



21 June 2024

Living by Grace

We know and love the hymn,

Amazing grace!

How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!

God's great, marvelous grace.

God's grace is His favor that He freely gives us.

Our sinfulness and sin separate us from God. The apostle Paul clearly and emphatically tells us in Galatians chapter 5 that sinners will not inherit the kingdom of God and, in Romans chapter 6, "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

As sinners we don't deserve God's grace. Paul wrote in Romans chapter 5, "while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly ... while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (6, 8).

We can't earn it. Our best efforts "are like a filthy garment" in God's eyes, as Isaiah wrote. Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 2, "a person is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus ... by works of the Law no flesh [person] will be justified" (16).

Grace is God's gift of His favor. We are humbled by it. We celebrate and are thankful for God's great grace is cleansing us from our sin and giving us eternal life with Him through Jesus Christ who died for us.

But that is not the end of God's grace to believers. His grace is the kingdom or realm in which we now live, now stand, as we are told in Romans chapter 5 verse 2. The question for each of us is

"Since I am in the realm of God's grace, am I actually *living by grace*?"

Paul put the question bluntly to believers in the churches in Galatia,

"This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (1:2-3)

We can fall back to *the old fashioned way* of trying to make our own way, to earn our way to growth and service rather than relying on God's grace.



Living by grace begins with understanding something of the grace God offers us as His children. Just a few quick points:

First, every believer receives “grace upon grace,” as we read in John chapter 1. God’s abundant, constant supply of favor.

Then, it is God’s grace that enables us to come to Him in prayer, to His throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16).

It is God through His “word of grace” that teaches us, builds us up, enables us to grow to being more like Christ.

It is God’s grace that equips us for and enables us to serving Him.

It is God’s grace that makes us what we are, as Paul said, “by the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Corinthians 15:10).

It is God’s grace that enables us to live holy, godly, sincere lives (2 Corinthians 1:2).

It is God’s grace that takes us through the most difficult times, through our greatest times of need (2 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 4:16).

And I have not touched on us being a channel of God’s grace to others — that will be for another time.

So then, in light of all of this and much more, how do we *live by grace*? Just three basic and familiar points to get us going:

Review and renew your commitment to present yourself as a sacrifice to God. Affirm and consciously live out God being your Lord, the source of all that you need by His grace. Follow the lesson the apostle Paul learned, “I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me” (Romans 15:18). Make this a regular discipline of your life.

Another vital discipline, keep in touch with God through prayer and reading, meditating on, studying and living His word.

Regularly look for, review, and even record how you have experienced God’s grace of teaching and leading you, of providing for you, of the steps of growth He has brought about in you.

Live by grace!

Pastor Lyle