

FOREWORD

In the early 1980's I met my now long-time friend and co-worker in the cause of Christ, George Bryson. At that time George was still a relatively young pastor of a Calvary Chapel in Eugene Oregon. In addition to his ministry with Calvary Chapel, George was also leading a Bible study for police officers from a wide cross-section of churches in the Eugene-Springfield area of Oregon. While I had opportunity to minister to and alongside George in his ministry with the police officers, most of my earlier meetings with George were as his guest on *Scripturally Speaking*, a popular Christian call-talk show in Oregon, of which George was the host.

During this time I learned that George was a very serious student of Scripture as well as biblical and systematic theology. While serving as a pastor, a chaplain, and the host of a 2 ½ daily talk show, George then became a student of New Testament and systematic theology at Western Theological Seminary, of which I was both the president and a professor of theology. Then around the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, George became convinced that the Lord was calling him to a full time church planting mission in Russia, where he has been serving the Lord for more than 22 years. When we have opportunity for fellowship, it almost always includes a serious discussion about our mutual concern for the promise and potential (and in some ways the plight) of God's matchless grace (Eph. 2: 8-10, Titus 2: 11, 3:7) in today's Evangelical churches and ministries.

Although George is probably best known for his expose and refutation of certain and serious theological errors directly related to what the Bible says about grace, in the book *GRACE-What We Should Believe*, he has written a very positive and much needed biblically-based affirmation of the truth about grace as it is found in Scripture. While it is impossible to take *a stand for the truth* without also taking *a stand against error* (Jude 1: 3), this book is much more focused on *what we should believe* than

on *what we should not believe*. All believers should agree that nothing is more important to the church of Jesus Christ than the biblical doctrines of grace, which first and foremost are about the glorious person of Jesus Christ (Jn. 1: 14, 16, 17, Acts 13: 43, 15: 11, 1 Cor. 15: 1, 2, 2, Col. 1: 6, Thess. 2: 16, Tim. 1: 9, 2: 15, Titus: 2: 11, 3: 7, Heb. 2: 9. 4: 16 etc.).

George is rightly convinced that it is very difficult (if not impossible) to live according to grace, as we can and should, if what we believe about grace is not in agreement with what God's Word says about grace.

After more than sixties years in ministry. I am convinced (along with George) that we live in a time in which there is a great deal of confusion about the meaning and implications of grace, both in terms of what the lost must believe to be saved, and how the saved can and should live once they have come to faith in Christ for salvation. In some cases, it is not only confusion about grace but a distortion of grace that is of concern. Sometimes a distortion of grace actually leads to opposition to *the biblical doctrines of grace*. It is not enough today (if it ever was) to confess that we are for grace or even that we are known for an emphasis on grace.

It is good and necessary to emphasize grace but it may not be enough. As not everything that glitters is gold, not every doctrine that passes as a doctrine of grace is gracious or biblical. Read this book about grace carefully and read it prayerfully. Most of all I encourage you to read this book and all that it says about grace in light of God's holy and inerrant Word. Also, while reading *GRACE-What We Should Believe*, look up the many passages of Scripture referenced in this book that specifically and clearly refer to grace. If we do as the Bereans' did (Acts. 17: 11), God will take care of the rest and clear up the confusion in our hearts and minds. I will leave you with the words of the apostle Paul who said:

*...As you abound in everything --- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us --- see that you abound in this **grace** also (2 Cor. 8: 7).*

And:

*...God is able to make all **grace** abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work (2 Cor. 9: 8*

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