

# It's Always Been Grace

**What do you think of when you hear the word “grace?”**

**In church?** What we get after mercy, “bigger or better than mercy” we think? Just a name of the church? the free and unmerited favor of God, as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings.

**In the world?** simple elegance or refinement of movement. Maybe someone’s name? do honor or credit to (someone or something) by one's presence.

I hear the Christian definition and I get it theologically, mentally, the point.

But maybe it’s just me, but I think the last wordly definition, the verb, says it all, in perspective of God: it is an honor and blessing to us, each one of us, and all of us together, to have God’s presence.

*That’s his free and unmerited (deserved) favor.*

*That’s the heart of salvation - God in OUR place*

*That’s the real blessing. Not a crown (we throw it back) but that the glory on our head would be knowing Him in our heart.*

**It’s been said: G. R. A. C. E.**

God’s Riches at Christ’s Expense

We’ve all heard it? But what does that mean?

**Again, I don’t know - my head thinks it gets it, but i feel distant from that.**

**Is it just grace to “get” a blessing we don’t deserve?**

**A bonus check we didn’t do enough for? A paycheck when maybe we didn’t do so well that week at work, but they keep paying us.**

**Somehow I think the grace of God is bigger than that.**

**Better than that.**

**Grace is not a work because it cannot be earned.**

**It’s not simply WHAT God gives us, but WHO God gives us.**

**Jesus. To us. Married. Inseparable. Made one with us.**

*Christmas is coming*

*Immanuel - GOD - WITH - US*

That is grace. That God would be with us. Ugly. Dirty. Deplorable. Down and out. Depressed. Broken. Bruised. Beaten. Rebellious. Obnoxious. Self-loving. Disasters.

Yet God desires to come and dwell in all of that. And clean us up. Not for his comfort (not a rude guest) but for OUR benefit.

### **When did grace come about?**

*Sometimes i think of it, wrongly, that it's like Mercy 2.0. We get mercy and then when we get mercy we get grace on top of it. But that's like saying we were a good steward of mercy, here's your reward, grace.*

*Or as an alternate to mercy - mercy not getting what you deserve, let off of punishment God picks one each time we mess up. Again, not entirely accurate. God doesn't flip a coin to decide what we get.*

### **Because God always intended grace.**

#### **History (ages of...)**

We're not just in a special-case bonus round of history.  
Age of grace, adam, noah, moses, Jesus

### **Not just something come up with by the new testament writers looking for a new buzz word for the faith**

**I believe that just as the law was fulfilled by Jesus and the law and religious practice of holy days and rites were a shadow...**

**[Col 2:16-17 KJV] 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days]: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ.**

**[Heb 10:1-10 KJV] 1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, [and] not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those [sacrifices there is] a remembrance again [made] of sins every year. 4 For [it is] not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and [offering] for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure [therein]; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will,**

**O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all].**

**So too, grace is the complete picture of God.**

**Not just mercy, but grace.**

**Not just goodness and blessings, but being in the presence of His grace.**

**Jesus is the embodiment of grace.**

We didn't earn him. We can't store him like a trophy, we commune with him. Are surrounded by him. Blessed by HIM HIMSELF.

Some quotes that have impacted me lately:

#### **Utmost/Chambers**

- Have we come to the point where God can withdraw His blessings (physical, emotional, spiritual perhaps even) from us without our trust in Him being affected?
- The passion of Christianity comes from deliberately signing away my own rights and becoming a bondservant of Jesus Christ. Until I do that, I will not begin to be a saint.
- The men and women our Lord sends out on His endeavors are ordinary human people, but people who are controlled by their devotion to Him, which has been brought about through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Our Lord told us how our love for Him is to exhibit itself when He asked, "Do you love Me?" (John 21:17). And then He said, "Feed My sheep." In effect, He said, "Identify yourself with My interests in other people," not, "Identify Me with your interests in other people."
- We must also learn that our individual effort for God shows nothing but disrespect for Him
- The effect [of sanctification] in me is obedience, service, and prayer, and is the outcome of inexpressible thanks and adoration for the miraculous sanctification that has been brought about in me because of the atonement through the Cross of Christ.

I'm sure we could tie many threads through those, but I think each speaks of grace.

