

GOD'S GRACE IN ACTION

Grace is the free and unmerited favor or beneficence of God. Grace is love in action; a disposition to kindness and compassion. Grace is a state of sanctification by God; the state of one who is under such divine influence. Grace is a word that shows the largeness of God's heart toward mankind. Grace motivates and manifests God's forgiveness. Grace declares man justified—righteous before God—by faith. Grace is good news; the expression of God's loving concern for you and me. Grace is compounded of God's love, compassion, mercy, and sacrifice toward the world.

Since we're talking about grace, I want to begin by telling you a joke. If you don't like it, remember, GRACE.

Three men died and wound up in heaven. They were greeted in heaven and told there was only one thing you need to do while you're in heaven; avoid stepping on any ducks. And they thought to themselves stepping ducks that seems awfully odd, but we can do that.

Then they were told that if you happen to step on a duck you won't like the consequences. And so they began their journey in heaven. Sure enough, after a month or so as they looked around, there were ducks everywhere.

They walked very carefully and lo and behold as they walked around heaven, one of them made a mistake and stepped on a duck. And poof, instantly there was this absolutely ugly woman chained to this guy and he was told, *You will live with her for eternity. Don't step on the ducks!*

The other two began to tremble in fear and they were very careful where they walked. About six months later the second man made a mistake and stepped on a duck and poof, chained to him was another ugly woman for eternity.

The last man is just beside himself in fear. He is absolutely careful not to step on a duck and as he is walking in heaven one day poof, all the sudden this beautiful woman is chained to him and he asked, *What happen to you? How did you get here?*

And she says, *"I don't know, I was just walking along and I stepped on a duck!"*

In Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT) Paul gives us one of the clearest definitions of grace. Paul said, *God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a*

gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. God saved you by His grace; a special favor when you believed.

The Bible is filled with stories about the grace of God. I want you to fix your eyes upon the marvelous picture of you and me coming before God, crippled and diseased and yet he welcomes us to come and feast in His kingdom. Grace is received by faith. Everyone is a candidate to receive the grace of God. God doesn't play favorites. Everyone can come to God if they just receive the gift that he gives them. God makes his grace available to everyone of us.

Grace is extended throughout eternity. Heaven is God's gift to us for eternity. But one catch, you must accept it. A wrapped gift will never be enjoyed if not unwrapped and used. God is offering you his gift of grace through his son, Jesus Christ.

Everyone has had a life torn and tattered by sin. I don't care how good you are, you cannot be good enough, to enter into heaven on your own. There is sin in your life and it has torn and affected your life, and the only way you can come to God is by Christ. You hide your life in Jesus Christ! And as you hide your life in Christ, all God will then see is Jesus Christ in your life because your torn and tattered life will be covered by his blood.

Romans 6:23 says, *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.* The life that God wants to bring to us filled with grace is a life that will be carried on into eternity.

Perhaps you need God's enabling grace as power to overcome failure in your life. Such grace is God working in you. It is available strength. Not your own, but God—by faith. It may be that trials in the form of suffering weigh you down. Are you burdened with disappointment, pain and sickness? Come, and you will find God's sustaining grace will be enough.

Perhaps you are carrying anger or bitterness against another for a wrong done to you and it is a heavy chain dragging you down. You can't seem to get rid of it. Come this moment and enter into the presence of God and give it all to him. Walk in the miracle of divine grace. As God forgave, He will put forgiveness into your heart. Such is God's amazing grace.

The willing grace of God is able, available, and sufficient to meet your need, whatever that need may be. Come to the heart of God, the heart of grace and walk from this day forward in that grace given to us through Jesus. **UNWRAP YOUR GIFT AND USE IT.**

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us. Search our hearts and draw us to you. Heal our wounds and draw us into your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.