

Title: Mystery Revealed: Reflecting on the Grace of God

Intro:

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. – Albert Einstein

1. God has graciously given us wisdom and insight to see His Gospel.
 - a. He has graced us with wisdom
 - i. The knowledge of the REAL nature of things
 - ii. A removal of the blinders of sin and deception about the Real
 - b. He has graced us with insight
 - i. The ability to see the Real as it is practical in our lives
 - ii. The art of skillful living according to the what is Real
 - c. The understanding that the Gospel is Truth so much so that our inclinations (Desires) shift to God for His glory and not for ours.
 - i. The act of the Holy Spirit called “regeneration” is the gracious giving of the ability to see the Real and the ability to *choose* the Truth
 - ii. JESUS (John 3:3; 14:6)
 - d. This wisdom and insight is ALL of God’s grace, GIVEN to us, not based upon our performance, wisdom, or ability
 - i. We could not even understand without God’s grace
 1. Matthew 13:13-16 – *parables reveal to the blessed, but hide from the rest*
 2. John 8:43-47 - *The reason the Phar. don’t hear Jesus is b/c they’re not of God*
 3. Holy Spirit in the basement analogy (Jack Miller)
 - ii. We could not even see the Kingdom of God without complete grace
 1. John 3:3 – “Unless one is born again (from above) he cannot even see the Kingdom
 2. Matt 19:24-26 – Camel/needle, impossible w/man, but not with God (enter Kingdom)
 - iii. This wisdom to see is undeserved and unearned, like election, adoption, and redemption
 1. No amount of study will reveal it AS TRUTH, the Real nature of things
 2. No amount of religion or outward obedience will see it as TRUE
 3. We did not gain this knowledge, or new heart and new eyes, because of something inherent *within* us (wisdom, knowledge, humility, trust, etc.), it was all given to us in a new birth due to God’s kind purpose (*ευδοκία*)

“Man with all his shrewdness is as stupid about understanding by himself the mysteries of God, as an ass is incapable of understanding musical harmony” – Jean Calvin
- a. We did not discover it! It was revealed to us by something else (The Holy Spirit)
- b. Only to the elect does God reveal the Gospel as TRUTH that changes the heart
 - i. Acts 13:48; 16:14
 - ii. Romans 10:20
 - iii. John 15:16
 - iv. Col 1:27
 - v. Matt 13:11
- c. We believe because we’re chosen, we’re not chosen because we believe.
 - i. God loves you as sons because...He loves you as sons.
 - ii. His love is self-originated and completely due to the kindness of His will
 - iii. It is sheer grace!

2. The Father makes us wise to see His mysterious Will in Jesus
 - a. It is the mystery of His will that is revealed to us
 - i. NOT mystery like Sherlock or Poirot, with deductive reasoning and “discovery” of the truth
 - ii. A mystery, in the biblical sense, is the truth held secret by God that only He can reveal
 1. 1 Cor 2:9-16
 2. Col 2:2
 - b. It is the particular mystery of bringing all things together under Christ
 - i. NOT an understanding of ALL of His will
 1. Deut. 29:29
 - ii. “summing up”
 1. is a word used in arguments, usually, of bringing all the secondary points into agreement with the main point. Jesus is the Main Thing, and all other things are being brought into line with Him
 2. “summing up” – in Greek mathematics the sum total went at the top of the list of sums, as opposed to the bottom where we usually sum up numbers. Really, we sum down, the Greeks actually summed up.
 - iii. “fullness of the times”
 1. The Christ is the pinnacle and the purpose of all of history, all its epochs and dispensations. Every moment on earth is heading toward that great day when all will be brought under the Supremacy of Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One of God. Jesus fulfilled His role as the Messiah and will bring all things together under His rule as the Christ.
 2. It is future, for not everything is subjected, yet
 - a. Hebrews 2:8
 - b. Phil 3:12
 - c. Rom 8:18ff
 3. It has also begun in the Church
 - a. God has placed us in line with Jesus by His election, adoption, redemption, salvation
 - b. This is the doctrinal TRUTH, the Real nature of the Church: Chosen, Adopted, Free, and under the Kingship of Jesus. We have been summed up and are being summed up together under Christ.
 - i. He is bringing all things together under His Kingship and we are already there!!
 - ii. He is in the act of bringing us TOGETHER, uniting us, teaching us to love each other because of His grace and His gospel (chs. 4-5).
 - c. God revealed His mystery because it pleased Him.
 - i. Why in this manner? Why the cross? Why bring us together under Christ now?
 1. Because it pleased Him to reveal Himself to the world
 - a. And in a special intimate way to His children
 - b. All the blessings of God are also the mystery of His will
 - c. Eudokia – good pleasure – good desire
 2. Sheer Grace
 - ii. According to the kindness of His will and desire, He revealed Himself to His elect
 1. The One who does according to the counsel of His own will

