

“God’s Grace”

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Opening Illustration:

I recently heard a sermon preached at an annual international gathering of preachers at Oakwood University.

The speaker was a powerful preacher of the Word and he was able to articulate an understanding of the Gospel in a clear and powerful, enthusiastic way.

He preached a sermon on Grace.

He demonstrated the ever-present operation of God the Holy Spirit in the story of the Woman Caught in the Act of Adultery.

You can read it in John Chapter Eight,

The Woman Caught in Adultery

1But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

2Early in the morning He went back into the temple courts. All the people came to Him, and He sat down to teach them. **3**And the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before them **4**and said, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. **5**In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such a woman. So what do you say?”

6They said this to test Him, in order to have a basis for accusing Him. But Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with His finger.

7When they continued to question Him, He straightened up and said to them, “Whoever is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone at her.” **8**And again He bent down and wrote on the ground.

9When they heard this they began to go away one by one, beginning with the older ones, until only Jesus was left, with the woman standing there. **10**Then Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?”

11“No one, Lord,” she answered.

But he left out the last verse of the **pericope, which** quotes Jesus as saying:

“Neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. *“NOW GO AND SIN NO MORE.”*

Seventh-day Adventism was founded by God to continue the work of the Reformation. By disclosing the hidden truths that had been obscured for centuries.

At our earlier dates, Adventist preachers preached defensively, pushing back at their critics and explained why we believed in the Law of God, the 10 Commandments which clearly attach to the Creation of the world in Exodus 20.8-11.

As such, we became inclined towards legalism.

In the last part of the 20th Century, a re-orientation towards grace began to emerge in our preaching.

And in many cases, grace has become the focus of much preaching and teaching.

However, in the scripture which I read earlier, it is clear that Jesus, while exercising grace with the woman caught in the act of adultery, also reminded her of the declaration of the law. "Go and sin no more."

Here Jesus indicates that it is not only possible, not only preferable but it is commandable and commendable that people overcome sin.

Here is where Grace enters the picture.

However, It is my contention that our understanding of any of God's operative positioning's is limited by our incapacity to comprehend the Divine Mind.

I mean, we don't know everything about God; nor do we need to know everything. If we knew everything about God, He would cease to be God. If the mystery was removed, we wouldn't be impressed by Whom and What He is.

We know and understand only what he reveals himself to be in the Sacred Scriptures and in our life experience with Him.

What we really need to remember most is what the children's song states: "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so..."

But we really know very little about God, our understanding is limited and small.

And so is, in my opinion as a clergyman, our understanding of Grace.

The word grace comes from the Greek word χάρις.

It means, "to rejoice.

Grace is a favor done without expectation of return; it is the absolute freeness of the loving kindness of God to humanity finding its only motive in the bounty and free heartedness of Jehovah God, the Giver.

In the Bible, the word grace is often used interchangeably with *favor*, hence, the classic definition: an “unmerited favor.”

It is true that Grace is the unmerited favor of God.

It is totally undeserved, unearnable, un-purchasable, unfathomable and inexhaustible.

Grace, however, is more than the free will forgiveness of God. It is not to be relegated *only* to the past wherein we were forgiven the wickedness of our lives.

Grace is not just forgiveness, but it is **empowerment, it is energy; it provides the ability to live for God.**

Titus 2:11, 12 “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”

1. Grace brings or transports salvation to all of humanity.
2. Grace teaches, instructs us to deny everything that is unlike God.
3. Grace teaches to live seriously and rightly in this present world, in 2017, in the United States of America, in the land of Trump.

“It is not merely God’s mercy and willingness to forgive; it is an **active, energizing, transforming power to save.**” SDABC v. 6, p. 504

Another Bible Commentator, Ellen White says: “Divine grace is the great element of saving power...” GW 70.

Therefore, we recognize grace as being power. **Power** that is given to us by God.

Grace ushers us into the Power Curve of the Universe.

Power curve refer to:

- The **power band** of an internal combustion engine, the range of

speeds in which it operates efficiently. An internal combustion engine with a four gear manual transmission.

- 1st gear disrupts the inertia of the vehicle and moves it forward. 2nd gear is the acceleration gear and third gear is the power gear. Fourth gear takes the vehicle into its cruising zone where the engine operates most efficiently.
- The car uses most of its energy to go from standing still to moving and then it relaxes in fourth gear or overdrive and thus uses less fuel in the last gear because it has moved through the power curve to its cruising speed.

So, grace is the **power curve of God**. It helps us to break free of the sins that bind us.

There is a **power curve** that flows from the Throne Room of God, right from His Mercy Seat and sweeps down through the universe to the place where it is needed most: planet earth.

Just like the electricity flows from outside of your house into your house and you turn it on with the flick of a switch.

Just because you don't turn the switch doesn't mean the power is not there. It is they're just waiting on you to connect and turn the switch.