**[Dan 3:13-18, 24-25, 28 KJV] 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in [his] rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, [Is it] true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? 15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; [well]: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who [is] that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we [are] not careful to answer thee in this matter. 17 If it be [so], our**

**God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver [us] out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. ...**

**24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, [and] spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. ...**

**28 [Then] Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed [be] the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.**

**18 but even if not**

Even if he doesn't deliver us from the fire, we still know he's gracious because we'll be delivered to Him

**Grace is not just the physical blessing or heavenly blessing.**

What a selfish view, a limited view, of grace

**And really, a missed view of God**

*Pointing out things to kids in the car, sometimes too fast for them to see, or they can't see from where they are sitting*

***Where are you sitting?***

**[Luk 10:38-42 KJV] 38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. 40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving,**

***Perispaō (perspire? Perimeter? ) animals would be tied and walk in a circle threshing grain (sampson even when captured by the Philistines)***

*to draw around, to draw away, distract  
metaph.*

*to be driven about mentally, to be distracted*

***to be over-occupied, too busy, about a thing***

and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. 41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: 42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

How often we are TOO busy about a thing.

*Cleaning up at night instead of just sitting with my kids - the mess will be there after they go to sleep. I can clean it then. Cleaning up vs. brushing their teeth.*

Being busy for the Lord and missing the Lord, is never FOR the Lord  
We are doing it for ourselves

Keeping the mill turning is not our responsibility

[1Co 3:4-7 KJV] 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I [am] of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who [is] Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

Yes, we will have a reward in heaven (read on, but I still believe that reward is Jesus and those that were ministered to by HIM through us being there)

God's the one who really does the work.

Our REAL job, our REAL ministry is to...sit at his feet and hear his word. His voice. His heart. Get to know him.

Levitical offerings, some required some to be burnt, some to be eaten. A fellowship time.  
*Communion anyone?*

God is the one who does the work. He's the one who gives the increase.

Neither you or I can ever truly increase God's ministry.

Oh yes, we can run around, do things, keep things going that appear godly to some  
But that is not God's work. That is not a substitute for the Word being made to not return void by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is doing the real work. If we're not spending more time sitting than serving, we're just getting in the way. We're just getting stuff done that's not as important. Doesn't have as much, or any, real, lasting, eternal value.

**Put it down. You've got to sit down.**  
***Not just anywhere. But at His feet.***

***Have you literally sat at the feet of Jesus lately? Seeking HIm in a message? In your personal time? Have you lately, or ever even, just sat, ont he floor, at his feet. IN worship? IN prayer? In study? Even just in quiet.***

***If not. If not recently. If not yet today...please, sit. Take a load off.***

**[1Pe 5:7 KJV] 7 Casting all your care [anxiety] upon him; for he careth [care about] for you.**

**Do you get that? Do I? That is even a selfish act. Casting MY anxiety. My problems. My worry. My burden. My work on him. Because he cares for me. I get care in return for giving up my care.**

***Talk about free healthcare...you do that you might not need to see that doctor. You might not need that medication. You might just get some sleep.***  
***And what did you do to earn that time with Doctor Jesus? Nothing.***  
***He just begs you to come so he can bless you.***

***That's grace.***

**Read Isaiah 61**

**Grace**

**What can you do? Do well?**

**Trade in your sorrows for gladness. Your pain for peace. Your brokenness to be made whole.**

***Deal in monopoly for free pass on boardwalk/park place***

***The deal God wants is give him anything and everything that we might be close to him***

**It's one thing to give to God the stuff that weighs us down.**  
**But can you *really* do anything that's good?**

**[Rom 7:15, 18-25 KJV] 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. ... 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no**

good thing: for to will is present with me; but [how] to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Paul says, "I thank God THROUGH Jesus Christ our Lord."

Paul knew that in and of himself, he couldn't even thank God on his own.

That the thanks to the Father was only truly exhibited through Jesus Christ thanking Him on our behalf.

[Jer 17:9-14 KJV] 9 The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it? 10 I the LORD search the heart, [I] try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, [and] according to the fruit of his doings. 11 [As] the partridge sitteth [on eggs], and hatcheth [them] not; [so] he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool. 12 A glorious high throne from the beginning [is] the place of our sanctuary. 13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, [and] they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters. 14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou [art] my praise.

