

## GRACE IN JESUS CHRIST

Some of the Gospel incidents where grace is operative:

Luke 5:12-14 Jesus, by the grace of God, heals a man with leprosy

Luke 5:17-20 Jesus heals the paralyzed man, lowered through the roof, and pronounces his sins forgiven

Luke 5:27-32 Jesus calls Matthew, the tax-collector, then attends a great banquet at Matthew's house. When the Pharisees and teachers of the law complain that Jesus and His disciples eat and drink with tax-collectors and sinners, Jesus answers: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick". God's grace is for sinners.

Luke 6:27-36 Jesus teaches about loving one's enemies - - extend grace to those who insult and hurt you.

Luke 6:37-38 Jesus instructs His followers not to judge or condemn, but to graciously forgive.

Luke 7:1-10 Jesus extends grace to a Roman centurion's servant, rescuing him from the brink of death. Grace is not restricted to God's chosen people; sometimes Gentiles and foreigners have exceptional faith, which seems to invite grace.

Luke 7:11-15 Jesus raises the Widow of Nain's son from death; everybody recognizes the grace that has been given: "God has come to help his people".

Luke 7:36-50 Jesus is anointed by a sinful woman, who wets His feet with her tears, wipes them with her hair, and pours perfume on them. Jesus receives her act of devotion, grants her forgiveness, tells her that her faith has saved her, and sends her away with a blessing of peace.

Luke 8:1-15 By grace, God's seed produces good fruit in our lives. And so the gracious works of God continue in Jesus: teaching, healing, casting out evil spirits, proclaiming forgiveness, speaking in an affirming way to 'unacceptable' people.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is a story of surprising grace shown by an unlikely person. Jesus commends the Good Samaritan.

Luke 11:13 Jesus speaks about God's desire to give graciously – especially the Holy Spirit – to those who ask.

Luke 12:11-12 God will give Jesus's disciples grace, when they are brought before synagogue rulers, and authorities, so they will know what to say.

Luke 12:22-34 God will provide for all our needs.

Luke 15:11-32 The Parable of the Prodigal Son: the father welcomes his destitute, broken, repentant son home – showing us God's desire to receive and restore us, after our waywardness, sinfulness and rebellion, when we repent. God loves to forgive the sinner who repents (Luke 15:7); the lost sheep, or child, who returns.

Luke 17:11-19 Jesus heals ten men with leprosy – including a Samaritan

Luke 18:15-17 Jesus welcomes little children

Luke 19:1-10 Jesus announces that salvation has come to Zaccheus's house – he is a tax-collector.

Luke 19:11-27 Jesus gives more to those who already have, when they use what they are given.

Luke 21:1-4 Jesus commends a widow who gives sacrificially.

Luke 23:34 Jesus forgives the soldiers who nail Him to the cross.

John 19:26-27 Jesus places Mary, His Mother, in the care of John.

John 20:24-31 Jesus gives Thomas a chance to see Him, after the resurrection, and believe.

John 21:15-23 Jesus reinstates Peter.

The Gospels that record the Good News of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus are full of testimony to the grace of God in Jesus, often astounding people, because they expected judgment and condemnation.

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost: that is grace. As a Person, He was full of grace. The words He spoke, often, were full of grace. The encounters He had with people often revealed grace. The parables teach the doctrine of grace. As John says: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and

truth” (John 1:14). And, “From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another” (John 1:16). And, “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Grace and truth, in Hebrew, translate as ‘unfailing love and faithfulness’.

In Jesus, grace is extended to:

- Gentiles and foreigners
- Children
- Women
- Sinners – the unclean, tax-collectors and prostitutes; those who have fallen from grace
- Even criminals (the assurance given to the thief on the cross)

It is grace that:

- Accepts
- Welcomes
- Embraces
- Affirms
- Challenges and breaks society’s norms
- Heals
- Recognizes and restores the dignity of each person
- Forgives
- Gives another chance
- Changes lives
- Saves

But back to the beginning.....

Luke says that, after the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, when Jesus was just eight days old and was circumcised, He “grew and became strong: he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40). He grew physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. God’s presence was evident in Him. God, and those who encountered Jesus, looked upon Him favourably. Next, Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, at the age of thirty, and He received grace, the empowering presence of God, when the Holy Spirit came upon Him. Jesus

received grace to enable Him to withstand the temptations of the Devil in the wilderness – although we must not think that He had any ‘unfair advantage’, making it easier for Him than it is for us. He announced, in the synagogue, that God’s Spirit was upon Him; that He had been anointed to preach good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour. God’s grace was evident in His teaching and preaching, His healings and miracles, His releasing people from oppressive spirits, and in raising the dead – although many people turned against Him because He claimed to have a special relationship with God, claimed to have been given grace to forgive sins, and challenged the status quo. The disciples responded to the grace of God, in Jesus, leaving their former occupations and following Him. By the grace of God, Jesus spoke with authority and conviction – not like the Pharisees.

In summary, the grace that is evident in the words and ministry of Jesus is grace that extends to:

- Gentiles and foreigners
- Children
- Women
- Sinners – tax-collectors and prostitutes
- The ‘fallen’
- A criminal
- The sick, the bound, the poor, the destitute
- Other marginalized people

In fact, although these people seemed to have been shown particular preference, grace was extended to all who would receive it. Often, there was the expectation, or instruction, that the recipient of grace had a responsibility to live appropriately, after the intervention of Jesus.

The grace that was and is evident in Jesus is grace that:

- Accepts
- Welcomes and embraces
- Breaks the rules (if they are inappropriate and restricting)
- Affirms the dignity of others

- Heals
- Forgives
- Always gives another chance; the option of renewal and a fresh start
- Changes lives
- Saves