

Grace is mentioned 170 times in the Bible. Consider some of the ways it can be defined:

1. Grace is God's unmerited favor. That is, grace is God doing good for us that we do not deserve. In the Bible, grace and mercy are like two heads of the same coin. Mercy is God withholding judgment or evil that I deserve; grace is God giving me blessing or good that I do not deserve. Because of God's mercy, I do not receive the judgment of God against my sins; because of God's grace, I receive eternal life and a promise of heaven though I do not deserve them. Both mercy and grace come to me through the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Grace can also be defined as God's sufficiency or God's fullness in the life of the believer. God told Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). That is, the grace of God in Paul enabled him and empowered him in his weakness. Another verse states, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). God's grace working in us supplies the sufficiency whereby we may abound to every good work. I like to call grace "God's enoughness." By this I mean that God is enough for us no matter what the situation we face.

This being the case, you can see that grace is first of all necessary for salvation. Ephesians 2:8 states, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*" One aspect of salvation is called justification. That is the act by which we are declared just (righteous) before God on the basis of the payment Jesus Christ made for our sin. The Bible clearly teaches that we are justified by the grace of God (Romans 3:24; Titus 3:7).

But not only are we saved by the grace of God--we also serve the Lord and live the Christian life by the grace of God. The letters of Paul always speak of a blessing of grace for the believers (along with peace). Just for an example, Romans 1:7 states, "*Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Paul is speaking to believers who are already saved and on their way to heaven, but he also recognizes that they need grace for living the Christian life. They need God's strength and sufficiency.

A good verse to help explain this grace by which we live is 1 Corinthians 15:10 where Paul testified,

*"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*

It was God's grace that made him what he was. It was God's goodness working in him that made him the great servant of God he was.

So, obviously, we also need the grace of God. We need it first of all for salvation. Without the grace of God, we cannot have eternal life. However, we also need the grace of God for our daily walk with God. We are weak and prone to stray. Jesus told us that we can do nothing without Him (John 15:5). But God provides daily strength through His grace working in us. We should seek this grace for living from him. Then, we

should believe that He will provide what He has promised and walk with assurance that His grace is working in us.

Noah "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6: 8). The lowly are said to be favored with grace (Prov. 3: 34, I Pet. 5: 5). Jesus and Paul are expressly said to have experienced God's grace (Lk. 2: 40, I Cor. 15: 10). Also, all who love the Lord have God's grace bestowed upon them (Eph. 6: 24). Beloved, a study of those who enjoyed God's grace consistently reveals a certain type of person: one who was implicitly obedient, trusting, submissive to God's requirements, and who had enduring fidelity (Noah, Gen. 6: 5-8, Jesus, Jn. 4: 34, those who love the Lord, I Jn. 5: 3, and Paul, I Cor. 9: 26, 27, 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8). A required personality type to enjoy God's grace explains why while God's grace is universal, still only a few are saved (Tit. 2: 11, Matt. 7: 13, 14).

Some in the First Century turned "the grace of our God into lasciviousness..." (Jude 4). One way in which this was done is seen in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6: 1). Paul immediately answered his own question: "God forbid" (vs. 2). Alas, grace continues to be presented today in such a fashion as to actually encourage the commission of sin. Instead of teaching which stresses man's responsibility to live right we hear statements similar to: "...the way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul..."

#### **QUESTION:**

Why does the devil hate God's grace? Grace gives all the **GLORY** to God.

Grace is God's #1 weapon for you- You win because Jesus won for you- you are more than a conqueror! The devil is more than a loser! He can't win and you can't lose!

Grace, we all know, is God's unmerited favor. In acrostic fashion we have been taught to define grace as God's Riches At Christ's Expense

#### **Grace destroys PRIDE.**

Ephesians 2:8-9 – 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.

"God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" ([James 4:6](#)).

#### **Grace destroys GUILT**

Romans 8:1 says there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

#### **GRACE destroys SIN**

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."—Romans 5:20.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men (Titus 2:11).

## QUESTION

1. "Have you worshiped God because of your **GRACE** lately?"

Grace means God moving heaven and earth to save sinners who could not lift a finger to save themselves. Grace means God sending His only Son to descend into hell on the cross so that we guilty ones might be reconciled to God and received into heaven. '(God) hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (2 Corinthians 5:21)

We say grace. Gracious, gratitude, GRACE NOTES. Embellishments. Sometime we cheapen grace.

## QUESTION

1. "How have you stood in the way of grace?"

