A few weeks ago we looked at the big subject of The will of God. A subject that we find difficult to understand if what we are doing is the will of God for our lives. For those of us who are following the Lord Jesus and are in a living vital relationship with Him, we can often look back and see how God has moved in our lives and see the hand of God in our lives.

We looked at six tests to help us understand this subject better and measure our actions against them. They were

1. Surrender your personal desires
2. Meditate on God’s word
3. Spend focused time in prayer
4. Seek other peoples advice
5. Consider your circumstances
6. Think through your decision logically

Today with the Lord’s help I would like to spend a few moments looking at another big subject

The Grace of God.

What it is and how it impacts on our lives. It is an enormous subject and every time I look at it I find a great joy in my heart and above all to know that an insignificant undeserving person like me is a recipient of God’s grace.

The subject of Grace is relevant for today as we are living in the period of time in God’s calendar for the world known as “The day of grace which started at the cross when the Lord Jesus bore the punishment for our sins and will end at His return when he comes again to receive us into heaven to be with him throughout eternity! What an opportunity you have today to experience first hand the grace of God in your life!

First of all what is grace ?

Grace is a constant theme in the Bible, and it culminates in the New Testament with the coming of Jesus ( John 1 v 17)Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ The word translated "grace” in the New Testament comes from the Greek word charis which means “favour, blessing, or kindness.” We can all extend grace to others; but when the word *grace* is used in connection with God, it takes on a more powerful meaning. Grace is God choosing to bless us rather than curse us as our sin deserves. It is His benevolence to the undeserving.

The theologian John Calvin describes it as “Irresistable “

In his five points of doctrine.

The slave ship captain John Newton called it “Amazing”

In the hymn that he wrote after his conversion.

 In Ephesians 2 v 8 we read, “For by grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the free gift of God” The only way any of us can enter into a relationship with God is because of His grace toward us. Can I challenge you this morning and ask you if you have experienced the saving grace of the Lord Jesus in your life? Have you been drawn by this irresistible grace as John Calvin described it?

 Grace began in the Garden of Eden when God killed an animal to cover the sin of Adam and Eve

Genesis 3 v 21He could have killed the first humans right then for their disobedience. But rather than destroy them, He chose to make a way for them to be right with Him. That pattern of grace continued throughout the Old Testament when God instituted blood sacrifices as a means to atone for sinful men. It was not the physical blood of those sacrifices, per se, that cleansed sinners; it was the grace of God that forgave those who trusted in Him Genesis 15 v 6 Sinful men showed their faith by offering the sacrifices that God required.

The apostle Paul began many of his letters with the phrase, "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" Romans 1 v 7 Ephesians 1 v 1 1 Corinthians 1 v 3 God is the instigator of grace, and it is from Him that all other grace flows.

God shows both mercy and grace, but they are not the same. Mercy withholds a punishment we deserve; grace gives a blessing we don’t deserve. In mercy, God chose to cancel our sin debt by sacrificing His perfect Son in our place2 Corinthians 5 v 21 But He goes even further than mercy and extends grace to His enemies He offers us forgiveness, reconciliation ,abundant life ,eternal treasure, His Holy Spirit , and a place in heaven with Him some day when we accept His offer and place our faith in His sacrifice.

* **Grace is the basis for Our Christian identity**: “By the grace of God I am what I am.” Paul said in his letter to the church at Corinth. As I said earlier as a result of being saved by God’s grace we now have an identity with Christ . Are we happy today to be identified as a Christian? Like Paul are we proud to say that we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ? Are we proud today of our identity as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ ?
* **Grace is the basis for Our standing before God**: “this grace in which we stand Romans 5 v 2 To have a relationship with the God of heaven, to be sons and daughters of the living God. What a position we have today. As children of God!
* **Grace is the basis for Our holiness**: God“called us to a holy calling … because of his own purpose and grace.” Do we seek to live a holy life before God? Paul in his letter to Timothy,exhorts,encourages him to live a holy life in Christ. We have been called to this holy calling by God and His grace helps us daily to live a holy life
* **Grace is the basis for Our way of speaking**: Paul in his letter to the church at Collose told them “Let your speech always be gracious.” How important an exhortation is this. Let your speech always be gracious. How much hurt is caused in our society today by angry words. On social media children at a young age sending vicious comments and sadly as a result some people fearful for their lives and some even committing suicide. Do we think before we speak? Is our language to one another gracious? Sadly over the years in churches I have seen harsh words damage people, young people who have watched wars of words taking place in churches and rightly asking where is the love of Christ in all this and becoming disillusioned with church.Lets take the words of Paul and apply them to our own lives today. Let us think before we speak and let our manner of speaking to each other always be gracious. We may be right but let us like Paul speak the truth in love.
* )
* **Grace is the basis for Our response to difficulty and suffering**: We get “grace to help in time of need,” Hebrews 4 v 16 Sometimes in our Christian lives we go through dark days. We experience difficulties and sometimes we face mountains that we look at and wonder how we are going to climb them. It might be that medical diagnosis , it might be loss of employment, it might be the loss of a loved one and we do not know where to go what to do. Look what the writer to the Hebrews says. “Go to the throne of Grace” Unburden your heart to the Lord and you will be amazed at what God can do. As I look around the audience today I am sure there are many who can testify to the power of the throne of grace where they found help in their time of extremity. Regardless of what you are facing bring it to the throne of grace and I am confident that you will find the resource that you need to face the trial or difficulty that you may be experiencing.
* **Grace is the basis for our participation in God’s mission**: As recipients of grace we are called to testify to the grace of God Acts 20 v 24 That’s challenging ! When was the last time we spoke to someone about the Gospel? Do we ask the Lord to grant us an opportunity to witness ? I find this a real challenge in my personal life;. Its easy to stand here today in a safe environment and talk about these things. But what about tomorrow when I am back in the workplace? When I am in an environment that’s perhaps hostile to the gospel. Are we like Peter denying we know the Lord Jesus? Let us make this our prayer for today that this week the Lord may grant us an opportunity to testify to the grace that we have experienced in coming to know the Lord Jesus. Lets be proud of our identity as Christians. And lastly
* **Grace is the basis for Our future**: God, and his grace, is everlasting. “Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1 v 13 This is our hope as Christians . The coming again of the Lord Jesus . He promised that He will come again and receive us into his presence and so shall we ever be with the Lord! What a prospect and let us live with anticipation and joy in our hearts and be ready to be received up into heaven to be forever with the Lord

In summary

Grace is God giving the greatest treasure to the least deserving—which is every one of us.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all”

Revelation 22 v 21

Amen

[s](https://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=https://www.christianity.com/theology/what-is-grace.html)