

What is Grace

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God's grace, highlighting how grace is not just about forgiveness but about empowering believers to live out mercy. Through the example of the Apostle Paul, it is shown that grace enables believers to exhibit qualities like mercy that were not present before, ultimately leading to a life of abundant labor and compassion. The sermon encourages recognizing and acknowledging the work of God's grace in our lives, leading to a humble and merciful attitude towards others.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:10, Luke 10:30, Ephesians 2:8, Matthew 5:7, 2 Corinthians 12:9

Topics: "Transformative Power of Grace", "Living Out Mercy"

Description

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Transcript

Now here's a verse that I want you to look at. Go to 1 Corinthians 15. This is, in my estimation, one of the most important verses concerning grace in our Bibles.

1 Corinthians 15.10. Listen to the Apostle Paul here. 1 Corinthians 15.10. This is a very well-known chapter on the resurrection of the dead. But listen to what Paul says.

But by the grace of God. Listen, oftentimes, grace simply gets defined as favor to the undeserving. That type of definition.

One of the things you never want to forget is this. Grace should have power somewhere in the definition. Grace is powerful.

Grace does things. Listen to this. By the grace of God, I am what I am.

This is Paul speaking. His grace toward me was not in vain. Now look what the grace did.

I labored more abundantly than they all. Now see, you could say that sounds like it's boasting. And that's the opposite of grace.

No way. You see, the same thing for a merciful person. It's not boasting when it comes from the same source.

Look at this. Yet not I. See, I labored more abundantly than they all. Yet not I. Well, that sounds like Paul in Galatians, right? It's I live, yet not I. Well, Paul, what is this? Are you you or are you not you? I mean, this sounds crazy, but we understand this.

It's the grace of God, which was with me. You see, we all ought to be able to talk like this. We all ought to be able to recognize that, listen, you know what a Christian should be able to do? This is, Jesus says this, blessed are the merciful.

You are the only ones that are going to receive mercy. And you know what we ought to be able to do? We ought to be able to go look in the mirror and say, I have been acted upon by God in a way that I have a merciful strain in me that wasn't there when I was lost. And you can recognize it and you can say, I am merciful by the grace of God.

I labored in mercy, even sometimes more than others. But you see, that doesn't mean that the people that labored less than him weren't objects and recipients of that grace. We recognize sometimes the grace in me, it doesn't match the grace in you.

So there can be special gifts of mercy. But the reality is this, every one of us ought to be able to speak exactly this way. By the grace of God, I am merciful.

Because I tell you, if you're not merciful, you don't inherit the kingdom. If you're not merciful, you don't get mercy. If you're not merciful, the end is going to be bad.

You see what grace does? See, so often we say, that sounds like works. No, it's not works, it's grace. You say, what? Now I'm confused.

Listen, grace acts on us. Grace, God says, I will forgive their transgressions. But he also says, I will put my spirit in you.

And that is a spirit of love. And see, that's part of the grace. You see, when we think grace, we think gift.

What it's saying is this, if you're merciful, it's a gift. You don't boast in gifts. What Paul recognized is, wow, I am not that old Pharisee.

Something has changed in me. In fact, I recognize I'm outrunning not only the vast majority of Christians, I'm outrunning all the other apostles. And yet it's not me.

It is me, but I know the source of it isn't me. It's the grace of God, that I am what I am. Now listen, that's what this is all about.

And you don't ever want to be wrong on it. But see how searching it is? Because I recognize what I'm really dealing with here is the, listen, the grace of God doesn't just forgive sins. The grace of God unleashes the raw power of God into the life of a sinner and transforms them from unmerciful people into merciful people.

You see, that's why Jesus can say, blessed are the merciful. They're going to receive mercy because this is what the grace of God does. This is how it moves.

Now listen, what I'm going to do is take you to the place in scripture that is probably our Lord's greatest discourse on showing mercy. And it is found in Luke chapter 10, and it is that parable of the good Samaritan. You see, brethren, we don't want to ever read things like this and say, well, I thought we were saved by grace.

You see, if you say that, I'm going to say exactly. But you better know what grace is. You see, the problem is most people have this errant idea that grace just simply means, oh, my guilt got pardoned.

Well, it does mean that. But you see, the grace of God does more than just forgive. Not that that's a small thing, but that's not all it does.

Where you find a merciful man or a merciful woman, be assured, nothing but the grace of God did that. And so that's what I want to see. I greatly desire to see that in our church.

Not so that you have something to boast in, or we collectively have something to boast in, but when you find merciful people gathering together and coming up with really creative, merciful deeds, well, we can come into the prayer meeting and not say, oh, look how great we are. No, what you do is you say, hey, brethren, it is no lack of humility, if it's true, to say we are even outrunning other churches when it comes to mercy. There's nothing wrong with being able to say that, as long as the next thing, and this has to come from the heart as well, but you recognize, wow, I mean, we don't have anything to boast in.

God did this. God did this among us. I'm really hoping that God will unleash some years, like lots of years, decades of mercy from this church that have never been unlocked before, so much so that we can see it and we can recognize it and we can say, wow, God did that.

God did that. Now look, Luke 10.

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