

THE GRACE OF JESUS

It is not unusual for people to seek the favor of a king. Kings have authority to rule, to dispense blessings, proclaim decrees and to bring judgment. During his public ministry, few people realized that Jesus was a king. However, they were aware of his unusual grace, especially to those that others would dismiss or even despise.

The apostle Paul had direct experience of God's grace when he was known as Saul, the persecutor of Christians. The glory of God came upon him as he was on the way to commit more religious terrorism. God got his attention and opened his spiritual sight while he went physically blind for a few days. Years later, his letters to various churches reveal his clear understanding and appreciation for the grace of Jesus. - 1 Timothy 1:12-17. He ends the letter to the Corinthians with reference to each person of the Trinity. We see his emphasis for each one of them.

*May the **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ, the **love** of God and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit be with you all. - 2 Corinthians 13:14 NIV*

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF GRACE?

*Grace = **charis** (Greek) is used 156 times in the New Testament*

The Greeks were lovers of beauty; in nature, in their architecture, poetry and drama. Anything which called out of the heart things such as wonder, admiration, pleasure or joy was designated by this word **charis**. The word also came to signify **the doing of a favor** graciously, generously, spontaneously, or without expectation of return. It was given out of the generosity of the giver and not because a person deserved it. The verb form of grace is; to give, to **deal generously** with.

FIVE ASPECTS OF GRACE

1. **GOD'S GRACE TOWARD US** - Ephesians 2:1-10 summary:

Guilt...Grace...Gratitude...Good Works - John Calvin, Protestant Reformer

Saved by grace through faith. Grace provides God's blessings, but faith reaches out to to receive them. Spiritual salvation, healing and other blessings come the same way; by grace through faith!
God initiates.....man cooperates. (God even provides the desire and power to do so)

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also along with Him, graciously give us all things? - Romans 8:32

Grace emphasizes the helpless poverty of man and the unlimited kindness of God. - William Barclay

Grace is God giving everything to those who deserve nothing. - Colin Urquhart

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. - James 4:6

Just as water flows to the lowest place, grace flows like a river to the weak, the lowly and the humble. - John Beckerink

2. **GOD'S GRACE AROUND US**

We are standing in grace. It surrounds us wherever we are. - Romans 5:1-2

**The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.
- Psalm 34:7**

3. **GOD'S GRACE IN US**

God's grace sustains us

The apostle Paul had been caught up to the third heaven (paradise) and heard and saw things that could not be fully expressed and he experienced great revelations. In order to prevent him from becoming proud, God gave him a thorn in his flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment him. Paul pleaded for God to take it away, but God spoke these words to him.

But the Lord said to me: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

What was the thorn in Paul's flesh? Some think it was a physical ailment as his eyesight was not good (he wrote in large letters) - Galatians 6:11. Some Galatians said they would pluck out their eyes for him - Galatians 4:13-15. Paul may have suffered an eye injury when he was stoned in Lystra - Acts 14:19-20. There are examples where God permitted the devil to bring afflictions to people, at least for a season Job 2:7. I think the thorn in the flesh refers to the torments from his adversaries who were opposed to the work of God. The verses above refer to **insults and persecutions**. This coincides with the example of God's people centuries before.

But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land and where you will live. - Numbers 33:55 NIV

***Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done
At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood by my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.
- 2 Timothy 4:14, 16-18 NIV***

Note: God's grace is there for us through any and every situation that we may face.

Grace is a Person

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. - John 1:14 NKJV

And the Word (Christ) became flesh, and lived among us; and we (actually) saw His glory. glory as only belongs to the (One and) only begotten Son of the Father, (The Son who is truly unique, the only one of His kind, who is) full of grace and truth (absolutely free of deception). John 1:14 Amplified

Jesus is a Grace Dispenser

*From the fullness of His grace, we have received one blessing after another.
John 1:16 NIV*

For out of His fullness (the superabundance of His grace and truth) we have all received grace upon grace (spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing, favor upon favor, and gift heaped upon gift.) - John 1:16 Amplified

4. God's Grace Above Us

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- Hebrews 4:15-16 NKJV*

When we come to God in prayer, we should not be timid but bold because the blood of Jesus has rolled out a warm welcome mat to the Father's throne. It is a throne of grace, not works.

Therefore brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. - Hebrews 10:19-23 NIV

5. God's Grace Through Us

Grace gives us the power and desire to do God's will

*Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Philippians 2:12-13 (works = energeo in Greek) God energizes us to do his plan for our life! (I experience this when I write these messages. I am aware of his empowering presence)
Note: we do not work for salvation but work it out once we have it.*

The apostle Paul was very much aware of this.

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them - yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. - 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 NIV

The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, it teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions. - Titus 2:11-12

Grace is God's willingness to use His power on our behalf. - Charles Capps

We Give and Serve Through Grace

- * *God causes people to excel in giving - 2 Corinthians 8:1-9*
- * *Sowing generously - 2 Corinthians 9:8-15*
- * *God is a generous giver!*

*God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.
2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV*

God is gracious! God is generous! God has abundance!

He has saved us by His grace and has given us His grace. Now He wants us to live by grace and be gracious to others. Jesus was a grace dispenser. That is our privilege too!