I have a little 6th generation iPod Nano that I bought years ago.

I pulled it out to listen to some gospel this morning, to get my pre-church praise on, and it was almost dead. I had to plug it in to recharge the battery.

Sometimes, we just run out of spiritual energy.

Fighting the fight of faith sometimes drains us of our energy.

Sometimes, this life can just drain us of our energy. We really don't have resident in us the power we need to overcome the devil.

We need to plug into Jesus every day and maybe several times during the day to make it.

Grace is freely given to men and women fighting the fight of faith.

James 4.7 Resist the devil and he will flee.

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 *Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

1 Peter 5.8,9

Grace enables us to resist the devil. This is the power of resistance.

Paul tells us in Eph. 2.8,9: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not by works lest any man should boast”.

Grace comes through faith. While it is a gift of God, it comes to us by our faith, which is also a gift of God.

*For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as **God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.** ROMANS 12.3*

We are not saved by anything that we can do or perform.

We cannot earn salvation. That which we earn is death. “For the **wages** of sin is death, but *the gift of God* is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

If we have small faith, then we will not have great grace. Small faith, weak faith results in little grace or power.

We are always in need of grace that we cannot get for ourselves.

But our King has taken care of that. He has provided for us.

Aretha Franklin may be the queen of soul.

Michael Jackson may have been the king of pop.

BB King may have been the King of the Blues.

Queen of gospel may be Shirley Caesar, or Mahalia Jackson or Albertina Walker...

CeCe Winans or Yolanda Adams may be the Queen of Contemporary Gospel Music....

But, Jesus is the King of Grace.

He purchased it with his blood soaked crown of thorns on Calvary.

He supplies grace, he gives it freely to every struggling sister or every beaten down brother trying to make it through this maze of life.

Jesus pours out the purchased power of **Grace** on *us just because* we trust him and have put all our faith in Him.

I am **amazed** every time I think of Jesus leaving heaven and coming here to earth.

I am **amazed** when I think about him, the King of Heaven being born in a manger in a barn.

I am **amazed** when I think about Him walking around Palestine trying to point someone to heaven

I am **amazed** at his taking my sins upon himself in the Garden of Gethsemane.

I am **amazed** when I realize anew that He died for my mess and me.

I am **amazed** when I stop and think of what he is doing for me in heaven today.

I am **amazed** that one day he will keep His promise to come back and take me home.

Everything about Jesus is Amazing.

AMAZING GRACE

“There was a sailing ship named the GREYHOUND. It had been thrashing about in the **North Atlantic Ocean storm for over a week.** Its canvas sails were ripped, and the wood on one side of the ship had been torn away and splintered.

The sailors had little hope of survival, but they manually worked the internal pumps, trying to keep the vessel afloat, by pumping water out of the damaged boat.

On the **eleventh day** of the storm, **captain John Newton** was too exhausted to pump anymore, so he was tied to the helm and tried to hold the ship to its course.

From one o'clock in the afternoon until midnight he was at the helm.

With the storm raging fiercely, Newton had time to think. His life seemed as ruined and wrecked as the battered ship he was trying to steer through the storm.

You see, since the age of eleven he had lived a life at sea, rejecting the teachings of his Christian mother, and choosing the life of his father, also a seaman.

Newton had a reputation for profanity, coarseness, and debauchery, which even shocked many other sailors.

As a captain of **slave ships**, John Newton was involved in one of the cruelest, most inhumane treatments of human beings ever perpetrated on planet earth.

But that night, Newton reverted to the faith in his mother's early teachings. He later recorded in his journal that when all seemed lost and the ship would surely sink, he exclaimed, “**Lord, have mercy upon us.**”

Later in his cabin he reflected on what he had said and began to believe that God had addressed him through the storm and that **grace had begun to work for him.**

John Newton survived that day at the helm. That day, March 21, 1748, was a turning point in his life. It was a day that he would never forget, for he believed that “On that day the Lord sent from on high and delivered me out of deep waters.” On that day he began to turn to the Christ that he had ignored since childhood when his mother had tried to teach him the Scriptures.

Newton abandoned his sailing of slave ships.

After experiencing a period of [Christian conversion](#) Newton eventually left the slave trade and became an Anglican clergyman in England and a prominent supporter of [abolitionism](#), living to see Britain's abolition of the African slave trade in 1807.

Newton went on to preach about the GRACE that had lifted him out of despair, and he wrote the words of the beloved hymn:

“Amazing grace! How sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind but now I see.”

Jesus cares for you. He Signed, sealed and delivered into the Galactic, Universal legislature in His blood on the Cross of Calvary.

It can never be repealed or replaced. It stands forever.

And Grace is the foundation of it all.

And what the laws and rules of humanity cannot ever accomplish for us, Jesus has already done!

Forgiveness, salvation, redemption are all wrapped up in Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and high priestly ministry and his coming again.

Praise God for His Grace....