The LORD Is the one who heals us

[Rom 5:6-12, 17 KJV] 6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only [so], but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. 12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ... 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

**Jesus descended (philipians 2)  
The enemy wanted to ascend...**

***The real estimation of the enemy's former role  
Our false estimation of the importance of our work***

**Jesus is the important one. His very existence and presence leads us to worship.**

**When we preach ourselves and not Jesus and His word, we lead people to us (not a bad start to draw people in that we might share with them in a relationship)  
But ultimately, our goal is that they not come back to us, but instead, they continue past us, to Jesus.**

**That we desire him first. Seek Him first. And then seek advice, counsel, and cast any remaining cares on others who do seek Him first.**

**We can never be an answer to their prayers, their needs, or our own, unless God accomplishes it first.**

**The need is not our duty. The need is his duty. Our duty is just to be available for him to use.**

**But he may not use you where you feel the most burdened for, the most needed.**

**A lot of times when we feel like we're the most needed answer, it's in fact, we're the least needed answer. They think they need you, you may think they need you, but the more you think that, the more you miss that what they really need - Jesus - and we burn out and they get burned.**

Granted, there are people that do need us - we do have responsibility to and for. But even then, if we're not sitting first and seeking first His kingdom, we'll only be building our own - As well intentioned as that is - it will always fail.

We fail, not when we try to let God do it, but when we try to do it when it's not our place to or we haven't seen where God is moving first in it.

We can only go where God is. When we go or do where he isn't or he isn't doing, we cannot conjure him up. We must draw near to him. Then he will draw near to us.

**We can only be an empty vessel. The Holy Spirit loves to fill an empty soul. Grace.  
[Jhn 3:30 KJV] 30 He must increase, but I [must] decrease.**

The greatest of all the prophets, but the least of all the saints. John gave his whole life to preparing people to meet Jesus but it could never accomplish nearly as much as the message of the cross.

**The work of Jesus on the cross grants us grace**

**How much grace then?**

**Is there a limit? Is it limitless?**

**Yes and Yes.**

There is a limit to the effect of grace on a life not motivated to repent by it.

There is not a limit to the fruit, the fellowship, the freedom within the bounds of grace that grace itself provides

**“Greasy grace?”**

**Where sin abounds grace abounds much more...shall we continue?**

[Rom 6:1-7 KJV] 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also [in the likeness] of [his] resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

**Grace makes it easy to lay our lives down.**

**It gives us desire to do so.**

**It greases the stuck wheels of our hearts and wills to bend and bow to the point of death**

**It's the road in to salvation**

**It's the road ahead in it**

A life lived in grace to continue in it.

We all fall short, but that doesn't mean we keep allowing ourselves to trip up in it.

BUt when we do...we have an advocate

We've got a lawyer

We've got a God who's for us. Not against us.

**That's special in all of creation.**

Angels not redeemable perhaps because they're not the same as us or God. They may be able to look like us at times. But they are not us

In a sense, They exist outside of grace. Grace is the container for God's love.

**They saw all of God's grace being exhibited in every way and still rebelled.**

**Like those who openly put the cross to shame, there is nothing left after grace.**

When you know grace and still don't let it keep you...you've got no where else to go

**We either let God marry us or we don't**

Man is able to receive grace, to marry God, because we are made in the image of God.

God made us to be his reflection, the one he would be able to marry.

To be spiritually bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. His help meet. Taken from His side and presented glorious on our wedding day.

Grace is that we've been given that as our inheritance...deeper...

than that is a fruit of our inheritance which is Jesus - a relationship with the living God.

Dirt breathed on now living eternally in communion with the ever existing one not bound by our limitations. Living in a realm, a dimension, that far exceeds the possibilities of our physics. The highest heaven. Unapproachable light. Yet...

**[Phi 2:1-11 KJV] 1 If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind. 3 [Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth; 11 And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Like we've read in Genesis...

**Noah found grace in the eyes of God...**

**When Noah looked into God's eyes...what did he see? What did he find shining through? His Grace.**

Receive grace in Jesus.

Let others receive it in Him too

"Freely you have received, freely give"

**This world needs grace. This is the revival we've been praying for. The goodness of God. One last shot to deliver the message. This is the good news. We're still in the age of grace. The time for this season of grace is about to end.**

**There is still grace given in judgment. But boy, to receive grace when that's the bowl being poured out and not to find just a smidgen of it when wrath is poured out.**

I don't know that either grace is bigger or better. ...