

A Summary of God's Grace

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: 1 Timothy 1:15

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I want you to turn in your Bibles this morning to the book of 1 Timothy. I am going to be speaking from 1 Timothy chapter one verse 15 and here is my subject. I could call this message several different things but I believe I will call it, "A Summary of God's Grace. A Summary of God's Grace."

I am just going to use one verse of Scripture, very familiar, very wonderful. Oh, what a verse, what a tremendous summary of God's grace, God's goodness and God's mercy. And listen, what a clear declaration of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's learn, let's learn something today.

When I finish this message I hope that you will have received by his grace some understanding of the goodness of God and the mercy of God in Christ our Lord. Listen to the text, 1 Timothy 1:15. You probably could quote it. "This is a faithful saying and it is worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ is come into this world to save sinners of whom I am the chief."

Now let's begin with the first line. I am going to...just one verse. But, like I said, oh what a verse, what a tremendous declaration of God's goodness, what a summary of the grace of God.

Take one line at a time. Now look at the first one. "This is a faithful saying." What does that mean? It is a true saying. What we read here and what I am about to declare unto you is the Word of God. It is faithful. It is true. It is not my words. This is not my doctrine. This is his Word and his doctrine. And how important it is that I preach his Word, his Word and that you hear his Word.

Do you know why? Do you know why it is so important that I preach God's Word? Paul said, "Timothy, preach the Word, preach the Word." It is so important that I preach the Word and that you hear the Word.

You know, a lot of people comment about this little notebook that I have in my hand and they make a comment once in a while about a lot of preachers just walk around. They don't have any notes or any outline or anything like that.

Let me tell you something. I am not just preaching my words. I am preaching his Word. I am not teaching you what I think. I am teaching you what he says. And in this little notebook is 45 years of study and prayer and seeking God's message for you and for the people to whom I preach. And I know what I am going to try to say here. I have studied the Word, prepared it for you. This is a faithful saying. This is not something off the top of my head. This is not some kind of vision or dream I have had. This is his Word. We are to study the Word of God. We are to preach the Word of God.

Why? Well, by the Word of God we find out who God is. God is revealed in his Word. That is how he reveals himself to us, by his Word.

Secondly, by the Word of God we learn about our fall and our sin and our condition. How do I know about myself and what God almighty's attitude is toward me except I read his Word? What does God say about himself and what does God say about us?

By the Word of God the Spirit quickens sinners. You know, the Scripture says, "Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth. We are born again not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible seed, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever."

By the preaching of the Word of God men are saved. That is what Paul said in 1 Corinthians. He says, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

The preaching of what? Experiences? Stories? No, the preaching of his Word, his Word, his Word about himself, his Word about us, his Word about Christ, his Word.

This is a faithful saying. This is a true saying. This is God's Word. And by the Word of God faith is given. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

And then by the Word of God we grow in grace. Peter said, "Desire the sincere milk of the Word of God that you may grow thereby." You grow by the teaching of the Word, not promotions, personality and psychology and philosophy, the Word of God.

What saith the Scriptures?

What frightens me is that I see these fellows walking around and talking, but I don't see them teaching the Word of God. And the people know nothing about the Scriptures. By the word of God we are comforted. By the Word of God we have assurance.

This is a faithful saying because it is God's Word and I must preach it and you must hear it.

Now look at the next line. "This is a faithful saying and it is worthy of all acceptance." It is worthy of acceptance by all, by all. This is not to be doubted. It is not to be debated. I hear people debating the Scriptures. There is no reason to debate the Word of God. This is not to be doubted, argued or to be debated. It is to be accepted. It is to be re-

ceived. All who hear are to receive it. I am to study the Word of God, prepare to come and teach you, take these verses one at a time, each line, line upon line, precept upon precept, word after word. I am to study, give my time to prayer, study and teach you and you are to hear it and receive it as the Word of God.

Let me give you five directions for hearing the Word of God when it is preached, five directions. Now this is important. You listen to it or else jot it down. Take heed how you hear. That is what our Lord said. Take heed how you hear.

