

**5 – Greater Grace**  
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We are in a sermon series called Greater. So far we've taught on how God is greater than all other power. We've taught that God is far greater than our ability to understand, but we can still grow in our knowledge of God and His infinite greatness.

Pastor Deb taught about walking in greater blessings. Then I taught on the levels of faith and how to have greater faith. Last week I taught on greater glory. In that sermon we compared the Old Covenant based on the works of the law with the New Covenant based on grace through faith in Jesus Christ. We saw how the New Covenant is better and greater than the Old.

Today I am preaching a sermon entitled Greater Grace. **Just like there are levels of faith we can walk in, likewise there are levels of grace available to us.**

**You might think that our first experience with God's grace is saving grace – but there is a grace that comes even before that. It's called prevenient grace.**

The word prevenient means something that occurs in advance of something else. That which comes before. Prevenient grace – the grace that draws us to God - comes before saving grace. **Without prevenient grace you would never seek God nor would you ever believe and accept His offer of saving grace.** Ephesians 2:4-5 says:

*Because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.*

**Grace comes to us before we can go to God. God's grace draws us to Himself.** He is the initiator. Even our desire for Him is from Him. Our search for Him is really us responding to Him drawing us to Himself. Jesus said in John 6:44

*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him to Me.*

Some people think – that's not fair, only those who God draws can come to Jesus. But Jesus said in John 12:32

*When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to Myself.*

Jesus was lifted up on the cross and He is drawing everyone to Himself. Does everyone respond to God's drawing and come to Jesus? No. Contrary to what Calvinists teach, people can resist the grace of God.

1 Timothy 2:4 says:

*God our Savior wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.*

Are all people saved? No. But don't blame God for that! Titus 2:11 says:

*The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all people.*

By the way – this should help you with questions like, “What about people who have never heard of Jesus? Can they be saved?” You can be sure that some way, somehow, God has shown His grace to them in order to draw them to Himself. They can either accept or reject that grace and that's on them. Romans 1:16-20 says:

*I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."*

*But God shows His anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because He has made it obvious to them.*

*For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see His invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.*

**The prevenient grace of God appears to everyone wherever they are, and they can either respond to God's drawing in faith or reject it.** John 1:9-12 says this about the birth and ministry of Christ:

*The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to His own people, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.*

God's light – or truth – gives light to all men. They can either walk in the light and receive more light or they can choose to walk in darkness. But if they do respond to the light of God's prevenient grace, they receive greater grace. Saving grace.

John 1:14 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.*

Greek words translated Jesus was “full of grace” mean “complete, lacking nothing, perfect.”

**When the Bible says Jesus was full of grace – it is saying that He is the source of grace and the giver of grace.**

Prevenient grace includes God drawing us to Himself, God convicting us of sin and our need for Him, and God opening our eyes to the truth about our sinfulness and the saving power of Jesus Christ. **Prevenient grace prepares us for saving grace!** Ephesians 2:8-9 says:

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast.*

**Saving grace is the grace we receive when we respond to the drawing of God’s prevenient grace.** Saving grace is the result of repentance from sin and faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That results in the forgiveness of sin and God's gracious gift of new life. We are born again, reconciled to God, adopted into the family of God as sons and daughters of God.

But saving grace is not the end of grace! As children of God we now grow in the grace of God. 2 Peter 3:18 tells us to:

*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

**Growing in grace is called sanctifying grace.** This is the gracious process of being made holy by being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. This happens by the power of the Holy Spirit who enables us to increase in the knowledge and love of God and in love for our neighbor.

Grace involves both gift and response. Our identity as children of God is God's gift to us. Living in the world as redeemed children of God is our gift to God.

Saving grace reconciles us to God, incorporates us into the body of Christ and sets us on the journey toward wholeness.

Sanctifying grace continuously forms us into the likeness of Christ and enables us to love others with the love of God.

**Growing in grace and discipleship cannot be done in our own strength.** The One who invites us on the journey toward the fullness of grace accompanies us and provides the means by which we can grow in grace.

Growing in grace means we experience greater grace. How do we grow in grace? We see how in Hebrews 4:16.

*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

**Grace grows by spending time in the presence of God.**  
**Grace grows through prayer and worship.**  
**Grace grows through time spent with God in His word.**

Acts 20:32 says:

*Now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

Greater grace includes the journey from prevenient grace to saving grace to sanctifying grace.

I want to talk to you about **three expressions of God's grace. The most common definition of grace is God's unmerited favor.** Unmerited means undeserved. Grace means you get something good you do not deserve. What an awesome thought – that we don't have to earn anything from God. In fact we can't.

Grace is a gift. Many people never understand this. They keep saying, "But I don't deserve it." Of course you don't deserve it. That's why it's called grace. Once you start talking about what you deserve you are out of the realm of grace and into the realm of works. Romans 11:6 says:

*If it is by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.*

In other words - works and grace are mutually exclusive. Salvation is either by grace or by works. The Bible says we're saved by grace. None of us can earn our way into heaven. Thank God for grace – God's unmerited favor!

**Grace is also God's unconditional love.** God loves without condition – there is nothing we do to earn it. God loves us without limit – there is no end to His love. We cannot earn the love of God, nor can we unearn it. Romans 8:31-32 says:

*If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*

Freely means graciously, without cost, unconditional. That means that you can do nothing to make God love you any more than He already does. Also, you can do nothing to make God stop loving you.