2. Only God ultimately know the “why’s” of His will, but what He has revealed to us makes us glory in His grace!
3. What does knowing this mystery mean?
 - a. “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” – C.S. Lewis
 - b. God’s revelation of Himself by sheer grace means that we cannot be lost
 - c. Knowing that we see the Truth only because of God’s sheer grace towards us changes our entire lives:
 - i. Deeper Humility
 1. There is nothing *in me* that makes me better than anyone else
 - a. Many people say “I’m saved by grace” when they really mean, “I’m saved by grace because...”
 - b. We need to be careful in functionally giving ourselves too much credit in our salvation by making implicit (or explicit) demands on God
 - i. “Don’t call me, God, I’ll call you”
 - ii. “I can’t believe that God would do such a thing, even if the Bible says it”
 2. Ed Brothstein has said, “Every identity factor is automatically a source of oppression.”
 - a. Identity: What makes me distinct and special (and therefore others less distinct and less special)
 - b. Race, Cause, Religion, Success, Functional Idols
 3. Only the Truth of God’s election, adoption, redemption, and understanding by sheer grace tells me that God loves me contra-conditionally
 - a. My identity is not my own and I didn’t earn it or even deserve it. I have no right to it by own power, and I actually acted against the conditions to be called a child of God. God chose me before I chose Him. Sheer Grace!
 - b. This grace that makes me special will not lead to oppression
 - i. The Gospel, due to gracious election, is *uniquely* non-oppressive (it isn’t my wisdom or discovery that led me to believe, all is a gracious gift of God)
 - ii. I am under the Kingship of Jesus! He is the King, I am not!
 - ii. Deeper Security
 1. If you didn’t earn it, how can you unearn it?
 - a. Since we didn’t gain it by wisdom, righteousness, or intelligence, we cannot lose it by foolishness, failure, or loss of intelligence
 2. Anxiety, fear, and worry come from the belief that if you don’t have something, then God will not love you, or keep you, or hold onto you
 - a. The gospel of sheer grace utterly destroys fear as we believe that God loves us with no dependence upon our wisdom, righteousness, or performance.
 - b. Before the creation of the world, God simply set His love upon us and worked for our salvation through Jesus, the Christ!
 - c. I am under the Kingship of Jesus! He is good and He loves me, if He died for me on the cross and bore my shame, what more does He have to prove?! He obviously will not let me go!!
 - iii. Deeper Community (love for each other)
 1. God is bringing all things TOGETHER under Jesus and it starts in the Church’s unity UNDER CHRIST: Unity of Love and Faithful Obedience to Jesus

2. How do we relate to others if the mystery of the Gospel is only understood because of God's gracious act of regeneration? There is no basis for hierarchy, religion, or looking down on others!
 - a. You're not a Child of God because you're choice
 - b. You're a Child of God because you're chosen
3. Christians create community
 - a. I have hope for *anyone*, because God elects, adopts, redeems, and reveals according to His grace alone
 - i. I'm a miracle of grace, why not them?
 - b. I coerce *no one*, for only God can reveal Truth as True to the heart by giving His wisdom and understanding
 - i. No one comes to Jesus unless the Father draws them. There is no need to "convince" or manipulate anyone into doing what you think that they should do
 - ii. You never look on anyone without hope
 - c. I have respect for *everyone*, for I am saved by grace alone, not my wisdom, intelligence, knowledge, or righteousness
 - i. I am not beloved by God because I'm a wiser or more spiritually minded person, a humbler man, a better father, worker, or driver.
 - ii. I AM NOT THE KING!!! But the King loves me so greatly that He sent His Son to die in my place. Oh! What a King! Hallelujah, what a Savior!
- iv. Deeper Love for God
 1. The freer the grace, the greater the love.
 - a. Luke 7:47
 - b. 1 John 4:19
 2. Seeing with our hearts' eyes that we are *completely* saved by the grace and work of God in Jesus Christ, we can feel nothing but pure and unadulterated worship, the grateful heart's response of humble love.
 3. Seeing God's holiness and the severity of my sin's proud wanderlust leads me to repentance, and seeing God's immense and radically gracious love toward me in His putting under Christ together with you all by choosing us, adopting us, redeeming us, and revealing Himself to us, leads me to love Him greatly for His love towards me.

Conclusion: Praise the Lord for His Glorious Grace of Revealing His Mysterious Gospel of Jesus to our Hearts

"I Sought the Lord and Afterward I Knew" by Anonymous

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
 He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me
 It was not I that found, O Savior true
 No, I was found of Thee

I find, I walk, I love, but, O the whole
 Of love is but my answer, Lord, to Thee
 For You were long beforehand with my soul
 Always You loved me.

You did reach forth your hand and mine enfold
 I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea
 'Twas not so much that I on Thee took hold
 As You, dear Lord, on me