

Sola gratia - by grace alone

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[0 : 00] So we've been thinking about the Reformation, October 31st, 1517. That's Martin Luther posting the 95 theses, the 95 discussion points onto the door of the chapel at Wittenberg.

And this, as we know, triggered a cultural, political, economic, spiritual revolution in Europe and America's Africa across the world.

We still reap its benefits today. And it's worth us going back to see what made that huge difference. Because that's one of the factors that makes our world what it is and gives us, as Christian churches and Christians these days, the blessings that we have.

In those days, he challenged the Roman Catholic Church. He said it was corrupt. He disagreed with the Pope and the religious establishment. He found a better way.

And those five solar principles encapsulate that. He wrote loads more than just five slogans. But the solar faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone, to the glory of God alone, based on the principle of scripture alone.

[1 : 15] And there it is in Latin again. Martin Luther said, I was a devout monk and wanted to force God to justify me because of my works and the severity of my life.

I was a good monk and kept the rule of my order so strictly that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery, I would have gotten there as well.

All my brothers in the monastery who knew me will bear me out. If I had kept on my life. If I had kept on any longer, I would have killed myself with vigils, prayers, readings and other works.

Until he realized that that was the completely wrong way to find peace with God. We find peace with God, not through our own endeavors, but through what he does for us.

His grace to us. Here is my illustration. Anybody know where that beach is? It's actually Harlick.

[2 : 20] Harlick. Well, I think it's Harlick. Yeah, Harlick. Big, big, big, long beach. We used to go there. This is North Wales. We used to go there on holiday.

And I have a childhood memory of a friend of my dad saying he'd walked along Harlick Beach. He was a head teacher in Bridge North.

And somebody had come the other way and punched him in the face for no reason at all. Broke some of his teeth. This is a childhood memory.

I might have got it completely wrong. But it stayed with me. Why would anybody do that? The word we would use is gratuitous. There was no reason.

It was gratuitous violence. Just walking along, punching. Why? For no reason whatsoever. And, of course, the question, you must have done something to deserve it.

[3 : 16] And the answer was, I did nothing to deserve it. I was just walking along the beach.

Nothing? You sure must have done something? Nothing at all. And this always strikes me as a good illustration of how God deals with sinners.

Only the reverse. We're just walking along. And for no reason at all, he blesses us with such a great blessing. What did you do to deserve it?

Nothing at all. You must have planned it somehow. No, I did nothing at all. He just blessed us. It's a sort of reverse illustration. And rather than use the word gratuitous, you could use the word gratuitous.

We could say, he blessed us freely for no reason. And this is where we use the word grace. Yes, he blessed us graciously.

He blessed us graciously. Meaning, just for no reason otherwise than that he wanted to be kind.

And I'd like us as best we can this morning to have a little nibble at this huge subject which says salvation is something God gives by his grace.

[4 : 26] Grace. That's what I'd like us to look at this morning. Now, the plan is in thinking about grace and the grace alone bit. That's what I would like to try and get a bit of that as well.

So, first of all, I'm going to take us back to the Roman Catholic view, the one that Luther escaped from. Then I'm going to try and tell us, we'll look in Ephesians at what the Bible says about grace. And then I've got some questions to try and draw that out and clarify it. So, those are the three stages I'd like us to go through this morning if we can. So, first of all, what did the Roman Catholic Church say about grace?

Now, there to help us in this is a picture of Pope Leo X who, I'm open to correction, but I think was the Pope in conflict with whom Luther entered.

So, what did the Roman Catholic Church say about grace? Because you see, Reformation, Martin Luther is going to say salvation is grace. And the Pope is going to say, yeah, we knew that.

[5 : 27] Of course it's by grace. Yeah, what else could it be apart from by grace? However, the meaning of grace is rather different.

And the idea of grace, the Roman Catholic idea of grace is rather different. Like this, grace is the something, I've put oomph.

I don't know whether you spell oomph like that, but the oomph that God gives us to enable us to live better. A bit like strong coffee for an architecture student pulling an all-night study before finals.

This is apparently what architecture students do. Is that correct, David? Yep, yeah, they do that.

Lots and lots of coffee. And grace, the Roman Catholic view, is you've got to work to do.

And grace is like something that God gives you to help you do better and get out all your efforts for your success. Well, I suppose there's another illustration.

