

The Grace of God

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[0:00] Ephesians 2, 1-10. Please stand together with me for this reading from God's Word. As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work and those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions. It is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved through faith. And this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

When was the last time you dropped your jaw in true wonder and cried, amazing? And what was it that amazed you? Was it some super duper slam dunk or a football player going up and catching a football against the back of his helmet and hanging on to it? And maybe a race car crashing and the driver living through it?

And you said, amazing, amazing. Or maybe it was something you saw on YouTube, something on the news. Maybe it was a sunrise or a sunset or even the destructive fury of a storm. And you said, amazing.

Or maybe it was when you were thinking about the grace of God. When have you last been amazed at God's grace to you? When's the last time you have been amazed that you are a Christian, that you are in Christ? Because it's all of grace and God's grace is always amazing grace.

Here then is a barometer for the health of your soul. Here's a way to tell the state, the condition of your soul. Something is wrong when God's grace is no longer amazing to you.

[3:00] When it's lost its wonder, it no longer grips you and moves your heart. Your amazement level can be a helpful indicator of how well you understand God's grace.

Does it leave you in awe? Does it leave you in wonder, love and praise? As the hymn writer says, does it leave you singing amazing grace that saved a wretch like me?

I once was lost, but now I'm found. It was blind, but now I see. We live in a time when the world is yawning at the grace of God.

And grace often receives the same sleepy nod from those in church, sadly. There's plenty of talking and singing about the grace of God. Don't get me wrong. We talk a lot and sing a lot and preach a lot about His love and grace.

And yet boredom reigns. And God's grace is ho-hum. It's almost expected. A few seem to be really amazed at it.

[4:07] And if we're honest with ourselves, we have to say that we have not altogether escaped that disease. But we're not always moved as we sit under the preaching of the grace of God in the gospel.

Sometimes we're cold. And no more amazed as we were when we first believed. Do you remember that?

You could hardly believe it was true. It was so glorious. That all your sins were forgiven. Never to be brought up against you again.

Your destination was changed from hell forever to heaven forever. And you were pinching yourself. Can it be that this is true?

You were amazed. But time has changed all that. And I ask, but why? But why? Time should be on our side after all, shouldn't it?

[5:08] For the longer that we live on this old earth, the more we sin against God. And the more he forgives. The more he has to forgive of our sins.

And the more we mature in the Christian life, the more we see how much we sin. And we see how unworthy we are. You see, time ought to increase our amazement at God's grace, not diminish it. Time should do nothing to make us used to God's grace. Daily we meet with fresh expressions of it. Oh, to grace how great a debtor. Daily I'm constrained to be.

That means I'm more in debt to the grace of God today than I was yesterday. And that means the longer I live, the more amazing grace ought to be to me.

So the problem's not time. Time's on our side in this matter. Rather, I believe the problem lies with our view of ourself and our view of God. And that's the reason for this study on the attributes of God.

[6:24] Now, there's plenty of talk today about God's love and grace. Much singing and preaching about that. But there's precious little or nothing being said about his wrath and his anger and his justice and his holiness.

And this diminishes God's grace and eats the heart out of our amazement of the grace of God. And all in the name of promoting God's grace.

But you see, God's grace is only amazing where his wrath and justice are recognized as realities pertaining to us.

And these two things rise and fall together. When the wrath of God is magnified, the grace of God is magnified.

When the wrath of God is diminished, grace is diminished. They rise and fall together. You see, the good news is only as amazing as the bad news.

[7:27] But Mr. and Mrs. Sinner have no patience for hearing the bad news. Just give us the good news, they say. Just tell us things that stroke our egos and make us feel good at the end of the service.

We have enough troubles at work and at home. When we come to church, we don't want to be told again about God's wrath and justice and holiness. Tell us something that will make us feel good. And by and large, the church is capitulated to their desires. And so we have a God of love and grace without any wrath and anger and justice and holiness. And so the church and the world yawn together at the grace of God.

An anemic love and a diminished grace. If God's wrath doesn't amaze you, then surely His grace will not either.

Because it saves you from that wrath. It's kind of like Little Red Riding Hood, that story, kids. Only, can you imagine the story of Little Red Riding Hood without the wolf?

