

## Chrisis Over Grace

There are a number of crises facing the Anglican Church at the present, but none so crucial as the crisis over 'grace'. Grace is the most 'adored' word in the church. It is also the most 'abused'! The Apostle Paul says in those familiar words of Ephesians 2:8-9 – "by grace you are saved through faith .. the gift of God, not of works.." Grace must be, and remain, the most adored word on the lips of the church. Without grace we cannot be saved! By grace we are saved! But what is grace? That is the critical/crucial question!

Grace is God's expression of His undeserved (unmerited) favour/mercy, whereby He forgives 'sinners' of their sin, and reconciles/unites them to Himself through the atoning work of Christ!

But for many people in the church grace is the virtual opposite of works/law/commandments! (I don't say they throw away all the commandments – sin is more cunning – but they *choose what suits them*; they are 'selective' both with regard to those commands they choose, and when they choose to do them!) Grace certainly means for these people that their 'works of obedience' have nothing to do with their eventual salvation. But is that a correct biblical conclusion?

Grace is the most 'abused' word because it has become a mechanism for sidelining obedience to the law/commandments; of not taking obedience seriously; an excuse for a partial/selective obedience to suit our 'culture' or our corruption to satisfy our whims. The church has been mesmerized by a very superficial and unbalanced understanding of grace!

***Grace does not free me from the law; it frees men from the 'curse' of the law, ie., it frees men from the law's judgement/condemnation upon sin.***

In other words, grace means we have a reprieve from the law's condemnation; ***we are not released from the law's obligations – keeping the law itself!***

Pastor J Iowe