

Grace – Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 2:11
From Sermon Series – Grace and Mercy . . . Something We all Need!

As I approach our subject for this message I am reminded of a wonderful truth – Grace. As a young man I was often reminded of Grace, as this was my mother’s name. But it is not my purpose today to preach about my mother Grace, but I will surely preach about the grace of God. It is my contention that the grace of God is so important that it would be horrible if a person would come to church and never hear about the grace of God!

Can you imagine having prepared yourself to go to church on Sunday morning with the clothes being laid out, the shoes are shined, you are ready to get up the next morning and go to church. But during the night, you keep having this dream which repeats itself over and over in your mind. You dreamed that you got up on Sunday morning, had breakfast, got dressed and you went to church but something strange happened about the service.

The announcements were made but there was **NO** voice. The congregational songs were sung but **NO** sound. The choir sang but **NO** sound. The preacher got up and preached his message but **NO** sound. There was **NO** sound during the entire worship time. Then suddenly you could see a young girl standing amongst the congregation and now suddenly you could hear her voice and she was singing, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.”

Your response would accurately be “I have now been to church” because you have now heard about the Grace of God. Yes, grace is just that important to each of us . . . we all need it.

Notice these truths about the grace of God:

1. Grace Must Be Defined

Most of us understand that when we use the word **grace** we are referring to God’s unmerited favor toward those who are underserving of it. That is certainly a proper understanding of God’s grace and I would have to admit that I certainly need God’s unmerited favor. Of all the blessings of God I have to admit that I am most appreciative of the grace of God, how about you? Aren’t you thankful for the grace of God?

Moody said: “Grace isn’t a little prayer you chant before receiving a meal. It’s a way to live. The law tells me how crooked I am. Grace comes along and straightens me out.”

One of the great truths of Scripture is that God provided His Son Jesus Christ as the mechanism through which He extended His grace towards mankind. Perhaps this little explanation will help you to grasp what grace is . . . **Grace is . . . God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense!**

Many years ago a well-known evangelist was driving through a small southern town when he was stopped by a policeman and charged with speeding. The evangelist admitted his guilt, but was told by the officer that he would have to appear in court.

The judge asked, "Guilty, or not guilty?" When the offender pleaded guilty, the judge replied, "That'll be ten dollars -- a dollar for every mile you went over the limit."

Suddenly the judge recognized the famous minister. "You have violated the law," he said. "The fine must be paid . . . but I am going to pay it for you." He took a ten dollar bill from his own wallet, attached it to the ticket, and then took the evangelist out and bought him a steak dinner! Later the evangelist was repeating this account during a sermon and he stated "the is how God treats repentant sinners!"

Is there little wonder that the saints of God rejoice in the grace of God?

***Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,
Yonder on Calvary's mount out-poured, There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.***

2. Grace Is Demonstrated

The pages of the Bible are literally saturated with the grace of God. I often hear people speak of the grace of God as if it is something new which is **NOT** found until you get to the NT and that just isn't so!

Granted there is a lot of grace referenced in the NT such as in many of the letters or epistles of the NT where the word **grace** is used as in the greeting or at least in the conclusion of the letter. (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon). Yes, the grace of God is demonstrated in the New Testament but it should also be understood that the Bible is a book which demonstrates the grace of God from the 1st book all the way through to the last. Notice these Scriptures:

Genesis 6:5-6 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Genesis 6:7-8 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

In these verses the unmerited favor of God was demonstrated, resulting in the judgment of God being spared for 120 years. At this time Noah has no printed Bible to read, so how did he even know about God and more specifically the grace of God?

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

If you pull these many Scriptures together, we find that Noah was a man who believed in God as Creator, as His Sovereign and the only Savior from sin. Because of this "**he found grace in the eyes of the Lord**" and "**moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith**".

Yes my dear brothers and sisters, mankind had not been on earth for a long period of time before we observe that mankind needs the grace of God and God always supplies that for mankind.

3. Grace Delivered

For this message I have chosen to use Noah as an example of God supplying His grace but I could have just as easily chosen any one of the 30,000 individuals recorded in the Scriptures because Scripture makes it clear that all of mankind needs the grace of God. And that includes all of us, doesn't it?

Let's take a moment and consider that truth, are you in agreement that you need the grace of God? So, if we all need the grace of God, how has God supplied that for all of us?

Titus 2:11-13 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 Savior Jesus Christ;

The Scriptures make it clear that God has abundantly supplied His grace, but why is it so important? The text of Scripture provides two simple reasons why God would do this for mankind:

- 1) It is impossible to save ourselves. (Titus 3:5)
- 2) We would never stop boasting about our ability to save ourselves. The Scriptures make it clear that God provided His Grace through His Son *"lest any man should boast"*.

4. Grace Must be Applied

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

In heaven there was once a great debate as to who was the greatest monument of God's grace. All breasts were bared and all secrets were told as the redeemed sought to pay tribute to the grace of God. One after another related the sin or transgression out of which Christ had delivered him. At length the choice seemed to be settling down upon one man who apparently had committed all sins. He recounted iniquity after iniquity as he turned over the ghastly pages of his autobiography. He then related how on his deathbed Christ came and saved him just as God had saved the thief on the cross.

