

## How Much Grace is Too Much? – Acts 4:32-35

### I. Introduction:

- A. Judy and I read from a couple sources during our devotions together.
1. The other day, I was reading Spurgeon's *"Morning and Evening,"* when I came across these words:
    - a. *"Think how much grace one saint requires..."*
    - b. *So much that nothing but **THE Infinite** could supply his (need) for one day;*
    - c. *And yet the Lord spreads His table, not for one, but many saints,*
    - d. *Not for one day, but for many years; not for many years only, but for generation after generation."*
  2. At that point both of us added, *"and not for generations only, but for eternity."*
  3. That afternoon I jotted down in my sermon idea book: *"How much grace does one soul require?"*
  4. Then later, I felt led of the Lord to pursue this idea for this evening's evenings' message.
  5. I confess that what I ended up with isn't long, and it isn't particularly concise, but I hope the Holy Spirit will bless it to all of us.

### II. The word "grace" is used 122 times in the New Testament.

- A. But it isn't confined to this dispensation.
1. The Lord has been gracious to sinners from day one of human history – even before the need of salvation.
  2. But to condense things, I chose to confine my study to the New Testament rather than to the whole Bible.
  3. All but one of those 122 references to "grace" come from the same Greek word: *"charis."*
    - a. The only exception is **James 1:11** which clearly is talking about something else:
    - b. *"For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, & the **GRACE** of the **FASHION** of it perisheth; so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways."*
- B. I probably should have expanded my research, but in reading all those scriptures I decided to look only for those which added a modifying word immediately prior to "grace."
1. There were about a dozen of those modifiers – sometimes in more than one verse.
  2. For example, the Bible speaks of *"**TRUE** grace,"* as opposed to false, corrupt and imaginary grace.
    - a. For example, some preachers say that sinners are *"saved by grace."*
    - b. But then they exhort those sinners to augment, or support, God's grace through various kinds of works.
    - c. That is not *"**TRUE** grace."* And what is not *"**TRUE** grace"* isn't grace at all.
  3. Grace is the **unmerited, unearned, kindness** of the Lord, of which He is the alpha and omega.
  4. Several scriptures speak of God being the **source** of *"**ALL** grace."*
  5. But Paul referred to *"**MY** grace,"* as opposed to the false grace that heretics were already preaching.
  6. Among other adjectives and modifiers, some verses speak of *"**EXCEEDING** grace," "MANIFOLD grace,"* and *"**ABUNDANT** grace."*
  7. So I had a number of scriptures from which to dive into the pool of God's **marvelous** grace – which, by the way, is not a Biblical term.
  8. Eventually, the Lord laid *"**GREAT** grace"* upon my heart.

### III. Going back to that initial, provoking thought: How much grace does one soul require?

- A. There are millions of professing Christians who seem to think that the only grace they need is that little bit which initiated their salvation as youngsters in Sunday School.
1. No, NO, **NO**. A thousand times *"no."*
  2. If that is it, those childish believers may not have received God's *"**TRUE** grace"* at all.
  3. The grace of God provides us with an **eternal Intercessor** and **constant Mediator**.
  4. There is a sense in which we are saved by grace through faith, every moment that we live.
  5. The saint of God feeds at the Lord's gracious table every day and every minute of their lives.
  6. That is what Spurgeon was saying in his devotion. Every good thing we enjoy is given by God's grace.
  7. God's grace is magnificently and eternally abundant.

- B. Does a **murderer need more** of God's saving grace than a **ten-year-old** who has been raised in church?
1. Meditate on that question a while. Maybe you will disagree with me.
  2. Does a **long life** in this sinful world require more grace than the **martyr** who trusted Christ and declared his faith in the Lord, only to be murdered later that day?
  3. Does a **minister** – a **pastor** or an **evangelist** – need more grace than a Christian plumber or baker?
  4. Does a **lonely, solitary, saint** need more grace than one who is surrounded by loving friends/supporters?
- C. I don't believe that any such criteria create more need for grace than any other.
1. The truth is: there is not a **worthy sinner** on earth. We all need constant mercy and grace.
  2. And there is not a Christian in God's sight who is more dependent upon the Lord than any other.
  3. In thinking about that question, we need to remind ourselves that God doesn't measure time, need, or even sinfulness, with the same calipers and scales that we employ.
  4. So time is not an issue. Neither is weight or depth.
  5. Like several other questions we might survey: the **measure of grace** is **not in us**, but **in the Lord** and the **sacrifice** which He made on the cross.
  6. We must not **measure love** – by **our** love for the Lord, but by His love toward us. He is the standard.
  7. Mercy and grace must be measured by the same standard – Jehovah Himself.

