

# The Riches of His Grace - as Seen Through Paul

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon explores the concept of grace and how it is the explanation of Paul's life and ministry, highlighting its significance in the Bible and the speaker's personal experience.*

**Duration:** 1:03:38

**Topics:** "Salvation By Grace", "Spiritual Freedom"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the impossibility of achieving salvation through human effort. He shares his personal experience of being burdened by sin and trying to reform himself through reading the Bible, prayer, and church attendance. However, he ultimately finds freedom and forgiveness when the Spirit of God quickens his spirit and he receives the unsearchable riches of God's grace. The speaker encourages the audience to trust in Christ alone for salvation and to recognize the burden of sin that we all carry.

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## Transcript

Our Father, how we praise and thank Thee for Thy presence with us throughout the day. We do thank Thee that Thou hast turned our heart, our attention, unto Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And we do see in Him the fullness of the Godhead.

Oh, how we praise and thank Thee that Thou hast given Thy Son even to us. We, the chief of sinners, that He should become our portion. We do want to declare before principalities and authorities that our cup runneth over.

We do rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, Father, as we gather together again this night, we do desire that Thy presence shall continue with us. We do desire that by Thy Spirit Thou will turn our hearts fixed upon Thy Son.

That truly we may see no one but Jesus only. Oh, how we praise and thank Thee that Thou art the only one who is worthy to be noticed, who is worthy to be seen and to be heard. And do we do desire to hear Thee, to see Thee, and to be occupied, possessed by Thee.

So, Lord, once again we commit ourselves to Thee. We commit this time into Thy hand. We do trust Thy Holy Spirit to reveal the Son in us, that we may be led into that unsearchable riches that is of Christ.

We ask in the precious name of our Lord Jesus and for His glory. Amen. I believe, dear brothers and sisters, you agree with me that the Lord has been good to us and He has been speaking to us through our brothers.

Our brother has helped us to sharpen our focus upon the one thing, or may we say upon that one person, even our Lord Jesus Christ. And then, this morning, our brother Sparks unfolded to us the unsearchable riches of the grace of Christ. How that God, in His great mercy towards us, that He should give us grace, delivering us from shame unto glory.

I do feel that God has done two impossible things. On the one hand is that impossible situation that we were in. As our brother has told us, David, and in a sense, all of us, we were even outside of the pale of Levitical sacrifice.

We had got ourselves into a situation, an impossible situation. We could not get out ourselves. Nobody can help us out.

We were there in that impossible place. And yet, grace has delivered us out of that impossible. And brothers and sisters, I think, on the other hand, there is another impossible state that is glory.

The glory that belongs to God, to God alone. And who can share, who can enter into that glory? It's impossible. It's beyond human effort.

And yet, grace has uplifted us and has brought us into glory. Brothers and sisters, my heart rejoices in the fact that grace, the unsearchable riches of His grace, has done these things possible. And you know, after the morning session, I went out and a few brothers met me.

And they said, Brother Cohn, we wonder what is left for you to say. I do rejoice in the Lord that our brother has said what I am thinking of saying tonight. I rejoice because our brother could say it much, much better.

Fuller, deeper than I can ever try to. I asked myself what is left for me to say. I remember years ago when I was in Bangkok, Thailand.

I had a friend there who had a store. And the name of their store is Grace Limited Partnership. Now brothers and sisters, if we know anything of grace, that word limited is the very contradiction of grace.

Our brother has been showing us the unlimitedness of grace. And yet this store is called Grace Limited Partnership. And brothers and sisters, in a sense, I feel that that's what I am.

God shares His grace, His grace with us. And His grace is unlimited. But when He shares His grace with me, I feel that I tend to limit His grace.

And it becomes Grace Limited Partnership. So brothers and sisters, if tonight I'm trying to say something a little bit on this matter of grace, maybe from another angle. Now if you feel that it is limited, remember that it is this partner that limits grace.

The other partner has unlimited capital. And brothers and sisters, I do desire that God would deliver us out of that limitation in us. And because of that limitation in us, oh how we limit God Himself.

May the Lord be merciful to us. Deliver us from our limitedness. That we may enter into that unlimited partnership with Him.

May we turn to a few places in the Bible. Ephesians chapter 1, we'll read from verse 3 through verse 7. Ephesians chapter 1, verse 3 through verse 7. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, according as He has chosen us in Him before the world's foundations, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. Having marked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has taken us into favor in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the richest.