[8:36] Okay? Without the wolf. It's a rather bland little story about a little girl that goes to visit her grandmother. And she's got some jam and tea and crumpets and heads off the woods and picks some flowers and arrives and has tea with her grandma.

A wonderful time. It's a nice story. But there's nothing gripping in it. But bring in the wolf and put him in bed disguised as grandma.

And you've got a nail-biter. And being saved by the lumberjack is nothing to yawn at. Because you're not being saved from cold tea and musty crumpets.

You're being saved from a real wolf with real fangs. And even so, you leave the wolf out of the story.

It becomes bland and tame. And you yawn. And if you leave the wrath and the holiness and the justice of God out of the picture, you have a nice little story about the Son of God coming to earth, setting a good example for some very good people.

[9:51] And if the cross is mentioned at all, it's only as an example of love, not something necessary to save these hell-deserving sinners. Not a place where God's holy wrath is put on display, as sin is being punished because of the great love and grace that he has for sinners.

And hell is not mentioned where a holy God of wrath punishes every sinner outside of Christ. And there's a result to this fiddling with the gospel.

It's that the gospel and church and religion are all nice things, if that's your cup of tea, if that's what suits your fancy.

And in reality, they've lost all their relevance to the world, and grace becomes ho-hum. So that's something of an apologetic for why we took five weeks to study the justice and the wrath of God before we now come to the grace of God.

I don't want you to miss just how amazing and awesome grace is. Just how amazing it is to be saved by grace. So that's the first point this morning.

[11:14] God's grace is amazing. Now exactly what is the grace of God? Well, it's his love. It's his goodness.

It's his favor. It's his kindness. But it's all those things shown to the undeserving. It's unmerited love. It's unearned goodness. It's undeserved favor. And it's the undeservingness of it all that makes it grace. When you think of grace, you must immediately think of undeserving.

It's God's favor to the undeserving. And that's our second point. God's grace is totally undeserving then. Every good thing that you've received from God since you were born is grace.

Because you didn't deserve it. As a sinner, you deserved wrath. And so every good thing you receive is grace. It's not only goodness of God, it's the grace of God.

[12:30] And I trust that will open your eyes to just how big this subject of the grace of God is. Every good thing you have is grace on display. But we need to narrow our focus this morning.

And so I've chosen the grace of God in salvation. Not in the breakfast you had this morning. Though that's grace. But now the grace of God in salvation.

God's salvation is all of grace. No part of its urn. Election. Were you chosen? It had nothing to do with you deserving to be chosen. That you were better than the next guy.

Was it regeneration? You were born again? Again, you did nothing to deserve to be born again and get a new heart. Was it being justified? Made right with God?

Never deserved. Adopted into his family? All of grace. To the praise and the glory of his grace. Being glorified in the end?

[13:34] To be with Christ forever? All of grace. Now high school students, when you get a diploma in high school.

Or college students, when you get a diploma in college. And you walk across the stage and the principal shakes your hand. You may say thank you. That would probably be appropriate in some way.

But it's not grace that he's given you. It's not a gift. That he's given you. No, you earned that.

And you can remember all the nights you stayed up to study. And crammed for tests. And the papers you wrote. And the classes you endured. You earned that diploma. It's not a gift of grace.

Or when payday comes. And the boss comes through the shop and hands you your paycheck.

Again, you may say thank you. But let's not kid anybody. That's not a gift of grace, is it?

[14:35] Again, you worked hard for that. You deserved it. You earned every penny of it. And that's why Romans 4.4 says, Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as grace.

Or as a gift. But as an obligation. It's something that is owed to you. Well, grace is not like that.

Grace is not like that. Grace is totally undeserved. It's altogether a free gift. Ephesians 1.6 speaks of our adoption into the family of God as being to the praise of his glorious grace.

Which he has freely given us in the one he loves. Freely given us. You see, it's pure charity. Grace is always free.

No one ever bought it. No one ever earned it by their works. Have you noticed how often the Bible goes to great lengths to emphasize that salvation is by grace?

[15:35] Grace. It states it positively. And then it comes in with a hammer and says, Not by works. Not by works. It's by grace. Not by works.

Ephesians 2.8.9 For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith. And this, not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not by works. So that no one can boast.

