

Study 1
Galatians 1:1-5

1. What is the meaning of Grace? Why is it so important in our understanding of salvation?

Grace is God's unmerited favor toward sinners. It emphasizes that salvation is a gift, not earned by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). It is important because it shifts the focus from human effort to God's sovereign will in saving us, highlighting that salvation is entirely of the Lord (Romans 11:6). Without grace, we would remain under the curse of sin.

2. What is the meaning of peace (*shalom*)?

In the biblical sense, peace (*shalom*) refers to the unity of God, humanity, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight, as seen in the Garden of Eden and anticipated in the New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21:1-4). *Shalom* is not merely the absence of conflict but the active presence of God's blessing, favor, and restorative power (Isaiah 26:3). Through Christ's sacrifice, we are reconciled to God, giving us peace with Him (Romans 5:1) and enabling peace to extend into our lives and relationships (Ephesians 2:14-17).

3. How is the gospel so aptly summarized by these two words? How is the way we live to be characterized by grace and peace? How does legalism undermine these two precious truths?

The gospel is summarized as grace—God's free gift of salvation—and peace—the restored relationship with God through Christ. Grace leads us to humility, gratitude, and reliance on God, while peace fosters peaceful assurance and joy in our salvation.

Legalism undermines grace by suggesting that we can earn God's favor through our efforts, placing us under a constant burden of performance. It also subtly implies that God's gift of salvation is insufficient or defective, dishonoring the completeness of Christ's finished work on the cross, ultimately making us feel at peace with God. (John 19:30; Galatians 2:21)

4. How do grace and peace come to us? What is it based upon? What is the content of the gospel? How is this different from other religions like Buddhism?

Grace and peace come to us through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, based on His finished work (Galatians 1:4). The gospel is that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again for our justification (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Unlike Buddhism, which emphasizes self-effort to achieve enlightenment, Christianity teaches that salvation is entirely a work of God, received by faith alone.

5. How is having a different gospel construed as deserting or abandoning God? What are the consequences of accepting a false gospel?

To embrace a different gospel is to reject God's plan of salvation and rely on human effort or distorted truth, which amounts to abandoning God (Galatians 1:6-7). The consequence of accepting a false gospel is eternal separation from God (Galatians 5:4; Matthew 7:21-23).

6. How are grace and peace being undermined by false teachers in the Galatian church? Why does it matter? Look at Gal 5:15,26 What caused this? Does this happen in your church? How do we mitigate this?

False teachers in Galatia added works of the law to grace, causing divisions and strife (Galatians 5:15). This undermined the unity and freedom of the gospel, leading to legalism and pride (Galatians 5:26).

Please do share among each other if you have encountered such issues in your church.

To mitigate this, churches must focus on sound teaching, maintain gospel-centered unity, and guard against divisive influences (Titus 1:9).

7. Reflection Question. Do you personally feel that your faith in God is enough, or do you think you need to perform additional work, such as attending church, Bible study, prayer, fasting, etc., to be truly secure in your salvation?

Takeaway

The Gospel of Christ is the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, through which we receive both the Grace and Peace of God. This work, accomplished through Christ's life, death, and resurrection, is fully sufficient for the salvation of mankind. It is by God's grace, not by human effort, that we are reconciled with God, and it is through faith in Christ that we experience true peace and eternal life.