Now I am going to tell you how to hear, how to hear the Word of God so as to prophet, to gain by it, to be blessed by it.

Number one, hear the Word of God with a hungry heart, with a needy heart. The Scripture says, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness. They shall be filled. People who are really hungry and needy like David kept saying, "I am poor and needy, poor and needy."

If a man comes to the Scripture with a hungry heart, with a needy heart, it will be filled. God will teach him. And I will tell you this. People who are really hungry are more interested in the food than they are in the dishes or the containers. They are not much taken up with the containers. They are taken up with the message, not with the messenger, but with the message he brings.

We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the power might be not of us, but of God and that your faith should not stand in us, but in him. So you hear the Word of God with a hungry heart and a needy heart.

Now watch this secondly. You hear the Word of God as it is, the Word of God, not the word of man, the Word of God.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. Listen to this, 1 Thessalonians 2:13. He said, "When you received the Word of God which you heard from me..." Paul preached to them. He said, "Now when you received the Word of God which you heard from me, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God which worketh effectually in you that believe." Now that is the way to hear. Hear it with a hungry heart, not to be entertained, but to be instructed, not to argue, but to be blessed and hear it not as the words of a man, but as the Word of God. This is a true saying and it is worthy of your acceptance because it is the Word of God.

Now, thirdly. Hear the Word preached for yourself. Don't hear it for somebody else.

People are always saying, "Well, I surely do wish so and so could hear this message."

You hear it. It is for you. It is for me.

“I surely do wish so and so had been here. That was a great...he certainly could have used that.”

No, you can use it. It is God's Word for me and for you.

When Nathan came to David and told him that story about the traveler coming to visit and the man had plenty of lambs and he went out and stole his neighbor's lamb, the neighbor only had one. He stole it and slew it and fed his visitor the lamb from his neighbor's house.

And David got so angry. He said, “You show me that man and I will deal with him.”

And Nathan said, “David, King David, you are the man. You are the man.”

And that is the way to hear the Word preached. Hear it as the Word of God for me and for you. Hear it for yourself.

And fourthly, hear the Word of God in faith, in faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Believe what you hear.

You know, I don't have to understand everything that is written in the Word of God. I can't understand everything that is written. It is impossible.

Martin Luther said one time, “I don't need a God I can understand. If I have a God that I can understand and I can comprehend, then he is no bigger or greater than I am.”

I hear the Word of God with faith, with faith. It is full of mysteries, mysteries. The secret things belong to God. The revealed things belong to us. So we hear the Word of God with faith. We believe it. Why? God said it.

You know, when God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees and told him to go to a land he would show him, he didn't know where he was going, but he believed God. And when Abraham was 100 years old and his wife was in her 90s and God told them that they were going to have a son, he didn't know how, but he believed God. And when God told him to sacrifice his son on that altar he didn't know why. He couldn't understand why. But he believed God. God told him that boy would be his heir so he just believed well, God will raise him from the dead. If I kill him, God will raise him. He believed God.

And that is what I am saying. The Word did not prophet Israel. Hebrews 4:2 says, “Not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” Believe.

Teach me, Lord. I believe. Reveal thy Word to me. I believe. I believe it because you said it. That is sufficient for me. It has got to be sufficient for you.

And fifthly, I will tell you how to hear. Hear the Word of God fully intending to obey him, to walk in him.

You know, when Cornelius sent for Peter, God told him to send for Peter and Peter preached the Word to him. “The apostle Peter is my servant and he will come down and preach the Word to you. You send for him.”

And so Cornelius sent some fellows up there and told Peter to...asked Peter to come down and preach to him. And he gathered his family together and his friends and the people that worked for him and they all sat down in a room and the apostle Peter came in and said, “Why have you sent for me?”

And this is what he said. Acts chapter 10. He says, “Now we are all here present before God to hear all things God has commanded you to speak.”

That is the way to hear him and be blessed.

