

# Grow in Grace

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Date: 21 September 2014

[0:00] Christ is a word used over a hundred times in the New Testament.

Grace is God's gift.

His kindness. Some have called it God's riches at Christ's expense. There are many terms you could put it to. Hearts are really concretely defining.

But it's God's kindness. His undeserved kindness to us. You know we can think in life how we might work an eight hour day and receive a fair day's pay for our time.

That's called a wage. A wage. You might compete in a boxing tournament and you might receive a trophy for what you've done.

[1:17] That's called a prize. You might undertake some study or some work that you've done and get some recognition and a pat on the back for it.

Maybe long service or some high achievement in your life. You know down at school you might do well and excel in a particular subject. And that's called an award.

A wage. A prize. An award. But when someone is not capable of earning a wage. They cannot win a prize.

They deserve no award. Yet they receive such a gift anyway. It's grace. It's grace. God's unmerited favour.

And that's what we talk about when we talk about the grace of God. The grace of God. Grace.

[2:13] It affects our salvation. Our holiness. Our Christian service. Our Christian life. It all hinges and is founded and grounded upon grace.

You are saved by grace. He saves us by His grace. We don't deserve any part of it. It's totally His gift. His kindness. That He extends His gift.

A salvation. Grace. Salvation is by grace. Our God is called the God of all grace. In 1 Peter 5 verse 10. All grace comes from our God.

The God of all grace. 1 Peter 5 verse 10. And His saving grace He demonstrated to us. In reconciling the world to Himself. At the cross. As He was made sin for us.

And you know sin. That we might be made. The very righteousness of God. In Him. Reconciling the world to Himself. That's grace isn't it? Grace. Do we deserve it?

[3:12] No. Absolutely not. If you think you deserve His grace. Then you probably don't realise what grace really means. We need to realise. We do not deserve it.

None of us can earn it. Merit it. Warrant it. God's grace is totally by His mercy and kindness for us. And grace. Further than saving us.

Grace can become part of our lives. Turn to Romans 5. Romans 5. Just turn there if you can. Romans 5 and verse 20. Grace abounds towards us.

Romans 5 verse 20. In part it says. Where sin abounded. Grace did much more abound. Where sin abounded. Grace did much more abound. Romans 5 verse 20. So grace saves us. It becomes part of our lives. Grace abounds towards us. Before he was saved.

The apostle Paul. He was then called Saul. In Acts 9. In Acts 9. 2. 2. 2. 3. 3. 4. 4.

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7. on the damascus road god turned him around from heading to slaughter the christians he was virtually a terrorist wanting to slay the christians and slaughter them curse them and kill them and god turned him right around totally the opposite direction in becoming a christian he still went to damascus but his life was totally turned around that's grace grace paul didn't deserve it he absolutely did not deserve it paul called himself the chiefest of sinners grace it speaks of the

wonderful compassion of god his nature his kindness his character and grace comes to you and me we do not deserve it we absolutely do not warrant it grace comes and grace makes its home in our own hearts in hearts sinful yet changed sinful yet cleansed grace comes and makes its home in you and me people just like you and me undeserving as we are and grace further than saving us being part of our lives abounding towards us grace is the key to a productive and fruitful christian life god wants us to be fruitful doesn't he he wants us to bear fruit he wants us fruit fruitful for his glory productive and the message we preach is today come as you are come as you are whosoever will may come it doesn't matter how sinful how unworthy you might feel how dirty and vile and unworthy you might feel tonight grace says come come as you are whosoever will may come and you can come as you are god loves you just the way you are furthermore he also loves you too much to leave you that way that's what grace does it changes us you know it's not us pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps or us turning over a new leaf but when we trust him when we come just as we are as he invites us to he loves us too much to leave us that way grace does something on the inside of us on the inside of us grace can reach to the uttermost it's not meant to leave us the way that we are it's meant to be something that's a transforming power that lives within us let grace have its perfect work grace is meant to help us to grow and so we see that in 2 peter 3 if you'd like to turn there 2 peter 3 really this is what i'd like to focus on somewhat here is 2 peter 3 verse 18 god loves you too much to leave you that way 2 peter 3 verse 18 firstly be saved that's grace it's trusting his saving work and and we heard this morning faith plus nothing it's god's mercy and grace it's not faith plus works or faith plus our doing in any measure that saves us yet there is a growing to do beyond that salvation in 2 peter 3 verse 18 and it says but grow in grace and the knowledge of our lord and savior jesus christ to him be glory both now and forever amen we're called to grow in grace grow in grace let god's transforming power have its work in us us every new day we ought to display more and more of grace every day we ought to be exercising more and more grace with others grace ought to mark us it ought to mark our nature our character as god's people it ought to be the hallmark of our lives grace should be something that shines from us as we read the path of the justice shines more and more unto the perfect day god wants us to be going from glory to glory as he changes

