

This Grace Is Also for Me

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet asks the question “Why me, Lord?” with a sense of marvel and awe. “Why, Lord, have you bestowed such favor upon us?” We, unlovely as we are, were saved while we were yet sinners. In all of our sinfulness, God so loved us that He died to save us.

And yet, as Christians we sometimes ask the question “Why me, Lord?” in a spirit of frustration when we wonder why God has allowed certain things to happen to us. We forget that each breath we take is purely a gift of grace.

This grace is a great mystery, and our fellowship in this mystery will continue throughout our lives and throughout the ages of eternity. I pray that you will see the unsearchable, inexhaustible, unfathomable grace that is ours. It is grace that has gone out to the chief sinners, to those who are less than the least. It is a grace that prompted me, many years ago, to write these words in a song:

*The pain of my sin, the grief of my trials,
Heartaches and sorrows and guilt all the while;
Then came the glory of God's loving grace—
I felt so unworthy, in human disgrace.*

*Oh, Forgiving Savior! Master of Peace,
You stilled my tempest, and my guilt has ceased.
I found Your favor; by faith I can see
That Calvary's Blood is also for me.*

Chapter One
SO RICH, SO FREE,
AND ALL FOR ME

“Whereof I was *made* a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

“Unto *me*, who am less than the least of all saints, is *this* grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:7-8).

“Unto *me*” in verse 8 is a very important phrase. Paul really emphasized the “*me*” here. “Of all people, this grace was given to *me*. Even while I was killing Christians, putting them away and trying to do damage to the Kingdom of God, the Savior met me and saved me on the road to Damascus” (see Acts 9). That is the point the apostle was making to the Ephesians. He had received *great* grace.

The beautiful thing about this grace is that it is unsearchable, unfathomable, and inexhaust-

ible. Man cannot comprehend it, because God's ways are past finding out (Romans 11:33).

"I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:

"Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:

"Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields" (Job 5:8-10).

God grants the riches of His grace to each one who calls upon His name. He is so rich in kindness (Romans 2:4; 9:23), and He wants His Word to dwell richly in our hearts (Colossians 3:16). The more the Word of God dwells in our hearts, the more we see how unsearchable, unfathomable, and inexhaustible God's grace is. We enter into the revelation of it, the motivation of it, the explanation of it, and the expression of it, and then we experience it. We go forward knowing that with all things that are said about God's grace, we are only beginning to comprehend it.

Less Than the Least

What the apostle Paul understood is something that every pastor must always understand: We are less than the least of all saints. You can't get any lower than being less than the least.

Another word Paul emphasized is “this” as it appears before the word “grace.” The reference is to a special kind of grace—the manifold grace that takes care of manifold trials (1 Peter 1:6, 7, 4:10). The grace given is a multifaceted grace that covers every single side of us. Saul was a roaring lion—tracking, killing, and persecuting the disciples of Christ (Acts 22:4). He had no affection for Christ whatsoever. Yet, God reached down in His Shekinah glory and gave him “this grace.”

This grace reaches out to us and calls us just as we are. This grace never leaves us nor forsakes us (Hebrews 13:5*b*). This grace helps us to become what we are going to be forever. After nearly five decades as a preacher of the Gospel, I have seen what goes on in Christian churches—mostly good, certainly some bad. And through it all, I have seen that this grace is unfathomable, unsearchable, and inexhaustible. I am repeating this deliberately. These words have so much meaning to me because I have received this grace.

Equipped for the Call

The apostle Paul said, “I want you to know, church at Ephesus, why this grace was given to

me.” It was given so that he might preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. This grace *made* him a minister to the Gentiles, who were not at all respected by the Pharisees. Paul became less than the least by grace. He was given this grace that even he could not search out; it was a grace that he could not fathom.

I have wondered what it would have been like to serve under Paul. I am sure I would have heard a lot about the unsearchable riches of grace and how it teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly pleasures. I am sure I would have heard about this grace that helps us, in doctrine, to be quiet in the present evil world (see Titus 2:12).

“I need to have this grace,” Paul told the Ephesians, “because I am less than the least” (Ephesians 3:8). He also declared, “I am the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), and I am least of all the apostles—but I am what I am by this grace! (1 Corinthians 15:9, 10). So, every time you think of me, always remember that I am what I am because of the grace given to me. It was given to me to preach to the Gentiles.”

