

The Apostolic Multiplication Table – First Peter 1:1-2

I. Introduction:

- A. Why did Peter begin this epistle with a prayer for grace and peace?
1. Wasn't it because the people to whom he was writing were in midst of a sea of "heaviness" and "manifold temptations" (verse 6)?
 2. Wasn't it because their faith was under trial (verse 7)?
 3. There had been death in their families, and their neighbor's hated them because of their new faith in Christ.
 4. Their governments and their society were running contrary to where the Holy Spirit was leading them.
 5. They were in much the same condition as we are today. "Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."
- B. That word "grace" conveys wonderful hope and comfort to the Christian who understands it.
1. It is not a word found in Islam, Hindu or Taoist religions.
 - a. It is a word unknown to the atheist in any real and practical sense.
 - b. It is a secondary word even in many of the various sects of Christendom.
 2. And, sad to say, it is even secondary among those who believe the Bible.
 3. When was the last time you said "good-bye" or "hello" to someone with the words "grace and peace?"
- C. It is a word that both Paul and Peter loved to use. We find it about 150 times in the Bible.
1. Nearly every epistle Paul wrote either begins or ends with mention of "grace."
 2. Peter speaks of it eight times in this first letter.
 3. And his second letter begins again with: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord."
- D. No Christian should ever tire to hear of the Lord's great and special grace.
1. But what does it actually mean? How is it used in the New Testament scriptures?
 2. What is Peter suggesting? What important things should we keep in mind concerning "grace"?

II. I hope that you can define and explain "grace" to someone who doesn't enjoys it.

- A. Isn't it something special and which gives joy, pleasure, and delight to the recipient?
1. These things are a part of the original idea of the Greek word "charis."
 2. Austin has a sister named Charis.
 - a. Perhaps his parents named her to express their the joy for God's gift of that little girl.
 - b. Perhaps that was the name given to her, expressing their prayer that she might enjoy God's grace.
 - c. Judy and I have known Charis ever since she was a little girl.
 - d. But to be honest, over the decades, the meaning of Charis' unique name has somewhat worn off.
 - e. Now, when I see her, it's not the grace of God which jumps into my mind, but the beautiful woman she has become.
 3. By nature, over time, Christians can loose the impact of God's blessings; even the blessing of grace.
 4. Is that the reason the apostles so often remind us about grace?
 5. Is that the reason they pray that grace be multiplied unto us?
- B. We are exhorted to fill our lives with grace.
1. Peter will say in his second epistle: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."
 2. As I've already said, he begins **II Peter** with: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord."
 3. Doesn't that suggest that unless we fill our minds and hearts with the Lord, His grace and peace will not be multiplied unto us?
- C. The word "charis" refers to good-will, lovingkindness, and favor...
1. But it is not just general run-of-mill kindness and good-will; rather it is undeserved kindness.

2. The writers of the New Testament usually use "*charis*" to speak of that kindness by which God bestows favors even upon the un-deserving.
3. It is the special kindness by which God grants to sinners pardon for their sin.
4. "*For by grace are ye saved through faith.*"
5. It is this definition of grace which prompts us think of it most often as "*unmerited favor.*"

- D. Grace is also a **spiritual state** or **condition** – the place where we enjoy God's unmerited favor.
1. By that I mean it is more than a one time act of God whereby He saves us from our sins.
 2. When Judy & I said, "*I do*" to each other nearly 53 years ago, we entered the relationship called "*marriage.*"
 3. And when someone receives God's saving grace, they move into a "*state of grace.*"

- E. **Romans 5** begins with the words: "*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*"

1. God's grace provides the sinner with justification and that produces a very special kind of peace.
2. Scripture says, "*He that hath (Christ Jesus,) the son, hath life; but he that hath not the Son, hath not life, rather the wrath of God abideth on him.*"
3. Isn't there a peace with possessing God's saving grace?
4. Let's say you have spent a day working outside in really cold weather.
 - a. When you get home, you feel miserable, aching and tingling all over, like your blood is crystalized.
 - b. So you step into a hot shower.
 - c. Standing in that shower is a poor illustration of standing in God's grace.
5. And generally speaking we don't have to be thoroughly frozen before we can enjoy that hot shower.

