

[5 : 25] What grace is all about. And firstly, grace gives. Grace gives. Verse seven, it says, I will surely show thee kindness.

Thou shalt eat at my table continually. Grace gives. The word grace is related to the word gift in the Greek. It's a giving.

Grace gives. David extends an invitation, an invitation to this man. It was unexpected. It was undeserved. So an all-you-can-eat, dining, for a lifetime, at the king's table.

And God, in his grace, he extends an invitation to the undeserving. Unexpectedly, he extends his invitation to you, to me, for a relationship with the king, our king, the Lord Jesus.

Grace gives. Grace looks down at mankind. God, in his grace, looks down. And it says of one Noah, in Genesis 6, verse 8, But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

[6 : 39] Will you be like Noah? Will God look down and find grace for you? Ephesians 2 tells us, For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Grace gives. It gives. A free gift.

I know I was watching a preacher on video lately, and he was explaining how salvation is a gift. It's as he was demonstrating door-to-door witnessing.

And he was explaining to a man, if I was to give you this, there was a Bible, as a gift. And then I was to say to you, it's going to cost you five dollars.

It wouldn't be a gift anymore, would it? Or if I was to say to you, here's a gift, but I want you to go out and work for me and do something for me.

[7 : 45] But God doesn't say that. He says, salvation, it's a gift. Take it. It's a gift. And then he doesn't come and take that gift away from us, too.

It's a gift. We've received it. It's ours. And grace is like that. It's a gift. It's beautiful, isn't it? That undeserved invitation like Mephibosheth had.

And the grace of God that bringeth salvation, Titus 2.11, hath appeared to all men. Grace gives. Think of 2 Corinthians 8, verse 9, where it describes the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 8, verse 9, it says, For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, how rich was he? He had everything.

He has everything. That though he was rich, yet for our sakes, for your sakes, he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.

[8 : 48] And then 2 Corinthians 9, verse 8, And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

There's a grace that we are given, and there's a grace that we give. And so as we, as we give of our substance, we give because of his grace. We want to give with that love, with that desire, desire, with that longing, to please, to bless, to give from our substance, to give from our hearts, to give our praise.

We give in grace. We give graciously, gracefully. And grace grows as we go through life. We're stewards of his grace in 1 Peter 4, verse 10, sharing it with others as Peter says, as every man hath received the gift, even so, minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

God gives to us so that we can give. God gives us his grace that we can impart his grace, that gracious gift to others. And 2 Corinthians 8 talks about the church of the day.

2 Corinthians 8, verse 1, Moreover, brethren, we do you wit to the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

[10 : 18] The churches of Macedonia, they were liberal. They were abundant. Out of their deep poverty, there was a richness in their grace that they showed as they ministered to other churches.

And we're going to do some of that today as we give to the cause of missions that they'll be a blessing to our brothers and sisters who are serving the Lord. And out of the abundance of their poverty, they gave joyfully and abundantly.

God loveth a cheerful giver. Giving is a grace. Do I demonstrate grace? Do I give with a free heart? God pours his grace into the lives of those who give.

Grace gives. That's what he does. God so loved that he gave. Grace gives. It's all about God, isn't it? And what he does. And we could think of those that we are giving to as a church.

We're living in a neighborhood, in a community where there's great need as we've heard on the news of a body found in a park. Just three or four stone throws away from this very place.

[11 : 23] A body has been found in Fremont Park. A young man slain, murdered. This is the world that we're living in. This is the community that we live in, that we're ministering in.

And we need grace. We need to impart grace to these ones about us. I know I was talking with young Matt who's actually moving to Air Peninsula to live with his family. And young Matt was telling me, and I was quite taken aback with what he was telling me, that I never realised this was the case before.

And Matt was telling me how there's lots of gangs in these neighbourhoods that we live in. And he was referring to the different tags, you know, the graffiti initials that you see up around the place. And I can't think of all the different names, but there's all these, they all refer to gangs of kids. And he rattled off, must have been about ten different names of different gangs, of different neighbourhoods.