But just before the vote was taken another of the redeemed stepped forward and asked to tell his story. He had come to know and love Christ as a child and had followed him all the days of his life and he related how the grace of God had kept him from the sins and transgressions of which the others had spoken. Then the vote was taken and it was not the drunkard, the thief, the adulterer, the perjurer, the murderer, or the blasphemer, but the man who had followed Christ all his days and had been kept by his grace who was selected as the greatest monument to the grace of God.

Today if you know Jesus Christ as Savior, you are a testimony of what God can do in the life of an undeserving sinner. So I urge each of us to leave this place today rejoicing that each of us is a monument of the grace of God!

Grace, Grace, God's Grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within!

Mercy . . . Me? Yes, I Need It! – Titus 3:5
From Sermon Series – Grace and Mercy . . . We all Need Them!

Once again I must admit that it humbles me to preach the Word. That God would allow me to stand before His children and proclaim the “unsearchable riches of Christ” cannot help but humble me. I also gladly admit that I am just like you I need the Grace of God, as well as the Mercy of God. It was these two virtues of God which provided for those who believe, which brings about what we know as salvation. I would hope that you too realize that each of these is greatly needed in your life as well.

When I prepare a topical message I will do a search of the Scriptures which lists for me the many references to that particular topic. In this case it is the word **mercy** and I find that it is abundantly given by the Lord to mankind.

Please allow me to use this little story to catapult us into what the Scriptures reveal to us about the mercy of God. A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death.

"But I don't ask for justice," the mother explained. "I plead for mercy." "But your son does not deserve mercy," Napoleon replied. "Sir," the woman cried, "it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for." "Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy." and he spared the woman's son.

1. Mercy Defined

Have you noticed that in general conversation that we often use the word *grace* and *mercy* together? We also sometimes use these two words grace and mercy as if they are the same thing, but that just isn't so.

Grace is the unmerited favor of God which He delivers to us through Jesus Christ and it is also demonstrated in the Scriptures as being a position where we stand in Christ (Romans 5).

Mercy however is something altogether different. Mercy is God not giving to sinful mankind what they rightly deserve.

Lamentations 3:22-24 It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

God's mercy and grace give me hope - for myself, and for our world.

Yes my brethren, we too are in a constant state of needing the mercy of God and we can only cry out – MERCY, MERCY, MERCY! God is faithful to NOT give us what we rightly deserve!

2. Mercy Demonstrated

One of the pleas which has been used throughout the history of mankind has been the cry for the mercy of God.

Do you know what caused the saints to cry out for the mercy of God? I believe it is found in some of the final words of John Newton, the writer of the hymn *Amazing Grace*. *“My memory is nearly gone but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior.”*

Notice these examples of those who were the recipients of the mercy of God:

JOSEPH - Genesis 39:21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

MOSES – Exodus 15:13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

DAVID – 1 Chronicles 16:34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

PAUL - 1 Timothy 1:13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

When you walk into this church you are overtaken by the image of the cross which is prominently displayed. Can you imagine attending a church which fails to exalt the cross?

Alexander Whyte speaking about the cross - "It is the picture of violence, yet the key to peace. It is a picture of suffering, yet the key to healing. It is a picture of utter weakness, yet the key to power. It is a picture of capital punishment, yet the key to mercy and forgiveness. It is a picture of supreme shame, yet the Christian's supreme boast. It is a picture of death, yet the key to life. It is a picture of vicious hatred, yet the key to love." What irresistible love.

You may have also noticed that in our singing this morning we exalted the Mighty Cross of Jesus. Thank God for the Cross where the MERCY of God is put onto full display!

“Great Is thy Faithfulness” is not the result of some tragic event in Thomas Chisholm’s life but a powerful witness to his daily walk with Jesus as he experienced “morning by morning” new mercies from His Everlasting Father. Pastor Chisholm always trusted his Everlasting Father to take care of Him, sustain him, and provide for his daily needs. Just before his death in 1960 he wrote this powerful, personal witness:

‘My income has never been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which has followed me on until now. But I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care which have filled me with astonishing gratefulness.’” [SOURCE: Kenneth W. Osbeck, *Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1990), 348.]

3. Mercy Declared

Deuteronomy 4:31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.

Job 11:6 And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.

Psalms 37:25-26 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.

Psalms 136:1 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalms 145:8-9 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

4. Mercy Applied

(Titus 3:5) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Conclusion

A young employee secretly misappropriated several hundred dollars of his business firm's money. When this action was discovered, the young man was told to report to the office of the senior partner of the firm. As he walked up the stairs toward the administrative office, the young employee was heavy-hearted. He knew without a doubt he would lose his position with the firm. He also feared the possibility of legal action taken against him. Seemingly his whole world had collapsed. Upon his arrival in the office of the senior executive the young man was questioned about the whole affair. He was asked if the allegations were true, and he answered in the affirmative. Then the executive surprisingly asked this question: "If I keep you in your present capacity, can I trust you in the future?" The young worker brightened up and said, "Yes, sir, you surely can. I've learned my lesson." The executive responded, "I'm not going to press charges, and you can continue in your present responsibility." The employer concluded the conversation with his younger employee by saying, "I think you ought to know, however, that you are the second man in this firm who succumbed to temptation and was shown leniency. I was the first. What you have done, I did. The mercy you are receiving, I received. It is only the mercy and grace of God that can keep us both."