

Grace

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[0:00] Ephesians 2.

And let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that your word is life! Lord, that you would be honoured and lifted up, that you would draw all now unto yourself.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Grace. What is the meaning of grace? It's a demonstration of God's love.

It's not defined in so many words, but grace is evident right through the word of God. Right from Genesis through Revelation.

Grace. It means we were dead spiritually, fit for nothing but the wrath of God. We were rebels in bondage to our sin and Satan.

[1:16] And in the midst of it all, God saved us. Remember, God saved us. That's grace. Grace. God's grace is given to someone who definitely does not deserve it.

In spite of our not deserving it, God grants it. Grace. God's steadfast in his gracious love. And we can thank God for grace.

We can thank him. Each one that knows it. Salvation is a gift of God. It's precious. You cannot earn a gift. A gift is defined as something voluntarily transferred from one person to another without compensation.

Think of that as a definition. It's a worldly definition, but I'm sure it's appropriate to think of salvation. Something voluntarily transferred from one person to another without compensation.

And Ephesus 2 verse 8. Ephesus 2 verse 8. It's one familiar verse, I'm sure. For by grace are you saved through faith that that not of yourselves it is the gift of God.

[2:24] What it's saying is that salvation is of God's grace and not of human effort.

The gift is salvation by grace. As someone has put it, salvation is wholly the work of God. Faith is wholly the responsibility of man.

Man does not contribute to his own salvation. It is the work of God. God alone must do the saving. Man must do the believing. As we read in Acts 16.31 when Paul and Silas spoke with the jailer. And he said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And he said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved in thy house.

I'm quoting here, those who are saved have only God to thank. Those who are lost have only themselves to blame. God gets all the credit for man's salvation.

[3:36] The unsaved man must take full blame and responsibility for his eternal damnation. The saved person thankfully can say, I'm in heaven because of God.

The lost person must truthfully say, I'm in hell because of me. His damnation is based not on God's rejection of him, but upon his rejection of God.

And in Ephesians 2 verse 8, faith is not the gift. Faith is how we receive the gift. Faith is how we receive the gift.

Grace is the loving kindness of God. And grace stands in contrast to his wrath. Wrath is the righteous reaction of God as that perfectly holy one towards sin.

Grace and wrath. From the same person. It's almost a contradiction and yet they're complimentary, aren't they? Grace and wrath. Thank God that he shows grace, he extends grace.

[5:06] In his sweet forgiveness he extends mercy towards the objects of his grace. Our Lord embodies grace. Our Lord embodies grace. We read of him in John 1.14 where it says that the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, full of grace and truth.

He was grace incarnate, grace in the flesh, grace in the human skin, grace in the God-man. He demonstrated grace in his life and he made grace possible for you and me. Grace made possible for us because of that gracious one. As we read in Hebrews 2 verse 9, but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. Grace in a person. Grace demonstrated grace tasting death on our behalf. And so salvation is by grace. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Romans 5 verse 20.

[6:36] And who does grace come to? We read in James 4 verse 6, but he giveth more grace. Grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

If you're humble, he'll show grace. If you're humble, you can receive grace. If you're humble, he gives grace to you. In Titus 3 verse 7 it says that being justified by his grace.

We should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Grace again in our justification.

Being justified by his grace. Our justification is entirely of his grace that he gives.

In Ephesians 1 verse 7 we see in whom Christ, in whom we have redemption through his blood.

The forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.

His grace is such a treasure store. It's such an abundance. That riches of his grace. That he would consider sharing that wondrous grace with us.

[7:39] And the grace of God as we see it right through the pages of scripture. The grace of God is evident. It's at work right through. As God touches lives.

It's at work in human lives. Such as yours and mine. As we see it in Acts 11 verse 23. There was something about grace that could be seen.

There was something about grace that was tangible. That could be seen. That was evident. We see in Acts 11 verse 23. It says when he came speaking of Barnabas.

And he had seen the grace of God. And was glad and exhorted them all. That with purpose of heart they would cling unto the Lord. Having come he saw the grace of God.

What was it that he saw? In an earlier verse, verse 21 of Acts 11 it says. And the hand of the Lord was with them. And a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.