By grace. Not by works. These are two mutually exclusive categories when it has to do with the reason God has saved us. Romans 11.5 and 6.

Paul says, At the present time, there's a remnant chosen by grace. Here's a lesson by grace.

What's the basis by which God chooses whom he will save? They are chosen by grace.

That's the positive statement. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works. If it were, grace would no longer be grace.

[16:39] I think that's perhaps one of the closest things Paul comes to making a definition. Grace is so much grace that if you introduce any works, it is no more grace.

If by works, then it's no longer grace. If by grace, then it's no longer works. There's simply no room for grace. Or no room in grace for any admixture of our works.

So the moment that you start talking about something in you that caused God to choose you, to save you, to give you a new heart, to make you right with God, you've stopped talking about salvation by grace.

You're talking about something else. Because the only grace the Bible knows is totally undeserved by any works of our own. Now, there's two different levels of undeservingness.

We're still on the second point that grace is totally undeserved. But there's two kinds of totally undeserved. I think Jerry Bridges was the first I heard use this illustration.

[17:50] He talks about a beggar, a hobo, in the days when the homeless people didn't go to shelters. They just went around on the boxcars or walked from town to town and showed up at people's doors asking for a meal.

And here comes one beggar. And you're having supper with your family. And he's asking for a handout. You don't know him. He doesn't know you. He's a perfect stranger.

You don't owe him a thing. He hasn't done any work for you at all. Has no claim on your kindness. He's just asking for a free gift to hand out.

And you invite him in and say, come on, there's room for you at the table. Come and join the family. That's grace. That's undeserved kindness shown to that man.

Totally undeserved. But this does not adequately set forth the way God's grace works. With us. For this, we need to imagine a different scene.

[18:51] Beggar number two comes to the door asking for a handout. And again, this man has no claim at all on your kindness. He's never done anything for you that you should repay him with a meal.

But as you look at him closely, you realize this is the man that robbed you many years ago and violated your wife.

And now he's here asking for a handout. This is a different layer, level of undeservingness.

This man has not only not done anything to earn your favor. He has done something to merit your wrath.

And so you open the door and say, there's room at the table for you, my friend. And you feed him.

[19:52] That's grace. That's grace. And that's the kind of undeservingness. And that's the kind of grace that God has toward us sinners.

Not just that we had done nothing to earn his favor. We had done everything to earn his wrath forever and ever in hell.

And it was while we were such people under his wrath that he demonstrated his grace and said, Come and have a place at my table, at my banquet, my feast.

Be adopted into my family. Grace is God's kindness shown to people who deserve God's wrath. Grace is God not dealing with us as our sins deserve or repaying us according to our iniquities. Not only was there nothing in us to attract him to us, there was much in us that was repulsive to his wrath.

[21:02] We were by nature the children of wrath. We read in Ephesians 2 and verse 3. We belong to that human race that killed his son. We were part of that conspiracy against the Lord and his anointed one.

We rebelled against him. We robbed him of his glory. We didn't value him or his son as being worthy of our life and love and trust. We chose our sin over this son of God.

And yet for all of this, he poured out his saving kindness upon us and gave us eternal life. That's grace. The grace, the amazing grace of God.

So our second point is that God's grace is totally undeserved. Third point is that saving grace comes to us through Jesus Christ alone. Think of it this way.

Here's this infinite ocean of God's grace. How does it come to me, a sinner who deserves his wrath and who is under his wrath?

[22:13] How does that grace make its way to John Heaney? Well, it comes by way of a funnel. You've seen a funnel in the kitchen, perhaps, or in the garage.

And it's wide at the top and it gets narrow at the bottom. And the funnel that brings the grace of God to me, the sinner, is Jesus Christ. There's no grace.

There's not a drop of grace that reaches me, the hell-deserving sinner, except through the funnel of Jesus Christ. It's not that God could just step aside from the funnel and just directly deposit grace to us.

No, his wrath will not allow that. Justice will not allow that. He sinned against me. She has offended me. She must be punished. Well, the only way grace can come to me then is through Jesus Christ, who bore the wrath and paid the price for my sin.

Ephesians 1, 6-8. Speaking of adoption again. To the praise. We've been adopted by grace. To the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the one He loves.

[23 : 23] There's the funnel. Jesus. All grace comes to us in the one He loves. In Him we have redemption. Through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished upon us.

