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy.

Psalms 96:4: For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.

This should be our prayer for holiness:

1 Thessalonians 5:23: May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 7:1: Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

The Grace of God

This attribute of God has always been part of his character.

Nehemiah 9:17: (ESV) They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but the stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them.

Think of Jonah. It was God’s grace that most displeased him.

Jonah 4:1-2: (ESV) But it displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.”

Grace came by Jesus Christ:

John 1:17: (ESV) For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Grace was part of God's ancient plan.

Revelation 13:8: All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

Grace is epitomized on the cross of Calvary. It is described in the Old Testament, but not until the New Testament is it clearly defined.

WHAT GRACE IS NOT

Grace is not license.

Romans 6:1-12:

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

While sin is an occasion for grace, grace is never to be an occasion for sin!

Grace is not legalism

Legalism is not law-keeping it is law-depending! Legalism is trying to win God's favor through performance.

In the early church some "men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved'" (ESV Acts 15:1).

Peter answered the "legalists" in this way:

Acts 15:10 – 11: (ESV) Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.

WHAT GRACE IS

John 1:17: (ESV) For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

John 1:14: (ESV) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

2 Corinthians 8:9: (ESV) For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Grace was manifest in the person of Jesus Christ when he became a man.

1 Peter 2:24: “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

Different expressions of God’s Grace:

Grace takes many forms in the Bible:

Common grace is God’s goodness poured out upon all men, regardless of their spiritual condition.

Matthew 5:44-45: But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Saving grace is our salvation provided on the cross of Calvary.

Ephesians 2:8: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God....

Securing grace is God’s goodness in keeping us secure in spite of sin.

Romans 5:1-2: Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

Sanctifying grace works within the true believer to bring growth, maturity and progress in becoming more and more like Christ.

2 Peter 3:18: But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Serving grace enables us to minister, using our gifts.

1 Peter 4:10: Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.

Sustaining grace is given at special times of need, during adversity or suffering.

2 Corinthians 12:9: But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

Hebrews 4:16: Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Grace is given only to the humble.

James 4:6b: “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

God gives us grace in positive and negative ways. When he pours out goodness upon us, that is positive, and we like it very much. But we often miss the fact that in his goodness and grace, God allows us to suffer:

Philippians 1:29: “For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for him.”

The word “granted” is the verb form of the word “grace.” God is not only graceful and good in what he gives, but also in what he withholds and takes away.

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwuDSw-9cUQ>

“Marvelous Grace”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xUYE8s_Efw