

God gives these earthly blessings of rain and sunshine, food and drink, clothing and shelter, to all human beings indiscriminately, when and where and in what measure seems good to Him. And this too is a matter of grace. Instead of destroying mankind, God preserves human beings in earthly life and pours out all kinds of temporal blessings on them. What benevolence and kindness! And this all comes to sinful mankind through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

What an abundance of blessings and benefits have come to sinful human beings through the redemptive work of our great Savior. God's general mercy, including His deferment of immediate judgment and punishment and His restraint of the full expression of human depravity; and God's general benevolence, including His preservation of the world and His bestowal of temporal blessings upon all mankind – all these are expressions of God's gracious prevention or mitigation of some suffering for all human beings.

B. God's Gracious Prevention and Alleviation of Some Suffering for Some Human Beings

Here we move from general grace, bestowed on all human beings, to special grace. Special grace is God's unmerited favor bestowed on those to whom God has chosen to give it.

What is the basis on which God bestows this special grace? As it is with general grace, so it is with special grace: the basis is the atoning work of Christ.

Paul, in Romans 3:24, states that we have been "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

In II Corinthians 8:9 the same apostle says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

And in Ephesians 1:7 he speaks of Christ "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

The basis on which God bestows His special grace is the atoning work of Christ!

But now we must ask: What prompted the Father to send the Son into the world? And what motivated the Son to go all the way to the cross?

The beloved apostle John, in I John 4:10, tells us, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

And Paul, in Romans 5:8, writes, "But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

That which prompted the Father and motivated the Son was love – sovereign, free, undeserved love.