

Lavished

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[0 : 00] Today is kind of a special day. It's the day after Remembrance Day, and it's always kind of interesting. What do you do the day after things? And today I'd like to talk about a theme that's quite near and dear to my heart.

Once, when I was listening to a radio program that I used to love to listen to, the person said something that upset me terribly. He said grace is dispensed in the Eucharist.

And this upset me for a couple of reasons. One is that I'm a Baptist, and I don't believe that the Lord's Supper is a meaning of grace. I think it's a ceremony of remembrance, and it's very meaningful, but it's not a means of grace.

The other thing, and much more important, is I don't like the term dispensed. You know, drugstores are called by different things in different places in the world and so on.

We normally call them pharmacies. Other places, I think England, they call them chemists. Other places call them dispensaries because pharmacies dispense medication.

[1 : 13] They carefully measure it out to make sure that you get just the right amount of medication. Not too much. And they also tend to check it out, and I keep going to the famous pharmacist to say that, oh, well, this conflict with something else that I'm doing.

And they're all shit. No, no, you're okay with this, or you're not okay with that. That's the kind of thing that they do. I once heard the story of a pharmacist who accidentally dispensed too much medication, and the child died.

That's because it's extremely important for a pharmacist to dispense exactly the right amount of medication. No more, no less.

Because of the side effects involved and all kinds of other things. But, do you really think that God dispenses his grace, carefully measures it out to make sure that we don't get too much grace?

Is there even such a thing as too much grace? No. God pours out his grace abundantly upon us. He doesn't dispense it at all.

[2 : 25] And there are two miracles that illustrate this point really vividly. One is Jesus' first miracle. It's recorded in the Gospel of John. And Jesus and his disciples were invited to a wedding in the smallest town of Cana.

And his mother came up to Jesus and said, they ran out of wine. And Jesus turned some water into wine.

Actually, some is not an accurate kind of way of putting it. He turned about 150 gallons of water into wine. Now, back when we were active and things more so, Lynn and I used to cater a lot of weddings and some of the weddings had wine.

I don't think they ever had 150 gallons of wine at a wedding. That's a lot of wine. I don't drink wine so I don't know what it is. But I do know that I've talked to people that nobody has 150 gallons worth.

That's way more than enough for the wedding and on beyond that. Some commentaries have said he probably provided enough wine so that the groom could sell the wine later on and continue to provide for his bride and so on.

[3 : 41] The other miracle is Jesus feeding the 5,000. Jesus took a small child's lunch and turned in enough food to feed 5,000 men, women, and children.

Again, enough is not quite an accurate thing. There were baskets of food left over. That's the way that God works. He doesn't say, oh, well, I've got to make sure that you get just enough to get by.

That's not the way God is. You know, there's so many ways that we make God out to be some kind of miser as if he's giving out just a little bit and a little bit more and so on.

But that's not God at all. God is a generous, loving God. God is a generous, He pours out his grace and love upon us. And I'm reading a bunch of scriptures today that show that so abundantly.

And yes, I'm using the term abundantly quite deliberately. The first is Ephesians 1, verses 3 to 10, which reads, Praise be the God and Father our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

[4 : 58] For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which he's freely given us in the one he loves.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ to put in effect when the times reach for fulfillment, to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

It's a wonderful passage that illustrates the first point that God's grace is lavished on us and it does use the term lavished. It just poured out abundantly.

And it's also in the passage it's so abundantly clear that all of these blessings come to us in Christ. It says in verse 4 he chose us in him.

[6 : 13] We're chosen in Christ. We're predestined for us to sonship through Jesus Christ in accordance to the praise of his glorious grace which he's given us in the one he loves.

Everything is in Christ and through Christ. We're adopted through him. We're chosen in him. Grace is given in him. In him we have redemption and salvation and God's grace is lavished on us.

We sing marvelous, infinite, matchless grace. freely bestowed on all he believe. Will you this moment his grace receive? The second scripture is 1 John 1 verses 1 to 3 and it talks about the great love of Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father.

And again, note how many times it talks about it's in him that we have all this love and grace. It says, See what great love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God and that is what we are.

The reason the world does not know us is did not know him. Dear children, now we are children of God. What we will be has not yet been known. known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.

[7 : 40] All of this open them, purify themselves just as he is pure. I think you're a couple slides behind. Sorry. I thought you'd catch up.

Yeah, keep going. Oh, no, back a couple. Whoops, sorry. There it is. There I am. All right.

Other churches, I've had a clicker myself and I'm going to, it's hard to do everything. And it's the love. Oh, God. See what great love the Father has lavished on us.

You know, it's amazing. Oh, God's love. And it says, and we, because of that, we become children of God. Because of God's love.

And it also says that we will become like Jesus because of God's love for us. It's abundant love that's lavished on us.

[8 : 49] And so much that's just all about us. Not about us at all. Again, we sing, could we ink the ocean fill and we're the skies of parchment made.

Wherever stock on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade. To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry, nor could the skull contain the whole.

Though stretch from sky to sky. And yes, I'm reading that rather than singing that because my wife is in the audience and she knows I can't sing.