These lavishing riches of God's grace all come to us through the blood of Jesus. Ephesians 2, 7. In order that in the coming ages, He might show the incomparable riches of His grace expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

How does the kindness of God come to us? In Christ Jesus. Romans 3, 24. And we are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

It's always through the blood of Christ, the redemption of Christ, the payment of the price by our Lord Jesus. Jesus. There we were on death row. Already condemned.

The sentence was already passed. Guilty. Condemned. The death sentence. Eternal death. The second death. The lake of fire. And we're just waiting for the day of the sentence to be executed.

[24 : 40] And Jesus Christ says, wait. And He comes in as our substitute, our mediator. And He says, no, I'll take that punishment in His place. And the door flies open and we're set free, full pardon, because Jesus took the wrath of God that we might know His kindness.

Brothers and sisters, we did absolutely nothing to deserve that. We did everything to deserve His wrath. It's pure grace. It's amazing grace. For you know the grace.

You do know the grace of our Lord Jesus. That though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.

So that you through His poverty might be made rich. Grace comes to you free, but it was anything but free to Jesus. It meant He had to become poor in order to enrich us with God's grace.

How poor did He become? As poor as the cross of Christ. As poor as Golgotha made Him. When He took on Him all the liabilities of sin.

[25 : 54] And there in the account books of Jesus Christ, all of our sins were on Him laid. And all the liabilities that He had.

He's a poor man now on the cross. And He suffers and He pays with His own blood. He became poor to make us rich. It's only by Jesus, through Jesus, that the riches of God's grace come to us. Yes, grace is God not treating us as our sins deserve. Our sins deserve wrath. And instead of giving us wrath, He gives us eternal life.

Do you know why? Because He treated His Son as we deserved. And having treated His Son as we deserved, it is in Christ and through Him alone that we are treated with such kindness.

You remember when David finally came to the throne, and he had made a covenant with King Saul's son, Jonathan, a dear bosom friend of his, and he said, Let's make a covenant.

[26 : 59] And David, don't you ever do anything harmful to me and my family. And David swore to him, and they cut a covenant between them.

Jonathan and King Saul died in battle, and now David's on the throne. And David asked, Is there anyone still left of the household of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?

See, David loved Jonathan so much. And his heart's overflowing with his love for Jonathan. He says, Is there anyone left in the house of Saul, a relative for whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?

And they said, Well, there is still one son of Jonathan. He's crippled on both feet. His name's Mephibosheth. Where is he? He's down in Lodibar. Well, go get him. And they send for him, and he comes into the presence of a king.

And you must know that in those days when one king died and another king came to the throne, the new king often slaughtered all the families of the old king, lest there be any question as to who should be king.

[28:10] And so Mephibosheth is trembling as he comes into the presence, the grandson of King Saul. And he's come into the presence of the new king David.

A new dynasty has begun. Oh, what's he going to do to us? And Mephibosheth bows down, trembling to pay him honor, and David says, Don't be afraid.

Don't be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. And I'll restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.

Oh, what is your servant that you should notice a dead dog like me? He's amazed at this grace.

He's amazed at this kindness. But notice it was kindness for Jonathan's sake.

And folks, some of the amazement perhaps needs to be brought back into our perception of grace by realizing afresh that any, any, any drop of grace and kindness that you have received from God is for Jesus' sake.

[29:22] Amen. God's undeserved kindness shown to us hell-deserving sinners for Jesus' sake. That's the third point.

Saving grace comes through Jesus Christ alone. Fourth, this gracious gift is received by faith alone. This gracious gift is received by faith alone.

We're talking of the gift of salvation. Romans 4.16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith so that it might be by grace.

Why does the promise of eternal life come to hell-deserving sinners by faith, by means of faith, so that it might be by grace?

To ensure that grace is not infringed upon. Therefore, the means by which we receive this gift is faith alone in Christ.

[30:27] And so, it is by grace that you have been saved through faith. Through faith. And this not from yourselves. It's the gift of God. Not by works so that no one can boast.

Why grace? Through faith? So that no one can boast. You see, more important than your salvation, yes, you heard me right, more important than your salvation is that God be glorified for the act of saving you.

