

**Trinity Baptist Church**  
**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2021**  
**David Linley – ‘Great Grace’**

We are going to look today at what I believe is a key word in our relationship with God.

A word that's unheard of in almost any other religion.

The Sunday School child finds out very quickly that the answer to almost every question they are ever asked in church is . . . ‘Jesus’.

But the word we are going to look at today is the reason, in the main, why Jesus is the answer to everything.

THAT WORD IS GRACE

The old children's hymn:

Why did He love me I never can tell?

Why did He suffer to save me from Hell?

Nothing but infinite Grace from above.

Could have conceived such a story of love

Grace, Grace, Wonderful Grace

Flowing to you and me

Grace, Grace, Wonderful Grace

From the cross of Calvary

I had a friend (who's in heaven now) Les Cleave. He was my London City Mission Trainer, who guided me in my first four months of work in the Mission.

I'd never before met anyone quite like him.

He was a really great visitor to people in their homes.

And he had a great understanding and appreciation of the Grace of God.

When he spoke to people about Grace, as he often did, he seemed to be taken to another level - just by saying the word.

Then there was Miss Jackson. The slightly eccentric but very lovely old lady, who helped out in our first Mission centre in Hoxton.

Looking back now I remember her for two things:

1. She taught Anne to play the piano and to my great amusement she would say to her during almost every lesson: ‘Your age is against you dear’.  
Anne was only 29 at the time!
2. Particularly during sermons, she would often proclaim her support by exclaiming something in a very loud whisper (if you can imagine that!).

It was most off-putting at first but you soon got used to it.

What became my very favourite was when someone mentioned ‘Grace’.

She would almost always say the same acronym.

(Now an acronym is a kind of teaching aid where you take each letter of a word to make another word).

So she would say about the word Grace:

‘Aha Grace - Great Riches At Christ's Expense’

And she said it so many times that I've never forgotten it!

Grace is one of the words that makes sense of why Jesus came into this world and why he did everything that he did.

It answers a lot of the 'Why' and 'How' questions that you might have about life now and on into eternity. (i.e. As a Christian, how can I be sure that I have eternal life? The answer is: "Because of the Grace of God").

I would in fact be so bold as to say:

**IT'S THE GRACE OF GOD THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING**

God's Grace equals Mercy, Goodness, Love and Favour - all rolled into one

*There are two types of Grace as far as we are concerned today:*

## **1. Everyone experiences what is called God's Universal or Common Grace**

After the flood God said:

Genesis 8:22

"As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night."

Then listen to the words of Jesus:

Matthew 5:45

". . . For He (*your Father in heaven*) gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike"

People often mis-quote from this verse, saying:

'The sun shines on the righteous'

When this opposite is actually the truth.

God allows every one of us to benefit from what is called Common Grace.

That is whether or not we would call ourselves Christians.

It's good to spend time thanking God for the good things that He allows us to enjoy here on earth every single day.

Whoever you are – why not try it?

## **2. Christian Saving Grace**

Relatively, only a very few people experience this amazing eternal truth.

As we are reminded in the Bible from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 7:13-14 (NLT)

"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it."

John 14:6 (NLT)

Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

Have you found it yet? Have you found the way to Eternal Life?

Acts 4:12 (NLT)

"There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."  
That Name is 'Jesus'

Romans 8:19 NLT

"For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are."

The whole creation is waiting eagerly to see God's salvation – His amazing Grace

Augustus Toplady's great hymn 'Rock of Ages' – written in 1776: has this verse (3):

Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling;  
Naked, come to thee for dress; helpless look to thee for Grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly; wash me Saviour, or I die.

Yorkshire saying:

*If the's ever owt for nowt*

*Av it for the sen*

Which means: Don't miss out on something that's free

God's Grace is free - but it certainly isn't cheap!

The cost of our salvation was very, very great.

Even the angels are amazed at what God has done to save people like us, people who deserve absolutely nothing from Him.

You could say that it's mind blowing for them.

1 Peter 1:10 & 12 NLT

"This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you . . . They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen."

You know, even the angels can't believe that God does all this for us.

From Ephesians 2:4-9 (NIV)

(And I want us to take this slowly)

v4 "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ (*when He died on the cross and rose again to life three days later*) even when we were dead in transgressions (*dead in our sins*) .

. . v8 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this (*faith*) is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by (*our own good*) works, so that no-one can boast.”

And that brings us to John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”

v17 “For God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through Him”

‘God Loves You’ and ‘Jesus Loves You’ smiley stickers were the rage for many younger Christians in the 1970’s. You could buy them in single sheets or on large rolls, for under a penny each.

Do you remember them?

They were in fact very controversial amongst some Christians:

Firstly - Because of the way that they were used as a ‘witness’. People stuck them everywhere - literally!! (Public places and in fact anywhere where there was a flat surface - and they were not always that easy to remove.

Secondly - They were controversial because many Christians believed that the message itself was wrong.

“Can you really say to someone deliberately committing sin, that God loves them?”

What do you think?

Well, the answer, in my opinion, is that you most definitely can.

Yes, God hates the sin but He dearly loves the sinner.

Which is why the Gospel’s ‘good news’ is so very very good.

God loved me while I was so far from Him, that He sent His son with the mission to die for my sins. And all that I have to do is turn from my sin – repent, and receive God’s truly amazing gift of eternal life through His Son.

How can it be possible? – It’s by Grace!

Let me tell you a story:

When I was at school in Sheffield, aged 11 to 15 we had ‘corporal punishment’, which meant that if you were considered to be very naughty, you would be sent by your teacher to the headmaster and if he agreed with the teacher, you would receive several strokes from this long thin cane on your hand or even on your bottom. When you were sent to the headmaster’s office and were waiting outside, you would be rehearsing your story. Woe betide you if you lied about what happened but if you were able to tell the story in such a way that made it not seem quite so bad, the punishment may be less severe.

In reality though when Mr Barret bellowed ‘Come in’ – he was a small man with a large voice – your legs turned to jelly, your mind went blank, and you just blurted out the truth.

You knew that you deserved the cane and you usually went in to the office holding out your hand ready to receive your punishment. But sometimes, for no apparent reason, he wouldn’t cane you. Instead, he would just bark “Linley. Don’t do this ever again. Now go and stay out of my sight!”

You’d rush back to the classroom and open the door. All the other children were expecting to see the tell-tale red marks on your hands and black marks on your face where you had been crying but you were smiling!

You'd sit down and as soon as the teacher turned to write something on the blackboard someone would say "Well, what happened?". And you'd reply, "You'll never believe it" "He let us off!".

That's Grace.

Well for Mr Barret it was actually mercy but when God does it - it's Grace.

God's unmerited favour.

Being let off. Something that we would never ever deserve.

What are the examples of God's Grace?

- Grace is God's ability to forgive us – whatever we have done
- Grace is God's ability, once we have repented, to forget everything that we have ever done wrong
- Grace is God's ability to truly love
- Grace is God's ability to be so very kind to each of His forgiven children – to each of us who know Him. This is sometimes called 'Knowing God's favour'.

Ephesians 1:3&6

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ . . . to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

THE BIG QUESTION: Do you know Him for yourself?

If not – Why not? What is stopping you?

Below is a prayer, that you might want to say if you would like now to receive this abundant Grace that God offers you through His Son Jesus. Here it is:

Heavenly Father

Thank you for your wonderful Grace, and your great love and mercy in giving Jesus your only Son to die on the cross for me.

I am truly sorry for all my sins and pray that you will help me to turn from them to you.

As best as I know how I now give you, my life.

Amen