[8:57] us and god's work of grace does that work it's his work again his work in saving us his work in transforming us grace works grace works continuing within our hearts as the disciples said to our lord in luke 17 5 they cried out lord increase our faith that was their prayer that's a profound prayer you know sometimes the most profound prayers are the shortest prayers you know we see lord save me the simple ones just three word prayers lord increase our faith there's a four word one you can memorize that lord increase our faith these were people who've been walking with our lord down those dusty uh jerusalem roads in uh his step groups walking day by day with the savior yet they knew they had more that they could have they wanted more more of god they wanted more faith they wanted more of our savior and as they walk with the lord they're exercising their faith increasing their faith each and every day praying for more faith praying and and we can too in this day in this place as we go through new trials new tests new battles our faith can increase he wants it to he wants your faith to grow to grow exceedingly abundantly god's people he wants you to grow he wants you to grow my heart is that you grow and i pray you too would have that heart you know it's it's it's hard as a preacher sometimes you see christians that they're kind of stuck you know they're kind of stuck somewhere it's not it's like uh you've seen those um cars down at the beach and they just get stuck in that sand and some christians get stuck but god wants us to grow to grow to keep on growing find something more to do be something more for god let god do his work in you through you find some new challenge to take up and be stirred be exhorted be challenged to to be more for god not not that you're working for your salvation but you want your salvation to be working out and doing and god wants us to have the heart of john the baptist john the baptist in john 3 verse 30 here's a simple verse again that's that would be good to put in your mind john the baptist says this

he must increase but i must decrease that's a good uh motto for life isn't it he must increase but i must decrease and as he has more of us he will have the glory more and more john the baptist he knew he had more growing to do and our lord praised him as one of the shining lights he was a burning and shining light and yet he knew he must increase i must decrease let that be your heart today grace it comes out in how we live and it's not something static something that the christian life isn't meant to be stagnant where if you were to go back in time some five ten years you weren't really much different then but ideally there's been some growth there's some growth in you now as preachers and churches and ministries we like to see lots and lots of seats filled we like to see churches grow but more than the numbers on the seats more than than bottles on seats is the growing in the person that's what excites my heart to see god's people grow to see you grow to see people mature in christ and i trust that's your

heart too that you'll have that heart he doesn't leave us to say the same he changes us and his grace works it lives in our lives god's grace shows in our lives god's grace here's some ways we ought to show god's grace it sort of shows through some thoughts about how can grace shine through how can grace show through in my life in my walk and firstly colossians 4 verse 6 colossians 4 verse 6 grace should show through in how we speak i'm going to spend a little bit of time on this one let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt that you may know how you ought to answer every man i know shane's been doing some work about how to relate to people how to communicate to people how to get on their wavelength and how to communicate the gospel to people let your speech be always with grace make sure you've got that that vital ingredient have you ever met someone who is lacking in grace oh can you think of that person you know you can almost picture horns on their head you know someone who is lacking in grace i think we've all met people like that from time to time and they drain the life out of you they drain the life out of you toxic people self-centered critical people and they wonder why no one wants to hang around them and their lips spew forth murmuring and complaining disputing and criticism backbiting and gossip they lack grace lack grace big time and actually could be maybe but people just like that are in your lives to help you grow in grace isn't that right it could well be but god's put those people in our lives to help us grow more in grace but god says that his people ought to be marked by grace grace in how we speak what do you think that might be grace in how we speak kind words words that build others up words that encourage the word tells us that what's inside of us will come out it says in luke 6 45 a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh does our speech glorify god now let's do a speech check a grace check how's your grace level you know you check your labels in your car maybe it's time to check the grace level the grace level does it how does it stack up does our speech glorify god we must watch our words watch our words choose them carefully is our talk filled with curses swearing lying gossiping are our words ungracious hateful selfish do we put others down think of these things some of the most gracious godly people i know are bearing up under difficulty and discouragement yet you wouldn't know it they don't speak ungracious words they they still maintain their sweet spirit that sweet disposition and what a testament it is when you see people like that really true saints of god they're going through suffering in their body difficulties at home maybe the practical needs of life they're scratching to find uh money to rub together and to get by and yet they still maintain that sweet spirit that sweet heart that sweet disposition grace and you can know grace in no matter what your circumstances you can know grace and show grace and give thanks to god find ways to praise god even in the midst of hard times makes me think of um you know paul and silas back in that prison cell just being beaten black and blue and scarred and wounded and held uh in confinement in a prison cell a dark dingy prison cell and at midnight they sang praises to god they used their mouth to send praises to god even in what would have been a very difficult time colossus 3 17 it says and whatsoever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the lord jesus giving thanks to god and the father by him give thanks to god let's think of our words choose them carefully can we put god's name to it you know when when you uh when you when you've got to apply an authority to something you want to be sure it's right don't you when you sign a document