[8:40] He saw the grace of God. It was people being saved. It was people being converted. It was people trusting Christ and turning unto him. When God's grace of God. When God's grace is present.

We will see lives changed. When God's grace is at work. We will see lives transformed. And a change in how people live.

Into a consistent Christian life. And friends this grace is not only extended Godward towards us. But it is something that we can know and live ourselves.

Because we are called to show God's grace. To show God's grace in a world of un-grace. In a world that's lacking in grace. Grace is meant to walk in your shoes.

Grace is meant to walk in your shoes. As we read in Proverbs 4 verse 18 it says. But the path of the just is as the shining light. That shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

[9:44] The path of the just is as the shining light. Grace should be walking in your shoes this week ahead. God helping you. How can we see grace evident in our lives?

Grace should be evident in how we speak. Grace should be evident in that we speak grace. As our Lord did of him it says in Luke 4 verse 22.

And all that he witnessed of the Lord as a young man. And wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said is not this Joseph's son?

All that he witnessed and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. It was a testimony of grace. Because he was speaking in the language of grace.

In Colossians 4 verse 6 it says. Let your speech be always seasoned with salt. Sorry. Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt.

[10:44] That you may know how you ought to answer every man. Let your speech be always with grace. In Ephesians 4 verse 29 it talks of this

communication of grace too.

It says let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. But that which is good to the use of edifying. That it may minister grace unto the hearers.

That your voice that you are speaking will not be corrupt. But that it will be ministering grace to others. That it will be for the use of edifying. What a contrast to the people talked of in Romans 3 verse 13 and 14.

It says their throat is an open sepulchre. Like an open tomb. With their tongues they have used deceit. The poison of asps is under their lips.

His mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. You know it's sad to see people professing to be Christians whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

[11:48] You know it could even be those euphemisms that we can carelessly say. So it's a word that sounds like Jesus. It's a word that sounds like God.

Or other versions of those words. Careless words. And yet words that should not be spoken by God's people.

We ought to be careful and put a guard over our lips. Keep our lips. And not have that which is questionable coming out of our mouth.

In Luke 6.45 it says, A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good. And an evil man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil.

For of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. What is in us will come out of us. And what is in our heart will be expressed in our speaking.

[12:50] And at conversion a change happens. Our tongue gets converted when we say. It may take some time to share some of that baggage over some time.

But God helping us, he will show us those words which ought not to be spoken by one who professes to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. We want to speak grace.

We want to minister grace. We want to use edifying, not cursing and bitterness. And have that good treasure that comes out of our mouth. In Colossians 3.16 it says, 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.

So even when you sing, you can sing with grace to your Lord. So speak grace. Another thing about grace is live grace.

Live grace. We are called to live soberly, righteously and godly. We see that in Titus 2 verse 11 through 14.

[14:05] And it says that grace teaches us how to live. To live grace. It says Titus 2.11, For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Grace teaches us how to live. To live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. God's grace. An old time preacher put it like this.

God's grace is magnified by man's ruin. The more keenly the ruin is felt, the more highly the grace is valued. The more joyful converts to Christ you will ever see are the ones who have come to realise how utterly lost and helpless they were without him.

Grace. Grace greater than all my sin. Grace sufficient to make the foulest clean. Grace avails today, tonight.

[15:32] Grace to live. Grace to serve. Grace to serve. We see in Hebrews 12, 28. It tells us some saints and martyrs, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Hebrews 12, 28. Receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Serve with grace. Let that service that you extend for his purposes be not something out of drudgery, out of having to, out of a duty, so much as love with grace, with reverence and godly fear. Determined to serve by grace, to serve whether it be something others might count as trivial, as not important. Serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

So determined to serve by grace. Moody, an old time preacher, said this, he said, I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something.

[16:49] And that which I can do, by the grace of God, I will do. Find a place to serve, and serve there. Bloom where you're planted, serve God acceptably, and with reverence and godly fear.

And God will help you to serve him. So have a yoke, that's not heavy, but is a blessing. And God will make it possible for you to serve with grace.

As someone has said, the will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you. Practice grace. You know, some of the people in your lives might be deliberately there, so you'll grow in grace.

