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**Amazing
Grace:
How Sweet
the Sound**

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Series: The Character of God

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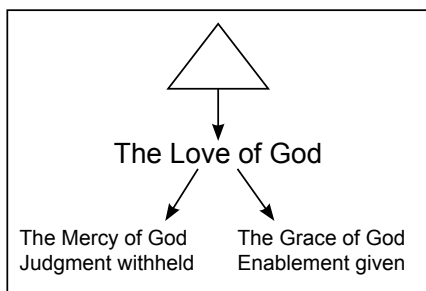
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Amazing Grace: How Sweet the Sound

It is a typical moment in a typical church. The choir blends its talents in melodious harmony singing “Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I’m found; was blind, but now I see.” The pastor moves to the pulpit and begins a dissertation that includes such words as “grace”, “mercy”, “justification”, “sanctification”, and “redemption”. There are occasional “amens” (though they have become muted as the years have progressed, and “amens” have become less fashionable).

After the service, you can hear the congregation buzzing about how great it was. And yet, were you to ask the average person, even some from the “amen corner”, just what the pastor meant by some of those words, they would possibly look at you as though you were from the CIA or the FBI, interrogating them needlessly over something that didn’t matter.

The truth is that many of us use words (“spiritual buzz words”, if you will), on a daily basis, but if asked to define them, we would suddenly remember another appointment and run for the nearest exit. One of those words is the subject of this chapter. It is that amazing word, “grace”. It’s something we all want, something we all claim, and something we all appreciate. What we do know about it, we like; but what we don’t know about it, we all too often ignore. Let’s begin an exploration of what may well be the most awesome aspect of all of God’s nature, His grace. Its facets are so all-encompassing, its attributes so encouraging, that Christians sometimes take it for granted. They lose the very element that makes grace, grace. If we were to diagram grace, it might look like this:



God is perfect love. That is His nature expressed. But that love

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takes two forms: a negative form, His mercy, and a positive form, His grace. His mercy is that aspect of His love that withholds from us the judgment we deserve. His grace is the opposite side of God's love. It grants to us enablement we do not deserve. It allows us to do and to be what we do not deserve to do or be. Once His mercy has overlooked our frailties and pardoned our sins, His grace moves into our lives and literally allows us to experience the life of God in our sinful bodies. Mercy is His love revealed. Grace is His love bestowed. Mercy is deliverance from. Grace is freedom in. Both are equally divine revelations of who He is. You cannot separate them, and yet you must.

What is the grace of God?

It is the delightful realization that inability is victory.

It is the divine energy that follows emptying.

It is the presence of God in the active tense.

It is the meaning of "free" taken to its limits.

It is doing what you cannot do.

It is God living in us, doing what only He can do.

It is spiritual power in a physical container.

It is supernatural ability in a natural environment.

It is uncommon power in common vessels.

It is Christ in you; Christ in me...our hope of glory.

Until you experience it, you cannot understand it. Without His grace to interpret it, you cannot recognize it. Yet once you have become the recipient of the grace of God, everything you do without it, robs you of it; and every time you presume upon it, you lose it. Because the moment grace appears deserved, it disappears. The moment grace is co-sponsored, it dies. And thus we learn that though we can never totally understand its marvels, we need not totally understand it to appreciate it.

There are many definitions of grace that have stood the test of time. To some, it is God's Riches At Christ's Expense. To others, it is the free, unmerited favor of God. It is certainly both of those. But perhaps those definitions fall short in one regard. They fail to communicate the active tense of the word. There is nothing passive about the grace of God. It flows out of the heart of God into the lives of His own with such force and power that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. It demonstrates itself with such intensity that Satan lives in utter fear of the word itself. No, it is more than

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unmerited favor. It is unmerited power! It is the energy of God enabling man by doing for man what man cannot do.

Four elements must be remembered for grace to be grace. Grace is:

- a- undeserved
- b- free
- c- eternal & supernatural
- d- sovereign

First of all, it is undeserved. If you deserve it, it's not grace. Grace means that God looked down and realized that you, in and of yourself, deserved nothing. So He gave you everything. To the degree that you think you deserve it even a little, you lose it. You steal God's glory when you claim God's grace by merit. God's grace by definition cannot be merited, so like oil and water, the two don't mix.

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant,...

