

Grace Unveiled!

What is *grace*? We often use the word, and sing about how amazing and marvelous it is, but do we really realize the impact it can have in our lives? This morning we begin a *tour* of grace, to discover what it is, why it's so awesome, and how it affects our lives.

1. What Noah Found

- The awesome knowledge of God
- The wonderful goodness of God

2. The Essence of Grace: Unmerited Favor

- Not earned, or deserved
- Given freely without expectation of return

3. The Message of Grace: You are free!

- God's 'Emancipation Proclamation'
- The call of grace: Be free!

*Grace! 'tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to the ear;
Heav'n with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear.*

*Saved by grace alone!
This is all my plea;
Jesus died for all mankind,
And Jesus died for me.
(Philip Doddridge)*



1. We use the word 'grace' in many contexts in English: A person with elegance, poise, or politeness is said to have *grace* ('social graces'). A person with special talents or abilities is said to be 'favored' or 'graced'; a person who abuses their abilities is said to have *fallen from grace*. An extended time to repay a debt is a 'grace period.' Grace can be a title ("Your grace"), or a prayer (we *say grace* before a meal). Combine these different uses for 'grace' in your 'mental blender': What do you come out with? Can you see any connection between the ways we use the word 'grace' and the revelation of God's grace in the Bible?
2. Gen. 6.8 is the first appearance of the word *grace* in the Bible. What was the spiritual state of the world at this time (v5)? How did God feel about His creation of mankind (v6)? What did He plan to do (v7)? Does Scripture suggest that Noah in any way *deserved* God's grace? *After receiving God's grace*, what does the text tell us about Noah (v8)?
3. Scripture draws a clear line between something that is of grace, and something that is a result of works (see Rom. 4.1-5; 11.5-6; Eph. 2.1-10). Why is this concept difficult for people to accept? It is often rejected in *Christian* churches! Have you ever heard someone teach that getting to heaven depends on good works? How do they do this, while still maintaining that we are saved by faith? How does the definition of grace – *unmerited favor* – expose the error of this teaching?
4. People who add 'good works' to the gospel message are 'grace killers' – they undermine grace. The main way they 'kill' grace is by making our eternal life dependent on what we *do* (or *don't do*). They make sure we are *not* free from do's and don'ts, and make our eternal destiny a result of something *we* do. Contrast this with Paul's words in Galatians 5.1. What difference does it make in your life to be truly free? How does this affect the way you *choose* to live your life? Why?

