The Gift of Grace

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References: Ephesians 2, Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; John 1:14; John 1:16-17; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Hebrews 12:28; Ephesians 4:7; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Hebrews 4:16; Titus 2:11-15; 1 Peter 4:8-10; 2 Peter 3:18

By Grace You Are Saved

Let's go to Ephesians chapter 3—no, I'm sorry, Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8 and 9.

Show of hands, who has these two verses memorized?

There we are. There's a few. Maybe I'll call on you later to say it out loud. Maybe not.

Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8 and 9. But if you haven't committed them to memory, I would suggest you do, because this is profound language here. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8:

> [Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV]
> [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.

We do trust our Father to bless the reading of His Word to us this morning.

And just echoing what the brother said up here—don't see him, but with his little child, right? His little son. Not of works, nothing. "Nothing to the Lord I bring, simply to the cross I cling." Right? For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

So my topic this morning is grace. And please forgive me if I scatter thoughts around a little bit; hopefully it all filters together for you as I finish. But again, this was part of the discipleship training program at Morningstar Bible Camp, and I took the topic of grace: the grace that has been shown to us by the Lord Jesus Christ, grace shown to us by God the Father, how we are to express grace in our lives and to each other as well. So hopefully that all comes together as a thought at the end.

Grace Versus Mercy

So grace is very much an essential part of God's character. It is very closely related to His mercy and His love. And grace can be variously defined as God's favor towards the unworthy, God's kindness to the undeserving. Remember that: favor towards the unworthy and kindness to the undeserving. Again, you should be reflecting that. In His grace, God is willing to forgive us and bless us abundantly, even though we don't deserve to be treated so well or dealt with so generously.

Now, grace and mercy—those two words. I have noticed that people are confused sometimes with those two words. So here's simple, simple definitions, phrases that you can—I would take notes even if I were you:

Grace is getting what we **don't** deserve. Okay? Grace is getting what we don't deserve.

But mercy is **not** getting what we **do** deserve. Right? "Have mercy on me, Lord." Or you plead for mercy to a judge, right? Mercy: not getting what you do deserve. Whereas grace is getting what you don't deserve. Does that make sense? Yeah. Okay.

So, again, just to add on to what the brother was talking about this morning, I so appreciated his bringing the thoughts of salvation and the love of God towards us, and using his son as a —thank you—an example, just so we understand our grace, the grace shown to us.

Again, getting what we don't deserve. We all, I would think, all know that we have a sinful nature, right? For all the good I want to do, I don't do; for all the bad I don't want to do, that I do, right? That was Paul's dilemma; that's my dilemma. I'm sure it's all of our dilemma. We have in us a sinful nature that needs to be taken care of, and it will stay with us till the day we die. Sin has been taken care of on the cross of Christ. Christ paid the penalty of our sin nature for all mankind for all time.

Thank you.

The Divider of Unbelief

The penalty has been paid. We no longer have that penalty upon us because Christ paid it for us. We still have a sin nature, but the penalty has been paid for.

Here is where it gets our responsibility. When we die, we either go to heaven or we go to hell, and the divider is **unbelief**. Christ has paid the penalty for our sins. It's paid for. The money is in the bank, the check is written, it's endorsed—all you have to do is cash it. But we don't believe. We don't believe in Christ. We don't believe in God saving us through Christ.

We think we need to do good works. We think we need to come to Him, you know, constantly repenting. No. John chapter 3 says, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, right?

> [John 3:16 NKJV]
> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

So if you're in this room this morning and you're still an unbeliever, that's your problem. The problem we have is, as sinners, we don't want to surrender. We don't want to give up our right to ourselves—my pride, myself, my self-determination, "I am my own God," however you want to look at it. No, we need to humbly surrender to the Savior who died in my place, your place. Boom—salvation! And it's given to us by grace: for by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God.

Grace, like I said, is Him extending His favor to us. Grace is the essence of the gospel. Grace gives us victory over sin.

2 Thessalonians 2, verse 16, please. 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 16. It says:

> [2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NKJV]
> 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Grace gives us eternal encouragement and good hope. The end of verse 16 gives us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, so comfort your hearts, establish you in every good word and work.

Earlier, if you were here, I mentioned how Jesus said two words to His disciples when He invited them into His circle. The two words were: "Follow Me." And "Follow Me," He means—again, as I said, He doesn't mean just walk behind Me and I'll show you where we're going. When He says follow Me, He means watch Me. Watch what I do, watch how I live, and learn. Learn by My example. And He shows grace.

So that should mean then that we should show grace. Grace: getting what we don't deserve.

Full of Grace and Truth

John chapter 1. John chapter 1, verse 14. Does the Lord Jesus Christ know about grace? John 1:14 says:

> [John 1:14 NKJV]
> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Verse 16:

> [John 1:16-17 NKJV]
> 16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

So then, the grace that is in Christ Jesus is a saving grace. By grace you are saved.

2 Corinthians chapter 12. 2 Corinthians 12 and verse 9. 2 Corinthians 12, verse 9. It says, and He said unto me—the Lord said unto Paul:

> [2 Corinthians 12:9 NKJV]
> 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.

So the grace that is in Christ Jesus is a sufficient grace. "My grace is sufficient for thee." Getting what we don't deserve. He keeps us.

Back to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 10. It says:

> [1 Corinthians 15:10 NKJV]
> 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.

