

## **Continuing in the Word, The Grace of God, Ephesians 2:4-7**

Paul was keenly aware of the riches of God's grace in that he clearly saw his deplorable condition before Jesus Christ saved him. He describes himself before his conversion as a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an arrogant man. But God's grace changed his life and his eternal destiny. In 1 Timothy 1:14 Paul writes, "The grace of our Lord Jesus was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."

Paul knew his lost condition as seen in his statement in 1 Timothy 1:15: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Paul knew he was a sinner and considered himself a sinner of the foremost degree, but his sin was no match for the exceedingly abundant grace of God.

In verse 16 Paul observes that he was shown mercy so that God's longsuffering would be clearly seen by others who would believe. In essence Paul was saying, "If God can be merciful to me the chief of sinners, He can be merciful to you." God's gift of salvation is a gift of grace, and it is more than sufficient to overcome our sinful nature and our sinful actions.

Ephesians 2:4-7 tells us that God is rich in mercy, great in love, and exceedingly rich in grace and kindness, and He directs these toward us. He put His love in action by providing the sacrifice that would cleanse us of our sins, that sacrifice being Jesus Christ. O the depths of His love! Songwriter William Newell has put it like this: "O the love that drew salvation's plan! O the grace that brought it down to man! O the mighty gulf that God did span, at Calvary!"

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable" – beyond our understanding (Psalm 145:3). Certainly the greatness of His love and grace is deeper, stronger, and more overwhelming than the human mind and heart can fully grasp.

And yet does not Satan try to convince us that God's grace and love are limited, by trying to convince us that we are too bad, we are too sinful? That God could never love us, never forgive us? What lies and deceptions! 1 John 1:9 should leave us with no doubt, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness."

Praise God for an all-sufficient Savior! Praise God for His rich mercy, great love, and over-abundant grace and kindness! We have every reason to praise Him, and every reason to rest confidently in the salvation He has brought about on our behalf.

Pastor Jim