

Graceless Preaching?

(Ephesians 1:6)

- Introduction: 1. In book that was written not too long ago by a brother in Christ, this author described the preaching done in churches of Christ as being “harsh and graceless.”
- a. “The sermons just seemed so harsh and graceless...If you were going to preach in the 1940’s and 50’s in the Churches of Christ, you had better be able to quote at least seventy-five verses per sermon or you were out on your ear in no time. Never mind that they didn’t fit the context of your message, that was irrelevant, you just had to be able to string them together and spit them out fast enough to let folks know that you were the right source for all of their Bible-thumping needs. Likewise, the messages had to be ‘hot.’ If you finished your sermon without mentioning hell at least ten times and associating other denominations with the same, then you were liberal.”
2. I happen to know the author who wrote this and I find it interesting that he wasn’t even alive during the time he said our preaching was so harsh and graceless.
 3. I would imagine that preachers from that era grow tired of hearing young men who haven’t yet proven themselves worthy to carry their coat, harshly critiquing their preaching.
 4. To me, such criticisms and caricatures indicate to me that someone doesn’t understand the nature of God’s grace.
 5. So let’s discuss a few things about God’s grace.

I. **Salvation is not earned**

- A. For years we have sung the song, “O Thou Fount Of Every Blessing,” which has the line, “Oh to grace how great a debtor, daily I’m constrained to be. Let thy goodness like a fetter bind my wandering heart to thee.”
- B. In recent years, I’ve heard many people charge gospel preachers of believing and preaching that salvation is earned.
- C. I deny such a charge as being an accurate representation of preaching over the past 50 years.
 1. How do they arrive at such a conclusion? Counting words.
 2. The “Core Gospel.”
- D. Did you know Jesus never once used the word grace in the gospel accounts? Did he understand it? Did he preach it?
 1. “Now just how often the word grace should be mentioned is difficult to say. However, it is noteworthy that Jesus never mentioned the word: not in the Sermon on the Mount, not in His cutting sermon in Matthew 23, not in His parables, not in His prayers, not in His miracles, not in His temptations with Satan, not in sending out the 70, not in giving the Great Commission, and