

What is 'Free Grace'

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 20 March 2017 14:03

Like so many other words and phrases used by evangelical/reformed Christians, this one is likely to be misunderstood! Do YOU know what it means? You will not find the phrase in scripture, but you WILL find it in other names. Romans 5:15 adequately describes what 'free grace' is... though calling it 'free grace' is making a double-statement, an unnecessary one, because God's grace is always free!

"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." (Romans 5:15)

The "free gift" referred to is given by the "grace of God". Always! This 'free gift', charisma, is simply a favour given without any merit on the recipient's part. It is thus divine grace that is also an aspect of God's unmerited mercy, for no-one ever deserves His grace.

Once this free gift is given – salvation itself – it is followed by the gift of faith. With that comes true knowledge (as I have said many times, it means we can use 'biblical logic', which is apart from human logic; Biblical logic arises from its foundation in Christ). And when we submit to God we will become holier (we are considered to be holy by God the Father simply because He sees the 100% holiness of His Son, Who owns us). From this holiness there will come the many virtues that separate a saved person from the world and his former life.

Grace is always 'free'. It is free because only God can give such a gift, and He gives it without any merit or work on our part. We can do absolutely nothing to merit salvation! However, after we are saved, we must comply with His demands, so His grace is no longer 'free'. His grace, in the Christian, must be earned. This is NOT the call of Arminianism. By 'earned', I do NOT mean we can obtain God's grace by working for it. We get it by allowing the Holy Spirit to change us into a person who lives more like Christ every day. This is not to be applauded – because it is how we must live anyway!

The feminine noun, **charis**, is translated 'grace'. It means a 'favour' given just because God has pleasure in doing so; He has great joy in doing it (**chairō**). Every *charis*

is based on God's eternal choice to favour a particular saved person. Thus, it is predestined. No act or decision or thought of God is ever random or sudden, nor is it shaped by human

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responses or actions. This is because everything He thinks, says and does is eternal, known to Him in eternity.

The "*gift by grace*" spoken of in the text is salvation (gift, **dōrea**). We know it refers to salvation because of the context and its use as opposite to death.

What I have given above is the interpretation of God's word. By the time it reaches man's mind it is changed into a theological statement and is listed as 'Free Grace theology'. Sadly, though not strictly needed, it must be stated because of the way heretics try to change its meaning.

Put simply, it means that anyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour is saved, given eternal life at the point of salvation. However, this requires a deeper analysis. For example, though a man is unsaved until after he is 'born again' by the Holy Spirit, His eternal status has already been decided by God in Heaven, so his eternal estate already exists in God's mind. Also, a man will not just 'believe' in Christ by way of his own will or decision – his acceptance of Christ is part of the eternal choice by God that he should believe. So, the belief itself is a divine gift.

The formalistic use of 'free grace' theologically is, like denominations, unnecessary and wrong... if we preach and teach scripture as it is written, we will not need to further define anything. The only time we need to do so is when confronted by heresy or bad teaching. As already stated, we can do nothing to earn salvation (thus making Arminianism a heresy). But, once saved we must comply with God's demands. Not complying after salvation does NOT cause us to lose our salvation: thus, the much-used phrase, "Once saved, always saved" is true.

Once a biblical aspect of doctrine is defined, almost invariably further definitions are given by groups opposed to the original definition! When 'free grace' was defined it led to the rise of at least four more movements and ideas:

- 1.

The 'Free Spirit controversy'

- 2.

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The 'Majoristic controversy'

3.

The 'Antinomian controversy', and

4.

The Lordship controversy'.

5.

As these require their own short descriptions they will not be given in this paper.

Suffice to say that 'free grace' is properly dealt with in the biblical text above. Grace comes from God as a free gift, the epitome being salvation. Anything that teaches against this is heresy and godless. Note that this has nothing at all to do with Calvin or Calvinism! It stands true because scripture says so, very plainly.

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