This is a faithful saying and it is worthy of your acceptance. But I will tell you. You have got to hear it with a hungry heart. You have got to hear it as it is, the Word of God. You have got to hear it for yourself and you have got to hear it by faith, not by understanding, not by intellect and not by argument and debate, but faith. And you have got to hear it fully intending to do something about it. Listen, listen, listen.

All right. Let's go on here. “This is a faithful saying.” It is the Word of God. And it is worthy of your acceptance. Now look at the next line. “Jesus Christ.” Jesus Christ came into this world. That is a faithful saying.

Who is this Jesus Christ? Who is Jesus Christ, the one that came into this world? Well, listen. Well, he is the son of the virgin Mary. That's right. We know that. This Jesus Christ is a son of a virgin. He had no human father.

Way back in Isaiah, Isaiah 7:14, God said that this man would come without a human father, the only person ever born into this world without a human father, only one. And God said way back yonder in Isaiah 7:14, listen. “Behold, behold, listen, listen, attention. Behold. “God himself will give you a sign, a virgin will be with child and you will call his name Immanuel, God with us.”

Jesus Christ has come into this world. You didn't come into this world. You were born into this world. He came into this world. He was born as a man but he himself who lived from everlasting came into this world. He decided to come. He planned to come. He purposed to come. He chose his mother. He chose the day to be born. He chose a place he would be born. He chose the family in which he would be born. He chose the way he would live and the way he would die and raised himself from the dead. This man is Jesus of Nazareth. Who is he? He is the Son of God.

When Mary was pregnant having no husband the angel said, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Who is this Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God. He is the son of the virgin and he is the Son of God, the only begotten Son of God, the well beloved Son of God, the only man in whom God said, "I am well pleased."

He is Immanuel, God with us. And he is the son of man. That's right. He is the God man. Jesus Christ is God as if he had never become a man. In essence, in power, in purpose, in holiness, in righteousness, in every attribute equal with God, in every attribute. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He said, "You have seen me. You have seen God." He is the express image of the Father. He is the exact likeness of the Father by whom he made the worlds and yet he is a man as if he had never been God.

Now you explain that. Of course, you can't do it because Paul said in 1 Timothy three, "Great is the mystery of godliness."

What is the mystery of godliness? Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. What is it? "God was manifest in the flesh, seen of the angels, vindicated by the Spirit, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, died on a cross and was received up into glory, mystery of mysteries, Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world.

Oh, me. Acts 20:28 Paul said, "Feed the Church of God which he purchased with his own blood." God's blood? God is spirit. God became a man and shed his blood. That's right.

2 Corinthians 5:19. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." God was in Christ.

Hebrews 1:8. "To the Son he saith, 'Thy throne, oh God, is forever'"

And Thomas summed it all up when he fell at his feet and said, "My Lord and my God."

Ah, my. This is a faithful saying. This is the Word of God and it is worthy of your acceptance, your reverence, receiving it, loving it, believing it.

Why did he come into the world? Listen. "Jesus Christ is come into the world to save sinners."

He didn't come to set up a kingdom. Oh, he got a kingdom. His kingdom is not of this world, though. He didn't come into this world to set up a kingdom. He didn't come to organize a religious movement. This world was religious enough without another movement. It is steeped in religion. Religion hated him. Religion crucified him. He didn't come to heal sick people. He healed some, but that is not why he came. He could have done that without coming into the world. He could have done that without becoming a man. He made them. He that made the eye can make it see. He that made the ear can make it hear. He that made the legs can make them walk. He who said, "I kill and I make alive," can do either one. He didn't come to show us the way to live. We knew that in

our consciences. He came to save sinners. That is what it says here. Christ came into the world to save sinners. The Scripture is so clear on this. Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

He said, "I didn't come to condemn the world. The world was already condemned. I came to save sinners."

We are lost. He said, "I came to seek and to save the lost."

We are separated from God. He died the just for the unjust to bring us to God who were separated.

We are dead. He said, "I came that you might have life."

We are unholy. He chose us in him that we might be holy.

We are unclean. His blood cleanseth us from all sin.