One at Cravemore, one at Davron Park, one at Salisbury, and all the different kind of turf wars that they're going on. There's this gang culture that is in our very neighbourhood.

[12 : 34] And these people need Christ. They're Mephibosheths. They're the people that are lame in both feet. They're Christless ones, dying ones. The message they need is grace.

It's God's salvation. It's God's riches at Christ's expense. Another lady I bumped into at the shop, she was near Nick Champion MP's stall in the booth there in Elizabeth City Centre, and she was pleading for her cause.

She was telling me how there's a local school, the Broadmeadow School in Elizabeth North. She was telling me how there's some 200 children every day coming to school without lunch.

They have no lunch. And she was pleading the cause that there might be some way, that there might be some intervention to help these folk. And she was telling me that it was the drug dealers that are getting the money.

That's where the parents are giving their money. The parents are getting up, she was saying, in the middle of the night and giving the money to the drug dealers. They get their next fix. And the kids miss out on lunch.

[13 : 47] This is the world, this is the community that we're living in, people. This is the need that is all around you. If we can open our eyes and see it and respond to it.

And grace gives. Think of the opportunity that we could have. It's sad at times there's not more that we can do in a practical sense. And we know some of these things are more the government's responsibility.

But yet, how can we as a church give? How can we as a church respond to these crying needs that are all around us? And I was looking at this lady and she was talking to me and I was looking at her face and I could see she believed in her cause.

And the Bible says, is there not a cause? Is there not a cause? What greater cause have we got? That we should get fired up about. And this dear lady, I was looking at her and I hoped to speak to her again and to try to do something.

Do something. And I was looking at her face and her teeth were all worn away and like diseased and infected. And I've heard it said that people use amphetamines.

[15 : 02] You know, the speed makes their teeth all decay and crumble and fade away. And I thought, perhaps this poor lady was herself used up by the drug dealers.

As we know, it happens, people. It happens in Elizabeth. It happens where we live. In the streets where we live. There's so much crying need. There's so many Mephibosheths out there.

And we need to give. We need to give and keep on giving. And secondly, grace. Grace grows. 2 Peter 3, it says, Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

David demonstrated grace. David demonstrated grace. He said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness? Saul had been his enemy.

And here was Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul. He was one who, you could think, Oh, don't worry about him. He's a cripple. He's a lame. He's a, nobody cares about people like that.

[16 : 09] They're just beggars. Let them be. But Saul, whilst his enemy, David showed grace, didn't he? To his enemy's kin.

And what does God do for us? While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. When we were still his enemies, Christ came and loved us with that love, undeserved, that love, absolute, that amazing grace.

And Christians receive God's grace. Grace is God's method of his dealing with us, working in us, through us, making us Christ-like. God does not want us static and stunted, but growing in grace. Growing in grace. You know, sometimes people make a profession of faith. God bless them. They commit to Christ. But they leave it there. They don't go on.

They don't grow. They just think, well, I'm on the glory train now. I'll just take a seat and enjoy the ride.

[17 : 15] But God wants you to grow in grace. Grow in it. Extend. Extend that grace. Grow in grace. And God helps us to do that.

For example, 2 Corinthians 12, verse 9, it says of Paul that he had a thorn in the flesh. And he asked God to deliver him. Three times Paul prayed earnestly, but no deliverance came.

God said, my grace is sufficient for thee. The Lord said to Paul, I will not take the thorn away, but I will do something better. I will give you grace to stand it.

Perhaps you've got a thorn today. Perhaps you married a thorn. I was kind of joking to Julie, but she was my thorn in the flesh. But no, she's a blessing. But, you know, perhaps you've got a thorn in your life.

A thorn, it's like a little prickle in your shoe, isn't it? And whatever it might be that nags and bugs and frustrates. Not that Julie David does it.

