



CrossRoads Notes:

Turn your Bibles to 1 Peter 4:10

Title: Grace Living

Theme: Walking in God's Amazing Grace

Series: Living in the Aroma of God's Grace

1 Peter 4:10, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10) Pray!!!!

Introduction: *God's grace is the most expensive gift there is.* Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price on the Cross of Calvary and today we are going to participate in an ordinance given to the Body of Christ, "Communion," to help us remember that cost. Hebrews 9:22 says, "In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." (Hebrews 9:22) Someone has to pay the price of sin. The cost for the person who committed the sin is separation from God, which leads to broken fellowship with the Triune God and a life surrendered to self-will and a life of bondage. The great news is that Jesus paid the only price that would be accepted and His sacrifice broke the power of sin, setting free those who were once held in bondage. I recently read this phrase in a message put together by Rick Warren, "Grace is God's Riches at Christ's Expense."

The application for the word "gift" (*charisma*) in 1 Peter 4:10 is the special ability given to Christians for the purpose of edifying the Body of Christ. Every Christian has a calling and there is empowerment sent from the "Throne of Grace" to accomplish all that God ordains each Christian to do.

Proposition: *I would propose to you that Christians are to be good stewards of the grace and gifts that the Holy Spirit has given them.* 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2) These gifts also include home and property and any open door of opportunity that has been given to you.

Interrogative Sentence: *Just what is involved in "Grace Living?"*

Transitional Sentence: *First, Christians who live in the aroma of God's grace shine like stars drawing attention to the works of Christ in a sin-stricken world.* Therefore, they are hungry for Paul's instructions in Philippians 2:12-13, "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed -- ...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose." (Philippians 2:12-13)

Walking in God's amazing grace begins with being hungry to receive the life of Christ within us. Not only was Jesus humble enough to leave the abode of God and walk this

sin-stricken world, He had the heart of obedience. Philippians 2:8 says this about Jesus Christ, “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on the cross.” (Philippians 2:8)

Mark Twain wrote, “Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.” Perhaps the most annoying thing about a good example is the fact in our own strength we cannot follow the example of someone else. The fact is admiration for a person who is a good example can only inspire us, it cannot enable us. Unless that person can enter into our spirit and take control of our hearts and share his specific gifts, we cannot attain to that person’s heights of accomplishments. It takes more than an example on the outside; it takes allowing someone inside who is able to give us their power before we can achieve what they have achieved.

A “disciple” (*mathetes*) means to be a pupil of some teacher. The practical application for this message is the acceptance in mind, views, practices and life of Jesus Christ. (The New International Dictionary of the Bible) Personal Salvation in Christ’s Name brings with it responsibilities which Paul relates to Christian obedience. Therefore the first principle to “Grace Living” is a heart that is hungry for obedience to the Words of Christ accomplished only by allowing the Holy Spirit of Christ into our hearts and life. He must be the one who enables us. Trying to achieve it on our own accord leads to dead religion which is what happened to the religious leaders of Jesus’ day.

Once Christians are hungry for a heart of obedience to Christ they can walk in the empowering of the Holy Spirit to achieve their high calling. Christians are to “...continue to work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling...” To “work out” (*katergazesthe*) means to pray a task through to completion.

This is a special direction from the Holy Spirit and it is stated forcefully like a coach would yell out to his team to perform a certain task. Christians are to put into practice daily what the Lord Jesus had placed in their hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit.

The truth worth grasping in this part of the message is “Sanctification.” “Sanctification” is the presence of the Holy Spirit taking the Word of God and doing a cleansing work in born again Christians, of which they more and more are being changed into the image of Christ.

Christians who express “Grace Living” will take great care and circumspection in their growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Christians die to themselves for the Christ they love who enables them to enjoy true pleasure in this life. Reverent fear causes Christians to not lean upon their own understanding of things, or just go along in life doing what seems right in their own eyes. No, they want to know what God’s will is, get the Lord’s perspective on what righteous living is and to feel Lord’s presence within them.