We are unrighteous. He who knew no sin was made sin for us for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

By one man's disobedience we became sinners. By another man's obedience, one man's disobedience condemned us. Another man's obedience redeemed us, made us righteous.

We were enmity. The natural mind is enmity against God. He is our peace. He made peace through the blood of his cross.

We are ugly. He gave us beauty for ashes.

We are sad. He gave us joy unspeakable.

We were without strength. I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.

We were without hope. That is what it says, without help, without God, without hope. He is our hope.

We are like the restless troubled sea. He said, "You come to me and I will give you rest."

We are dying creatures and he said, "I am the resurrection and the life and he that believeth on me shall never die."

We know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And in this body we groan desiring to be clothed upon with our body which is from heaven. He...

This is a true saying. This is God's Word, God's Word, God's promise. And it is worthy of your acceptance with full faith and confidence that Jesus Christ, God's Son "came into this world to save sinners."

Now watch it. Listen. "...of whom I am the chief."

He came into the world to save real sinners, the chief of sinners.

My friends, now listen carefully. Will you listen to me a moment? Somehow, somewhere, sometime, people got the idea that God loves and saves nice people. Well, nice people don't need saving if there were any nice people. But they are not. There's no nice people. They think they are nice, but you cross them and you will find out that they are just like everybody else.

Somehow, somewhere, sometime people got the idea and preachers maybe carried it on that God loves and saves good people, that heaven is built for good people. That is not so because God says there is none good, no not one. There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth. There is none that seek after God. They are all the same, fallen, depraved, corrupt, deceitful, sons of fallen Adam.

Our Lord came into the world to save sinners, real sinners.

I have a preacher friend who pastors a church up in West Virginia. And he went by a tavern. Down in Alabama they used to call them honky tonks. Up here they call them beer joints or whatever it was. He went by one of these places and got him a Coca Cola. And while he was in there the owner of the business, establishment said to my preacher friend, said, "Who are you?"

And my friend said, "I am the pastor of this church down the road here." He said, "Why don't you come and hear me some Sunday? Why don't you come down there to the church and hear me preach?"

"Ah," the man said, "You don't want folks like me down there. Those good people down there don't want a fellow like me in that building."

And my preacher friend said, "My friend, you are the very fellow I want down there. You are a sinner and my Lord came into the world to save sinners like you and me. And don't you let those good people bother you. You come and listen to the gospel."

There are no good people. Our Lord didn't come to save nice folks or good folks or religious folks or righteous folks because they are all liars. They are pretending to be what they are not. Our Lord came to save sinners, not awakened sinners, sinners. Not interested sinners, sinners. Not pretty good sinners, sinners, Bonafide genuine lost sinners of whom I am the chief. Come ye sinners poor and needy weak and wounded, sick and sore. Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, love and power. Come ye weary, heavy laden, bruised and mangled by the fall. If you tarry till you are better, you won't come at all

because you will never be any better. He makes you better. It is his blood that cleanses. It is his grace that saves. It is his mercy that receives. It is his mediatorial work and intercession that presents us to the Father. He is the Savior.

You don't get all fixed up and then come to Christ. You come to Christ like you are. Let not conscience make you linger nor of fitness fondly dream. All the fitness he requireth is to feel your need of him.

This is a faithful saying, true, sure, certain. God's Word. It is worthy of your acceptance, the acceptance of all men that Jesus Christ God's Son, Lord and Savior came into this world and he came for one purpose, to save sinners of whom I and you and all the rest of you folks out there are chief. Are you a sinner? A sinner is a sacred thing. The Holy Ghost hath made him so. My Lord came to save them. If I can find the sinner, I am going to tell him something. Christ died for you. He died for sinners.

All right. Here is my message, "A Summary of God's Grace. A Summary of God's Grace." And on the other side of this message is one I brought last week on what the rich man discovered in death. Here is the address. If you don't have any money, write for this tape. We'll send it to you. If you do have some money send two dollars and it will help us put out some more of them. If you want the tape write for it. Until next week may God bless you every one.