[18 : 21] But Paul was told that this old thorn in the flesh, it's going to hurt. There will be sleepless nights.

There will be painful hours, but I will give you grace. I will give you power. And because of this infirmity, I will bless you as I bless no other man.

And Paul said resignedly, most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Perhaps you're called to suffer.

There could be a place, we know our brothers and sisters in far lands and persecuted lands, they're called on to suffer. And how God blesses them.

How God strengthens them. How God makes them shine in the midst of all of that. There will be a time when you will ask God to take something out of your life, your thorn.

[19 : 24] And God may say, I cannot take it away. If I did, you would not be what I wish you to be, but I will give you grace to bear it. I'm quoting here in part of the sermon that touched me.

And the preacher said, someday you will hear the flapping wings of the angel of death. as he hovers over your home, yonder at the little crib, he will snatch away that little body of flesh you love more than anything else on earth.

You will pray, oh God, don't do this. Bring her back. God will say, no. But he will give you grace to stand it, grace to walk, grace to walk to the open grave, grace to go home and keep looking towards heaven.

Someday the doctor will shake his head and say, your health is failing. You will never be well again. You will pray, oh God, give me back my health.

But God will answer, I cannot do that, but I will give you grace in your hour of need. A good Christian once said, I would rather be in the will of God with poor health than to be healthy and out of God's will.

[20 : 45] I would rather be weak in body and have God's power than to be strong and without it. Grace. Grace.

Romans 12, 3. For I say through the grace given unto me to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

But he giveth more grace, James 4, 6. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. I know, I was talking with a brother this week who was saying he was doing a course and it was increasing his self-confidence, but he was aware that he doesn't want his self-confidence to end up having a swelled head and to have that kind of attitude.

You know, we need to keep humble and it's so true. And I need to be humbled. We all need to keep humble. We all need to keep behind the cross. We all need to keep ourselves in due regard to who we are.

I saw this amazing video that showed how you've got, you know, our little place on planet Earth and then in the scheme of things, Australia and the world and then in comparison to the planets and the planets and then the sun and then the other suns in the universe and just how tiny, tiny, tiny we are

in contrast to the universe.

[22 : 16] We have nothing, nothing. How that we could ever think of ourselves as more highly than we ought to think. But God gives grace to the humble. God gave grace to Mephibosheth, to this one lame in both feet, this one that the others would discount, they would count as human trash, as many count people today.

In our world, they would look down upon one who has certain characteristics or certain behaviours. You know, we can all take those views of other people, can't we? And consider another less than ourselves, yet we're all equal at the foot of the cross, the ground's level at the foot of the cross and we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.

And it blesses me when I see older people coming and blessing the young people in the youth group, the ministry of it. And we have people in their 60s and 70s ministering to young people. That's a blessing. That's giving. That's grace. You know, when you grow older, sometimes you grow less tolerant. You grow less...

[23 : 34] You wear thin. Yeah, you get thinner and thinner, doesn't it? Your patience wears thin and you get more inclined to lose your cool and be that way inclined.

And you know, sometimes it can be the most schooled in the Bible. It can be the most ungracious, ungracious people that you've ever met. You know, I've seen some that stand behind pulpits and talk about people disparagingly, and putting people down over some petty fault or failing or disagreement of the past and they're full of bitterness and...

What's the opposite of lack of grace? Whatever the opposite of the lack of grace is, they're full of it. And people today, shouldn't we be like our gracious saviour, full of grace and truth?

Shouldn't we be like him? Grace. God gives grace. Grace to the humble. And in grace, we're free. And so we should want to share his grace with others. It talks of 1 Peter 5, how the youngest should submit to the elder.

We should all be subject one to another, clothed with humility, for God resists the proud. He gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

[24 : 53] Think of Peter, the one who wrote this. Some have said he had a cocky, kind of proud, high-minded nature, as maybe a kind of thick-skinned fisherman, maybe stubborn, selfish, maybe coarse in his language, and yet God used pizza so mightily, didn't he?

