

WHAT'S SO AMAZING ABOUT GRACE?
Heb.4:16; 2 Cor. 12:9

Int. "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound, That saved a wretch like me!" This is one of the most popular and loved hymn of our century. The theme is the Grace of God! The Bible mentions grace 170 times in 159 different references. Grace is first mentioned in reference to Noah, whose life was spared as the result of God's gracious favor. Paul, however, sprinkled the word throughout his letters. He used the term 59 times in his letters describing how great a debt the church has to the grace of God.

Now, what is so amazing about grace to deserved much emphasis in the Holy Scripture?

The words in the Bible translated grace is one used of kings and emperors who treated their subject with undeserved kindness or blessing. The same concept apply to the way in which the Creator, the Lord of the universe treats His subjects. Grace has to do with what God has done for us, undeserving as we are. Yes, Grace is a theological concept. But in simple terms, grace means undeserved, and unmerited favor.

Mercy is not getting what we deserve, while grace is getting what we don't deserve. A child caught taking candies from a candy jar may not receive spanking- that's mercy; but the gift of more candies than a child could eat in a lifetime is what grace is about.

A simple but good definition of grace is an acrostic based on the letters, G-R-A-C-E-, God's riches at Christ's expense.

Jesus' appeal to the common fold was not the result of stirring messages on hell, judgment, or condemnation; these were reserved primarily for the religious leaders of the day. Rather, Jesus spoke of the compelling allure of tender, forgiving grace.

His stop at a Samaritan well, His mercy to an adulterous woman, His frequent dinners in the homes of outcasts, all testify of His ministry and message of grace.

John wrote: "God did not send the son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him." (John3:17).

God is a just God, but His justice was satisfied by the death of Christ on the cross, the supreme display of God's grace. Certainly there is a hell, but it is occupied only by those who refuse God's offer of grace.

Do you understand the significance of this truth? It was grace that transformed you from sinner to saint, that delivered you from death to life, that transferred you from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. And it is the very same grace in which you live today.

Apart from the grace of God in Christ, you can do nothing eternally meaningful. You can not triumph over the power of sin, enjoy intimate fellowship with the Savior, or experience the riches of your inheritance. You need grace in the kitchen. You need grace at the dinner table. You need grace in the office. You need grace in every affair of every day.

Once your faith is placed in Christ's and you receive His life for eternity, grace envelops you. You live in a sphere of grace. Your failures are never permanent. There always is a second chance with grace. You can change. The walls and barriers of past conduct or present sins are shattered by the power of God's grace. A second chance is what grace is all about because you have been justified by God, cleared of all guilt, and reconciled to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Grace is God's kindness and graciousness toward humanity without regard to the worth or merit of those who receive it and without their deserving.

Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to bestow it in the presence of human merit. In the same way, grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to withdraw it in the presence of human demerit. Grace is given solely according to the infinite goodness and sovereign purpose of God.

Though it cost the Father the death of His son, you cannot pay Him back. Grace is a free gift. You cannot barter with Him. You cannot manipulate Him. There is nothing you could do to earn God's grace before you were saved, and there is nothing you can do to merit it now.

Grace, however, does not give us a license to sin. Sin still has distasteful consequences. However, the person who lives under grace obeys God from a heart of delight and devotion. Just the awareness of God's grace motivates him to holiness. It stirs him to worship and adoration. It energize him for service.

Grace is the loving hand of God extended to raise up every believer who stumbles. It is the compassion of God that comforts everyone who feels lonely and rejected. It is the power of God that sustains and strengthens the weary and wounded.

There is no end to the grace of God. It heals, forgives, loves, accepts and gives without measure. This is why when Paul talks about God's grace he speaks in lavish tones. "God is able to make all grace abound to you" 2 cor. 9:8.

Thus grace is like a multifaceted diamond. One facet of grace is the help that allows us to endure when bad things happens. It is grace which touches your life and lets you smile when the clouds are dark and gloomy. Grace brings a measure of cheerfulness when you are in deep waters financially, and you wonder where your next meal is coming from.

God's grace is sufficient. It is sufficient for all your needs; it is sufficient regardless of the severity of any one need. The Israelites never exhausted God's supply of manna. It was always there to be gathered every day for forty years, and you will never exhaust the supply of God's grace. It is always ~~be~~ there every day for you to appropriate as much as you need for whatever your need is.

Paul had a lot of experience when it comes to bad things happening. He wrote: "We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down but not destroyed" 2 cor. 4:8-9. We would say, He was down but not out. But what is it that made the difference? It was the grace factor which brought him comfort and help.

Now our text invite us to approach the throne of grace. In doing so However, we must remember that the only door to the throne of grace is through Jesus Christ. Good works will not save or keep you. Only grace, received by childlike faith, saves and sanctifies you. The cross of Christ is the foundation of grace, and the Person of Christ is the only mediator of grace. You cannot find grace anywhere else but in Christ and His cross.

Grace is so amazing! This is the testimony of the author of this hymn, John Newton.

He was a child of a broken family. A school drop out. A deserter from the British Navy. An exconvict. A slave trader. He live a life described as wine, women, and money.

Inspite of his unworthiness. God has not forgotten him. God converted him, using his fear of death during a terrible storm at sea. He studied theology, but the Bishop of the diocese refused to ordain him because of his past. When the Bishop ordained him after several years of waiting, he was appointed to a forgotten village. John Newton found a meaningful and successful ministry, for now he realized that God had plucked him from life of misery and shame.

It was God's grace, amazing grace that did it.

My friend, God's grace is all you need, and it is enough.

SINGING SOLDIER

Psalm 27

Int. One of the carpenter of our Cathedral was a former army soldier. He related his experience in Jolo where they cannot see their enemies. Many, including him were overcome by fear, that they lose courage. He himself lost his mind spraying everything that moved. They easily spent their ammunitions and many died.

Many times, too, our attempt to obey God's will is defeated by fear. David who wrote the Psalms, especially our text found in Psalm 27 speak that David was facing enemies and was tempted to be afraid. But he did ^{not} give ⁱⁿ to his fears, and in this Psalm we can trace his experience and discover how we can have victory over fear.

1. WARRING (vv.1-3)

God's people have enemies. The nation of Israel was often attacked by enemies; the prophets aroused the opposition of unbelievers; even the early church experienced attack from religious people. It is impossible to escape opposition once you have made your stand for Christ,

We must keep in mind that our enemies are tools of the real enemy, Satan. Paul said: "For our struggle is not againsts flesh and blood, but againsts the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly place" Eph.6:12. Now knowing that the people who oppose us are only being used by the devil enables us to love them and pray for them as Jesus commanded us to do. Mtt.5:43-48.

Sometime an enemy suddenly comes upon us (Ps. 27:2) and at other times, the enemy sets up camp and begins a long seige (v.3). David saw his foes as wild beast, stalking him in order to eat him up. Their very breath was cruelty (v.12). But he was not afraid, for his confidence was in God.

"In this I will be confident" he cried out. "In the Lord who is my light, salvation and strength!"

Now light is a significant symbol of God, for God is compared to the sun (Ps.84:11), which is the source of life for our world. Enemies like to attack at night and catch us off guard, but if we are walking in the light, they will fail.

Because God is our light, He is our salvation. Salvation in the OT usually refers to deliverance from physical danger, but the spiritual meaningh is not lacking (Ps.51:14).

When the enemy attacks us, God is also our strength or stronghold. The word used here by David describes a fortress into which the enemy cannot penetrate. It also carries the meaning of strength that God gives to his people in times of attack. We do not run