**Biblical Foundations – The Doctrine of Common Grace (Pt.2)**

**What are the undeserved blessings that God gives to all people, both believers and nonbelievers?**

**Examples Of Common Grace-** If we look at the world around us, we can immediately see abundant evidence of God’s common grace in our everyday lives. We can also distinguish several specific categories in which this common grace is seen.

**Physical Realm**- Unbelievers continue to live in this world solely because of God’s common grace- every breath that people take is of grace, for the wages of sin is death, not life. Moreover, the earth does not produce only thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:18) or remain a parched desert, but by God’s common grace it produces food, air, materials for clothing, shelter, sun, heat, and rain. (Matthew 5:45). Similarly, Paul shared this same concept with the people of Lystra. (Acts 14:16-17). God’s common grace is also evident by the beauty of the natural world. The beauty of flowers, grass, landscapes, sunrises and sunsets, rivers, lakes, snow-capped mountains, and ocean shores remain a daily reminder to the testimony of common grace.

**Intellectual Realm**- Satan is “a liar and the father of lies,” and “there is no truth in him” (John 8:44), because he is fully given over to evil and to the irrationality and commitment to falsehood that accompanies radical evil. But humans in the world today, even unbelievers, are not totally given over to lying, irrationality, and ignorance. All people are able to have some grasp of the truth; with some having great intelligence and understanding. God’s common grace in the intellectual realm is seen in the fact that all people have a knowledge of God. (Romans 1:21) This means that there is a sense of God’s existence and often hunger to know God that he allows to remain in people’s hearts- even the hearts of non-believers.

**Moral Realm**- God’s common grace also restrains people from being as evil as they could be. Once again, the demonic realm, totally devoted to evil and destruction, provides a clear contrast with human society in which evil is clearly restrained. If people persist hard-heartedly and repeatedly in following sin over a course of time, God will eventually “give them up” to greater and greater sin (Romans 1:24, 26, 28), but in the case of most human beings, they do not fall to the depths to which their sin would otherwise take them because God intervenes and puts restraints on their conduct.

**Creative Realm**- God has allowed significant measures of skill in artistic and musical areas, as well as other spheres in which creativity can be expressed such as athletics, cooking, writing, gardening, or technical “hands-on” expertise.

**Societal Realm**- God’s grace is evident in the existence of various organizations and structures in human society that allow us functional interaction. It is seen first and foremost in the family, which is not simply an institution for believers but for all people. Beyond the family, there is government, educational institutions, civic organizations and social groups, and now the presence of social media.

**Religious Realm**- Even in the realm of human religion, God’s common grace brings some blessings to unbelieving people. (Matthew 5:44) Paul specifically commands that we pray for government rulers and higher ups. (1 Timothy 2:1-2) Even the proclamation of the gospel to those who do not ultimately accept it, is a clear declaration of God’s common grace and gives witness to the fact that God does not delight in the death or condemnation of any. (1 Timothy 2:4)

***Common Grace Does Not Save People***- In spite of all of this, we must recognize that common grace is different from saving grace. Common grace **DOES NOT** change the human heart or bring people to genuine repentance and faith- it cannot and does not save people (though in the intellectual and moral spheres it can give some preparation to make people more disposed toward accepting the gospel). Common grace restrains sin but does not change anyone’s foundational disposition to sin, nor does it in any significant measure purify fallen humanity. We must also recognize that the actions of unbelievers performed by virtue of common grace do not in themselves merit God’s approval or favor. These actions do not spring from faith (Romans 14:23), nor are they motivated by a love for God (Matthew 22:37) but by a love of self in some form. Therefore, although we can say that the works of unbelievers that externally conform to the laws of God are “good” in some sense, they nonetheless are not good in terms of meriting God’s approval nor of making God obligated to the sinner in any way.