Amen? Who said amen? Yeah? It could be those people, they get under your skin, God's way of increasing your grace. It could be the one you married to.

There could be those people in your life, that God brings across your path, that's helping you to be more gracious, day by day by day. And you can practice that grace.

[17:52] Practice that grace, in your day by day lives. Here's one example, of grace in action. It was the collapse of the Berlin Wall, in 1989. And no person in all of East Germany, was more despised, than the former communist dictator, Eric Honaker.

who had been stripped of all his officers. And the communist party itself rejected him. And kicked out of his villa, the new government refused him, and his wife knew housing.

And the Honakers were homeless, and destitute. Enter Pastor Uwe Holmer, director of a Christian service, north of Berlin.

Made aware of the Honakers' straits, Pastor Uwe Holmer felt it would be wrong, to give them a roommate, for even needier folk. So the pastor, and his family, decided to take, the former dictator, into their own home.

Eric Honaker's wife, Margot, had ruled the East German educational system, for 26 years. Eight of Pastor Holmer's, ten children, had been turned down, from higher education, due to, Mrs. Honaker's policies, which discriminated, against Christians.

[19:05] Now the Holmers, were caring, for their personal enemy. The most hated man, in Germany. This was so unnatural, so unconventional, so Christ-like.

By the grace of God, the Holmers, loved their enemies. They did them good, they blessed them, they prayed for them, they turned the other cheek. They were grace, in action.

Grace demonstrated. Grace, in a practical way. And, holiness will grow, as grace grows. Moment by moment, as you grow, ever more like him.

As you grow, to, trick people, like our Lord, would trick them. You'll become more like, the Lord Jesus, every day. And, I thank God, for those that are ministering, there's numbers here tonight, that are ministering, in prison ministry.

Reaching those, that others would, would not spare, a thought for. I thank God, in the women's prison, and in the men's prison, there's people here tonight, who are doing ministry, just like that. Reaching those, that most absolutely, are in need of grace, and yet, sometimes it's the, those that have, the most appearance, of holiness, that need, his grace too.

[20:18] Maybe more so, because he gives grace, to the humble, brother and sister. He gives grace, to the humble. Maybe we've got to be humbled, so that we can be transformed, from one degree, of glory, to another.

God's desire, also in grace, is that grace, is not static, not static, but dynamic. Grace that is growing. In 2 Peter 3, verse 18, it says, but grow in grace, and in the knowledge, of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to him, be glory, both now, and forever.

Amen. Grow in grace, and in the knowledge, of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Grow in grace, don't settle, for a grace, that was some experience, some time of conversion, way back, and you're not growing in it.

Let it be growing. Brother, let it be growing, day by day by day, not resting on some, past salvation experience, long ago, but a grace, that is growing, growing, growing, the path of the just, increasing, day by day, by day.

Grace, is what makes us accepted. It says in Ephesians 1, verse 6, to the praise of the glory, of his grace, wherein, he hath made us, accepted, in the beloved.

[21:33] To the praise, of the glory, of his grace. Consider those riches, of his grace, that he would expand, those riches for you, that he would, deign, to make you, able to make a transaction, and be a partaker, of that wealth, of the riches, of his grace.

That you can, be a recipient, of, that treasure store, of his grace tonight. In whom we have redemption, through, his blood, the forgiveness, of sins, according to the riches, of his grace. The wealth, of his grace. Consider the generosity, of his grace. Ephesians 2, verse 7, that in the ages to come, he might show, the exceeding riches, of his grace, and his kindness, towards us, through Christ Jesus.

He pours it out. He pours it out. He does not hold it back. He does not withhold it. He pours it out. And friends, we can thank him, for grace tonight. We can thank him, that all we have, is due unto him.

In Ephesians 4, 7, it says, but unto every one of us, is given grace. Every one of us, is given grace, according to the measure, of the gift of Christ.

[22:46] It's thankfully, at his giving, and our receiving. God wants us, to abound in grace. In 2 Corinthians 9, verse 8, it says, 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 wants you, to abound, in grace. To make all grace, abound, towards you. And so you might think, well, perhaps this isn't, true for me, I'm going through, a tough time.