(I Timothy 1:12 NKJV)

"I obtained mercy and grace enabled me". There's the balance. Look at Paul's credentials for the ministry: He was a blasphemer, a persecutor, an insolent murderer. So God had mercy on him, (He forgave him, shortened His anger, overlooked his past, and gave him a clean slate) and then He poured grace upon him; (He filled Him with divine enabling power). In other words, He saved him, changed him, and put him in the ministry. Never could Paul feel worthy of the calling. He was the "chiefest of sinners" in his own eyes. Never could Paul feel that he possessed power apart from God. Paul understood grace. It was undeserved.

Second, it is free. If you try to earn it or pay God back for it, you defile His Holiness. He gives grace because He loves. He loves because He is. You cannot earn a gift; once you do, it becomes wages, not a gift. Grace is free. Always free. Paul said:

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.

(II Corinthians 8:9 NKJV)

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Grace cost God everything. It costs us nothing. The minute it has strings attached, it becomes religion. As long as it is completely free, it is grace.

Third, grace is eternal and supernatural. It always works in the spirit realm for spiritual purposes with eternal consequences. Even when God provides grace in the physical realm, it is always for God's glory and the kingdom's good. Grace is a reflection of the eternal nature of God which is immutable. It will always be what it always has been...eternal in nature. Paul wrote:

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

And perseverance, character; and character, hope.

(Romans 5:1-4 NKJV)

Whatever grace God has given us we glory in, not because of what it does for us, but because of what it does in us for His glory. Even grace in tribulation is profitable, not because it reduces the testing, but because it produces eternal fruit in the form of character. Grace is always eternal, and by definition, it is always supernatural. If God is doing it, it is supernatural. What you can do for God is not grace; that's works. What God can do for you is grace. Never confuse the two.

And, finally, grace is sovereign. That is, God gives it to whomsoever He wills, whenever He wills, regardless of whether or not we feel they are deserving. If they were deserving, it wouldn't be grace. Paul wrote to Timothy of the grace of God in this way:

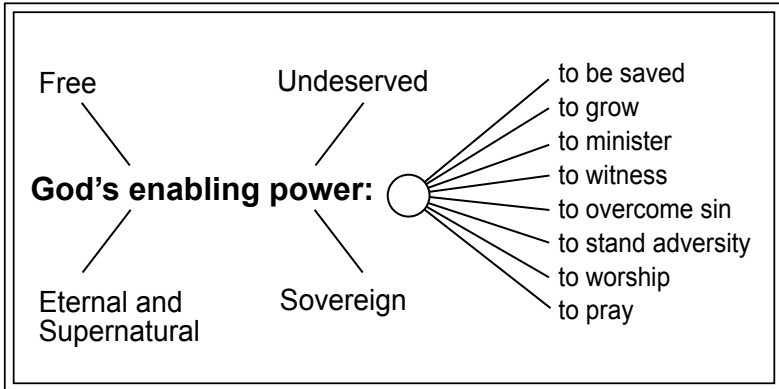
who (He) has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

(II Timothy 1:9 NKJV)

God will have mercy on whom He will, and He will give grace to whom He will, with no regard whatsoever to man's determinations or man's expectations. Grace is a sovereign, free, undeserved gift that always bears eternal fruit. If any of those four elements are missing, it's not grace. It may be from God, but it's not grace. Grace is free, unmerited, sovereign, and eternally supernatural. Those are your four test points.

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But all of that is doctrinal in nature. Let's get practical. Let's try to grasp, experientially, what grace is and what it does and how it affects the believer. First, an overview; then, a step by step look at the characteristics of grace, the expressions of grace, and the elements of grace.



We can never totally put the grace of God in a box or tie it to any kind of limits. To limit grace is to eliminate grace. By nature of its being, its only limits are God, and He has none. But we can, by using Scripture, begin to isolate some of the most common expressions of His grace, and thus recognize them when they happen to us. The diagram above is for that purpose. It shows us eight things the grace of God enables us to do when we allow Him to. By grace, and grace alone, we can be saved. By grace and grace alone, we can grow. By grace and grace alone, we minister, and through ministering, we produce eternal fruit. We can “minister” without grace, but there will be no rewards, no fruit, no glory given to God. What we do will not be eternal and will not be supernatural, so it will not be grace.

