

Living By Grace – Sufficient for our need

Everyone needs grace and mercy from God. In Ephesians 2, we are shown our need for God's rich mercy. We were all dead in trespasses and sins, but God took action. This is the rich mercy of God. Ephesians 2:4 tells us, "But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us." When God saw that you were helplessly lost and bound by sin and trespasses, He intervened and did what was necessary to bring us up and make us sit together with Him in heavenly places. God delights to pour out His kindness, mercy, and His grace on those who are His enemies, on the fearful, and on the helpless. He wants to give sufficient grace to the spiritually bankrupt and the despised. God wants to restore bankrupt lives and provide all that we need. He invites us to eat at His table forever as His sons and daughters. He searches high and low for us and has a deep burning desire to bring us home to Himself! You need to know that the Lord loves you with an everlasting love. He wants to calm all our fears. God is saying to you, "Don't be afraid."

The Bible tells us "do not fear" or "be not afraid" 365 times.

The reason is clear. God wants to show His grace rather than His wrath. God prefers mercy and grace over wrath and judgment. Some people have trouble with this because they are overwhelmed with their own wickedness and transgressions.

Sin has twisted and broken our relationship with God.

We are like Adam and Eve after they disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit. They immediately knew that there was a break in their fellowship with a holy God and they wanted to hide in fear. Satan and sin has made us afraid to come near to God and receive what He wants to give us. In His goodness, mercy and grace, God made a covering for their nakedness and made provision for a Redeemer for man's sin, (Revelation 13:8). The Lord our God is a holy God and He wants to show us His grace, mercy and love. God keeps reassuring us that He really wants to pour His blessing, mercy and love into our lives.

We need what God wants to give us, but we fear it.

We all need God's kindness for without it we are fearful, bankrupt, and helpless. Every one of us are equally destitute, defiled, unclean and dead in trespasses. We all need His transforming power. Only God can take us from our depravity and sin and transform us into His child.

In 1 Timothy 1:15 The Apostle Paul confessed: *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst."*

No one needs God's grace more than we do.

This grace of God has purchased peace and heaven for all eternity. Praise God, the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches you and me regardless of the depth of our transgressions and sins. I don't know if we have realized the depth of our need for God's grace. Without His grace we are totally hopeless, bankrupt and empty. The true wonder of God's grace can

only be seen against the dark backdrop of our sinfulness.

Ephesians 2 shows the record of our darkness.

Our ruin was complete. Our sin was black. Our situation was hopeless. Our mind and conscience was darkened by our evil nature.

Ephesians 2:13 NKJV And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

- **We were dead.** Before we came to know God, the judgment of **death** reigned in our lives because we had sinned.
- **We were dominated.** We were under Satan's **dominion**, "the prince of the power of the air."
- **We were disobedient.** Our lives were marked by **disobedience** to God's will.
- **We were depraved.** Our corrupt and **depraved** heart and mind was driven by passions and desires.
- **We were doomed.** We were **doomed** for destruction by the righteousness of God against sin.
- **We were hopeless and helpless.** We could do nothing to escape the judgment that was upon us.

"But God..." swept in!

The stars began to shine in our darkness! The light of God's salvation appeared in our dark despair.

Ephesians 2:4-10 NASB95 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

The words: "But God..." tells the story of God's grace.

God broke into the darkness of our destiny and delivered us from certain destruction!

There is sufficient grace for our need.

We were dead – but God raised us with Christ Jesus. **We were dominated – but God** seated us with Christ and gave us authority to resist Satan and sin. **We were disobedient –**

but God forgave us through Jesus' death for us. **We were depraved** – **but God** gave us new hearts and minds to accomplish good things in Jesus' name. **We were doomed** – **but God** showed His kindness through Christ Jesus. We have been delivered! The hordes of hell **were** about to celebrate our total defeat and destruction.

“But God” sent Christ His Son into the world to redeem us.

We have been snatched from the jaws of defeat! This is the message of God's grace.

Thanks be to God who gives us the victory by Christ Jesus.

When everything seems lost, God comes sweeping to our rescue. When the enemy comes in, the Lord comes to our aid like a rushing river of grace and power. He deals decisively with our sin problem. He deals with our present and future changes in an instant.

What does God do with our sin?

When God breaks in and saves us, it is not a temporary victory.

The powers of sin are broken.

He has not just won the battle, He has won the war! We are no longer God's enemy, we are His friend. We have been brought under the covering of the blood of His Son. We no longer need to fear Him, we have His peace. We are no longer hopeless, we have His promise of eternal life. We are no longer bankrupt, we have the riches of Christ. We are no longer despised, we have been made beloved children of God.

Here are four word pictures where God's Word paints decisive deliverance for us.

You need to get these images in your mind and heart. They will change the way you think and feel.

First, “But God” has taken our sin.

Psalm 103:12 “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

What does this word picture mean?

This tells us that God's forgiveness is infinite! God's forgiveness is total and complete! He takes our sin so far away from us that it is no longer attached to us or associated with us. It is completely removed! In Christ Jesus, our deliverance from sin is complete.

Second, “But God” has hidden our sin behind His back.

Isaiah 38:17 NIV “In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.”

How big is God?

He has taken our sins and placed them behind his back. They are completely hidden from view. By His grace and mercy, God has chosen to not let our sin stand between Him and us. Through Christ Jesus, we have received His forgiveness. He has chosen to not hold them against us or to see us through them. We are covered and hidden in Christ.

God has chosen to see us through the righteousness of Jesus.

We have been clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from our sins. Our old sinful and dirty clothes are behind His back. He sees us clean and holy in Christ.

Third, “But God” has blotted out our record.

Isaiah 43:25 NIV “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

What kind of pardon have we received in Jesus Christ?

We are free from any penalty or punishment. There is no record because we have been pardoned by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, “But God” has hurled all our sin into the sea.

Micah 7:19 NIV You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

When you throw something in the sea, it's gone! When God throws our sin into the sea, there are no maps or directions given on where to find them. God's forgiveness is irreversible and our sins are gone! God's forgiveness is complete. The sea of God's mercy is big enough to hold everything He throws in it. It is deep enough to hide it forever.

The blood of Jesus Christ can wash away every stain!

Have you accepted Christ as your Savior? Have you accepted God's offer of forgiveness in Jesus? Then your sin and failure is as far from you as the east is from the west – He no longer attaches it to you – it's gone. It's hidden from view behind the back of God – He no longer sees it when He looks at you. It's been wiped from His books – there is no record to be held against you. It's been buried in the depths of the ocean of His forgiveness – it will never surface again!

Do you believe it? Do you feel it?

- You are **no longer God's enemy**; you are His friend.
- You **no longer need to fear Him**; you have His peace.
- You are **no longer hopeless**; you have His hope of eternal life.
- You are **no longer bankrupt**; you have the riches of Christ.
- You are **no longer despised and rejected**; you are a beloved child of God.