God gave grace to the humble. And God wants us to be used by him. Grace gives, grace grows, it should do. And lastly, grace goes.

We're talking about missions today, as we think, missionaries in the foreign field. We think, as David demonstrated in 2 Samuel 9, verse 5, it says, Then King David sent and fetched him.

King David sent and fetched him. He sent and fetched Mephibosheth. And grace goes. Grace goes to the Mephibosheths and invites them to the king's table.

Grace goes and extends the king's invitation. Grace invites people to partake of the oil you can eat at the king's table.

[26 : 01] To be treated as the king's son, as Mephibosheth was. And Paul, he just demonstrates that everything he says in 1 Corinthians 15, he says, By the grace of God I am what I am.

And he calls himself in that verse there, I'm the least of the apostles. But by the grace of God I am what I am. Maybe you can just think of that for yourself today.

You are what you are. God has invested in you. He's invested in you. He's given his son for you. He's given you abilities and talents.

There's people here who can play musical instruments. God can bless you and use you with those gifts and callings. If you can sing, God gave you that voice. If you can speak, God gave you that voice.

If you can minister, whatever it be, by the grace of God you can be used of God. And Paul went on to say, not only was he the least of the apostles, in Ephesians 3 he called himself the least of all saints.

[27 : 13] Unto me is this grace given. And he says in 1 Timothy 1 Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. He felt like he was the most unworthy Christian who ever lived, the least of all saints, the chief of sinners.

Yeah, what a Mephibosheth he was. One that would be cast aside, one that killed or certainly participated in the killing of Christians. He'd drag them to persecution and punishment, breathing

out threatenings against them.

But one day on the Damascus road, the grace of God met Paul and saved him. And he became that mighty missionary, walking across the lands of the day, telling the story of redeeming love, taking God's grace and grace abounds.

Grace abounded to that cursing, swearing, rough, impetuous Peter. Grace came to Paul, that murderous man, a Christ-hateful man.

God extended an invitation in grace to them. And you too have that grace. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

[28 : 38] Colossians 4, let your speech always be seasoned with grace. Sorry, let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how to answer every man.

Let your speech be full of grace. Think of it, people, today, as we close, grace. Do you have it? You've received it. Are you giving it?

We can all be ungracious and lack grace when we think, I know at times the young people, they get under your skin, at times when we have restless and wriggly ones, but maybe they're on Mephibosheth.

Maybe they're the one that we can come alongside and care for them and be Christ to them and be His grace to them and bless them, encourage them.

Maybe it's ones that might come now and again and you wonder where are they at? God can use you to bless them.

[29 : 43] We can extend an invitation to them and grace is always there for you. It says, let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need.

That's Hebrews 4 verse 16. When the hour of need comes, God will give us the grace we need for it. And a good mission statement for a church is this, to embody God's grace as we receive it to those who need it.

Will we be a church of grace? A church of grace where we see people through the eyes of grace. We see people through the eyes of Christ.

If we could put his lenses, if we could see through his eyes and see the souls, we could see the need, if we could but see these are the ones for whom Christ has died.

Will we be that church of grace, offering grace, demonstrating grace, pointing to the grace of God? Grace gives. It gave him Christ. Christ was in, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

[30 : 54] What a demonstration. As we've heard before, grace embodied in a man, robed in flesh, yet grace personified.

Grace. Grace. The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.

Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor. Grace. To know him is to know grace. And we want to grow in grace, extend that grace, be more gracious, be more loving, be more kind, be more considerate, be more Christ-like.

And does grace hold grudges? Does grace hold hurts against those that have hurt us?

Or does grace forgive? Grace gives and keeps on giving. Grace grows and keeps on growing. And grace goes.

[32 : 11] Go and fetch Mephibosheth. Let's go get the Mephibosheths. We've got to go and keep on going.