And therefore, He established a way for you to receive this gift that will lay all the praise at His feet and will not allow you to boast at all.

So He made it by grace through faith alone in His Son. You see, there's nothing for man to boast about in faith.

What is faith? Faith is the empty hands held out to receive Christ and His salvation. What's there to boast about emptiness?

[31:39] Faith is a declaration of bankruptcy. Faith is saying, I don't have anything. I don't have anything to pay. I'm not bringing you anything. There's nothing in my hands I bring. Faith is the empty hands to receive.

Everything is received here. It's all free gift. And so I come with empty hands to receive everything. To bring nothing. That's not something that man would boast about.

Well, I had faith. Faith in Scripture is referred to as a look. To look away and live.

Remember when the snakes bit the Israelites and the word was, look to the serpent on the pole and live. That's faith. And Jesus was lifted up on the cross that whoever looks, whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

To believe is to look. And there's nothing to boast about in a look. Because it's a look away. It's not a look to yourself. It's having seen there's nothing here.

[32:42] I despair of any hope here. I'm looking away to Christ. There's my hope. There's nothing there for man to boast in. For even this ability to look away, even this ability to trust in Christ is a gift of God.

This faith is the gift of God. God works it in the hearts of sinners so that no one can boast. We can't even take credit for our faith.

The only thing we can take credit for is the sin that made salvation so necessary. So faith maintains the gracious nature of our salvation and leaves all the praise at God's door to the praise of His glorious grace.

And then lastly, salvation by grace alone is despised by natural man. Now that's pretty unbelievable.

That's amazing in itself, isn't it? That salvation by grace would be despised by natural man.

[33 : 53] You think it's a good deal, don't you? You bring nothing, you receive everything. Why despise that? Have you noticed that all man-made religions are based on works?

Whether it's the five pillars of the Muslim or the meditation and self-denial of the Hindu or the keeping of the Torah for the Jews or the sacraments and good works or the Roman Catholics or the Roman Catholics and many Protestant churches?

The list differs as to what you must do. But all agree that salvation depends on your performance, your works, your rituals, your good deeds, your obedience.

Now that says to me that the gospel of God's grace is not a human invention. Man would never invent such a gospel of salvation.

There's nothing in it to gratify man's pride. There's nothing about which he can stand up at the end of the day and boast that he has eternal life. Nothing to take credit for but his sin.

[35 : 14] Remember we said earlier how God goes to the pains of saying over and over in the Bible that it's by grace not by works. A couple more verses. 2 Timothy 1.9 God who has saved us and called us to a holy life not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

This grace was given us in Christ before the beginning of time. Not because of anything we've done. Titus 3.5 He saved us not because of the righteous things that we had done but because of his mercy.

Why is that? Why is God at such pains to say over and over it's not by anything you've done? It's because that's the religion of natural man. That's the way every sinner thinks salvation should operate.

If I'm good God will reward me with eternal life. If I keep his commands well then he'll bless me and give me salvation. That comes natural.

You know lying comes natural to kids? Nobody had to teach them that? Salvation by works comes naturally as well to every sinner. It's the way we default to.

[36 : 27] It's the way we lean toward. We have this this about us as sinners. We're fallen. Our mind is fallen and we think that it's our works that make us right with God.

And so God says you're wrong. You're wrong. You're wrong. You're wrong. It's not by works. Not by works. Not by anything that we have done. Not by your righteous deeds. A man would like to think he had something to do with it.

He made some contribution. He at least did his own part. After all God helps those who help themselves. So over and over the Bible says not by works. Christopher Hitchens is that atheist going around debating Christians before large gatherings.

He quoted one of his quotes back when we were studying the justice of God a couple months ago. Quoted him complaining about this Christian's view of God's justice that he's a thought policeman and he actually judges you for the thoughts that go through your head and he'll actually punish you after you die.

You know what else he rails against in Christianity? Salvation by grace. Alone. Listen to him. He's describing Christianity.

[37 : 47] You're told not that you might get a second chance but that all your debts can be paid. Payment by another should be rejected by anyone with any self-respect.

So the vicarious redemption by human sacrifice is an immoral preachment with very immoral implications. I say never did the human heart speak with greater honesty and eloquence as to his hostility against the gospel of God's grace.