By grace and grace alone, we witness and bear eternal fruit. By grace and grace alone, we overcome sin and gain victory. It is only by grace that we can stand in adversity; it is only by grace that we truly worship, truly pray. Some of these things may actually be illustrations of obedience, but the ability to do them is not ours. So God instructs us to allow Him, in us, to provide the grace, and as we choose, He gives.

The grace of God. It is that aspect of God's power that becomes available when self dies. It is unmerited, free, eternal, supernatural and sovereign. It is wonderful. It flows through our lives like a

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refreshing stream and lifts us when we have no hope, empowers us when we have no strength, speaks through us when we have no words, draws us to worship when we have no peace. It is the energy of God implanted in the believer to supplant his weakness. It is God's everything given in an even trade for our nothingness. What a trade.

So whenever we can't, grace can. Whenever we think we can, grace won't. Whenever we feel deserving, grace quietly leaves the room. Whenever we are humbled and empty, grace enables and empowers; and suddenly, God is on stage where He belongs. It is the spotlight of eternity shining through us until the light lands only on The King. It is God revealed as God in man. And it's ours. Dearly, Beloved, it's ours!

THE CALVARY SIDE OF GRACE

There are really two sides to grace. The basic definition holds in both cases, but there are some basic differences in its application. The first is the Calvary side of grace. That is the grace that God offers to unbelievers allowing them to come to Him. It is free, eternal, supernatural, undeserved, and sovereign. But it is offered to men and women as a means to enter into the grace life that will forever thereafter be theirs for the taking.

The grace that follows salvation is available only to believers. God's mercy, we read, is over all His works; but God's grace is only extended to the believer. It is offered to lead us into God's Kingdom, and it is offered thereafter as a seal of God's presence in our lives which will never depart. The non-Christian has no grace, except the grace that is available for him to receive Christ. So when you pray for grace for your unbelieving friends, you are asking God to save them. Other grace is not theirs until God's Spirit is theirs. Then, and only then, can they be the recipients of the grace of God.

For the remainder of this first study, we will look exclusively at the grace of God given to us at Calvary. If, in the process, we are not brought to our knees in utter awe that God would save the likes of us, we have not come to understand grace. If we feel in any way that God saved us because He needed us, or because we, by our works, could add anything to what He has done, we are so far removed from grace that we do not have the right even to use the word. Let us then progress to search out the scriptures for the grace of God that lifted us out of the miry clay and set our feet upon the Rock of Ages. Let us sing with understanding, "Amazing grace,

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how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.” How sweet the sound, indeed.

Scripture abounds with passages that teach of the grace of God in the transaction that took place between God and man at Calvary. None, however, more clearly makes the point than Ephesians, chapter two. We must note not only what it says about salvation, but we must, for the sake of later studies, carefully see the foundation it builds for the “grace” life that follows salvation. Let’s read it first:

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.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with
which He loved us,

even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together
with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the
heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches
of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not
of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

not of works, lest anyone should boast.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good
works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk
in them.

(Ephesians 2:1-10 NKJV)

OUR UNWORTHINESS

The passage begins: “And you He made alive.” Have you ever meditated for an entire day on those five words? Try it. It could be “*you* He made alive”. It could be “you *He* made alive”. It could be “you He *made* alive”. And it could read “you He made *alive*”. No matter where you place the emphasis, the emphasis is on grace. It literally says, if you read the verse following, “even you” He made alive. Even you, who were once dead in trespasses and sins; even you, He made alive. The “even you” speaks of undeserved, unearned love. Even you, He (the eternal One) made (a supernatural intervention)

alive (divine enabling to do what man could not do). Grace.

Go stand in front of a mirror tomorrow morning, and look yourself straight in the eye and say, "And even you, He made alive." Then fall to your knees and worship. Even you. Even me. That's grace. Can you think of one thing in your life that deserved the death of God? Can you think of one characteristic you possess apart from Christ that makes you worthy of the greatest gift ever given? When you are sitting around feeling sorry for yourself because you didn't get that raise or that job or that word of encouragement, and you are wondering what God has ever done for you, say those words... "Even me He made alive." That ought to change your perspective. You were dead. You had contracted the incurable disease of sin, and it took your life. There was no hope, no help, no power. You were buried. It was over. Then you He made alive. Why? Because you were such a pretty corpse? Because God needed another trophy to display? Of course not.