[6 : 35] The bank of mum and dad helping with the mortgage. So a young couple are trying to buy a property. You can probably envisage this. And they think, look, the house price is in Brighton.

Astronomical. And mum and dad say, well, we'll help you. We'll give you so much for the deposit. Or we'll help you a certain amount with your expenditure. And that's a very kind thing to do.

Who would disagree with that? That's very kind. Thanks, mum and dad. They wouldn't pay the whole thing. They'd just give you something. It would almost be an awkward thing to pay the whole lot, wouldn't it?

Because it would remove from the couple the sense that the house was theirs. That they'd worked towards this. That they'd earned it in any sort of way. And it would actually be rather humiliating.

And I think if you were a parent, you would probably say, yeah, I'm not quite sure whether it's very wise just to buy the whole house for them. We'll help them. And they can help themselves too.

[7 : 41] And here is a thought of grace. That God helps those who help themselves. That God will help you do your best.

And their own Catholic view would say, that's the sort of grace God gives. Of course salvation is by grace. It's like giving you some coffee. It's like helping you with your mortgage.

And maybe you think of God's grace like this. And maybe you think, if you were to ask, what is a Christian? You've come along to a Christian church this morning.

And presumably many of the people here are Christians. And if we were to say to you, what do you think a Christian is? And you'd say, well, I think a Christian is somebody who behaves well.

These people seem to behave well. They're quite nice people. Seem very cheerful. A lot of the time. And this is what being a Christian is. It's behaving well.

[8 : 43] And I suppose you might say that's what being a Christian is. It's sort of climbing up a ladder to get to a point where you're behaving well enough to be right with God.

I should have mentioned mortgage. Getting on the mortgage ladder, shouldn't I? But anyway, I missed that opportunity. What do we think God's grace is like? Well, God's grace, you might say, helps me to try harder so that I can one day, I hope, be acceptable to him.

Maybe that's what you're thinking a Christian is. Because most religions work like that. They say you try harder. You discipline yourself. Maybe you get some help from God until you're good enough somehow.

Now, and what grace does, it takes me part of the way. It takes me part of the way. But there's a gap because I've got to work too.

And if you took that view, and I was to say to you, so what do you think about Jesus then? And you would say, he's a great example.

[9 : 52] I admire him. He's a great teacher. And I would like to be more like him. And you might say, I'm trying hard. I don't come to church perhaps as much as I'd like.

But I think I'm getting nearer to being a Christian. Although I'm not quite sure whether I've ever got there yet. That's the sort of things you'd be thinking, things you'd be saying, the way you'd be understanding things.

If you thought grace worked like this. But you'd say, to be honest, I don't think I have the certainty and the inner joy that these other Christians seem to have.

It's a bit of a puzzle to me. Because they seem to have this sort of enthusiasm and conviction. And even on their bad days, they seem to have some sort of joy, source of joy, that I don't seem to have. And all this would go together to say, maybe you are even now understanding grace the way that the Roman Catholic Church taught.

[11 : 08] And as for all I know, still teaches. And Martin Luther, he would have been well into this. And then it dawned on him, that's wrong.

It's not how grace works. That's not what grace is. That's not the way God has set it up. That's not where I am. That's a complete misunderstanding. So let's look at a different view of grace.

But before we get there, we need to look at what grace rescues us from. So we want to look at the Bible's view of sin.

And you might say, well, I don't want to know about sin. Very depressing. Bit old-fashioned. Rather quaint to come to somewhere where they use the word sin. But please come with me, because we have to understand sin in order to understand what God has saved us from.

We need to understand sin before we can understand salvation. And what do you think? Now, if I just clicked something, it's gone funny. What do you think of sin?

[12 : 27] I'll give you some multiple choice test, this one. So option A, there is really no such thing as sin. It's not really a problem.

We just have to try harder, because we're basically good. And if we can just try harder, everything will be fine. That version A would lead to a version of Christianity, which is entirely to do with techniques for raising ethical standards.

It would be what we would technically call moralism. And so there have been such versions of Christianity, but they're wrong. So come to B. Sin is, in version B, a sort of sickness from which we can be healed, given the correct medication.

So a little bit like having a cold. It doesn't kill you. And given the right treatment, enough paracetamol, you can work your way through that, and everything's fine.

Is that what the Bible says about sin? Or is it version C, which is actually a much more radical, pessimistic view, which says, human sin is a complete black hole from which there is no escape.

