



SERIES: DEEPER LIFE

Amazing, Abundant Grace

Life Reference: Ephesians 2:1-10

Focus Verse:

"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found.
Was blind, but now I see.

John Newton (1725-1807)

Grace is so amazing because it is so undeserved. It has often been defined as God's unmerited or unearned favor. It is a gift. There is no way to earn it, and it comes to us at great cost to the One who gives it.

We often use the words *grace* and *mercy* interchangeably. There are subtle differences, but the two are often mentioned together. Webster's Dictionary defines them as follows:

Mercy: compassion or forbearance shown to an offender or subject; clemency or kindness extended to someone instead of strictness or severity.

Grace: beneficence or generosity shown by God to man; especially divine favor unmerited by man: the mercy of God as distinguished from his justice.

Rolfe Barnard expressed it this way: "Mercy is God's favour that holds back from us what we deserve. Grace is God's favour that gives us what we do not deserve."



Life Reflection:

Have you ever made the statement that someone “got what he deserves”? What did you mean by that?

Can you think of a time when you did not receive what you deserved because someone offered you mercy and grace for that action?

God’s Grace Is for Everyone

God bestows His grace—His benevolence and kindness—to all mankind. All of us enjoy these blessings each day, even those who do not acknowledge Him. However, there is so much more to understand about His grace than just the good things He places in our lives.

- “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:44-45, NKJV).

We sometimes think of grace as a New Testament doctrine, but God’s grace was evident throughout the Old Testament as well.

The Book of Jonah relates the story of a very reluctant prophet. Jonah refused to obey God’s instructions to go to Nineveh and cry out against that city’s great wickedness. Instead he fled in another direction—only to learn that we can never go far enough to escape God’s presence.

- “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your Presence?” (Psalm 139:7).



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Eventually, Jonah found himself at the bottom of the sea in the belly of a great fish, where he remained for three days. There Jonah came to a place of repentance and experienced God's mercy and grace. The reluctant prophet became a willing one, and great things happened when he obeyed. Jonah witnessed the entire city of Nineveh, from the king to the humblest peasant, turn from evil and violence. Everyone fasted and repented, and God graciously spared them.

End of story and everyone was happy ever after! Not exactly. The reluctant prophet turned willing prophet now became the angry prophet. Jonah knew that God was compassionate toward the repentant. It may well be this is why he fled in the first place, not wanting to give the Assyrians the opportunity to repent.

- "For I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil" (Jonah 4:2).

It seems likely that he wanted his prophecy against them to come true; he wanted this enemy of Israel to experience God's judgment. Jonah was a recipient of grace but wished to limit God in offering that same grace to others that he felt unworthy to receive it.

Fortunately for us, God is indeed "of great kindness." Like the people of Nineveh, we can never be so sinful that God will withhold His grace from us if we are willing to turn to Him and repent.

- "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy ... He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities ... For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:8, 10, 14, NKJV).

Life Reflection:

Does God allow us to get away with sin?

What does Romans 2:4 say that grace is meant to bring in our lives?





Grace Was Exemplified at Calvary

Calvary showed us saving grace. All of us are sinners in need of God's mercy and forgiveness, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Roman 3:23). If justice is to be satisfied, a penalty must be paid for sin. Jesus Christ stepped into our place and offered Himself as that sacrifice. He paid the price in full and canceled our debt. This was God's grace in action. It was nothing we could do for ourselves.

- "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21, NKJV).
- "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9, NKJV)

Isaiah 64:6 describes our righteousness as "filthy rags." Grace is never a mixture of God's mercifulness and human effort. It is all the work of God.

- "So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:16, NKJV).
- "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; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7, NKJV).

Romans 6:1 poses the question: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Verse two emphatically answers, "God forbid." Grace does not give us the liberty to continue in wrongdoing. The chapter goes on to explain that we now "walk in newness of life" (verse 5) and that "he that is dead is freed from sin" (verse 7).

- "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace"



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(Romans 6:14).

Life Response:

Grace is an attribute of God's character. It always has been and always will be. He does not change. It is abundant and inexhaustible, always available for those willing to turn to God. There is sufficient for each of us, regardless of how sinful our lives.

- And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (I Timothy 1:14).

For whatever reason, not everyone responds to God's grace. Some may not understand their need for grace. They feel that they are a good, moral person and nothing else is necessary. Others may believe they are too sinful and therefore God would not show His favor to them. They do not realize that salvation is for everyone. No one is excluded.

- "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).

Life Reflection:

In giving her testimony of how she finally found God, a lady related that no one had invited her or her husband to church because they were viewed as so sinful that it would be useless to witness to them. God still drew them and they became new creations in Christ.

Have you ever passed someone by without talking to them about the Lord, perhaps unconsciously judging them as too sinful to be saved?



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What is the relationship between salvation and grace?

God has issued an invitation to us. We are told we can confidently approach Him to receive this abundant grace.

- “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

The grace that we show to each other is but a small drop in the ocean when compared to the grace God gives to us.

Grace, abundant amazing grace!

My Prayer:

Thank you, Lord, for the grace that You offer me. It is only because of Your grace and mercy that I can be saved. There is nothing I can do to earn salvation. I cannot become righteous on my own. My efforts are worthless and in vain. But You provided a way—the ultimate sacrifice--that I might be saved. You traded Your life for mine that I might have eternal life. You are amazing, and I thank You for the favor and blessings You shower upon me each day.

More Deeper Life References:

I Chronicles 21:13, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalm 78:38, Romans 11:6, Titus 2:11

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