

The Power of Grace

by Thomas Reade

The sermon explores the transformative power of grace and the assurance of God's protection for His people through faith in Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 33:12, Psalm 27:5, Psalm 90:1, John 14:21, Romans 8:14, Romans 8:16, Hebrews 11:13, 1 John 4:16, 1 John 5:13

Topics: "Gods Grace", "Faith In Jesus"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches on the power of God's grace and the blessedness of divine favor, highlighting the promises of protection to His people throughout history. From Abram to Moses, Jacob, Joseph, and David, the beloved of the Lord have always found safety in Him. The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in Jesus, acknowledging His faithfulness, loving-kindness, and the need for a personal relationship with Him for true happiness and salvation.

Transcript

13. THE POWER OF GRACE, AND THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE DIVINE FAVOR

"The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him." Deut. 33:12

The promises of protection to the people of God are as numerous as they are consoling. When Abram returned from the slaughter of the kings, and naturally dreaded the fury of their successors, how graciously did the Almighty allay his fears, "The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward." When Jacob was oppressed by the covetousness of Laban, the Lord said unto him, "Return unto the land of your fathers, and to your kindred, and I will be with you." When Esau came with four hundred men to meet him, and Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed, the angel of the covenant blessed him, and dispelled his fears. When Joseph was unjustly cast into prison, the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper. Thus, in every age, the beloved of the Lord have dwelt in safety by him.

Moses, when blessing the tribes of Israel, for their comfort recorded the power of Jehovah: "There is no one like the God of Israel. He rides across the heavens to help you, across the skies in majestic splendor. The eternal God is your refuge, and his everlasting arms are under you. He thrusts out the enemy before you; it is he who cries, 'Destroy them!' So Israel will live in safety, prosperous Jacob in security, in a land of grain and wine, while the heavens drop down dew. How blessed you are, O Israel! Who else is like you, a

people saved by the Lord? He is your protecting shield and your triumphant sword! Your enemies will bow low before you, and you will trample on their backs!"

In his prayer, Moses also acknowledges the faithfulness of God: "Lord, you have been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God."

How sweetly does David sing of the loving-kindness of the Lord. His heart seems too full for words to express his feelings: "I love you, Lord; you are my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the strength of my salvation, and my stronghold. I will call on the Lord, who is worthy of praise, for he saves me from my enemies." "In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret place of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock. And now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies round about me, therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto the Lord." "He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God; in him will I trust."

Thousands can witness to this truth, that God is the refuge of his people- a present help in trouble. The eleventh chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews is a precious portion. There we have a host of worthies, who, being dead, yet speak to us through the oracles of God. "All these faithful ones died without receiving what God had promised them, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed the promises of God. They agreed that they were no more than foreigners and nomads here on earth. And obviously people who talk like that are looking forward to a country they can call their own. If they had meant the country they came from, they would have found a way to go back. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a heavenly city for them."

Who can read this beautiful record of patriarchal faith and patience, without the firm conviction, that, under all the varied scenes of life, "the beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him." Oh! what a sweet thing it is to be in the favor of God, to enjoy his peace, through the blood of Emmanuel; to have an assured interest in the righteousness of Christ; to see the way which leads unto Zion, and to walk therein. What can be called happiness if this not? This is, indeed, heaven begun below, and shall terminate in the enjoyment of heaven above.

And is all this bliss, this glory, this grace, freely offered to me, the chief of sinners? Indeed it is. The voice of mercy speaks to me- the invitation is given to me by an ever-loving Savior "Come unto me, and I will give you rest;" "look unto me, and be saved." But how can I come? By his power. How must I come? Just as I am; for, if I tarry until I am better, I shall never come at all. Under a deep sense of my spiritual maladies I must come, as the lame, the blind, the dumb, and the maimed, came to the Great Physician in the days of his flesh. The longer I keep away from Jesus, the more inveterate will my disease become. All human help is vain. Nothing can reach my case, or effect my cure, but the blood of my Emmanuel.

Behold me, then, at your feet, all-gracious Savior; an humble suppliant for pardoning and restoring grace. Pity me, O gentle Redeemer, you who will never break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Pity me, O sympathizing High Priest, who was in all things tempted like I am, though without sin. Stretch forth your hand. Speak the powerful word, and your servant shall be healed.

Blessed Spirit! give me faith to believe. All things are possible to him who believes. Let me not doubt the Savior's love, and willingness, and power to save, yes, even to the uttermost. Impart this living principle. I cannot believe through any force of reasoning. You, you, alone, can bestow this precious, special gift of faith. Come in your divine energy and make me from this hour, a real believer in Christ, a faithful follower of the Lamb.

Jesus was lifted up upon the Cross, that he might draw all men unto himself. A free pardon is now proclaimed. All who repent and believe the Gospel shall be saved. To apprehend this by faith is the secret of consolation. But some may ask: When can I know that I am among the redeemed? What assurance can I have that my name is written in the book of life? I answer- when you are saved from your sins- when the new name of love is written on your heart.