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer said:*

*"Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline. Communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ."*

*Costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus, it comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and the contrite heart. It is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him; it is grace because Jesus says: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." "*

**Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our church**

## QUOTE

*When you understand the message of grace, you can then begin to worship God.*

## **3 SCENES OF GRACE**

### **Scene 1 – JOSHUA the High Priest**

Zechariah 3:1-6 NIV

<sup>1</sup> Then he showed me Joshua <sup>[a]</sup> the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan <sup>[b]</sup> standing at his right side to accuse him. <sup>2</sup> The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"

<sup>3</sup> Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. <sup>4</sup> The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes."

Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you."

<sup>5</sup> Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.

## Zechariah – **THE LORD REMEMBERS**

The Hebrew word translated **filthy** is "the strongest expression in the Hebrew language for filth of the most vile and loathsome character." It is the dirtiest, filthiest, most putrid thing you can imagine. Manure covered.

The **turban** was part of the High Priest's garments and on the front it had a gold plate inscribed with the phrase HOLINESS TO THE LORD – EXODUS 28

When John Wesley was only six years old, he was trapped in a burning house and was only rescued when one neighbor climbed on another's shoulders and pulled him out of window. A picture of the scene was drawn for Wesley and he kept the drawing until he died, and wrote under it Zechariah 3:2: *Is this not a brand plucked from the burning?*

Isaiah 64:6, 8 NIV

All of us have become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;  
we all shrivel up like a leaf,  
and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

<sup>8</sup> Yet, O LORD, you are our Father.  
We are the clay, you are the potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.

*Every time the devil comes to condemn you, begin to praise the name of Jesus.*

## Scene 2 –**ZERUBBABEL** the Governor

Zerubbabel, leader of Judah, and a group of about 42,000 people had been released by their Babylonian captors to return to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is in ruin. Everything is destroyed and burned to the ground. God's people begin to rebuild it, brick by brick – Nehemiah tells of rebuilding the walls. God's people were attacked by those living nearby. Consequently, the people were discouraged and ready to give up.

### **Zechariah 4:1-13**

1 Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep. 2 He asked me, "What do you see?"

I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. 3 Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." 4 I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" 5 He answered, "Do you not know what these are?" "No, my lord," I replied. **6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.**

7 "What [a] are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!' " 8 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 9 "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you.

10 "Who despises the day of small things? Men will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. "(These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth.)"

11 Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?"

12 Again I asked him, "What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil?" 13 He replied, "Do you not know what these are?" "No, my lord," I said. 14 So he said, "These are the two who are anointed to [b] serve the Lord of all the earth."

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What have you been doing in your own power?
2. In what areas of your life do you need more of the Spirit of the Lord?

### **Zerubbabel – BORN IN CONFUSION/Babylon**

We are not to face seemingly insurmountable tasks in our own strength. Instead, we are to rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit within us. We are like the lampstand that was to be kept continually burning in the temple. In Zechariah's dream, the olive trees on each side of the lampstand were pouring oil directly into its bowl, with no help from the priests. The Holy Spirit was acting as the olive trees - He was God's promise of continual help to the weary people. We, too, can trust the Lord to pour His Holy Spirit into our lives for help in facing life's mountains.

*Stop telling your God how big your MOUNTAINS are. Start telling your mountains how big your GOD is!*

## QUESTIONS:

1. How big is God?
2. How big/small have you been making God?

Psalms 147:4-5 say, "He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. number of hairs on each of our heads is numbered" Mt 10:30.

*Isaiah 66: The earth is his footstool. The heavens are his throne.*

*Isaiah 40: the nations are a drop in the bucket. He holds the all the waters in the palm of his hands. He measured the heavens with the breadth of his hands.*

*"Behold, I have indelibly imprinted (tattooed a picture of) you on the palm of each of My hands..." (Isaiah 49:16, Amplified Bible). God knows you by name... you are tattooed on His loving hands. His hands which are big enough to hold all the waters and all the stars are loving enough to hold you!*

Joel 3:10 NIV - Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, "I am strong!"

## Scene 3 – JERUSALEM, God's City

Zechariah 8:20-23 NIV 18-23

<sup>18</sup> Again the word of the LORD Almighty came to me. <sup>19</sup> This is what the LORD Almighty says: "The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace."<sup>20</sup> This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, <sup>21</sup> and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, 'Let us go at once to entreat the LORD and seek the LORD Almighty. I myself am going.'<sup>22</sup> And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him."

<sup>23</sup> This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.' "

God will turn your fasts into feasting.

## QUESTIONS

1. What mess-ups do you have that Satan keeps accusing you of? Have you repented of them?
2. What mountains do you have that stand in your way?