when something has the authority of the government or of an authority of some kind you want to check every word make sure that it's all just so just right what about our words that come out of our mouth can we put god's name to those words that's a thought isn't it can we could put god's name to what we say does what i say have god's approval would he approve of what we say is it something we can say in the name of the lord you know it says whatsoever you do do it in his name so can you yell at another driver in jesus name when he cuts you off you know let's think about can we scream at our kids in jesus name when they don't do what they should not that uh any any of the children here tonight will be like that uh can you say unkind things to your mate in jesus name to your spouse saying something unkind can you say it in jesus name let's think about that amen let's think about that seriously now kind of being a little bit light-hearted but really and truly think before you speak engage brain before mouth you know engage your heart uh before mouth is our speech gracious is it truthful is it hurtful is it kind should we even say it at all the things is for it says let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth but that which is good to the use of edifying in other words that which is going to build people up not tear them down that it may minister grace that it may minister grace do we minister grace with the words that we say our speech can edify build up or it can tear down you know we're not meant to be demolition workers we're meant to be construction workers for the kingdom of god constructing his kingdom building people up edifying building others up because so easily the words that we use can tear people down who can think back to childhood days when someone said something and it hurt and it still almost smarts today something someone said i can think of some horrible nicknames i heard when i was a kid i think there's certain things that people used to do you know and it hurts doesn't it and people say words will never hurt you but sometimes they can and they do so we as god's people ought to really check check before we speak we don't tear people down break them destroy them we don't want corrupt speech in other words when i think of the word corrupt you know i think it it stinks doesn't it corrupt you know that it's that it's that it's that article in your fridge that's growing fur you know and so it's green and squelchy and or you know you know it's not those i was actually just uh lately i i opened the window where i tend to uh

uh do some study and we've got this this smelly bin just outside the outside the window i thought what's that horrible smell now that's the sort of thing corrupt speech it's awful you don't want you don't want that sort of speaks to come out of your mouth do you don't want to do that it's not pure it's putrid it's spoiled it's rotten rather we ought to have holy speech holy speech so is it helpful does it communicate god's grace is it filled with constructive encouraging words god calls us to grow in grace that's just one aspect how we speak another aspect how we serve how we serve how we serve should be by grace for his grace unto his grace we can show god's grace in how we work in our lives through our service in hebrews 12 hebrews 12 it says uh let us have grace whereby we may serve god acceptably with reverence and godly fear we want to serve god in other words you know esteeming him glorifying him honoring him with reverence he's worthy and with godly fear there's a reverence there's a worshipfulness that we may serve god serving with grace you know sometimes i heard one lady she was complaining about the church that she just left and she said i work like a dog for that church that's what she said that was her heart you know we might work like a dog for a church but we don't have the attitude you know we should serve god with grace and even when people hurt us and spite us and mock us and bag us we should still have grace because you know we're all in the same boat aren't we we're all unworthy servants we're all unprofitable servants we all we all uh the the least that we can do is is try to serve god try to serve him and even our stumbling bumbling uh hopeless efforts uh hopefully there's some glory to god in that despite us god can use us he can use you he can use every one of you here tonight all of us we've got something we can do let's serve god with grace and grace it means faithfulness it means humility you know serving without someone having to pat you on the back and say good job you don't need that you don't need human praise in fact better that you don't get it isn't it jesus says better that you don't get praise down here you know those unseen things there's people here tonight who go about quietly graciously serving god and you know who you are you know those little things there's someone here today who helped put some signs out on the weekend and thank god for you that's a quiet little work a quiet work an unseen work an unpraised work yet something you can do for god we can all do something for god and those humble things are probably the best things for us to do you know those jobs that nobody else wants to do there there's people who make sure these toilets are nice and clean and help set things up for the service these are things that we can serve god acceptably serve god with grace with humility not expecting a pat on the back human recognition