This is Paul talking: "But by the grace of God I am what I am." The grace that is in Christ Jesus is an encouraging grace. It's sufficient, it's encouraging, and it's a serving grace.

Hebrews 12, verse 28. You're getting your Bible exercise today! Hebrews 12 and verse 28:

> [Hebrews 12:28 NKJV]
> Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

His grace is sufficient to serve Him. His grace is an encouraging grace. His grace is sufficient. And by grace are you saved.

The Costly, Invaluable Gift

Now back in Ephesians 2, verse 8 and 9—you don't have to turn there, but it says: for by grace are you saved through faith, and that is a gift from God, or a gift of God. So let's think about that word gift again. Grace: getting something you don't deserve. A gift: someone gives you something. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 7 says:

> [Ephesians 4:7 NKJV]
> But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

A gift is different than a loan. When God gives us the gift of salvation, He's not lending it to us. It's not a borrow; it's not a loan. The fact that grace is a gift means that nothing is owed in return.

Second, there's no cost to the person who receives a gift. Remember, I think it was Dave Hunt gave an illustration how someone gives the neighbor a treasure, a painting worth millions of dollars. And the neighbor says, "Oh, thank you so much. Can I cut your grass in return?"

"No. I gave you a gift, an invaluable gift. You owe me nothing."

But that gift is not free to the giver. The giver pays a big price. And as we've been learning this morning already, the price that was paid on the cross of Calvary is beyond any measure. We don't really fully understand what Christ paid on that cross to redeem us unto God the Father.

So it's not free to the giver, but it's free to the receiver.

A gift has to be given. Ownership of the gift has been transferred, and it is now ours to keep. Someone gives you a gift, it's yours; you don't have to return it. So the gift of grace given to us is forever: eternal salvation. The giving of a gift—the giver gives away something he owns, willingly losing what belongs to him so that the recipient gains. For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, right, as a gift. Right.

2 Corinthians 8 and 9—you don't have to turn there. 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 says:

> [2 Corinthians 8:9 NKJV]
> For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is a gift.

And finally, the Bible teaches that grace is completely unmerited, undeserving. Right? Grace is getting what you don't deserve. The gift and the act of giving have nothing at all to do with whether I merit or qualify or have anything to give. It's a free gift to take and receive. Right?

As I said earlier, what now puts people in hell is their unbelief, their denial of the free gift of salvation that is offered by grace to each and every one.

Grace That Trains and Disciplines

And God does not stop once we're saved. God is gracious, as we were talking about earlier. He's gracious to us for the rest of our lives, working within us and upon us, lovingly as a Father of love. So grace provides us access to God.

If you are still in Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 4, verse 16 says:

> [Hebrews 4:16 NKJV]
> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!

Grace disciplines and trains us to live in a way that honors God. Titus chapter 2, just a couple of pages back from Hebrews. Titus chapter 2, verse 11. By grace we are saved. It is a

free gift. We approach the throne of grace in the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace disciplines and trains us to live in a way that honors God. Titus chapter 2, verse 11 says:

> [Titus 2:11-15 NKJV]
> 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. 15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

It's grace that motivates us. It's grace that gives us the gift of salvation. It's grace that teaches us to live godly lives. It's grace, grace, grace, continually working in the lives of God's people. It's an ongoing kindness of God working in us, without which we can do nothing.

Grace is greater than all our sin, more abundant than we can expect or deserve, and too wonderful for words—a gift that is free. So freely you have received, freely give. Ah, here's the next part: freely you have received, now freely give.

Stewards of the Manifold Grace of God

As the recipients of God's grace, Christians are to be gracious to each other. We are strengthened by grace; strengthen others by giving grace. We're motivated by grace; motivate each other by giving grace. We are encouraged by grace; encourage one another by giving grace. Dear saints, we are unconditionally loved by grace, so it makes sense that we should unconditionally love others by grace.

Grace is given to us to serve others and to exercise our spiritual gifts for the building up of the church. 1 Peter 4:8-10—you don't have to turn there, just listen:

> [1 Peter 4:8-10 NKJV]
> [8] And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." [9] Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. [10] As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound. Show grace one to another. We are unconditionally loved by grace; unconditionally love others by grace. Remember, John chapter 10, Jesus said to His disciples, "Follow Me." Don't just walk behind Me; watch Me. Do as I do. Build the body. Show the world who I am. Watch Me and do as I do.

Closing hymn—I'm sorry, closing verse: 2 Peter, just a little ways before the book of Revelation. 2 Peter 3. 2 Peter 3, the last verse, 18. Peter says to the church, and of course to us:

> [2 Peter 3:18 NKJV]
> but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Now I've, like many of you I'm sure, have read over that verse many times, but notice there's no "the" before grace. It says, "but grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." So grow in grace. You've received this free gift, an undeserved gift. Freely you've received, freely, freely give, and grow in it. Grow in that grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Grace that is greater than all our sin, more abundant than we can ever expect or deserve, and too wonderful for words—a gift that is free.

Closing Prayer

Let's pray.

So, Father, we are again thankful for the thoughts that You give us. And especially thankful, Father, for Your Word that puts these thoughts together for us. We thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You for so great a salvation. Thank You for Your grace. Thank You for Your mercy. Thank You for Your love.

We pray these things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thank you.

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