

**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:** OUR PRAYER and God's mercy are like two buckets in a well; while one ascends, the other descends. ~Hopkins.

KIND ~ The Christian surely means to be considerate and kind in Heaven! but why not here on earth and in these trying circumstances where perhaps his friends and neighbors need it most? ~ Bolton Jones.

## **THE SPIRIT OF GRACE**

### **Exodus chapter 32 through 34**

In the *Hayford's Bible Handbook*, the complete companion for Spirit-Filled Bible Study, Jack writes the definition of Grace—favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and in spite of what that same person deserves. He says that Grace is one of the key attributes of God, so we see that it is almost always associated with mercy, love, compassion, and patience; a source of help in time of need for deliverance from distress.

If you have been a Christian for any amount of time, I am sure that you have heard sermons on Grace in one form or another. I know as a Minister, Counselor and Teacher, I speak about grace time and time again. In Counseling, it is one of the most powerful tools we can use against the enemy. It goes into those areas where unforgiveness has taken root and is holding the person captive in anger and bitterness; it forms a death grip and only the grace of God can loosen it. When a person chooses to give grace to another who has hurt them, to forgive, grace comes into play and victory is on the way.

In Exodus, the story of Moses is a wonderful example of God's grace in action. You remember that Moses went to the mountain where God gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. (31:18)

When Moses came off the mountain he saw that the Israelites were dancing before the golden calf. *So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. Then he took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it. (32:19-20)* (Drinking the gold dust was to serve as a sign to the people that the golden image was totally destroyed). Then he address his brother Aaron, and his lack of authority and control; Aaron had not restrained the people.

Moses went to the mountain the next day with the intentions of asking the Lord's forgiveness for the people's sins and to offer himself as a sacrifice in their stead; grace in action. God and Moses talk and finally *the Lord said to Moses, Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke.* Exodus 34:1

The next morning Moses went up Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone. *And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty... .."* (34:4-7)

Exodus 33:17, *So the Lord said to Moses, I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.*" Even though Moses when he saw the Israelites worshiping the golden calf became angry and threw down the tablets and broke them, still God's grace covered him. We do see that although God did relent and was moved to pity, God's decision was not totally reversed, merely tempered. His presence did lead the people but the Lord plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made. Read chapters 32-34; then pray and let the marvelous truth of God grace, mercy, love and compassion be revealed as you tuck it away in your heart. Also let these chapters alert you to the foolishness of turning aside from what God has told you to do to follow your own selfish desires. Punishment for willful sin may be temporarily stayed, but it is clear to us in reading these chapters that it is important for individual, personal repentance.

God has been speaking to my heart on the word grace. Grace is only five letters long, but full of authority and power. As we learn to embrace grace into our daily life, we will see positive changes in our behavior and attitudes toward self and others; our lives will change for the better. A positive attitude brings victory, freedom, and peace, so why would we not choose grace to be an attribute in our lives?

What happens when you choose in your personal life to daily walk in God's grace? When you wake up in the morning and before your feet hit the floor, you take a few moments to commit to walk in grace for the day? What happens? Peace will cover you; the peace of God that the world can not understand. You will find yourself walking not only in God's grace, but you will be releasing compassion, mercy, love, and forgiveness, to others; your spirit will soar within you. No! It is not a fantasy or a figment of your imagination, it is God's truth. It can and will happen if you so choose to embrace grace.

The grace of God is a wonderful gift that is freely given by God and we his people receive it through repentance and faith. Mal. 1:9, *But now entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us.* We are to humbly seek grace through the prayer of faith. We should never take God's grace for granted although it is always free and undeserved.

The grace of God is seen through the sacrifice of Jesus as revealed through salvation. Romans 5:8, *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Salvation is not something that can be earned or merited; it can be received only as a gift of grace. Grace does not stand alone, it is coupled with faith. Therefore we must trust in the mercy and favor of God.

Roman 5:15, *But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.*

Throughout history we see God's gracious gift given to man, but Jesus brought the gospel of grace into the world through the work on the Cross and the sacrifice of His life for man's sins. John 1:17, *For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

There is more than enough of God's grace to go around and God's grace is sufficient! God can meet your every need, whatever the need may be. For we all at times are weighed down with a variety of burdens as we journey through life. Paul wrote that *the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant.* Romans 5:20, *Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Again in looking up the word abounded, I see that the word means: be abundant or plentiful; exist in large quantities, bursting and the word that really hits the bull's eye to me is galore!

God is not only gracious in providing a salvation for us, but He is also gracious in rewarding both the one who seeks God and the one who serves Him. *He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.* (Hebrews 1:6) We are blessed in that as children of God, we are born into His family, then we become partakers of His nature, and then we enjoy His favor and grace. God blesses the righteous and surrounds him with favor. We see those examples in the Old and the New Testament. (Samuel as a child, Ruth, Moses, Paul and the list goes on)

The next time you are suffering intensely from your distress and in desperation cry out to God, *Why me, God?* You may receive this amazing and disappointing answer from God-*Why not you?* We need to realize that God in His grace has a purpose for the dark places and sufferings in life. The more we press into God, we can go from questioning doubt to courageous acceptance, as we move from fear into faith.

God's grace is extended to sinful man. It is His unmerited favor, undeserved blessing. Grace is His free gift. May we never take God's grace lightly. Consider the definition of GRACE: favor, graciousness, kindness, beauty, pleasantness, charm, attractiveness, loveliness, affectionate regard which is freely given, then choose to walk in it and honor God and Jesus.

Always remember child of God this Word of Promise – *My grace is sufficient for you!*