1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 10. 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 10. But by God's grace I am what I am, and His grace which was towards me hath not been vain, but I have labored more abundantly than they all, but not I. For the grace of God, which walketh in Corinthians chapter 1, verse 12.

2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 12. For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and sincerity before God, not in fleshly wisdom, but in God's grace, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly towards Him. And the last place will be 2 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 9. That most familiar verse.

2 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 9. And He said to me, My grace suffices thee, for my power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell. Now, dear brothers and sisters, when you take up that letter to the Ephesians, you will find there is one word repeated many times in that short epistle.

And that is the word grace. If you try to count how many times that word grace is used in that epistle, you will find, if I am wrong, please correct me, you will find 12 times in that short epistle, that word grace is being mentioned. It is mentioned in chapter 1, verse 2, verse 6, verse 7. In chapter 2, verse 5, 7 and 8. In chapter 3, verse 2, 7 and 8. In chapter 4, verse 7 and 29.

And in chapter 6, verse 24. So there you will find that word grace is used 12 times in this short epistle. Paul begins his letter with a greeting of grace.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. And he concludes his letter with saying grace with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption. In other words, you will find that in the heart and mind of Paul, that word grace and what that word represents looms very large before him.

Grace. All of grace. From the beginning to the end it is grace.

It is pure grace. The whole life and ministry of Paul may be summed up by this one word, grace. He is called by the grace of God.

He is saved by God's grace. He receives the forgiveness of his offenses according to the riches of the grace of Christ. He is called to serve the Lord by grace being given to him.

He is enabled to suffer. It is because of grace. He has love and faith towards Jesus Christ.

It is due to the grace of God. And he said, I am what I am by the grace, brothers and sisters. With Paul, grace is everything.

Grace explains his life and grace explains his ministry. If you take away the grace of God from him, there is nothing left. But that's Pharisees by the name of Saul.

And you remember when he wrote that letter to the Galatians, how he drew their attention to his former life. And he said, you know that formerly, my conversation, my conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted violently the church of God, determined to destroy it, and how I was more advanced than people of my age, being extremely zealous for the tradition of the fathers. Oh, brothers and sisters, you listen to Paul.

Before he knew grace, what was he? He was zealous, energetic, active, in Judaism, more advanced than those contemporaries of it. And yet there you'll find that man, in the flesh, with tremendous drive, could do many things, thinking that he was serving God, and yet he was going the opposite direction. He was an enemy of God, a rabble, the chief of sinners.

That was the kind of man Paul was, before he met grace. And then he said, God who knew him, even before he was born, call him by his name. Dear brothers and sisters, if we ask Paul, how is it that you become a Paul? How is it that from a rabble, you become a child of God? How is it from a sinner, you become a saint? Who changes you? What happens to you? The only thing Paul can tell us is grace.

The grace of God. He cannot explain this by anything that is in himself. Anything that is in him is contrary to what has become of him.

After he has met the Lord, everything that is in him will lead him further and further away from God, and get deeper and deeper into what is himself. There is nothing in him that can explain the life and ministry of Paul. Nothing.

Absolutely nothing. His being born a Hebrew of the Hebrews does not explain that. His being circumcised on the eighth day does not explain that.

He belongs to the tribe of Benjamin does not explain that. He belongs to the sect of Pharisees does not explain that. His sit at the foot of Gamaliel does not explain that.

His being overzealous does not explain that. His persecuting the church certainly does not explain that. Dear brothers and sisters, nothing in Paul, that is Paul himself, can explain a single bit of what has become of him after he has been met.

But, on the contrary, every bit of his life, no matter which direction you are looking at, whether it is Paul at prayer, or Paul at work, whether he is alone, or whether he is with people, his personal life, his relationship with others, his concern for the church, his being in prison, everything and anything in the life and ministry of Paul can be traced to the grace. There you will find it begins and there you will find it ends. Grace is the explanation of the life of Paul.

Dear brothers and sisters, what is grace? Our brother told us this morning that no one can define grace. I fully agree with that statement. People try to explain what grace is.