[13 : 55] That it is a moral and spiritual trap, failure, disgrace, which does not offer any escape to us.

We're trapped in sin. And if you like, we're dead in sin. So it doesn't just say that your eyesight needs a little bit of therapy. It says you can't see spiritual things at all.

And it's not saying that in terms of moving towards God, where we just move slowly, we just need a bit of help. It says you're absolutely stuck. You can't move towards God. And it says about the heart, instead of saying that the heart is something you need, a little bit of tweaking to get your heart right with God, it just says your heart is completely set in the wrong direction.

Not for God, but against God. Now that view is a very radical view of sin. And that's the one that Bible gives. Here are the texts.

I've just got a couple of texts. This is from John's gospel. And you might think, oh, well, that's a relief because John's gospel is full of inspiring and benign things.

[15 : 12] But actually, this is Jesus talking to Nicodemus. And Nicodemus, in John chapter 3, comes in with an impossibility.

And he says, no one could do the miraculous signs you're doing if God were not with him. It's impossible for you to do the miracles unless God's with you. And Jesus says, well, I'll tell you an impossibility.

These things are on the subject of impossible. I tell you the truth. No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. Which is actually quite a way to begin the conversation, isn't it?

Nicodemus has come very politely. Look, old chap, we're all religious people together here. And he comes rather deferentially. We know you're a teacher sent from God. And Jesus comes straight

back with this impossibility.

Please understand, this is the human condition. You cannot see the kingdom of God unless you are born again.

[16:15] Amen. And then he goes on to say in verse, which verse is it? Verse 5. I tell you the truth.

When Jesus says, I tell you the truth, I think this is probably amen, amen. It's quite a serious thing. He's saying, listen up. I tell you the truth. No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the spirit.

Meaning to say something supernatural, deep, powerful, has to happen because human beings, by their nature, are stuck.

They cannot see. They cannot move. They cannot enter. They cannot turn because that's what sin does to them. Oh dear.

Oh dear. Now, if that's what sin is, any idea of grace just helping us a little bit so that we can do the rest ourselves is not going to work, is it?

[17:28] Here's another text from the Apostle Paul, which was read to us. As for you, he says, you were dead in transgressions and sins in which you used to live.

You were by nature objects of wrath. That's what he says. It's a funny thing to say, isn't it? You're dead and you live. Yeah, I'm sure he would understand that that's a puzzling thing to say.

He says, you live in the ways of this world. But he says, spiritually speaking, you are dead in your transgressions.

That's how stuck you are in sin. Okay, that's the thing about sin. So now let's come and see what the Bible says about grace. Did that make sense about sin? Yeah.

So now let's see what the Bible says about grace. And actually the Bible says a whole lot about grace, which you'll see in a moment. I looked up on my computer and in the Old Testament and New Testament, if you just do a search on the word grace, you find 159 times, 37 times in the Old Testament, 120 times, 122 times in the New Testament.

[18:52] Interesting that balance, isn't it? Because the Old Testament is a lot bigger than the New Testament. But the use of the word grace, insofar as that's a guide, and it's only a rough guide, is less.

Now grace is present in the Old Testament. It means, it's a particular word which means to favor, to act in favor, perhaps to somebody who doesn't deserve favor, but you act in favor to them anyway.

So an example of grace in this case would be if you are caught speeding, so you are doing 70 miles an hour and a 30 mile an hour limit, and I don't have a lot of sympathy for you if you're doing that, to be honest, but anyway, let's assume the road was safe and that was an honest mistake.

You come along and a policeman stops you and he says, I'm going to charge you because you were exceeding the speed limit, you're caught banter rights, and rather than trying to make an excuse, you say, you're absolutely right, I was completely out of order, please could you let me off? And if the policeman says, okay, you'd be jolly pleased, wouldn't you? And you think, why would he do that?

[20:08] I haven't given him any money, I'm not going to get into that. I was wrong, and if he just lets you off, that's grace.

For no reason at all. Now, in the Old Testament, God acts in grace. Certainly does. He describes himself in Exodus 33, verse 6, as the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God.

So God explains who he thinks he is, and who he thinks he is, the Lord, the compassionate.

Compassionate is a word to mean womb, and sort of this belly area where you feel things.

And God says, I'm a womb-like, compassionate God, and I am a gracious God. I am a God who does let people off for no reason other than I choose to do so.

