

God's Amazing Grace

The True & False Self

Ephesians 2:1-10

Grace

The grace of God means something like: Here is your life. You might never have been, but you **are** because the party wouldn't have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. Nothing can ever separate us. It's for you I created the universe. I love you.

Grace
Frederick Buechner

1. The False Self

Ephesians 2:1-3

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1. A Way of Alienation (v1-2)

- » A way characterized by sin – self-centred choices (v1)
- » Living for selfish desires
- » Following the mores of this world (v2) – “the course of the world”

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2. A Way of Slavery (v2-3)

- » Following the ruler of this age (v2) – ‘the power of the air’, the spirit at work in this age
- » The spirit at work (energy) - war, materialism, pornography, tribalism
- » Being shaped or influenced by this spirit

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3. A Way of Passion (v3)

- » Not passion in a good sense (enthusiasm) but a passion that leads to addiction & destruction
- » Characterized by anger (wrath)

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The Way of the False Self

- » **Materialism** – commitment to things
- » **Power** – control, exploitation, desire
- » **Hedonism** – unbridled pleasure, avarice, to want more, 'seven deadly sins'

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Do we believe Paul?

Do we believe there is a way of alienation?

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But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. Do not be deceived, my beloved.

James 1:14-16

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Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world.

1 John 2:15-16

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II. The True Self: The Way of Reconciliation

Ephesians 2:4-10

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“But God...” (v4)

1. A Way of Love

- » 'great love', 'which he loved us' (love = 2x in v4)
- » God loves us even as the Father loves the prodigal son

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2. A Way of Mercy (v4)

- » Mercy is an Old Testament term – ‘steadfast love’ (Psalm 103:4-5)
- » ‘the mercies of God’ (Romans 12:1)
- » He loves us more than we deserve

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3. A Way of Grace (v5,7,8)

- » ‘Grace’ used 3x;
- » ‘saved’ used 2x (v5,8)
- » Shipwreck terminology – when there is no other hope

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Three unique words by Paul:

- i. ‘made alive together with’ (v5)
- ii. ‘raised us up with’ (v6)
- iii. ‘seated us with’ (v6)

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4. A Way of Kindness (v7)

- » God’s lovingkindness – an Old Testament word
- » “I have loved you with an everlasting kindness” (Jeremiah 31:3)
- » God’s grace is a sign of God’s kindness

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5. A ‘Gift’ from God (v8)

- » All of these characteristics are a “gift of God – not your own doing”
- » ‘not of works’ (v9) – simply through your faith (v8)

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6. A Mission/a Purpose (v10)

- » We are God’s creation – created to fulfill his good works in us
- » We have a mission/ a purpose/ a vocation from God

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Our Great Adventure

- » It is not simply about living comfortable lives – we have a purpose/ a mission
- » We are to discern God's path – our great adventure is to live passionately before God

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III. Going Forward in Grace

1. *Devotion* – living in communion with God
2. *Community* – living in community with others for God's purposes

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3. *Witness* – living as children of God in a hopeless world

4. *Incarnation* – being the hands and feet of Jesus – 'good works'

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