If a blind man is restored to sight, will he not be conscious of it? "This one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

If a man, groaning under a heavy burden, is delivered from it, will he not be sensible of the change? "Now I will relieve your shoulder of its burden; I will free your hands from their heavy tasks."

If a person, laboring under a painful disease, is healed of his malady, will he not experience the blessing? "Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague."

If a man is confined in prison, and is again restored to liberty, will he remain in doubt respecting his deliverance? "When Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety that the Lord has sent his angel, and has delivered me out of the hand of Herod."

If reason and experience declare that we must distinguish between light and darkness; between slavery and freedom; between sickness and health; between imprisonment and liberty, why do we not distinguish between sin and holiness, between a state of condemnation and a state of acceptance with God?

If my blind eyes have been opened by divine grace to see my guilty, lost, and ruined condition by nature; if I have been enabled to view Jesus with the eye of faith as my Prophet, Priest, and King, as the Lord my Righteousness, as the Way of access to the Father; if I have beheld him in all these glorious offices and characters which he sustains in the covenant of grace for the redemption of his people, shall I not be conscious of it?

If the load of guilt which oppressed my soul, and filled me with direful apprehensions of the wrath to come, has been removed through faith in the blood of Christ; and if, in consequence of this faith, I enjoy peace with God, and peace in my conscience, shall I not be sensible of this delightful change?

If the power of sin, which, like an acute disease, was hurrying my soul to the second death, and filling me with the poison of corruption, has been destroyed through the mighty power of God; and my soul be renewed in righteousness and true holiness, shall I not experience this blessed effect of the healthful spirit of his grace?

If, when tied and bound by the chain of my sins, and shut up in the prison of unbelief, I not only heard the voice of mercy bidding me come forth into the glorious liberty of the children of God, but have been led by the hand of the Spirit, to Jesus, the friend of sinners; can I remain in doubt, whether I have been delivered or no? Surely not.

Well, then, O my soul, have you experienced and felt these things? Do not be deceived. It is one thing to know these truths from books and human teaching, and another to know and feel them from the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit. What practical effects do I experience from these truths? Do they make me more humble, thankful, and holy? Am I daily praying to Jesus for grace to love him more, and to evidence my love by an uniform obedience to his will? Am I seeking after a more simple dependence on his all-sufficient merits?

If these be the effects produced and witnessed in my soul, by an universal change in my temper, heart, and life, then, I may take the comfort of the promises made in Christ to penitent, believing sinners; then I may enjoy the foretaste of that glory which shall be revealed in all those who believe.

For the comfort of the Church in every age, John shows, that the knowledge of our salvation is attainable, when connected with childlike obedience and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "By this we know that we know him- if we keep his commandments." "You know that he was manifested to take away our sins." "He that keeps his commandments dwells in him, and he in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit who he has given us." "We have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness." "We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

Had these been the words of an uninspired believer, would they not, by many, have been condemned as enthusiastic and presumptuous? Even in the face of these blessed declarations of John, so descriptive of his own state, and of those to whom he wrote, an inward experience of the love and faithfulness of Christ, combined with a humble assurance of an interest in his atonement, is still treated as the visionary dream of over-heated enthusiasts.

But infidelity and indifference can never remove the rock on which our hopes are fixed. He who enjoys the sunshine of spiritual joy, can never be persuaded that he is wrapped in midnight darkness. One, in the twilight of divine revelation, could say, "I know that my Redeemer lives." Paul, in the blaze of Gospel day, could add- "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." And John, to strengthen his testimony, declared- "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that our joy may be full." What precious words- that our joy may be full.

Can it then be unscriptural or presumptuous to take the comfort of God's word, if his love is shed abroad in our hearts; if his will is the rule of our conduct; if to please him is our sincere intention and delight? "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." If we feel the godly motions of the Spirit drawing us from evil, and inclining us to good, shall we call it all delusion? Surely this must be a dishonoring of the Spirit, which none can commit, but those who are destitute of his grace.

Blessed Savior, make me wise unto salvation through faith in You. May I ever take your word as my rule and guide. May I ever repose on your faithfulness and care. Then, in the midst of abounding error, and abounding wickedness, I shall hourly experience the blessedness of the promise, "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him."

Jesus, who hung upon the Cross,

And shed his blood for me,
Displays his power in every herb,
In every flower I see.
The flaming orb that lights the day,
The stars which gild the night,
The rolling sea- the rocky shore,
Proclaim the Savior's might.
The beasts that roam the woods among,
The birds which fill the air;
Each little insect on its wing,
Bespeak the Savior's care.
But man, of all his works below,
Lies nearest to his heart;
Give me, blessed Savior, in your love,
A never-failing part.
The objects of your love and care,
In safety shall abide
Beneath the shadow of your wing,
And near your sacred side.
No harm shall ever reach their souls;
No power, their hope destroy;
For you did bleed upon the Cross,
To give them endless joy.
O may I now your image bear,
From Satan's power set free,
Take up the Cross, despise the shame,
Then reign in heaven with Thee.

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