Maybe you are able to explain that word in the Greek if you are a Greek scholar. But if you want to explain grace according to the thought of God, it is beyond description. It is unsearchable because it is the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Those Greek scholars tell us this word grace is first of all the property that is in a thing which gives joy and pleasure to those who hear and who see. It is a joy inspiring property inherent in a thing or in a person. And of course to the Greeks nothing gave them more joy than beauty.

So they put beauty and grace together. Then Greek scholars continue to tell us gradually that word takes upon itself a deeper meaning. And that is it tells us more than that property or quality that is inherent in that thing or person that will cause joy to other people.

But gradually that word grace means the thing or the person. Greek scholars tell us and also they tell us that there is an element in grace and it is the element of being freely given. It is not something that is a debt.

It is not something that is a reward, a payment of some work. It is a free outflowing spontaneous gracious act towards those who are undeserving unlovely and that is grace. And furthermore Greek scholars will tell us that there is still another element in grace and that is because of the gracious act that comes upon the person who receives it.

It is so gracious, so beautiful, it gives so much joy that it inspires a thankfulness unto the one who gives it. So it comes back in grace. Now brothers and sisters these are the different meanings of grace as Greek scholars but dear brothers and sisters do not limit grace to its word.

When that word is taken up by the Spirit of God and applies it to our Lord Jesus Christ it means much more than the word itself. It is being lifted up, sublimated, glorified and it has become a word that baffles any explanation. Dear brothers and sisters I dare not try to tell you what grace is.

It is impossible. But this evening by the grace of God we will like to look into that understanding of the riches of the grace of God in Christ. Paul's understanding of that grace.

Paul's experience of that grace. When Paul mentions grace what does it mean to him? Of course in the first place we have already mentioned that this man saw being arrested from destruction from shame and be turned around and be pushed in a sense into glory into life eternal. That is grace.

Paul tells us himself the forgiveness of sin is grace. In Romans chapter 3 verse 24 being freely justified by God's grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Oh brothers and sisters Paul says he is justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

He is not justified because he has done so many good things he has fulfilled all the law. He is just free without any cost without doing anything freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And you know when he wrote that letter to the Ephesians in the second chapter how he told us that we all were once dead in sins and transgressions we were following the fashion of this world we were under the rule and dominion of the evil spirit who is now working in the sons of disobedience and we were all in that state and yet God who is rich in mercy has come to our rescue and he has quickened us together with Christ.

He has raised us up from the dead and he has seated us in the heavenlies together in Christ Jesus. And as Paul is describing what God has done for us in Christ Jesus he put in a parenthesis that is he explains it and says we are saved. What is grace? The grace of God has quickened us we were dead in sins and transgressions is it not true that we were dead in sins and transgressions? Of course we were very much alive through sins but we were dead in sins because we were in a condition where there was no sensitivity

to God as our brother mentioned this afternoon.

Our spirit was dead so far as towards God. Maybe we were very active physically we were very keen mentally and yet God said we were dead now. We were dead in sins and transgressions hopeless beyond repair beyond improvement beyond restoration.

And yet dear brothers and sisters He has quickened us He that is born of the Holy Spirit comes to us and quickens our spirit and renewing it making it a new spirit and dear brothers and sisters at that very instant there is a coming at that very instant you do not need anybody to tell you that you are a child of God because the spirit of God witnesses with our spirit our new and quickened spirit that we are true. Brothers and sisters this is grace. A dead person what can it be except it is grace? You may try to improve upon a dying person you may try to restore the health of one who is weakening you may improve his health but who can call a dead person back to life? Give him a new life a new spirit this is grace.

You are saved by grace. Is there anyone here who is still trying to restore himself to life? Who is still trying to regain his connection with God? Who is trying to improve his spirit's health? May I tell you it is a waste of time. Just come and receive the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus.

He alone can quicken you. He alone can connect you with God in a living way. He alone can give you a new life.

Dear brothers and sisters I believe all of us here in more or less degree of intensity once we were under that burden that terrible burden of I do not know about you but I know what happened to me. When I was in my teens humanly speaking I wasn't in that age of thinking of my eternal future. Humanly speaking I should live in the present day and enjoy myself.

But strange for a whole year I was under deep conviction God knows how many tears I shed. Because of my sins I felt the terribleness of my spirit. It weighed upon my conscience.

I woke up in the night and I wondered where would I be if I should die. Dear brothers and sisters under that terrible burden of sin it weighed upon my conscience. I cried out for deliverance.