Oh, we are so privileged to have *this* grace.

Chapter Two

FELLOWSHIP IN THE MYSTERY

“And to make all men see what is the *fellowship of the mystery*, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9).

The purpose of “this grace” was to make men see “the fellowship of the mystery.” This speaks of a oneness that exists between people who have experienced the unsearchable riches of God’s grace. They fellowship around the mystery being revealed in their lives: the mystery of who God is and of what God has done.

I have a tape of testimonies from several of our ministry’s pastors in India; I listen to it again and again. Every one of them reveals such oneness. Their words are so tender. We have a fellowship in the mystery that was, from the beginning of time, concealed—hid with Christ in God. But we have the privilege of knowing it today.

Don't misunderstand what is being said: Grace was always there for us. We are saved *only* by grace through faith. But we also know that there is a deeper revelation of grace that comes as we go on with God. As for those people who walk by sight and not by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7), God wants us all to fellowship in the mystery of what Christ has done for us so we can see Him in one another.

The longer I walk with God, and the nearer I draw to Him, the more I know I need His great grace. This is part of the mystery of grace. It allows a sinner to stand in the light of God, which exposes every dark thing that is in us, and at the same time it purifies us and makes us feel so clean. When Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord high and lifted up, he cried "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:1-5). Many great preachers—Spurgeon, Moody, and Wesley, for example—have expressed similar sentiments. As they grew older, they came to see themselves both as the off-scouring of the earth in their old sin nature and as spiritual millionaires in their new creation in Christ. God did not hold back His light in revealing what these men were really like, but He also helped them to see the unsearchable riches

of grace in Christ to take care of those things that need to be dealt with.

That is why this grace remains a mystery. Knowing everything about who we are and what we think, God still loves us! This great grace is still given to us.

Motivated to Reconciliation

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4:6).

The grace of God is “unsearchable,” according to Ephesians 3:8. It means that the depth of God’s grace cannot be figured out. When people attack others, trying to bring their failures to light, we cannot even fathom the seriousness of what they are doing. This is illustrated in John 8, with the self-righteous Pharisees and the woman who was taken in adultery.

Many commentators agree that the woman was saved, because she referred to Jesus as “Lord.” But though she was saved, she had committed adultery and had been caught in the act. The Pharisees sought to stone her—a just punishment according to the law of Moses. Yet, when they asked Jesus what *He* thought they should do (trying to catch Him in the act of going

against the Scriptures), Jesus said that the one who was without sin could cast the first stone at her. Not one of them qualified, and from the oldest to the youngest they filed out and left her there with her Savior.

So many Christians in the world cast stones at others, yet there is a log in their own eye and only a splinter in the guilty person's eye. It is not our job to expose someone's failure. It is our job to guard the one who has fallen and to restore him to God by extending this unsearchable grace.

Unless we are without sin, we cannot cast a stone—even when we know that a person is guilty. As Christians, we are called to extend this unsearchable grace to others and to exercise a ministry of reconciliation. Those who fail must be made accountable, but privately. We kindly restore them in the spirit of meekness (Galatians 6:1).

God's grace is unsearchable, inexhaustible, and unfathomable. We give it to those who fall, and it teaches them how to stop sinning and how to live without the type of sin that they are in. When they do come through, we will not remember what they did anymore—even if it was something done against us. They are just as

wonderful in our eyes as they ever were before—because of this grace.

Chapter Three

PREPARED TO SHARE IN AN ETERNAL PURPOSE

This grace is what motivates me to win souls. A precious grace message is in my heart, and it cannot wait to come out when I go soul winning. Getting people saved and making them disciples is why we are on earth. The progression goes like this: I get saved, I get disciplined, I win someone else to the Lord, and I disciple him. He goes out, he wins another person to God, and he disciplines that one. That one then goes and gets someone else saved. He grows into a disciple and wins someone to Christ. That is how things in heaven multiply.

Many people have come to know God because of the testimony of our lives (2 Corinthians 3:2). Some people are living epistles on the job. Their testimonies are magnificent, and the Holy Spirit begins His tender work of conviction in others through their lives. What a beautiful

work it is.