I can talk but I can't sing. And one of the things I'm looking forward to is heaven and maybe I'll have a voice that's worthwhile listening to. God's love is lavished on us.

It's in free, infinite, abundant love. And then Romans 5, another one of Paul's great passages, talks about the love of God again and how it's abundantly poured out upon us.

[10 : 01] Romans 5, 1 to 5 says, Therefore, since we've been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So when we get access by faith in the grace in which we now stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God, not only so, but we also glory in his sufferings because the only suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character, and hope.

And hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Again, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we gain access grace, by faith, into the grace in which we now stand.

It's all about Jesus Christ. And God's love is poured out into our hearts. Poured out. Again, we think of the love of God.

It's greater far than tongue or pen can tell. It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell. The guilty pair bow down with care God gave his son to win.

His errant child he reconciled and pardoned from his sin. The next scripture is 1 Timothy chapter 1 verses 12 to 14 where Paul says, I thank Jesus Christ our Lord who has given me strength and he considered me trustworthy appointing me to his service even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man.

[11 : 37] I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly along with the faith and love that I crushed Jesus.

Think about that. There the Apostle Paul is thanking God that through Jesus Christ he was he's given so much mercy.

Grace, God's grace was poured out abundantly on him. Even though he was called a blasphemer and a persecuting remember what Apostle Paul started out?

He was persecuting Christians dragging them to their death and yet the grace of God was poured out abundantly upon him. One of the amazing things about God's grace is it's not dependent upon us.

if God can pour out his grace abundantly upon a person who persecuted the church who effectively in some ways murdered Christians who believed and trusted in God how much more could the grace of God be poured out upon us?

[12 : 55] Again we sing to every believer the promise of God the vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. Another one of Paul's passages where he talks about the love and grace of God is in Titus 3 3-7 says at one time we too were foolish disobedient deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures we lived in malice and envy being hated and hating one another but when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared he saved us not because of the righteous things that we had done but because of his mercy he saved us through the washing and rebirth and renewing by the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior so having been justified by his grace we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life Apostle Paul says this is the way we were disobedient disabled enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures he saved us again not because of the righteous things that we have done one of the horrible things about that I found out in

Christian churches so often people talk as if it's all about me and that's not it it's all about God which son great is thy faithfulness great is thy faithfulness morning I mourning new mercies I see all I have needed my hand has provided great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me I've quoted read a whole bunch of scriptures quoted a few songs and so on to illustrate the point that's so abundantly clear and you know I've got to say it because we need to say it again and again because we believe it with our heads that God's love and grace are poured out upon us generously that God doesn't dispense his grace with an eyedropper but pours it out on us with a bucket but that's not always the way we live and we we don't live that way because they put the focus on ourselves I remember once I was asked to preach in a town and for a funeral service and I preached the gospel that's what I like to do at funeral services and at the end after I did this some people went up to me and said oh so and so is such a good man he should be in heaven you know and all the rest of this as if it was about the person they just didn't get what I said which is not unusual sometimes when I preach people aren't listening but you know that's the way the other way makes it about us another way that often we make it about us and not about the infinite grace of God is that we have it all mixed up we read

Romans 8 38 to 39 but we don't believe it it says for I'm convinced that neither death nor life nor the angels nor demons nor the present nor the future nor any powers nor the height nor depth or anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord I remember one church I was serving the guy talked about how he got saved and unsaved and you know because he he'd backslidden and therefore he thought he'd lost his salvation as if the things that he'd done could separate us from the love of God as in Christ Jesus our Lord and there's nothing we can do there's not a power in the entire universe that can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus nothing because it's not about us the apostle Paul made it abundantly clear that we don't deserve God's love if you think well I've done this horrible terrible thing and therefore

I don't deserve God's love in a sense you're right I don't deserve God's love either none of us do because it's not about us it's about God God loves us because he is love and he pours out his love upon us another way we make it all about us is that we you know I've heard many times people preaching about oh well I'm going to get a greater reward in heaven because you know I've been a pastor for years or I've led so many people to Christ and I remember saying to one person once if God gave you the heavenly equivalent of a million dollars what would he have left for me and what's the answer everything he is infinite resources so why would God miserly give it out okay well you can have this shack over in heaven and you can have this mansion three bedroom mansion and with all kinds of other things what well there's no there's supposed to be no jealousy no envy no tears in heaven that's not what it's about

God is sharing his infinite resources with all of us and we don't deserve any more than the next guy three times Jesus said when he talked about rewards the last shall be first and the first shall be last we have no God just doesn't die things by our standards that's not the way he works at all I'd like to close with a short poem I wrote as Christians we often love to discuss that it's only on Jesus we trust now God's grace is lavished on us and his love is poured out on each of us let us pray heavenly father help us to live as if it's all about you and not about us help us to live as if your love and grace are poured out on us abundantly help us to live an abundant life a life filled with the glorious riches of your grace your love your mercy and help us to show that grace love and mercy toward others in Jesus name we pray amen as you amen so thatap can be