But having said that, oh, let me go back, because this was supposed to whiz round. Yes, look at that. Grace in the New Testament explodes.

[21:20] We go through the Old Testament, it's grace, and then in the New Testament, there's an explosion of grace. Suddenly, something that was there all the time becomes brilliantly illuminated, powerfully present.

The extremity of this undeserved favor, the, I have the word, it's gone, the generosity of it.

To use a word, the prodigality of it. Do you know what prodigality is? Prodigality is when you have a bath, and you don't bother to take the soap out, you just leave it in there, and it all dissolves away.

Do you have no care for looking after your soap? Do you have no concern? You're going to have to buy a new lot. That is just a complete waste of soap to leave the soap sloshing around in the bath. That's a prodigal. Now then, you'll remember that illustration. God is prodigal in his grace. He just sloshes it around. He doesn't seem to care to look after it carefully.

[22 : 29] He's so generous with his grace. And not only the amount of grace and the way he shows it to individuals, but the way he spreads it around.

Because we had God being gracious to his nation, his own people, Israel, and to various other people from other nations in a limited sort of way.

But suddenly, his grace explodes with a view of all the world, of being kind and merciful to nation upon nation upon nation.

Paul writes in Titus 2, 11, thinking of the change that has occurred as the gospel has come, The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions while we wait for our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us. But do you notice that expression?

[23 : 34] He says, what's happened? The grace of God has appeared. It was there all the time, but now, wow! It's sort of illuminated in neon lights.

The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all. So grace explodes in the New Testament. So let's look, may we, at two particular passages in Ephesians.

So if you've got your Bible, please will you turn to Ephesians, which Ruth read to us. And I want us to read these simply asking, do these tell us a Roman Catholic type view of grace?

In other words, that grace is like coffee which helps people to stay awake and carry on working until they reach their goal. Or does it give a completely different view of grace like the guy who punched my dad's friend in the mouth for no reason?

Let's see what we've got. So Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 to 3. So this is the bit where we get a very negative view of human sin.

[24 : 51] Ephesians 2, verse 1. As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

And that's a pretty comprehensive view of human nature. There's positive things to say about human nature in terms of creativity, capacity to care for one another, all sorts of things like that.

But he's analyzing it from the spiritual route and he says, there is no spiritual capacity in human beings so that if you just give them a bit of coffee, then they can make themselves better.

He says, you're dead. He says, you seem to be on a track which you follow and you follow the ways of this world. And the things that motivate you are the desires of the sinful nature.

[26 : 11] And you're on a track there. You follow its desires and thoughts. And the verdict is, there is nothing good in that sense about these people. They are objects of wrath as God judges human beings.

So that's a very negative view there. And I think that what's needed is far more than God offering to help us out with our spiritual mortgage and then we do the rest of it ourselves.

Paul describes intensive action by God and he says in verse 4, because of his great love for us, that's rather wonderful, isn't it, that God should love people who are by nature objects of wrath.

Because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ even when we are dead in transgressions.

He took us, enfolded us in the arms of his son, Jesus Christ, and made us alive. That's a fantastic, deep thing, isn't it?

[27 : 28] It's a million miles from just helping us to do our own thing. In verse 6, he says, and God raised us up with Christ.

So he sort of grabbed us with the Lord Jesus and raised us up. And it says, and he seated us with him in heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

And in some mysterious way, but it says it's true, that as Jesus Christ has been taken up into heavenly places and sits at the right hand of God, he sort of grabbed hold of us too.

And in some sense, even as we're sitting here today, we're also sitting in heavenly places with Jesus Christ. It's amazing, isn't it? He's raised us up with Christ and seated us with Christ.

And this is his action, as he describes it here. And what's the name for this action? What is the name for this? And he tells us that the name for it in verse 5, end of verse 5, it is by grace you have been saved.

[28 : 34] So in other words, I've just described, says Paul, what has been done for you in the Lord Jesus Christ is taking you up from death, from sin, into life, and newness and heavenly places.

And what do we call that? It is grace. It's by grace you have been saved. And what is the interpretation of it in verse 7?

Why has he done this? In verse 7 it says, in order that in the coming ages he might show, what? The incomparable riches of his grace expressed in kindness to us in the Lord Jesus Christ, in Christ Jesus.

He says, what, what, what, what, what's the expression? What do we take away from learning this? Answer, we take away that God's grace is incomparably rich. It's just so unheard of. so magnificent, so big, incomparably rich.