A woman in our church works in the office of a major company in downtown Baltimore. "Would you come to church with me just one time?" she asked the company president. He and his wife came one Sunday morning, then they came back for that evening's service.

"Thanks for coming out," I said to him while shaking his hand.

"No—thank *you*," he replied. "I couldn't wait to come back tonight."

These folks have been coming to church ever since. That woman did not take advantage by talking about the Lord on company time. She is a great worker who puts in her hours. But she was led by God to ask the president out to church. He saw the fellowship she has in the mystery of grace by her poise and composure at work, and he was drawn by her life, which is hid in God.

This fellowship in the nature of God cannot be comprehended in the natural mind. I am in awe. I marvel that Jesus Christ—my Savior, my Lord, my God, my Healer, my Support, my faithful Friend—loves us, though we are not lovable by nature.

Consider His overwhelming holiness. We

are living before Someone who never sinned. God described Israel as having a head that was sick, a heart that was faint, and a body covered with wounds and bruises and putrifying sores. He declared the entire nation as desolate and wretched (Isaiah 1:2-8). I was in the same condition. But God's answer was *this grace*, for me.

Magnificent Testimonies

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

Every time I drive onto our church property, I marvel, just like a little child, at what God has done for us. We had nothing—no money and no way to acquire anything. But God has provided a wonderful place.

Wherever God calls us, He always has a provision for us. There is always a solution for our problems. No matter what we have done, God has a solution. No matter what mistakes we have made, no matter what sicknesses we might have, there is a solution as far as grace goes.

Fulfilling an Eternal Intention

"To the intent that now unto the principal-

ties and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

“According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:10-11).

The Greek text of verse 10 contains an infinitive clause expressing a goal and a purpose. Simply, our fellowship in the mystery of this grace has always had an eternal intention. The intention is to reveal the greatness of God’s grace in the angelic conflict (1 Corinthians 4:9).

The angels must have rejoiced the day that Mary, without having known a man, conceived Jesus in her womb. Yet, they cannot comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height of God’s love revealed by this grace because they do not have an old sin nature. The angels cannot fully appreciate the transforming power of grace, yet they desire to look into the fruit of it (1 Peter 1:12). That is why they rejoice at every salvation (Luke 15:7) and whenever a sinner is delivered, as when a drug addict comes clean by the power of the Holy Spirit who is within him.

Of course, Satan’s army of demons is watching, too. They saw a grace that could not be exhausted, grace that is unsearchable, as it was

expressed to Paul. They watched him fellowship in the mystery of it, and they have had to watch the power of Christ, the power of love, and the power of transformation that has worked in people's lives throughout the age of the Church. This grace makes the demons realize that they are totally defeated.

The Church is the theater that plays out the glory of God and His eternal work. It is such an object of interest to the angels. God uses us—sinners saved by grace—to define for the angels what it means to have grace on every side. Through the Church, they see the vastness of God's nature, the indescribable principle of God's program of salvation. And because of the manifold grace expressed in manifold wisdom, both men and angels can see how great this grace is.

Manifold grace enables us to stay on the King's highway. The stumbling blocks have been removed out of our way. Our fellowship in the mystery of this grace keeps us on the right way. It is a testimony to people and to the principalities and powers watching us. It is the ultimate manifestation of what God has done.

CONCLUSION

“Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king’s highway, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders” (Numbers 20:17).

“The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul” (Proverbs 16:17).

“And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people” (Isaiah 57:14).

See the value of keeping on with God. Just keep on! Don’t worry about your circumstances. Get up in the morning and keep going on. Stay on the King’s highway. Don’t go on the broad road of the world, which leads to death and destruction. Just keep on going forward with God. Do not become weary in well doing (Galatians

6:9). Endure hardness as a good soldier, and do not allow yourself to become entangled again in this world (2 Timothy 2:3, 4).

Just keep on. Pray and don't faint (Luke 18:1). Let us run the race with patience, always considering Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. He endured the Cross, despising its shame, for the joy that was set before Him.

Now He is seated at the right hand of God: the Lord Jesus Christ, the One with whom we fellowship. This grace has made it possible for us to relate to Him every moment of every day. Keep on witnessing, keep on praying, keep on loving God. Build yourself up in these sacred truths. Just keep going on with Christ, manifesting the mystery of this great grace.