

GRACE

07 - Tools for Sharing the Good News

Graduation Sunday, 13 June 2021 | Church on the Park & Holy Fire School | Glen Gerhauser

Text: “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove in vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me” (1 Cor. 15:10, NASB).

“**χάριτι** δὲ θεοῦ **εἰμι ὃ εἰμι**, καὶ ἡ **χάρις** αὐτοῦ ἢ εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, ἀλλὰ περισσότερον αὐτῶν πάντων **ἐκοπίασα**, οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλὰ ἡ **χάρις** τοῦ θεοῦ [ἡ] σὺν ἐμοί. (1 Corinthians 15:10, NA27 w/GRAMCORD):

Theme: God’s way is the way of grace.

Intro: Paul had a deep awareness of God's grace. In his old life, he thought he was righteous; he even pursued Christians to their death. He was so convinced of his own righteousness that he concluded he was doing God's will by persecuting Christians. But then, Jesus himself appeared to him, knocking him into the dust. The light of Christ's glory exposed how wrong, sinful and dead he really was. But Jesus had mercy on him, gave him new life and helped him out of the miry bog he was stuck in. Paul had a revelation of God's grace, and it stuck with him till the day he graduated into glory. Therefore he declares to the Corinthians: "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10). So my message to you this morning is GRACE.

1) You are here by grace (Eph. 2:4-10).

- If you're graduating—or if you've achieved any awards—it's not because of your work, but his work in your life.
 - You are graduating by grace.
- Today, we are celebrating God’s grace in your life.
 - Our boast is not in ourselves but in his grace.
- So what is grace?
 - Grace is the gift of God’s undeserved help that empowers you to live for him.
 - It is by grace you are saved (Eph. 2:7-9).
 - It is by grace you are forgiven.
 - It is by grace that you are born again.
 - It is by grace that you are given the gift of God’s own righteousness.
 - And it is by grace that God has given you new desires—his desires to love his word and live it out.
- However, the longer you are born again, the easier it is to forget God’s grace.
 - We think that we have done these great things.
 - When really, it has been the grace of God with us.

2) God’s very nature is grace (Exo. 34:6).

- Yahweh’s very nature is grace, and he revealed this to Moses.
- Listen to Exodus 34:6: “Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘Yahweh, Yahweh God, compassionate and gracious [*rachum v’channun*]...”

יְהוָה יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן

- Both these Hebrew words—compassionate and gracious—are guttural and gritty. They come from deep within God’s nature and heart.
- Yahweh feels deeply for you. His heart burns for you, and he experiences your pain.
- And yet, he doesn’t just feel for you: he helps you.
 - He picks you up and strengthens you.
 - He breathes life in you and teaches you how to walk.

- God spoke of his compassion and grace to Moses after Israel encountered God, received the ten commandments and then flagrantly broke every one of them by erecting a golden calf and partying around it (Exo. 32:19-35).

3) Experience God's grace and express that grace to others (Luke 15).

- Life is one big lesson on experiencing God's grace and expressing that grace to others.
 - In other words, you are called to know God's grace and show God's grace.
- Here's the thing: We all want to experience grace—God's forgiveness and help—but it often offends us when we see others experience grace.
 - "Why should they experience grace? I'm better than them. I worked harder than them. I cared more and served more. They don't deserve God's grace."
 - When you start thinking like this, you lose God's heart, the Father's heart.
 - You then become like the Older Brother in the Prodigal Son story, who was angry because his Father showed grace to his younger brother.
 - Or even worse, you become like the older brother, Cain, who hated Abel, rather than humble himself and learn from Abel.
 - When you lose grace, you become like Esau, who fought against Jacob, and you become like Saul that fought against David.
 - The Pharisees lost the Father's heart, and so they sought to crucify Christ.
 - Religion is law and rules without grace.
 - However, the Kingdom is a rule and reign of grace.

4) The law is good, but grace is better (James 2:13).

- Everybody today is crying out for social justice, but there is a better way—that way is grace.
- Parables of Grace
 - The Parable of the Good Muslim (my own, cf. Luke 10:25-37)
 - The Parable of the Labourers (Matthew 20:1-16)
- People will hurt you—show grace.
- Others will receive what they haven't fully deserved—express grace.
- Now it's the time that we are celebrating you—the students and grads.
 - But soon, it will not be about you; it will be all about the Prodigal Sons and Daughters returning from the pigpen after indulging their sinful desires.
 - The Father will be pouring grace on this new generation, and if you want to be a part of God's moving, you need to embrace his grace toward them.
- God gives you grace so that you can show grace.
 - And discipling someone is all about showing grace.
- James said, "For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13).

5) The only way to grow and be fruitful is through grace (John 15:16).

- You have been grafted into the vine of Christ by grace.
 - You will grow and be fruitful by that same grace.
- Let grace be your daily bread and the wine you continually drink.
- The cross is all about grace.
- Let's remember what Paul said: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove in vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (1 Cor. 15:10, NASB).
- This graduation is not an end but a beginning.
 - It's the beginning of living motivated by grace.
 - It's the beginning of living to serve by grace.
 - It's the beginning of a life laid down—like Jesus—because God's grace is with you and in you.

Conclusion: As we honour all those who are receiving awards and graduating, let's remember we are all here by God's grace, and we are receiving this honour by God's grace. And since you have received grace, be generous in sowing grace into others.