And brothers and sisters I reformed myself. I read the Bible. I prayed every day.

I faithfully went to church. I was active in Christian service. Whenever there was a revival meeting I was there.

Even when there was final examination I had to go because that burden of sin weighed so heavily. One day when the Spirit of God came and quickened me quickened my spirit. Dear brothers and sisters I received the forgiveness of my sins according to the riches of His glory.

And I can tell you when that thing happened to me the load was gone. I could fly. I was free.

Dear brothers and sisters how thankful I was that God had come to me. I said we may enjoy it in different degree of intensity. According to the different degree of our understanding of the terribleness it is by grace that we are saved.

And if it is by grace then it is through faith. It is not by our work but it is by trusting in the Lord Jesus who has done. Now dear brothers and sisters I believe we have experienced this.

We have experienced the riches of the grace of God in Christ Jesus in the forgiveness. It is rich enough. But dear brothers and sisters as our brother mentioned this morning it is such a wealth that probably it is just the beginning.

And it is. Grace is not limited in the forgiveness of offences. If you read the first chapter of Ephesians you will find Paul says the forgiveness of offences is there.

Oh but always more than that. He has chosen us in him before the world's foundation that we shall be holy and blameless before him in life. Dear brothers and sisters grace is not only a forgiveness of offences that just starts us in grace.

Grace will carry us all the way into glory. That we may be holy and blameless before God in life. We have been marked out beforehand for adoption for sonship.

Oh that we may be sons. The only begotten Son is to be the firstborn. He is to lead many sons to glory.

How does he do that? I believe brothers and sisters we are all looking forward to that day when we shall be led by the Son into glory. But how? It is by grace that we are delivered from shame and carried on into glory. This is the understanding.

Dear brothers and sisters often I feel that we limit the meaning of grace. When we talk about grace it just means the forgiveness of offences. Yes it is grace very gracious offering.

But brothers and sisters is that all? Oh maybe you say no. After I have received the forgiveness of my sin well I was told that I should ask grace before each meal. In other words I know that grace does not stop there.

Ask the forgiveness of my sin. But I do recognize that when I am having my daily meal and as you go on in your life oh you discover then here and there in this need and in that need when you meet this problem and when you meet that problem and when you come to the end of your wit to the end of yourself you realize that you need some grace. It is not only that grace for the forgiveness of your sin but you need special grace for special need.

When you are sick you need the grace of it. When you are in sorrow you need the grace of comfort. When you are in lack you need the grace of supply.

When you are in suffering you need the grace of endurance. When you are put together with someone very special and very difficult you need the grace of patience. Dear brothers and sisters at different occasions at different times as you go along in your lives journey you discover that you need the grace of God here and there and all along.

Oh God give me this grace Oh God give me that grace Hasn't you promised to bless me with all the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus? Now give it to me I need it now. The word of God says that we can come approach boldly to the throne of grace and receive help for all our needs. But dear brothers and sisters is there not a difficulty here that we tend to consider grace as something that God will give to us.

In other words we consider grace as a thing when we need forgiveness of sins and we have tried our best and cannot be forgiven. We give up and say God give me the grace of the forgiveness of sins. You have to give it freely to me because I cannot earn it.

And God has already here it is the forgiveness of sins. I give you this. Then after a while you find that you need the grace to be patient.

Oh you cannot be patient. You cannot be patient with the one who lives with you with the one who works with you and you know as a Christian you ought to be patient because it is a very ugly thing to lose your temper. Certainly it dishonors the Lord if you throw up in a temple a wretch.

That does not look like a Christian. You try to control yourself. There is no self-control.

And when you discover that you cannot control yourself you come to God and say Oh God be gracious to me. Give me the special grace of patience that no matter how my colleagues will stimulate me and stir me. Oh give me grace that I can bear with Him, if not for that.

Dear brothers and sisters, you pray most earnestly with the best of intentions for the glory of God. But does He answer? Out of that bag of grace, God picks up the grace of patience and says, And after you take that, you become a patient person. Dear brothers and sisters, is that our understanding of grace? No wonder our store is called Grace Limited Partnership.

There is a limit. There is a limit to our patience. Oh, brothers and sisters, may I put it this way, do I understand Paul right? With Paul, grace is more than something that comes from God to meet his need.

Grace to Paul is not a dead thing. Grace to Paul is not an impersonal thing. Grace to Paul is not isolated items.