He says to you, my grace, is sufficient, for thee. For my grace, is made perfect, in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12, grace, amazing grace.

We know, the one who, penned that song, was John Newton. John Newton, he continued, his ministry, into old age. And friends, were urging him, to accept retirement.

Here he was, at the age of 80. He was almost blind, and partially dead. And they, were telling him, John, it's time to, you know, hang up your hat, and take it easy.

[23:53] And he said, what? Shall the old African, blasphemer, stop, while he can speak? In December, 1806, the end was coming. And Newton's diary, recorded his prayer, asking God, to help him meet, his end, with a faithful spirit.

This is what, John Newton wrote. Oh, for grace to meet, the approach of death, with a humble, thankful, resigned spirit, becoming my profession. That I may, not stain my character, by impatience, jealousy, or in any, hateful temper, but may be prepared, and permitted, to depart, in peace, and hope, and be enabled, if I can speak, to bear my testimony, to thy faithfulness, and goodness, with my last bread.

Amen. What a beautiful prayer. What a beautiful prayer. Oh, for grace. That was his prayer. The one who penned, amazing grace. And someone was watching him, and they said, I saw Mr. Newton, near the closing scene, and was hardly able to talk, and all I find, I noted down, upon my leaving him, was this.

My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things. This is what Newton said, that I am a great sinner, and that Christ, is a great saviour. Of course we know, that we're changed, from sinners to saints, but he had that humility, to say, I am a great sinner, and that Christ, is a great saviour.

And Newton, wouldn't have liked, the eulogy, that the times, gave, at the time of his death, describing him, as having, an unblemished life, because he never forgot, that he owed his redemption, from a life, of sin, to a life, in Christ, entirely, to divine mercy, and grace.

[25:41] And on his gravestone, it says, once an infidel, and libertine, a servant, of slaves, in Africa, was by the rich mercy, of our Lord, and saviour, Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, and pardoned, and appointed, to preach the faith, he had long laboured, to destroy.

Truly, amazing grace. Friends, when, it all comes down to it, when, we, are on the other side, there'll be no contest, to see, who is most deserving, of God's grace, because no one, deserves it. No one, not one, not one of us, deserves his grace. Someone put it like this, there'll only be one, contest in heaven, when we look back, and see, what we were, before.

And when, we see the pit, from which he rescued us. When we recall, how confused we were. When we remember, how God reached out, and, took us into his family, and how he held us, in his hand.

And when we see, the Lord Jesus, who loved us, and gave himself, for us, the only contest, will be to see, which of us will be, singing the loudest.

[26:58] Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved the wretch, like me. Grace, grace, it's available today. It's available 24 by 7, and we can seek God's grace, and receive God's grace, by prayer.

As it says, let us therefore, come boldly, unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain, mercy, and find grace to help, in time of need. Just quickly, to touch back on, where we've gone tonight. Grace, is God's love gift. His loving kindness, salvation, the riches of his grace. It's tangible, Barnabas saw it. It was evident, in the conversion, of lives.

Grace, is something we should show, to this graceless world, we live in. Grace is something, we should speak. Not words of corrupt communication, not bitterness, and lying, but gracious words, as our Lord spoke.

We should speak with grace, we should sing with grace, in our hearts. We should live with grace. Soberly, righteously, godly, grace teaching us, and training us, how to live.

[28:06] Serve in grace, not, out of obligation, but freely, willingly, joyfully, gladly. Practice grace, with those, that are, rubbing you up the wrong way.

God's put them in your life, for a reason. So you can learn, to be gracious. Practice grace, growing grace, don't be static, be dynamic, abounding in his grace.

And knowing that, in those times, when his grace, seems so far away, he's telling you, my grace, is sufficient for you. My grace, is sufficient for you. Because my strength, is made perfect, in your witness.

And we can know, that grace, to help, in time of need, has become boldly, unto the throne of grace. The last verse, in Hebrews 13, 25 says, grace, be with you, all.

Amen. Grace, be with you, all. Amen. We're going to sing, Amazing Grace, God willing. So let's turn there if we can. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound.

[29:11] Amen. No.