we know that god will reward our service that's what matters 1 peter 4 verse 10 it says as every man has received the gift so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of god we're all stewards of his grace every one of you you know the bible says that every christian has different callings abilities giftings service that we can all do every one of us you have spiritual gifts you have abilities aptitudes training learning experiences that you can use to serve god and every one of us of us has got a different kit bag of such callings and abilities extensions of his grace serve one another with god's grace as good stewards of his grace we're called to growing grace to growing love in one teslaanian street says we should increase and abound in love and abound in love towards one another find ways that you can serve other people what you've done to the least of these you've done to me think of that one makes you think doesn't it now there's people in your circle of influence there's people there's people that you can reach there's people that you can talk with that maybe others can't talk with as well as you can and every one of us has that circle of influence those people in our circle of acquaintance us find ways to serve them find ways i know many of us there's different ways to witness some more you know more public more uh quieter ways it could be just getting to know others around about and quietly reaching them with that word of witness and we're all stewards to serve one another god's gifts we're stewards of them we're caretakers we're not the owners of those gifts god's given you gifts so that you could use them not that we can keep them selfishly for our own selves but for he's given into our trust for his praise so we've been entrusted with these things and let's be faithful stewards so growing grace let's exercise that grace amen let's grow in that grace we call we're saved by grace we're abounding in grace we're meant to serve in grace and also we're meant to be strong in his grace 2 timothy 2 verse 1 paul says to timothy now therefore my son be strong in the grace that is in christ jesus paul says be strong in his grace it's his grace and god wants us each of us to be strong christians what makes a strong christian what makes a strong christian i know paul says um exercise yourself unto godliness it's got the sense of going to the gymnasium you know that's why i've got such big muscles sorry you know now that's what makes that's why that's why your dean goes to the gym you know we got those big muscles because we work out and it's the same in our faith but we need to work out our faith we need our faith to get a workout we need our grace to be worked out we need to go into the gym as it were go into that training session go into those training methods you know through bible study through personal study through uh learnings uh there's many courses that you can do this it's so abundant now there's many choices where we can learn and tune in and get good teaching and be discerning but try to find that good teaching that's strong and bible based to great gain that strength to draw that strength from god grow in grace grow in grace friends tonight just as i wrap up here grow in grace grow is an operative word it's a word and god is commanding us grow in grace it's a command the opposite of grow is be stagnant be stuck in the rubs be stagnant do nothing be nothing a lot of christians i know are stagnant

[29:22] it's sad it's sad it grieves me i think wow they're missing out they're missing out stagnant stunts of christians they've stopped growing something is hindering them their faith has grown weak and inactive their walk with god has got hindered now paul writes in galatians 5 you're running so well what's hindered you what's hindered you what's got in your way what's stopping you from obeying the truth god says grow in grace it's an instruction it's a command for you young men women older men women it's for all of us grow in grace grow in grace let's be encouraged that way there was a young girl who got saved and people were questioning uh you know she really a christian and they said to this little girl were you a sinner and she said yes are you still a sinner yes then what real changes have taken place in your life and the girl said the best way i can explain it is this i used to be a sinner running after sin now i'm a sinner running away from sin running away from sin grow in grace grow in grace grace will do its work in us grace will give us a song in our heart colossians 3 talks about singing with grace in your hearts to the lord that's what paul and silas knew wasn't about their circumstance in that dark dingy prison cell at midnight as they sang praises to god they were singing with grace in their hearts and we can have grace fill our hearts and we can have that heart that is set free