Paul tells the Body of Christ that God works in them so they can have a desire to do His will and accomplish His good purposes. The Greek word for “works” (*energeo*)

means to be supernaturally energized and enabled to accomplish God's purpose through Christ-like character. (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament; The Complete Word Study of the New Testament; Word Meanings of the New Testament; Vines; Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon; Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains; Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains) The Christian life has tremendous potential for God and Christ. When Christians live by the leading of the Holy Spirit they have real joy and peace achieving God's purposes.

There are no shortcuts in this matter of "Grace Living." It is through prayerful reading of God's Word and a full surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Christians who live out the grace of God upon their lives seek out good Godly counsel from Christians who have proven themselves faithful to exercise the "grace gifts" sacrificially for the good of others.

Transitional Sentence: *Living in the aroma of God's grace enables Christians to live out a positive active response to the Spirit of Christ working in them.* Walking in the "Amazing Grace of God" empowers Christians to administer the various forms of God's grace or gifts. 1 Peter 4:11 is Holy Spirit inspired to instruct Christians on how to live in the aroma of God's grace. The Apostle Peter exhorts us with, "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it in the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ..." (1 Peter 4:11)

There is nothing more encouraging than getting the whole counsel of God's Word from someone who has been living the grace filled life of God before making a decision. The greatest blessing outside of praying steadfastly for someone is to be able to share the whole council of God's Word on a certain matter. This gift of utterance can express the grace of God publicly, privately, or in Christian ministry to the sick.

In Closing: *Gracing Living begins with the understanding of the cost paid for us on the Cross of Calvary, "Grace is God's Riches at Christ's Expense."*

One of the most influential Christians who exhibited "Grace Living" and touches lives as powerfully today as he did in the late 1700 and early 1800's is John Newton, the writer of "Amazing Grace." His own evaluation of himself was, "a wretch who was once lost but then was found, saved by amazing grace."

God's grace began in Newton's life through his mother, who died when John was a child, but not before she had given him some Christian training. Like most young people he gave up his mother's Christian teaching and surrendered to a life of bondage that led him to be abused, become a servant on a slave ship and eventually the captain of his own ship that also carried slaves.

While living a life that had given up Christian convictions, God allowed him to experience His grace once more, no doubt because of the prayers of his mother.

While steering his ship through a violent storm, John Newton experienced what he called his "great deliverance." He recorded in his journal that when all seemed lost and the ship would surely sink, "I prayed, 'Lord, have mercy upon us.'" God answered that prayer and as he sat in his cabin John became convinced it was God's grace that got them through. For the rest of his life he observed May

10, 1748 as the day of his conversion, a day of humiliation in which he subjected his will to God's directions.

During his days as a sailor he had begun to educate himself, teaching himself Latin, among other subjects. After serious health problems he quit sailing and finally ended up where he could become a disciple of Christ through teachings of George Whitefield, evangelistic preacher and leader of the Calvinistic Methodist Church. He also became influenced by the Biblical teachings of John Wesley. The "Grace Living" of these two great men of God inspired John Newton to learn Greek and Hebrew.

After persistence, John became an ordained preacher of the Word of God. Many were influenced by his teaching and writings about the Word of God, by his speaking in the local church and holding meetings in other places. He started weekly prayer meetings and became the author of over 280 Hymns. Hymns that speak for the Word of God through songs like, "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds," "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken" and one of his favorites, "Amazing Grace."

John preached until the last year of his life even though by this time in his life he was blind. John Newton knew the grace of God upon his life and he extended "Grace Living" by exercising his Spiritual gifts diligently.

"Amazing Grace" was not the original title to that great Hymn so loved and use of God today. The first edition of this hymn was in Olney Hymns under the title, "Faith's Review and Expectation," along with 1 Chronicles 17:16-17 which reflect the heart of John Newton, "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant. You have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men, O LORD God." These were the Words of King David, who exhibited "Grace Living."

Christians who exhibit "Grace Living" have the heart of King David who sat before God in prayer saying these very words, "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant." Christians are amazed at God's grace and grasp His plan to use them and prosper them according to His good purposes. "Grace Living" enables Christians to grasp God's grace for them which always says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Let us pray!