[29 : 42] That's what we're supposed to take away from this. And he says, again, in verse 8, I think this is the third time he's said this, isn't it?

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith. And was it our own endeavor? Did God help us halfway? It is not from yourselves.

It is the gift of God. Not by works so that no one can boast. So we, we can't get to heaven and say, well, thank you, Lord, for helping me halfway.

I'm pleased to say I did the rest of it myself. Not like a mortgage. Thank you, mum and dad, for giving me the, the, what do you call it? The down payment. What's it called? The deposit.

But we did the rest of it ourselves. And God says, you're never going to say that about salvation salvation. Because it is the gift of God. You'll never be able to say, look how well I did.

[30 : 47] All you'll ever be able to say is, see what God did for me. Is that right? Isn't he wonderful? We are his workmanship.

He says, not by works so that no one can boast. We're going to have to say solely Deo Gloria if we speak Latin.

But if we don't, we'll just say to God alone be the glory. Because he's done it. He picked me up when I was nowhere. He brought me into the Lord Jesus Christ.

He forgave my sins. He seated me with his son. What did I do to deserve that? Nothing. Now that is grace.

He says, it's a free gift. Like the gift that bloke gave to my dad's friend. That gift was a punch in the face. But the free gift that God gives us is all of this in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[31 : 51] Do you not think that's fantastic? Because I think it's amazing. And he summarizes in verse 10. He says, we've been remade, recreated.

It's an act of creation. Created in Christ Jesus to do good works. Now that's grace. That's grace. Okay?

Let's look at chapter 1 in the same sort of way. So let's look at what it says here. And we're asking ourselves, is the Roman Catholic view right that he sort of helps us on our way?

We do a good proportion of this. Chapter 1, verse 3. Praise be to God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. blessed. Well, he did that. He blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He doesn't say, God blessed us with about 90% of our spiritual blessings, but there's 10% that you jolly well got to do yourself.

[32 : 57] He's blessed us with every spiritual blessing. That's so different, isn't it? He chose us.

Verse 4. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. Now, I would say that Paul is saying we and he transfers to you a little bit later on, but it's true of all Christians.

How did we come to be in this privileged position? How did we get here? Because he decided to do it. And why did he decide to do it?

We have no idea. He decided because he decided. He decided because he loved us. He loved us because he loved us.

He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. Verse 5 says, in love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ.

[34 : 05] He, predestined meaning to mark out beforehand. Now, how does that work? I have no idea. It just says it, so I'm going to believe it. He marked us out beforehand, before we were even

born, apparently.

He had us on his list. He knew us. He had a plan of love for us. What was God doing before the creation of the world? Answer, he was thinking about you and how he could bless you before you were even born.

That's the implication of it. And whose plan was it? Was it us? Were we clever? We got this all sorted out, worked it out ahead.

And he says, no, it was in accordance with his pleasure and will. He decided to do this. And it's, why, again, what is the correct reaction?

What do we learn from this? It is to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves. It's, this is grace.

[35 : 17] This is grace. That he should so plan good things for us before we'd even, we would even been thought of. Humanly speaking, that's just amazing, isn't it?

To the praise of his glorious grace so that people like us would say, isn't God amazing? Isn't he great? Do you think that? Do you think of the praise his glorious grace?

Just remarkable. Out of this world. And he's given it to us in Jesus Christ. Now that's grace. That's worth the name grace.

It's God deciding and acting and blessing, not just helping us get a foot on the ladder of spiritual ascent.

But he, just so wholesale, there's hardly any room for anything else at all but just to say God's done it all. He chose us.

[36 : 22] He brought us. He raised us. He seated us. He, well, everything. His total generosity to save us so completely.

So I think that is a very different picture of grace to the idea that Martin Luther had to begin with. I think this really is grace.

And it's grace in a way which doesn't allow room for anything else to come in. So hence this is grace alone. Do you see the difference? The Roman Catholic grace, you say it's grace but it does part of it.

You've got to top it up with something else, quite a bit actually. But this is grace alone. Because this grace is so big it expands to fill 100% of the space. There's only room for grace there, it is grace alone.

So let's try and clarify that with some questions. So here they are. So question one. So is this grace a thing like strong coffee?

[37 : 28] Sometimes people use G-R-A-C-E, God's riches at Christ expense. It's not bad. God's riches at Christ expense grace. But even that makes it into a thing.