This kind of grace is utterly amazing. You won't find it anywhere else. **Grace makes Christianity different from every other religion because all other religions are based on people earning salvation.** Christianity says you will never be good enough on your own. You are saved by grace and grace alone!

**Grace is God's unmerited favor, God's unconditional love, and grace is God's unlimited power.**

In 2 Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul tells about how he was caught up to heaven where God gave Him revelations so great he could not even speak about them. In verses 7-9 he says:

*To keep me from becoming exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me. I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

Three times Paul prayed and asked God to take the thorn away. And God answered His prayer. And God's answer was, "No." I've had people tell me that God doesn't answer their prayers. To that I say, "God answers every prayer. You just might not like His answer." We think that God's only possible answer is "Yes." But sometimes God says no. Sometimes God says not yet. But He always answers!

The main thing I want you to see is what God told Paul – My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Notice that **God equates His grace with His strength.**

According to Strong's Bible Concordance, one of the meanings of grace is "divine influence upon the heart and life." There are many Bible verses teaching us that grace is the power of God. One of my favorites is 1 Corinthians 15:10

*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them - yet not I, but the grace of God that was working with me.*

In other words, anything good we accomplish is by the grace of God. James 4:6 in the Amplified Version says:

*He gives us more and more grace (power of the Holy Spirit).*

The main thing I want you to understand is this: Not only is grace God's unconditional love and unmerited favor; it is also God's unlimited power. And God says, "My grace is sufficient." According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, the word sufficient has two main meanings: "to be possessed of unfailing strength; and to be enough."

**So, God's grace is God's power and God's power is always enough.** Grace is the power of God to draw us, save us and sanctify us. And grace is the power of God to get us through whatever we go through.

No matter what difficulties you may be facing right now, God's grace will always be enough. 2 Corinthians 9:8 says:

*God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

So, if you need financial help, His grace is enough.

If you need healing, His grace is enough.

If you need help in a relationship, His grace is enough.

It doesn't matter what the devil or the world throws at you, because God's grace will always be enough.

His grace is enough when you're on a mountain top and His grace is enough when you're in a valley! His grace is enough when you're flowing in the river of God and His grace is enough when you're in a barren desert. His grace is enough whether His answer is yes or no or wait! No matter what, His grace is always enough! God's grace will bring you through whatever you go through in life! Romans 5:17 tells us that:

*Those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.*

God's grace gives you the power to reign in life! I ask you today: Have you experienced the power of God's grace? Has His grace saved you? Is His grace getting you through the tough times? Are you reigning in life or is life reigning over you? You may have experienced a measure of God's grace, but there is always more to experience. James 4:6 says:

*He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

Faith changes things, but grace changes people. Faith changes circumstances, but grace changes character.

We obtain more grace when we approach God with humility – when we give up trusting in ourselves and put our trust in Christ and Christ alone! **We are saved by grace plus nothing**, but Romans 5:2 tells us

*We have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.*

**It's faith that gets you into the power of God's grace. God's grace is free, but you must believe it to receive it.** Just like salvation is a free gift, but not everyone is saved - only those who believe in Christ and receive the free gift of salvation by grace.

If I gave you a monetary gift, what did you do to deserve that gift? NOTHING! You just believed me and received what I had to give.

And God is standing here today with gifts for everyone. Not \$5 or \$500 or \$5 million – but something worth much more:

Forgiveness, salvation and eternal life – all by the grace of God. Freedom, healing and restoration – all by the grace of God. Romans 5:15-16 says:

*For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater, God's wonderful grace and His gift of forgiveness abounded to many through this other man, Jesus Christ.*

**Greater grace is not a different kind of grace – it is more grace, a bigger quantity of grace.**

The devil wants you to think that your sin is too big for God's grace. But Romans 5:20 says: *Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.*

The Amplified Version says: *Where sin increased and abounded, grace (God's unmerited favor) has surpassed it and increased more and superabounded.*

I love that! Our sin might be abundance but God's grace is greater. It is super-abundant. So for everything you will ever have to face, God's grace is greater!

God's grace saves us from sin. But He wants to give us greater grace and save us from the shame of sin.

God's grace imparts the Holy Spirit to us when we are born again. But He wants to give us greater grace and baptize us in the Holy Spirit.

God's grace saves us from stinginess. But greater grace makes us generous givers! God's grace saves us from our anxiety and fear. But greater grace causes us to be bold in our faith!

God's grace saves us from ungratefulness. But greater grace causes us to be passionate praisers and worshipping warriors!

God's grace sets us free from addictions and strongholds. But greater grace empowers us to set others free from their strongholds! Thank God for grace and thank God for greater grace!

So, do what we read in Hebrews 4:16, which says - *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

God gives grace to the humble and the bold. God's grace is drawing you right now. If you've never been born again through faith in Jesus Christ, God's prevenient grace is drawing you to His saving faith. If you've been saved, God's sanctifying grace is drawing you to greater consecration and maturity in Christ. Everything we receive from God is by grace through faith!

**Greater grace is always available to you!**

**All you need to do is respond to the grace of God in faith!**