It was because of His love. He unfolded the two-edged sword of His love and with it slew the enemy of death. In mercy, He forgave your sins, satisfying His holiness by the death of His Son, and then He imparted to you divine grace, enabling you to be saved. It was not by works of righteousness which you had done. It was free. It was not because of your worthiness; it was unmerited. It was not because you did something; it was eternal and supernatural. All you did was let Him.

And by letting Him, you allowed Him not only to make you alive, who were once dead; He allowed you to enter into the grace life, becoming a new man, "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness". The grace life is the life that requires the same prerequisite that salvation requires. God does it; you let Him. Period. All that He is, you receive. As long as you remain totally in recognition of your inability apart from His divine enabling, that life flows through you like a mighty river, doing things beyond your comprehension, granting wisdom beyond your understanding, giving comfort beyond your expectations, giving you power over the enemy sufficient to stand in the greatest of onslaughts.

And it all began the day He made you come alive. Why did He do it?

and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches

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of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace...

(Ephesians 2:6-8a NKJV)

Verse 10 adds the finishing touch:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
(Ephesians 2:10 NKJV)

He made you alive so that He could make known through you the exceeding riches of His glory. You are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world to be a vessel of His grace. He saved you by grace, so you could demonstrate that grace by letting Him do and letting Him be what He ordained in eternity past. You were designed to be a living demonstration of the grace of God; therefore, you He made alive. You were a slave of Satan. 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.” That’s how your resume reads: “Before grace entered my life, I did the best I could. The best I could do was to live according to the desires of Satan, doing the works of his rebellious spirit.” By the world’s standards, maybe you weren’t a criminal or a menace to society. But according to God’s standards, you had sinned and come short of the glory of God, and nothing you produced was of any eternal value. Nothing.

But God is rich in mercy. Why? The passage says,

But God, who was rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
(Ephesians 2:4 NKJV)

There’s mercy defined. It is God’s wrath withheld because God’s love overcame. But even when His mercy had cleared us of our guilt, we still stood unable to come to God. The path was clear; the obstruction was removed; but we did not possess even the faith to believe. So God enabled us to be saved. That’s grace. He saw that we did not deserve it, couldn’t pay for it, and couldn’t do it naturally; so according to His sovereign pleasure, He supernaturally did what we could not, so we could become what we were not...godly. The same love that had bestowed mercy now released enabling grace, and by His power and His power alone, heaven touched earth, and the gift of God was given to us freely, undeservedly, supernaturally, eternally.

We were dead (vs 5), and “*He made us alive together with Christ by grace.*” The mighty rushing wind of God’s Spirit blew upon our dead spirits, and we came alive. How sweet the sound! How sweet

the sound, indeed. And now the same grace that washed us clean and swept us into the heavenlies has raised us up together and seated us in the heavenlies “in Christ Jesus”. When God sees us, God sees Jesus in us; and His grace then enables us to live in that eternal, supernatural plane of existence we did not even know before.

Why? So that in the “ages to come He might show through us the exceeding riches of His kindness”. The crux of it all (next verse) is that “by grace we have been saved through faith”. Undeserved? Absolutely. Free? Undoubtedly. Sovereign? Most certainly. Supernatural? Unmistakably.

What, then, shall we boast about? Nothing. We are simply, “His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God in His eternal sovereignty designed us for before ever the world was.”

So all of our boasting is vain blasphemy. Were it up to us, we would spend an eternity in the fires of hell, “where the fire is never quenched, and the worm never dies”. Were our “self-worth” a factor with God, we would remain dead in trespasses and sins forever. Were our “talents and abilities” needed by God, it would not be grace at all, but merit. Were our righteousness even a trillionth of the size of a grain of sand, we could boast a little, but all our righteousnesses added together is described as the equivalent of a pile of filthy rags in God’s sight.

