

The Power of Grace

Pastor Michael

TEXT:

1 Cor 15:10 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

The first thing to examine is the love of God. Sometimes we just can't comprehend how much God loves us. John said, God so loved us.

Grace is the love of God, but what is grace? Grace is un-merited favor. Every day you wake up, you are demonstrating the grace of God. God gives us life each day even though we might not really deserve it. Regardless of your intellect, your financial status, or your social status, it is the about the *grace of God*. Just the mere fact that you still have your intellect and have not gone crazy, is an example of the *grace of God*.

You have these gifts that allow you to make a living BUT at any moment, you could be in an accident and wound up *paralyzed* or unable to do what you do. The fact that you did not get into that accident is God's grace. You going to school and having the money to pay your tuition is another example of God's grace. You were only able to afford it because of God's grace.

God wants to remind us of *the power of grace*. Grace can *transform our lives*. It can turn a drunk into a preacher, a drug dealer into a counselor, or a lazy person into an athlete! You have no idea where the people around you have been *transformed from*.

This text was part of a letter to the Corinthian church. Paul had to point out to them that there is a *resurrection from the dead*. Without that, there could be no grace. He also talks about this corruptible body putting on incorruption. When it is all said and done, it was the grace of God that gave us a *chance at life*.

1. Your past has to be put into perspective

You can't appreciate grace until you put your *past into perspective*. You have to:

1. Be honest concerning what you used to be – The Saul in Paul was the one the *persecuted Christians*. Everyone here has had a Saul season. Saul represents our *pre-Christ time* and Paul represents our *post-Christ time*.
2. Being honest about your past, puts grace in perspective.

3. Grace doesn't hold your past against you. – Charles H. Spurgeon says it best when he was quoted as saying, “If you are renewed by grace, and were to meet your old self, I am sure you would be very anxious to get out of his company.” – Here Charles explains that even you would not kick it with *the old you*.
4. Grace is about the sacrifice of Christ, not us – God gave us grace regardless to what we were and what we have done. **Psa 103:12** says 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. – Max Lucado says, “When grace moves in, guilt moves out”.
5. **Eph 2:8- 9** says 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.- After Paul gives a transparent look at what he used to be, he comes back in verse 10 and says 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.- We were created for good works.
6. **1 cor 15:9** says 9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.- Translated Paul is saying, “I am the least of the people that should be here, but by the grace of God. “ Paul is thanking God that he didn't hold his Saul past against him. Every time the devil tries to torment you, tell him, “ But grace!”.
7. You got to move out of being histrionic. **1 John 1:9** says 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1. Potential in your presence

In all of us, is some amazing potential.

1. Your identity is a result of God's divinity. Wherever you are, is a result of series of events that God orchestrated to make you who you are today. Because of Him, we are what we are.
 1. Job says God allowed him to go through this crazy moment in his life, but Satan was not allowed to *touch his life*. God protected you, because he protected your destiny. The good, the bad, and the ugly made you who you were. If you hadn't gone through what you have, then you wouldn't pray like your do, read the bible like you do, or have the faith that you have.
2. You can't take this chance for granted. – **1 cor 15:58** says 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.- Paul understood that this hardship given to him would *not be in vain*. This meant that this opportunity (the hardship) couldn't be mishandled, because what *was to come* was greater than what he came from. Paul could not take a chance on going back from *where he came from*.
 1. We can't be flighty. When Paul was all over the place in his spirit, he found that God's grace was *still there*. No matter what happens, you have to declare that you ain't going nowhere, because you are a *recipient of grace*.

- **Power to produce**

We got to make full proof of our life in Christ Paul said. Paul perfected the art on how to persecute Christians. Now Paul has been transformed from being Saul. Having said this, know that what you have in your old life, *transforms to your new life*. Too many of us got tired after our change to our new saved lives. We are renewed, but like Paul (Saul), God wants the qualities that we possessed in our old lives to *be used* in our new lives.

1. Walk in purpose beyond expectation. When you walk in purpose, you *observe grace*. We serve over and beyond what is required *because of grace*. When you recognize the grace that was allotted to you, to have that job or to possess something you didn't deserve, you might stay a little longer than you normally would have.
1. My friends are always telling me that I am always *doing too much*. And They try to caution me to pace my self in the things that I does in the Body of Christ. And my response to them is i was like this when i wasn't saved. The Old Joe, burnt the candle at both ends when i wasn't saved, so naturally, God wants to use this in the Body of Christ. No need to burn the candle at both ends and then get tired after you get saved.
 2. Give God glory for it all. Matthew Henry has been quoted as saying, "Extraordinary afflictions are not always the punishment of extraordinary sins, but sometimes the trial of extraordinary graces."- God will let you go through sometimes *just for you to see his grace*.

2 Cor 4:17 says 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory

James 1:2 says 2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials – Sometimes, our trials are not for sins, it is a precursor for the next level of our lives.

2 Cor 12:9 says 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. – Give God glory in his infirmities, because God gave us the grace to deal with it.

3. There is grace on your life – When you go through, grace got your through. God is to going share his glory with you.

Closing Story:

There were 3 people that were to show up for a required meeting. Their names were *Time*, *Justice*, and *Grace*. When it was time for the meeting, Time and Justice showed up, but Grace was nowhere to be found. As a result, Justice said, "We are going to have to penalize Grace based on the law"!

A while later, Grace came limping over the horizon. Grace's pants was wet and torn and Grace's hands were burnt also. After Time and Justice had finished looking at one another astonished, they noticed that one of Grace's eyes were missing too.

As Grace got a little closer, they noticed blood on his clothes. Justice said to Grace, "I am going to read the charges that will be brought against you for being late for this mandatory meeting". Time cosigned by saying, "That's right!" Afterwards Justice asked Grace if he had anything to say on his behalf before punishment was administered to him and Grace slowing began to respond. Grace told them both, "I apologize for being late, but you see, some things happened on my way here." Grace continues to say, "On my way here, I saw a man named Moses and he stretched his rod over the Red Sea, trying to escape Pharaoh's Army, so I stepped in the Red Sea and parted it for them. This is how my clothes got wet.

Then he said, "Also I saw Daniel in the Lion's den, so I got down in the den with him to tame the lions and keep him safe. This is how I got my clothes torn. And oh yeah, there were 3 Hebrew boys name Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and they were thrown in the furnace, because they refused to bow down to the king's idol god, so I stepped in the fiery furnace to calm down the fire. In fact, I was the 4th character in the furnace, waving at the king.

There was a man called blind Bartimaeus whose eyes were missing, so I gave him one of mines so that he could see. This is how lost my eyes. Finally, I had to wait until the 6th hour for this man hanging on the cross. He happened to be shedding his blood for mankind. — We don't always get it, but no matter what we go through, God's grace is with us. We don't always recognize it, but it is there. Thank God for his Amazing Grace!