To Paul, grace is living. To Paul, grace is not a thing. Grace is a person.

Dear brothers and sisters, God has only one grace to give. God does not have many graces for your many needs. God has only one grace, and that is His only Son, our Lord Jesus.

Oh, brothers and sisters, once Paul, because of the greatness of his revelation, Satan has fallen. A thorn was in his flesh. Oh, how he cried to the Lord, take away that thorn that makes me weak.

Do you want me to be weak? Is it a good testimony to you if I am weak? I am preaching. I am ministering. And the people are looking at me and say, look at that.

He is preaching of the greatness of Christ. The unsearchable riches of Christ. Oh, the riches of His grace.

And here look at Paul, a thorn. We do not know what that is, but that weakens him. And everybody knows it.

It is not a good testimony. It will curtail the effectiveness of his ministry. It will certainly frustrate the glory of God.

Paul came to God and said, Oh Lord, take it away. Give me grace to take it away. Brothers and sisters, what is grace? Grace to many people is the taking away of unpleasant things.

If the unpleasant thing is not removed, then you begin to doubt, is God gracious? Is He the God of grace? You begin to doubt. Brothers and sisters, our concept of grace is so. The Lord did not answer.

The Lord seemed to be very hard on Paul. Seemed not to be gracious to him. No, the Lord said, that thorn shall remain in your flesh.

You shall be weakened by that thorn. You will be weak in the eyes of the people whom you serve. But the Lord said, I do not leave you there alone.

Bearing the thorn alone? No. My grace suffices. My grace is sufficient for thee.

For my power is manifested, is perfected in your weakness. Dear brothers and sisters, what is grace? Grace is not the taking away of unpleasant things. Grace is not giving you something that will gratify your flesh.

It is the light of Christ in you. When that light is in action, in weakness, in sorrow, there is comfort. Dear brothers and sisters, when God says, My grace is sufficient for you, He means what? Isn't my son sufficient for you? Why do you ask me as if something is insufficient? Don't you know that Christ in you is the hope of glory? Don't you know that Christ in you is my grace to you? Don't you know that you will find all the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus? And this Christ Jesus is in you.

If only you get out of here. If only you turn to me. Let me prove myself to you.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the principle of grace. The reason why we do not know more of His grace is because we stand in the way. That is the principle of law.

Law demands obey and then live. If you do not obey God. And brothers and sisters, in a sense, we love to live under law.

Oh, you say, No, I don't want law. Law is too severe for me. I have been trying hard to find a loophole in law.

But there is no loophole in the law of God. But dear brothers and sisters, we do not know ourselves. We love to live under law.

That is to say, we will accept any challenge that comes to us in our life's journey and try to meet it with ourselves. Let me do it. I will do it.

I can. I am able to. Like there is life.

They say, Oh, that God has commanded us. We will do it. Very good heart.

But dear brothers and sisters, if only we can see that we were crucified. God has got us out of His way on Calvary's cross. Why? Why? Because He wants to manifest His grace upon your life.

Not I, but Christ. And Paul says, I do not set aside. That's in Galatians chapter 2. How often we quote Galatians chapter 2 verse 20.

I am crucified with Christ and no longer live I, but Christ who lives in me. And now I live in the flesh. I, the faith of the Son of God who loves me and gave Himself for me.

What do you mean by that? In verse 21, I do not set aside. What is the grace of God? The grace of God is not I. That's the grace of God. Oh, brothers and sisters, the grace of God.

It is freely given to us. You do not need to do anything. Grace says, believe.

So dear brothers and sisters, the richest is in Christ. And thank God that He has given this Christ. He is in you.

He is in you. He is God's grace to you and God's grace. And this grace is sufficient to carry us through.

Our Heavenly Father, how can we thank Thee enough? For Thou has given Thy Son, our Lord Jesus, the only begotten Son. And in Him, oh, we do praise and thank Thee for the unsearchable riches of Christ. We do thank and praise Thee for that grace.

He is full of grace and truth. All peacefulness we have received. Grace upon us.

Oh, we do pray and worship Thee. We do pray that Thou will open our eyes. That we may see Thy wisdom in getting us out of Thy way.

It is not because Thou art ungracious. It is because Thou dost desire to show grace to us. Oh, may we live under grace, precious name.

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