- F. Grace can take an entirely different form when it is an **expression of gratitude** for God's unmerited favor.
1. "*What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*"
 - a. *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*
 - b. **But God be THANKED**, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.
 - c. *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*"
 2. The words translated "*God be thanked*" is "*theos charis.*"
 3. This reminds us to express our great thanks for the Lord's unmerited favor.
 4. Paul said, "*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enable me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.*"
 5. Again, the word "*thank*" in our Bibles is sometimes a translation of "*grace.*"
 6. And that is why some people say, "*Grace*" before eating their meals.
 7. Certainly, Peter is not thinking of all of these meanings, but we need to consider them from time to time.

III. These are the meanings of the word, now lets think of their use:

- A. If any sinner is ever delivered from his sin, it is possible only because of Divine Grace.
1. Salvation is first, foremost, and always a matter of grace. **Ephesians 2:5-8**
 2. Obviously, God doesn't owe us anything, especially forgiveness and eternal life.
- B. But again, over time, the beauty of grace can become common place in our hearts.
1. Even while still rejoicing in God's salvation, we can forget the grace which brought it down to man.
 2. And we can become complacent in our salvation forgetting the exhortations connected with that blessing.
 3. We can forget that as **recipients** of grace we should become **conduits** of grace.
 4. Therefore, "*Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*"

- C. In a round about way, God's grace should produce thankful, holy living.
1. Just as sight automatically demands that we look and see, and just as love requires us to love, grace demands graciousness.
 - a. So Peter prays, *"Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."*
 - b. You might say there is a spiritual law involved, like some sort of spiritual gravity.
 2. Lawlessness – antinomianism – is actually a form of anti-graciousness.
 3. If someone has been blessed by grace, obedience to the Giver of grace is not motivated by law, but by love
 4. Thus, in **Titus 2:11-13**, Paul wrote that the *"grace of God...teaches us"* to:
 - a. Deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly.
 - b. The grace of God teaches us to look for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ.
 5. And then he explained why Christ, in grace, gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity.
 - a. And that He might purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous for good works (**Titus 2:14**).
 6. Where grace is multiplied, godliness and service is also multiplied.

IV. **And as such, it is essential that Christians appreciate and progress in the Lord's grace.**

- A. We need to grow in grace as Peter says in **II Peter 3:18**.
1. It is not enough just to experience God's grace in forgiveness.
 2. God has so much more to share with us, both in this life and the life to come.
 3. In eternity the Lord promises to show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (**Ephesians 2:7**).
 4. Is this the explanation for all the apostolic salutations and benedictions?
- B. *"Now, brethren, I commend you to God, & to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up" (Acts 20:32).*
1. One way in which we grow is by drawing near to God in prayer.
 2. *"Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).*
- C. Doesn't the constant need of grace, suggest that we are not efficient in the use of grace?
1. Paul wrote to the **Corinthians**: *"We then as workers together with (Christ) beseech you that ye receive not the the grace of God in vain."*
 2. Most theologians summarize God's gifts of grace by putting them in two big boxes: common grace and more specific.
 3. If it were not for every day, every hour, every second grace, life would not go on.
 4. Not only did God create this universe, it is maintained by His kindness and grace.
 5. Billions of people use and enjoy God's common grace, but reject His saving grace.
 6. Peter suggests: Don't you be like them. *"Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."*
- D. If I knew that you needed \$500 for some important need.
1. And if I gave you \$5.00 towards that need, but you rejected my gift, because it was so small.
 2. What incentive would I have to give you \$100 more tomorrow?
- E. Peter is not writing to lost people; he is addressing some of the Christian diaspora.
1. Even Christians can minimize common grace day after day, before the day of serious trial comes along.
 2. Maybe it's a day of grief or terribly bad news.
 3. Oh, how we need to not only hear but receive: *"Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."*
- F. Take notice of Peter's salutation: *"Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied."*
1. Make it a part of your prayer life. Make it a part of your prayers for others and for yourself.
 2. We not only need a constant flow of grace, like the oxygen-rich atmosphere in which we live.
 3. But we need to breathe it in and synthesize it into something which we can share with others for the glory of God.