

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to use a word without really grasping its depth? We say it, we sing it, we thank God for it—but when pressed to explain it, we sometimes struggle. Few words fit that description more than *grace*. And that is exactly where the Epistle to the Romans takes us—right into the heart of what grace truly is.

The Epistle to the Romans—whether we realize it or not—is widely regarded as one of the most profound pieces of writing ever composed. It is also one of the most demanding books in the Bible. Romans sets out to explain something that sounds simple on the surface but is anything but simple in reality: the grace of God. Grace is not merely a comforting concept; it is a divine solution to humanity's greatest problem.

If I were to hand you a quiz right now and ask, “What is the grace of God?” and then gave you the same quiz again after we have carefully read our way through this letter, I believe you would be amazed at how much clearer, richer, and more grounded your answer would become. Romans doesn't just define grace—it unfolds it, defends it, and applies it to every corner of life.

Here is the issue Romans confronts head-on: God's righteousness is not the problem—our sin is. God is holy, just, and perfect. We are not. There is a real and serious gulf between God's holiness and human iniquity, and no amount of moral effort, religious activity, or good intentions can bridge that gap. Romans explains God's remedy for that separation, and that remedy is grace. Grace is spoken of often, preached frequently, and sung joyfully—but it remains deeply challenging when we begin to consider its cost and its implications.

Even the ancient world sensed this tension. Socrates once acknowledged that deity might forgive sins, but he admitted he did not see how such forgiveness could be morally possible. In other words, he understood that forgiveness is not simply ignoring wrongdoing. Justice must be satisfied. Romans is going to show us the “how”—and at the very center of that answer stands Jesus Christ, who saved us by shedding His blood on the cross. The resurrection then declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

One simple acronym of the word grace that has helped many believers over the years is this: **God's riches at Christ's expense**. While that phrase is a summary rather than a direct quotation from any single source, it captures the biblical reality well. Grace is costly. It required nothing less than the sacrifice of the Son of God to reconcile sinful humanity to a holy God. Romans will make it unmistakably clear that salvation is not cheap, casual, or sentimental—it is grounded in the justice and love of God meeting at the cross.

Romans does more than inform the intellect; it reshapes the soul. It confronts our natural tendency to drift toward legalism—toward trying to earn what God freely gives. Grace is never meant to lead us into spiritual laziness, nor is it meant to place us back under bondage. Instead, grace frees us to live in grateful obedience. When grace is neglected or misunderstood, it often hardens into rule-keeping religion. Romans calls us back to a living, vibrant relationship with God grounded in faith.

Historically, the impact of Romans has been enormous. It played a decisive role in the recovery of the biblical truth of justification by faith. The letter pressed a question that Martin Luther could not escape: *How can a sinful person stand right before a holy God?* Romans drove him back to a single,

life-altering declaration of Scripture: “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17). That truth shook his world—and eventually shook history.

As we begin our reading of Romans, it is important to recognize what kind of book this is. Paul is writing primarily to believers. His aim is not merely evangelistic; it is foundational and instructional. He wants the saints to understand what salvation truly is, what grace accomplishes, and how faith reshapes every aspect of life. And because Romans goes deep—especially in its opening chapters—it will challenge us, stretch our thinking, and call us to a more settled, obedient, faith-filled walk with God.

Practical Application

As we prepare to journey through Romans, ask yourself an honest question: *Do I truly live from grace, or do I merely agree with it theologically?* Grace is not just the doorway into salvation; it is the ground on which the Christian life stands every day.

A Challenge for Believers

Resist the pull toward self-reliance and spiritual performance. Let Romans teach you how to rest in what Christ has already accomplished and then let that grace motivate a life of joyful obedience rather than fearful striving.

An Invitation to Non-Believers

If you have never trusted Jesus Christ, Romans will make one truth unmistakably clear: forgiveness is possible because Jesus shed His blood on the cross for your sins, and His resurrection proves that He is Lord. Grace is not earned—it is received.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Today, you can turn to Him in faith, confess your need, and receive the gift of eternal life that God freely offers through His Son.

As we read this letter together, may God deepen our understanding, steady our faith, and transform our lives through the power of His grace.