#### IV. Now, take your mind back to our opening scripture, but don't look down at the page.

- A. Just listen as I read, **Acts 4:32-35**.
1. *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.*
  2. *Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,*
  3. *And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”*
- B. Isn't that a complete thought?
1. The whole congregation, the whole church, was so united, it was if they had one heart and soul.
  2. And as Austin pointed out the other day, they voluntarily showed their love for one another, by their giving.
  3. Some of them, some of the time, sacrificially gave what they had, giving almost everything to the church.
  4. They gave in order that the needs of their brethren would be met.
  5. And the next verse tells us about Barnabas who, *“having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles's feet.”*
  6. There were so many people in need, and so many giving to meet those needs, it became necessary for the church to appoint deacons to handle the volume.
- C. Now, when I re-read our text, did you notice that I did not read the second verse of my text?
1. You probably didn't see that because **verse 33** is almost parenthetical; it comes close to dividing the thought into two parts.
  2. It says, *“And with **great POWER** gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and **great GRACE** was upon them all.”*
  3. That sounds like a stand-alone scripture, or maybe it should precede the paragraph. But of course it doesn't
- D. It was because of God's great power – His **“dunamis”** – that the church was so united, and loving, and sincerely concerned and caring about one another. But it was more than just power.
1. It was through the preaching of the gospel, of which the resurrection was such an important part at the time, that sinners were flocking to the Lord, being baptized and becoming a part of that loving ecclesia.
  2. But it **wasn't just** the **POWER of God** that was so instrumental.
  3. Right beside the Lord's **“dunamis”** was His **“charis”** – His grace.

- E. And it **wasn't just GRACE**; it was the Lord's "**GREAT grace.**"
1. The word "**great**" is used twice in this verse – great power and great grace.
    - a. It is the Greek word "**megas.**" It was grace **mag-nified**. It was **mag-nificent grace**.
    - b. It was large and super-abundant.
  2. And with that I come to another question for your meditation – perhaps it is a bit silly – nevertheless I'll ask anyway: **What is greater: God's POWER or His GRACE?**
  3. I know that is basically like apples and oranges.
  4. But at the very least it is something we should consider – for a reason which I will come to in just a minute.
- F. But first, **upon whom** was this great grace? "**Great grace was upon them ALL.**"
1. This should point out to us that **God's grace** is **multifaceted**.
  2. Those many thousands of people all had different needs and different responsibilities, but they all needed divine grace.
  3. The **apostles** needed **grace** to augment, or fulfill, the **power** necessary to present the gospel to the lost.
  4. The **wealthy**, like Barnabas, needed grace to be **willing** to **sacrifice** their property for the blessing of others.
  5. And some of those others needed God's grace before they became **willing to receive** His blessings.
  6. Perhaps this is speaking of the grace of God in **protecting the church** from the wrath of the Jews.
  7. Maybe this is the blessing of **having favor** with those who were yet unsaved.
  8. Maybe it was simply the generic fact that the entire church all **felt AWARE** of God's grace.
- G. Why have I brought this before you on this prayer meeting evening?
1. I'd like to encourage you to **make God's GRACE** as much a part of your prayers as you do **His POWER**.
  2. **We need God's grace as much**, if not even more, than we need God's power.
    - a. The filling of the Holy Spirit is a gift of God's grace.
    - b. The wisdom necessary to do God's work requires grace.
    - c. We need grace in order to be the loving, united church God means for us to be.
- H. Please pray for God's power on our gospel preaching – on our outreach; our evangelism.
1. But pray also for the blessings God's of grace.
  2. Remember, souls are saved by grace as much as they are God's sovereign power.
  3. And Christians mature and grow as a result of God's grace as well.
- I. Pray for the grace of God – God's **GREAT** grace.