

7. Grace (2Q 2009—Walking the Walk: The Christian Life)

Biblical material: Exod. 25:8; Isaiah 53; Rom. 5:18, 19; 2 Cor. 3:16–18; Eph. 2:4–10; Titus 2:11-14.

Quotes

- Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. Touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are sacred moments and life itself is grace. *Frederick Buechner*
- Grace isn't a little prayer you chant before receiving a meal. It's a way to live. *Jackie Windspear*
- Grace determines the quality of our service. *Charles Bradford*

Questions

What is more important—grace or a gracious God? How do we show grace in our lives? How do grace and doing right fit together? Why is graciousness more than just excusing wrong? How do we see God's grace in action—not only for ourselves, but also for the whole universe? What part does grace play in the conflict over truth and right?

Bible discussion

God showed his grace in coming to dwell with his people through the sanctuary (Ex. 25:8). Through the coming of Christ the grace is demonstrated in person (Is. 53; Rom. 5:18), and where Christ is there is freedom by his grace (2 Cor. 3:16-18). For we are saved by grace—God's gracious spirit (Eph. 2:5). "For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people." (Titus 2:11). This is to focus: on "the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:14, 15 NIV. May we always thank God for his graciousness towards us!

Comment

"Grace is a way of life. It is in everything that we do. Redemption for me is like the story of the prodigal son—no matter your sins or the charges against you, God is always willing to take you back and redeem you. For me it means the healing of a sin-damaged relationship so that I can come back into the presence of the Heavenly Father. Sometimes people talk about grace as being a substance—but it's never a substance, it's an aspect of a relationship. That's why it's important to talk about the graciousness of God rather than grace on its own. As the Bible says it is the graciousness of God that leads us to repentance.

"As a Christian, knowing about God's grace is wonderful. God's graciousness is everlasting, and he is willing to give it to everyone and anyone who will accept his wonderful gift. I love talking and telling people about God's grace because it really shows how kind and forgiving God really is. It shows us that no matter who we are, we have a chance in Heaven regardless of how many times we mess up. It is why I still am Christian because I know God will accept me for who I am because of his ultimate grace. He still loves me no matter what. He gives me the power to be gracious also. In this hard sinful world it gives us hope and encouragement to get through this world for something so much better. All thanks to God's grace. 'The Word became flesh and made his

dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.' (John 1:14 NIV).

“God’s grace really heals us from the damage of sin—it is not simply a theological doctrine, and it’s something that is practical and works in our everyday life. So ‘There is now no condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ.’ (Rom. 8:1). I love this quote: in so few words it gives so much hope to all of us. It is against the legalists who want to make your salvation dependent on the strict keeping of the law and righteousness by works. Jesus reserved his strongest condemnation for the Pharisees who did not accept the concept of grace because they had turned God’s salvation into a legal system. This text also helps those who have a burden of guilt because it reassures them that God does not condemn us.

“So I conclude that from beginning to end the Bible, salvation, and even God himself is grace. It was God’s grace that led him to come to this planet to save us from ourselves. It is God’s grace that is the answer to the issues in the Great Controversy because the devil accused God of being ungracious and legalistic, but he came and proved the devil wrong and in that he proved to all of us and the on-looking universe that he is the most gracious loving God. It is so important to emphasise God’s grace for if you have the wrong picture of God you can really misrepresent him like those who burned heretics at the stake. You need to understand God and his sacrifice for us, and how much he has showed us to prove that.

“In order to show his grace God took on human form in the person of Jesus who was described by John as full of grace and truth. In his life and ministry Jesus was the perfect representation of grace. For example: his dealing with the Samaritan woman at the well; his night time conversation with Nicodemus; and his conversation with the thief on the cross. In his miracles we see a practical demonstration of grace. Those are all such good examples that represent the character of grace of our gracious God. God is GRACE!!” *Rebekah Gallagher*

Ellen White Comments

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away.... He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration... {AG 118}

For earth’s sin and misery the gospel is the only antidote. To make known to all mankind the message of the grace of God is the first work of those who know its healing power. {MH 141}

In all the gracious deeds that Jesus did, He sought to impress upon men the parental, benevolent attributes of God. . . . Jesus would have us understand the love of the Father, and He seeks to draw us to Him by presenting His parental grace. He would have the whole field of our vision filled with the perfection of God’s character. . . . It was only by living among men that He could reveal the mercy, compassion, and love of His heavenly Father; for it was only by actions of benevolence that He could set forth the grace of God. {AG 99}

You cannot hallow His name, you cannot represent Him to the world, unless in life and character you represent the very life and character of God. This you can do only through the acceptance of the grace and righteousness of Christ. {AG 94}