

**Episode:** Other Letters Series No. 09

**Narrator:** Demoniac

**Primary Scriptures:** Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39

**Story Summary:** Grace is gift

**Location:** Israel

**Time:** 30's AD

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Luke 8:39

The demoniac lived in the region of the Gerasenes, on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. The Bible doesn't say, but it is likely this area was inhabited by mostly non-Jewish people, and that the demoniac was not a Jew. Jesus showed special grace to the man both as a demoniac and as a non-Jew. That could add a special level of grace to the story's end where the man wanted to go with Jesus, but Jesus instructed him to go tell others what God had done for him.<sup>1</sup>

There are 124 uses of the word "grace" in the English Standard Version of the Bible, of which 86 are in books written by Paul. There are many facets to the concept of grace, but here are two of the major uses.

Grace is often described as "undeserved favor." Examples of this use are Romans 3:24, 5:15, and 11:5-6. In these, grace is a quality of God that inclines him to give undeserved gifts to sinners, with salvation being one of those gifts.

Grace is also used to describe the power of living a godly life. Examples of this use are 1 Corinthians 15:10; and, 2 Corinthians 9:8 and 12:9. These verses picture grace as a power or a strong influence for godly behaviors. It is a gift from God that works in us to change our capacities for work, suffering, and obedience.

It's common to say that grace is a free gift of God. This means the gift doesn't cost the recipient anything, but it doesn't mean grace doesn't cost God or Jesus anything. In fact, we know Jesus paid the ultimate price to bring salvation.

When Paul wrote about grace, he may have sometimes been referring to the idea of patronage in Roman society. At the top of society were patrons who were wealthy and influential. They had clients who supported the patron through their works, votes and personal influence. It was very much a quid pro quo situation. Patrons provided gifts in return for loyalty of their clients. In relationships, Romans would not have understood the concept of a "free" gift.

Ephesians 2:8-10 gives a remarkable insight to how these all work together: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 8:39

the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”