If God gave us a second chance okay we failed okay we did wrong we stumbled and fell but the gospel is God gives us a second chance and so we pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and we fix things.

Hitchens says well I could buy into that but that's not the message of Christianity says. No in Christianity you don't do for yourself. You have someone else pay for you and anybody with any self-respect ought to mark that down as an immoral idea.

Why? Because it kills a man's self-respect to receive everything charity he's not complaining that Christianity makes salvation too hard he's complaining that Christianity makes salvation too easy.

[39 : 19] When self-sufficient man is altogether too proud to be saved by grace too proud to beg too proud to live on the charity of God too proud to receive the riches on the basis of grace alone.

But man's self-respect is preserved when salvation is by works by doing these five things these ten things these two things well then I can say I can handle this this isn't above me and beyond me I've got what it takes to fix this mess that's why self-help books are so popular and none are selling better than self-help religion we would be our own saviors and that's why sinners refuse to come to Christ just as they are right up out of the hog pen of their sins why they why they think they must somehow clean themselves up first before they come to Christ they can preserve some self-respect that way they must contribute something they think some work if it's only feeling bad for another day for my sin I must do something they'll not bow so low as to say

I have nothing to bring God have mercy on me the sinner for Jesus sake that was the great stumbling block of the Jews that was the folly for the Gentiles but I tell you unless you're willing to be saved entirely by the works of another even Jesus you cannot be saved at all remember Naaman kids he was a great commander of the Syrian army and he had come into Israelite territory and had kidnapped a young lady a young girl taken her back made her a servant for his wife she no doubt was a good servant conscientious one and when the servant girl found out that her master's husband Naaman had leprosy she says well he should go to Israel my homeland there's a prophet there who could help him and heal him and you remember the story how the arrangements are made between the king of Syria and the king of Israel and he comes and he comes to the house of the prophet

Elisha and he's expecting the prophet to come out and do his googly gop over him and pronounce him cleansed and he doesn't even come out and see him just sends a servant says tell him to go down to the Jordan and wash seven times and Naaman was furious you see his pride was offended his pride was I've got cleaner rivers back in Syria why are you sending me down to the Jordan and he headed back for he headed the chariots back to Syria he come all that way and he's going back mad and his servants blessed their hearts said master wait a minute think about it if the prophet would have given you something hard to do you would have done it all he told you to do was to go wash in the river seven times dip seven times should you not at least try and they prevailed with him and he went and dipped in the river and the first time he came up with his leprosy and the second time he came up with his leprosy and the third and fourth and fifth and sixth time but when he came up the seventh time he was cleansed and his flesh was like that of a baby some of you are perhaps where

Naaman was you've got the leprosy of sin God's wrath is upon you you die today you're in hell forever and the gospel says come as you are Jesus knows what you did last night he doesn't say wait till another Saturday night to live different he said no you come you come right now just as you are come with your sin and I will freely and fully forgive you and you say that that can't be you see natural man thinks it doesn't work that way that's too easy and you're offended but if he would say to you crawl uptown on your knees and pray for three hours or take a journey to the holy land or do why then you think well that's something I can do oh and you're you're offended just because of the simplicity of the gospel and the freeness of God's grace well how do we apply this unbeliever if God is this gracious then come to him at once come to

[44 : 20] Christ at once just as you are then sin and all and just trust in him and ask him to save say God be merciful to me a sinner and save me for Jesus sake and nothing good to bring to you nothing good to say for myself in fact I confess the wickedness of my pride and thinking that sin my sin is so little that I could fix it by something I could do no it's so big and so offensive to you that only the son of God shedding his blood in my behalf could ever undo my guilt save me for Jesus sake look on him pardon me well you know going to God can be a fearful thing to a sinner it can be like a fugitive turning himself into the police and he's been on the run and he's wondering if I turn myself in what will I meet with what will that that person behind the desk be like toward me and God knows that you have fears as a guilty sinner in coming to himself and you might wonder if I come to him what will