unchained where grace has set us free friends i urge you tonight think of reasons why if you're a christian here tonight you think wow when he was talking about christians that uh about stunted growth christians that are stagnant was he having a go at me tonight you know some some people think that and the preacher's talking and and it hits a nerve and some people react i'm not having a go at you tonight talking about me i can do more i can get stagnant i can get stuck in a rut i can stop growing uh my growth can get hindered and i've always got to check in for myself let a man examine himself how is my growth am i growing like god wants me to grow why did why does growth get hindered now you think lately my little dog rusty has had a problem little rusty couldn't keep his food down little rusty he could he was having trouble and we could find scarcely anything to feed him and he was getting really skinny and you could see all of his bones sticking out and he was very scrawny and people saying i'll put him down put him down his growth was hindered because of a poor diet we changed the food that he was eating and now he's he's back on the road to health again he's little rusty survived so we thank god for that it was a blessing for us and we didn't really want to see him um put down but little rusty is an example for you and me the diet matters we need a good diet that's why it's important to study the word study to show yourself approved study the word insufficient food and wrong diet can stunt our growth watch out for what you eat what you feed your soul with watch out for telly evangelists there's there's some out there that i wouldn't recommend that can make you skinny and your spiritual growth we need a good diet a good wholesome diet feed your faith and starve your doubts to death i like that one feed your faith and starve your doubts to death so a poor diet can

hinder your growth and another one is restriction restriction when you're buying a tree we've got a qualified gardener here tonight who knows all about growing trees and and beautiful gardens i've seen just down the road from me with his beautiful garden and when you bind a tree to a pole it can hamper its growth when you bind a tree to a pole it can hamper its growth you know you see those what they call those little trees you can get you should know lester like those trees the bonsai the bonsai trees you know they they prune it and prune it until it's just all stunted it stops growing kind of gets stuck and restriction can hinder our growth too maybe there's things that restrict us kind of bondages in our lives things that hold us back habits things that hold us that that get a grip on us things that get us off sensor or it starts and growing and we just get stuck god says growing grace growing grace watch your diet and let go of those restrictions those bondages that hold you captive god's spirit is called the spirit of grace god's word is called the word of his grace it's able to build you up get the spirit get the word get encouraged tonight and don't cut yourself off from the source of grace the spirit of god the spirit of grace the spirit the word of god the word of his grace is the spirit of grace how am i growing tonight let's let's get it personal here tonight now let's get it real down personal here tonight have i stopped growing in grace is the problem laziness laziness not applying ourselves to study there's many things that can occupy us laziness distractions other interests can stop us from growing poor diet don't be a lot little rusty get some good spiritual food and spiritual immaturity can hinder us to stop us growing in grace god's word says put away childish things i see so many christians they're hanging on to childish things now you see people just going off on tangents childish things it's like they've never grown up put away childish things stop playing games with god another hindrance to growing in grace is carnality following the flesh instead of the spirit we've all got to examine ourselves for these things for instance just one quick closing message here a story about a man who still had some growing to do this man's name is pablo casals 95 years old you know still a young man in methuselah's day he wouldn't have been pablo was 95 years old and the reporter came and asked pablo this question mr casals you are 95. you know there's lots of younger people in that here tonight brian you're younger than 95 you are 95. you are 95 and the greatest cellist you know someone who plays a cello is that how you say it uh i'm not very good at these things so he played a musical instrument i think called a cello he was a cellist i'm not sure if you even say it that way but he played this musical instrument anyway and he and this

man he played this instrument and he was the greatest sellers that ever lived why do you practice six hours a day it's what the reporter asked him why do you practice six hours a day he said because i think i'm making progress i think i'm making progress it's the same with your christian life isn't it

we're still learning as and we'll be learning until we see him one day and then we'll know as we are known then your theology will all be straightened down it'll be just like mine you know you know when you when you see him face to face you'll know him and you'll know just as you are known i'll get straight down for all my heresies now when we see him we'll know him and we'll know as we are known but meantime we're still growing aren't we we ought to be we ought to be it's a lifelong process spiritual growth i think i'm making progress and we might get to the point where we're the greatest musician in our field of that time and yet there's still more we can do more we can perfect more that we can improve and the christian walk turns progressive it's a walk step by step and he gives us grace in saving us and he gives us grace in leading us and we can come boldly to the throne of his grace friends you can know his grace firstly in saving you i trust i pray that you know him tonight his grace that came and bore our sin in the person of his son bleeding and dying rising again that we can call on him and know him as savior and lord grace in saving you and grace as a christian as you grow grace in your speaking grace in your serving grace in your growing grace in your strengthening the word of his grace the spirit of his grace to build you up be strong in his grace and god is able to make all grace abound towards you that you always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work god is able to make all grace abound towards you it's still amazing grace isn't it it's still amazing grace tonight let's pray a dream

Thank you.