

## **Living By Grace – The generosity of God’s Grace**

We have heard much about God’s amazing grace. Grace is God’s kindness. When God passed before Moses on Sinai, He proclaimed, “The LORD, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,” (Exodus 34:6-7). God’s generous grace is the basis for our salvation, deliverance, and healing. Every blessing, goodness, and kindness comes to us as a result of God’s amazing and generous grace. In Matthew 20, the Lord told a parable about the generosity of God’s grace. He spoke of a landowner who hired workers for his vineyard and agreed to pay them what was right. In this story of God’s goodness, everyone received the same grace.

### ***The mathematics of grace does not make sense.***

God’s methods do not work in the world. Grace just seems wrong to us, unless we know God! Jesus was teaching us that we are blessed simply because God is so good. The Apostle Paul was an example of God’s generous grace.

**1 Timothy 1:14-16 NIV** The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life.

### ***Paul knew that he could not depend on his own goodness.***

He relied on the generosity of God’s grace that saves. He was shown the mercy of Christ that was displayed with unlimited patience.

### ***Jesus constantly demonstrated the generosity of God’s grace.***

Many of the Lord’s parables, sermons, and miracles were demonstrations of that grace. He came to this world with the express purpose to demonstrate God’s grace to fallen men.

### ***Luke 15:3-7 records the parable of the one lost sheep.***

Jesus spoke of a shepherd who left the **99** sheep to search for **one** lost sheep. It does not make sense! The 99 sheep were left exposed to thieves or wolves while the shepherd searched for the one. What if he returned with the one to find 99 now lost? Grace searches for the lost ONE! God wants you to know that you are important to Him.

*This is part of God's generous and amazing grace.*

God is generous with His grace because we need it. It is all of grace and not because we merit it. God is generous because that is the kind of God He is!

**In Genesis 2:9 NIV84**, the Lord God made all kinds of trees to grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.”

That is God's generosity on display! All kinds of things that are good for food are growing out of the ground! The abundance of God's provision is amazing.

**Jeremiah 32:40-41 NIV** I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.

This is a wonderful expression of God's grace.

*What could the people have done to deserve this blessing?*

Maybe they were repentant and especially good. Maybe they finally got it, and started obeying all of God's commands.

*Just ten verses earlier, God described the spiritual condition of His people with these words.*

**Jeremiah 32:30 NIV84** The people of Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth; indeed, the people of Israel have done nothing but provoke me with what their hands have made, declares the Lord.

*Why would God give His blessing on people who have done nothing but evil?  
God's grace is extravagant and generous.*

His generosity and grace is abundant and free. Grace is God's “unmerited favor” toward us. Every one of us have sinned and have fallen short of God's glory.

*The Apostle Peter was a perfect illustration of God's generous grace.*

His faith was constantly tossed like a reed blown by the wind. One time he confessed that Christ was the Son of God and then he plunged to the depths of denying that he knew the Man.

*Peter was given the opportunity to do something that no one else had done.*

Jesus had commanded his disciples to get into a boat and go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Later that night, the Lord came walking on the water toward them. When Peter and the other disciples saw Him, Peter asked, “*Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water.*”

*Jesus said: "COME."*

In faith, Peter stepped out of the boat, walked a few feet on the water, then he became terrified and began to sink. In fear he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

**Matthew 14:31 NKJV** And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

*In Matthew 16, Jesus predicted His impending death on the cross.*

**In Matthew 16:22** "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you!'"

**Jesus stopped Peter with these words, Matthew 16:23** "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God..."

*Then, on the night that Jesus was betrayed, Peter rushed to defend Jesus with his sword, only to be rebuked again:*

**John 18:11** "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

Peter had boldly told the Lord that he would never forsake him, but Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself.

**In Matthew 26:34 Jesus told him,** "I tell you the truth ... this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny and disown me three times."

Peter seemed to be a total failure and disappointment. He could not say or do anything right. His faith is weak. He had become a "stumbling block" to Jesus. He was unfaithful at the Lord's moment of greatest need.

*After Christ's resurrection, the generosity of God's grace turned Peter into another man.*

In the Book of Acts, Peter became a strong leader in the church. God chose the man who seemed to do nothing right to be His spokesman on the Day of Pentecost, and thousands were added to the church, (Acts 2:14). Within a short time, Peter was sent to open the message of the Gospel to the Gentile world at Cornelius' home, (Acts 10). While he thought about the vision, all of the roots of his beliefs were challenged. How could he being a Jew go to the Gentiles who were unclean? Once again the Lord gave grace and Peter went to Cornelius'

home and the world was changed. (Acts 10:34)

*At the Council of Jerusalem, Peter, who had been a “stumbling block” to Jesus, resolved a problem that was about to rip the church apart. (Acts 15:7)*

It appeared that his faith was strong and he was finally cured of his weakness and impulsiveness. Then at Antioch, he compromised his faith in the grace of God and separated himself from the Gentile Christians.

***In Galatians 2:11 the Apostle Paul said,*** “When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.”

He fell flat on his face again! Through all of his failures and restorations, Peter learned an important truth about God.

*He wrote about it in his first book.*

**1 Peter 5:10-11** “The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To Him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

Peter learned that God is the God of “all grace.” God is in the business of restoring failures and making weak people strong. He makes our step firm and sure. He lifts up those who feel like giving up.

*Can you relate to Peter?*

We need a God of “all grace!” God is generous in His kindness to us. He is extravagant in His grace to us. He has given us everything we need.

*In Romans 7, Paul described his helplessness and sinfulness.*

He felt powerless against his old sinful nature. He was on the brink of despair. The Law of God had clearly defined his many sins.

**Romans 7:18 NLT** I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can’t make myself do right. I want to, but I can’t.

Have you felt that way? We want to do right and please God in all of our ways. We want to live in faith and power and victory. Paul said no matter which way I turn, I cannot make myself do right.

**Romans 7:24-25 NLT** Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from

this life that is dominated by sin? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

*Paul came to know the power of the generous grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.*

With that knowledge, he wrote this question.

**Romans 8:32** "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?"

*God cares enough for us to send His only Son to die for us on the cross.*

*If God will do that, why would He withhold from us what we need to live in victory?*

If we have Jesus, we have everything He can possibly give us. If we are connected to Jesus, we are connected to everything that will give us the victory, power and help.

*When we receive God's generous grace, we need to live in that grace.*

We need to become totally dependent on Christ and throw ourselves over on His mercy and grace. Recognize that without His grace we will never succeed. It is God's generous grace, mercy and goodness that is carrying us through.

*Peter and Paul came to know this.*

They had the testimony that they could not make it on their own. They were not good enough. They needed the generosity of God's grace to be saved, delivered, and set free. They knew that *in Christ* they were more than a conqueror. There is more than enough in Christ Jesus to lead them into victory.

*It is all of grace, God's generous grace.*