No, the only thing we have to boast about is that in His eternal, sovereign, supernatural plan, a God, who is perfect love, looked down, saw that we were dead, and said, “You, I make alive.” And He did. His righteousness pronounced the sentence, “guilty”. His mercy stayed the execution, “pardoned”. Then His grace picked us up from that eternal death chamber, and delivered us into the very presence of the King who had pronounced the sentence, who then robed us in His royal robes, gave us the King’s name, the King’s authority, and the King’s inheritance, and arranged for us to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

If the knowledge of that does not drive you to your knees in utter humility and gratitude, you do not have God’s perspective. For had His mercy not found you, and His grace not restored you, you would be dead in trespasses and sins, and nothing you could do or say or think or arrange could so much as make a particle of difference.

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You were saved by grace, Beloved. Nothing more. Nothing else. Nothing added. Amazing grace; how sweet the sound.

THE SOURCE OF ALL GRACE

How, then, do we worship God for His grace? How do we approach His throne and acknowledge that it's all of grace? How do we maintain that attitude of dependence that says, "All of God and none of me; that's all the Gospel's meant to be"?

Again, we tend to make it too complicated. To worship God for His grace, we simply honor God, the Son. He is perfect grace personified. In John we read:

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. (John 1:14 NKJV)

When we behold the Savior, we behold grace Himself. He is full of grace. In fact, these verses add:

John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"

And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:15,16 NKJV)

No one has seen God at any time, The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (John 1:18 NKJV)

Jesus equals grace. "He who knew no sin became sin for us" (undeserved) "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (free). While God disclosed His nature to Moses to include "grace", the reality of the indwelling God, who would give everything for those who deserved nothing, to be a sin-bearer was not a reality until Jesus came. We read:

And the child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. (Luke 2:40 NKJV)

That means He was totally dependent. Never at any time did Jesus function apart from His Father. His Father's power enabled Him to do what He did (miracles), and be what He was (God), and not sin (holy). Jesus not only possessed grace, He became grace. For He, in the final analysis, became the free, undeserved, sovereign, eternal, supernatural gift that both received man back to God and

allowed man to receive God. The power was not only His to give, He became the power Himself, so that *“as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become...”*. The “power to become” is another definition for grace.

You cannot separate grace from Jesus. He is the gift, and He is the giver. He is the source, and He is the essence. He is the meaning, and He is the means. Jesus is the grace of God. So you worship God for His grace anytime you rightly worship Jesus. You receive grace when you receive Jesus, and you appropriate grace, when you allow Jesus to operate freely in your life without competition.

THE GRACE LIFE

As we conclude this chapter, it is necessary to draw a comparison between Calvary grace and the life of grace which follows. Calvary grace is free; you cannot pay for it. Calvary grace is undeserved; you cannot earn it. Calvary grace is supernatural; you cannot duplicate it. Calvary grace is sovereign; you cannot presume upon it. Those are the four edges of the diamond that reflect their rays of light to a lost and dying world. But because God is grace, we—who deserve nothing, have nothing to offer, have no ability to do anything, and no right to demand—now stand in the presence of the Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth. He views us through the blood of His dear Son and now sees us as worthy of all things, able to do all things, able to bear all things, able to ask all things. In fact, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Fallen, sinful man has been restored. Worthless, useless, sinners that we are, God has imputed His worth and His authority to us as though we were His Son. Now by virtue of His Son, we have become sons of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. The angels are in awe. They have not experienced God’s grace as we have. Satan is despondent. He has seen God take the enemy of man (sin) and by bearing it Himself, destroy it. Now Satan stands defeated, waiting only for the sentence of execution to be carried out, and all because of grace.

So all Satan can try to do now, once you have received the grace of God (Jesus), is to try to get you to live the life you have received without the grace you have received. To whatever degree you do that, you frustrate the grace of God, and you who have been granted all the riches of glory, begin to live the life of a pauper in the spirit realm; not because your bank account is not full of grace, but because you refuse to draw upon it, choosing rather to live in

the utter poverty of the flesh as though that were all there was.

If there are four facets of grace, then there are four enemies of grace, and as we walk through the Christian grace experience these next few lessons, watch for these four enemies to rear their ugly heads again and again. If Satan did not succeed in keeping you from Calvary grace, He will now try to rob you of living grace, for we'll be limited only to those things grace has produced. What you produce will burn. What grace produces multiplies, and is reserved in heaven for "you who are kept by the power of God". Satan has no recourse over what the grace life produces. Moth and rust cannot corrupt it. Thieves cannot break through and steal it.