And if you have noticed all the way through, it's always linked to one degree or another to Christ himself.

What does God bless us with? He blesses us with Christ. All of those blessings are in Christ. And if you were to look at the list, I've put them there, all the times he says he's blessed us in Christ, he's raised us in Christ, he's chosen us in Christ, he's purposed in Christ, he's going to bring everything together in Christ, in him we were chosen, etc., etc., etc.

So I think we would be better off us thinking that grace is what God does through Christ in our lives. It's not a thing, it's really a person in action. I've got the list of the in Christ and the through Christ there. So that was question one.

[38 : 43] Question two. So do we add to grace what it lacks? Does it have gaps and blanks which we fill in ourselves? And the answer is, in Jesus Christ there is no room left for anything other than grace because he has done it all.

There's no sense in which we look back and say, well God did maybe 75% of my salvation, I did 25%. We get to heaven, we say, you did everything.

You saved me 100%. Not by works, lest anyone should boast. Grace alone, you see?

See the point of that? Sola. Sola meaning alone, grace alone. And I can ask you, is that what you would say about yourself and your being a Christian?

Would you say, that's how it is? He saved me. Unless you can say that, you probably haven't got the right end of the stick about what being a Christian is.

[39 : 52] Ask God to show that. Next question. But surely we have to earn it and seek it and ask. Well, we do.

We're told to seek the Lord while he may be found. We're told to knock on the door and so on and so on. But the heart of it is, the heart of what God requires is for us to stop trying to earn merit and start trusting his promises to do what we can't.

And in a sense, what we're seeking and pressing forward to do is seeking and pressing forward to realise we can't achieve salvation ourselves. The problem with the Jews is where they would not submit to a righteousness that was given to them.

They insisted on trying to work up their own righteousness. And what we're encouraged to do is to come to that point where we, if you like, stop trying and start trusting in what Jesus Christ alone does.

Believing that Christ has done all that is necessary and if we receive him through faith in his promises, then all is found in him. That's what faith does, you see. It says, I'm not looking at me anymore, I'm looking at the Lord Jesus and what he promises and who he is and that's where my dependency is.

[41 : 21] That's what faith is. we have done nothing to deserve his grace. It's like the punch only the other way around if you see what I mean.

Here's another question. You might say, but, but, but, but, but, but, but, but, but, this makes Christianity too easy. People, if it's as simple as this, they just trust, people will become Christians who have no intention of living a holy life and carrying on unconcerned in their sin.

Now, if you're asking that question, it shows that you've really got what's being said. Martin Lloyd Jones, the preacher, said, unless people ask this question, the preacher probably isn't preaching properly.

The Apostle Paul had this accusation against him. Does that mean that we go on, that grace means that we go on in sin that grace may abound?

And the answer to this question is found in Jesus Christ. Because what we're receiving, as I said, is grace is not just, it's not a thing, it's a person really.

[42 : 35] We are receiving Christ. We are in union with Christ. And to have him is to have his forgiveness and his mercy and be lifted up with him.

But it's also to have someone whom we love. It's also to have a vision of who he is. It's also to have a relationship between him and myself. It changes the relationship to the offers and ways of this world.

If I have him, it doesn't just free me to sin. If I have him, it frees me to love him and follow him and to want the things he wants and to walk the way that he walked and to embrace the things that he embraced.

And that's what it does for me. So Paul would have no problem in preaching a gospel of free grace. And if people get it, then they don't live lives of license and indifference.

They live lives of holiness and love because of Jesus Christ. Grace teaches us to say no to ungodly passions, was the quote in Titus.

[43 : 48] And question five, who gets the glory? Who gets the glory? Me?

You? No. God gets the glory. It's his kindness. All the glory goes to him.

That's why we would say soul, what is it? Soul, soul, soul, Deo Gloria. To God alone be the glory.

So I'm closed by saying, is this where you're at?

Would you say, yeah? Definitely. I'm on board with that. God. If not, you need to ask this God of grace to do for you what you can't do for yourself.

Your eyes are blind. Say to him, Lord, open my eyes. Your heart is hard. You need to say to God, please change my hard, rebellious heart.

[45 : 01] Make it soft and willing. And you need to ask God, put into me love for the Lord Jesus.

My heart is so indifferent. I need to love him. Bring me to that place. Show me your grace. Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, to God be the glory.

Amen.