I find and he says in Joel 2 13 return to the Lord for he is gracious and compassionate he knows you've got those fears and so he assures you he's gracious he's compassionate he wants you to know that if you come you'll find a gracious savior Isaiah 30 the Lord longs to be gracious to you he rises to show you compassion how how gracious he will be when you cry for help as soon as he hears he will answer you so sinner be encouraged God takes pleasure in magnifying his grace he's more gracious than you even realize he's ready right now to forgive you all of your sins just for the asking just for casting yourself upon him and believing on him nothing you you do to earn it you just

come and he'll never bring your sins up against you again he's that gracious come to him why do you linger take words with you

Hosea 14 says take words with you and return to the! and say to him forgive all our sins and receive us graciously if you come to him if you come to him you'll be met with abounding grace if you refuse to come to him you will continue to live under horrifying wrath why not come to Christ today he's gracious believers if God is gracious let that move you first to gratitude all grace should lead us to gratitude we should be living our lives as amazed people amazed that God has had grace we should be the most thankful man the most thankful woman he's not dealt with me according to what my sins deserve whatever else is happening to me whatever else is going on in my life or not happening in my life I'm not in hell that's grace and he's heaped upon me every spiritual blessing in Jesus Christ that's grace and all your obedience should feel the warmth of gratitude for grace received like that woman in the gospels in Luke 7 she served much and loved much because she was forgiven much so if God is so gracious let it move us to gratitude and let it move us secondly to holy living some conclude that if salvation is totally free then men will sin it up if you don't have to earn your salvation then people will just go wild with sin and they simply show that they've never yet tasted of the real grace of God for once a man experiences God's grace he's not saying let us continue in sin that grace may abound no Jude says it's the godless men who turn the grace of God into a license for immorality it's the godless who say okay if

God's so gracious then we've got a license to sin doesn't matter not the man that's tasted the man that's tasted says how can I sin against this God that's been so gracious to rails when nothing else will there's no more powerful motive to holy living than the free sovereign unmerited grace of God to this hell deserving sinner it's when we're no longer amazed at that grace that we're most susceptible to sin and temptation and then lastly be gracious be gracious let it move you to gratitude to holy living and then let it move you that is the grace of God to being gracious yourself the man amazed at how gracious God is to him will be most gracious in his dealings toward others he will not wait to show favor to another until they deserve it he himself has been shown unmerited favor when he deserved the opposite so

[49:50] I ask you are you kind are you only kind to those who deserve your kindness if so Jesus has a question for you from Matthew 5 what are you doing more than others do not even pagans do that are they not kind to those who are kind to them yes they love those who love them but the one who has tasted of God's grace has the motivation the resources to love his enemies just as God has loved you when you were his enemy so I challenge you this week to show kindness to those who do not expect it to those even who would expect you to treat them with unkindness due to their treatment of you you have such people in your lives there's the opportunity to demonstrate real grace the kind of grace God had for you to shower them with kindness when they really deserve something else and to keep yourself in a healthy spiritual state keep yourself amazed at the grace of

God that comes through the Lord Jesus Christ and his work upon the cross you know I believe it's not only the unconverted sinner that does not realize just how gracious God is I believe that we believers many times are really out of step with how gracious God is so that when we sin we don't come right away why not because we think we have to fix it first and then maybe after a couple days of feeling bad we can come and confess it maybe after trying to fix it we can come and confess it but no Jesus is so gracious he says right now as soon as you know you sin you come right now when you have nothing good to say for yourself come right now and you'll find I am so gracious I'll forgive for if we confess our sins he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness he's just that gracious let's pray and pour out our hearts in response to this

God of grace you talk to him after we've had a moment I'll close in prayer let's all pray our gracious God we've come today to be amazed all over again at the amazing grace that you've shown us in Jesus Christ and we we come humbly!

come confessing our sins! We come confessing that we have seen things on the television that have amazed us more than things seen in the Bible we've been more taken up with other things that we've said amazing amazing than we have that Christ should die and suffer wrath on our behalf forgive us Lord we we know there's far more to your grace than what we have yet realized!

will you take the dimness of our eyes away will you please remove the idols from our hearts to please increase in flame in our hearts a gratitude for such grace help us to see it for what it is to see

our undeserving us to see the infinite grace that reached down in Christ to save us and save the lost sinner here today and cause them to come just as they are and to taste and to find that they can come and buy without money and find that which is truly satisfying we ask glorify yourself we have nothing in which to boast but we would make our boast in Christ we thank you for him as we pray in his name amen