THE ENEMIES OF GRACE ARE THESE:

Enemy 1- Pride- To the degree that you feel that anything you receive from God is deserved, it is not of grace. Therefore, your living the grace life will depend upon a continual realization that your only value is found in Christ. The world may be impressed with your looks, your intelligence or your talents. Good for them. God isn't. Whatever you have, He gave you. He is the painter, you are the canvas. Canvas is canvas. It has no bragging rights. As your "self" confidence rises, your grace quotient decreases proportionately. Jesus was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief". "There was no beauty that men should behold Him". Why? Because God was sending grace to earth. Grace need not be in an attractive package. Grace is its own package.

Enemy 2- Works- Not God's works; good works. By definition, works are things the world considers "good" done apart from God. They inflate the ego, draw attention to self, and imply that God is impressed because man is. But grace is free. You can't work for it. Not Calvary grace. Not living grace. And the more you think you can, the less you receive. Man's works destroy God's grace.

Enemy 3- Religion- Religion teaches that man can do in the natural realm, things that please God. But God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit. His life is eternal, and His works are supernatural. Religion is man's way of reaching God. Grace is God's way of reaching man. Religion is the world's way of performing for God. Grace is God's way of performing in man.

Enemy 4- Presumption- It says to God, "you did this the last time; now you're obligated." Or it says "God, you perform based

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on my faith.” God says, “No, I’ll perform based on My sovereignty; and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will.” Presumption demands grace. Grace, by nature of its being, is sovereign and cannot be either presumed upon or demanded.

How those enemies affect our walk with God and our life of grace will be the subject of succeeding lessons. Suffice it to say that the grace life is the life of victory, the life of joy, and the life of fruitfulness. It sees man as man and lets God be God. It pities man’s self-worth, self-satisfaction, self-promotion, self-pity and self-determination. In fact, it pities self. But it more than pities self, it hates self. Because when self is to any degree on the throne, grace to that degree is dethroned and rendered ineffective.

For the next few lessons, we will look at the grace life and see how it functions. We’ll see what it’s like to let God do the witnessing, the working, the growing, the worshiping. We’ll watch God stand in adversity, watch God overcome sin, and watch God minister to others and wonder why we ever tried to do for God what He has already done for us. I’ll tell you why. Satan delights in destroying grace. But God delights in giving it, and giving it, and giving it, and giving it. In fact, so measureless is His grace that we can go from grace to grace if we’ll but learn to let grace live in us. No small wonder the songwriter said, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound.” It is the sound of Jesus Christ alive in us.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
The song by which we’re freed!
The blessed sound of Christ in me...
How sweet it is, indeed!

Our Father and our God,

Some of us here this morning have taken the grace of God for granted; perhaps it is all of us in varying degrees. We have forgotten that apart from Your divine act of mercy we would not be forgiven. And even forgiven, apart from Your divine act of grace we would not be saved. But in Your love You looked down upon us and said, “You come alive”, and we did.

Some of us here this morning, Father, walk around with pompous, self-confident attitudes that we can do for You what only You can do for Yourself. Some of us have allowed pride and presumption and activities as a substitute for a realization that we are not the ones who can, we simply belong to a God who can.

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Some of us here this morning, Father, need to bow in total adoration and praise, once more, with a realization in our hearts that apart from You we would have nothing, apart from You we could do nothing, and apart from You we would be nothing.

We thank You, our Father, that in eternity past You determined that on that one day because of the death of Your Son we might by grace come alive.

May we leave this place no longer taking that grace for granted but singing all the way home with praise in our hearts and on our lips,

*“Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now I’m found
Was blind but now I see.”*

*Surely those that have been blind and now can see won’t forget.
And, dear God, may we not forget either.*

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

A Challenge to Further Study

- 1- Define grace. How do you differentiate between the mercy of God and the grace of God? What aspect of God do they both reflect?
- 2- Name the four elements of grace described in this lesson. Explain each in your own words.
- 3- Name four things you cannot do without grace. What happens when we try?
- 4- Paraphrase Ephesians 2:1-10. (Write it in your own words.)
- 5- Spend time this week praising God that “you He made alive”. How does this passage describe your life before Christ came in?
- 6- How can we worship God for His grace?
- 7- Name four enemies of grace. Explain how each quenches the grace of God in your life.
- 8- Spend a week worshipping God for the grace with which He saved you.

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