

## Grace In the Eyes of the Lord

Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1985

### Genesis 6:5-8

*“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. I will give you the address at the closing of this message.”*

Last week I brought a message on the subject: “GRACE IS FOR THE GUILTY.” Today, I’m going to bring another message on the grace of God; the title of this message is: “GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD.”

Both of these messages will be available to you if you want to hear them again or share them with someone else. They both will be available on the same tape. The cassette tape will be for 60 minutes with 30 minutes on each side. There will be “Grace for the Guilty” on one side and “Grace in the Sight of the Lord” on the other side. You write for the tape and I will send it to you.

Here is my text for today in Genesis chapter 6: 5, 8: *“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”* And the Lord said, *“I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”*

The picture here is that the whole world lies in the sea of corruption; there is evil, wickedness, and depravity; *“but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.* Every imagination of every heart was evil continually. The thoughts of men were anti-God, evil and blasphemous; *“but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”*

The wrath of God hung like a cloud over the whole earth; *“but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”* God said, *“I will destroy man from the face of the earth and every creeping thing and every fowl. I will destroy every beast; “but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”*

God sent a flood that destroyed every creature except those in the Ark; *“but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”*

If you will go back to these statements which I have taken from this passage of Scripture and apply them to this present day, you will get the same picture today as you got back then. Our Lord said, *“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man.”*

In Noah’s day, the whole world lay in a sea of corruption. Is this not true today? There is crime and corruption, depravity, wars and rumors of war, hatred and terrorism all throughout this earth.

Some people are the objects of the grace of God. *“Every imagination of men’s hearts is evil continually.”* God said, *“I will destroy this world.”* He will not destroy this world by water but He will destroy it; God said, *the elements shall melt with a fervent heat.”*

God is going to destroy this world and the wrath of God is hanging over this world in which we live like a dark cloud. Some people are finding grace in the eyes of the Lord. Just like Noah of old, God has always had His people. He has never left Himself without a people or a witness.

The hymn writer put it this way:

Grace, tis a charming sound  
Harmonious to the ear,  
Heaven will the echo resound,  
And all the earth shall hear.

Grace first planned the way  
To save rebellious men,  
All God’s attributes are on display  
In that eternal plan.

Grace, first inscribed my name  
In God’s eternal Book,  
It was grace that sent that blessed Lamb  
Who all my sorrows took.

Grace taught my heart to pray  
Grace made my eyes overflow,  
Twas grace that keeps me to this day  
And His grace will not let me go.

The Scripture says, *“But Noah, found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”*

My friends, I want you to think with me a moment. I know that God is good and that God is love, truth, and God is merciful. If you could come up with one word by which you could sum up the character and attributes of the living God, what word would you choose? I would choose the word Holy. He is called the *“Holy God, Holy and Reverend is His name.”*

When Isaiah saw the Lord, the Scripture says, *“The seraphims were flying about the throne saying; “Holy, Holy, Holy.”* This is why God’s Word is called the Holy Bible. His angels are called the *“Holy angels.”* His Temple is called the *“Holy temple, the Holy of Holies.”*

When the priest went into the Holy of Holies, he wore a miter on his head that said, *“Holiness to the Lord.”* So, there is one word that sums up the character and attributes of the living God and it is the word *“Holy.”* Try to remember that.

If there is one word that sums up the nature and character of all men, what would it be? The one word that describes all men is the word *“evil.”* God’s Word says, *“Every imagination of man’s heart is evil continually.”* I am talking about men in the sight of God. Man is evil; *“there is none good, none righteous, none that seeketh after God and none that understandeth.”*

There is one word that can sum up redemption, eternal life, and salvation from sin and deliverance from eternal wrath. What one word would you use to sum up this thing of redemption, salvation, eternal life, reconciliation to God, union with God and a child of God? The one word I would use is *“Christ.”*

*“There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee will bow in heaven, earth, and under the earth. Every tongue will confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”*

Well, if there is one word that can sum up the character and attributes of God it would be *“Holy.”* The nature and character of men is described in one word, *“evil.”* Salvation, redemption, eternal life is summed up in Christ.

There is one word that could sum up our Gospel and message which I am sent to do. There is the function of the church, the business of the church, the ministry of the church, the ministry of the missionary, the evangelist, the pastor, and the preacher. If there is one

word that could sum up our ministry, our message, and our Gospel, what would it be? The one word that defines our Gospel is “*grace*.”

*“For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast. We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”* The Scripture says, “*God hath foreordained that we should walk in them.*”

The apostle Paul was bidding farewell to the elders from Ephesus. These men were his friends, his brethren, his co-workers and his co-laborers. He preached the Gospel to them and they were devoted to one another.

He was leaving them. He knew that he would never see them again. He knew that he would never preach to them again. He knew that they would never meet again. He was going to go to prison and to suffer and die as a martyr for his message.

If you will read the whole chapter 20 of the Book of Acts, you will hear Paul’s farewell message to these men. They wept because they would never see him or hear him again. The Holy Spirit revealed that prison and death awaited Paul.

Paul said to them in Acts 20:24, “*None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.*” What Paul is saying is, “That’s my ministry.”

I wish the church would move in this direction, back to the ministry of the grace of God; that is what Paul said. He wanted to finish his course with joy and the ministry of which he received of the Lord Jesus to “*testify the Gospel of the grace of God.*”

Like a golden thread, the grace of God runs through the believer’s whole history. Are you a believer? If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, if you are a child of God, the grace of God runs through your whole history.

Grace runs from your whole history from your election in eternity past to the day that you will stand perfectly conformed to the image of God’s Son. That grace of God runs like a golden thread through your whole experience and existence, your whole history.

There is no point from eternity past to eternity future in the existence, in the history and experience of the child of God where he cannot say there is no point; “*I am what I am by*

*the grace of God.*” I know what I know by the grace of God. I have what I have by the grace of God.”

Let me give you six or seven things about this grace. You can jot these things down and you can take the Scriptures and study them.

*“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”* I can say that, “I have found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” I’m not bragging about what I’ve done or what I’ve given. I’m not bragging about what I profess; I am bragging on God who showed mercy to a sinner.

He shows mercy and will show mercy. We have been saved and we’re being saved; *“Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”* At no time are we dependent on ourselves, we are always dependent on Him. By His grace *“I am what I am.”*

First of all: Our election to salvation is of God’s grace. Don’t be afraid of a Scriptural term and don’t run from it. Someone said, “If you meet a truth in the road, you have to accept it or run from it.” Don’t run from it, accept it.

In Romans 11:5 it says, *“Even so, at this present time there is remnant according to the election of grace.”* It is the election of grace and Paul says, *“If it is grace it is not of works, otherwise, grace is not grace.”*

The cause of our election is not found in us, it is found in God. That is what our Lord Jesus said, *“He lifted His eyes to heaven and He said; Father, Lord of Heaven and earth; I thank Thee that You have hid these things from the wise and from the prudent and you revealed it to babes. Even so, Father, it seemed good in Thy sight.”*

You see, the cause of our election is not found in us. God did not look down through time and see what we would be or what we would do; God chose us. We are what we are by His grace and we do what we do by His grace. The cause of our election is not found in us, it is found in God.

He loved us and then we loved Him. Listen to the Word of God, *“Herein is love, not that we loved God but He loved us. We love Him because He first loved us.”* The cause of that love was found in Himself, not in the sinner; there was nothing in us to love. There is nothing in us that is loveable. There was nothing in us to attract the love of God.

We are everything that God isn’t, we are the opposite of what God is. He loved us because He is love. He found the source in Himself, the cause in Himself and the reason

in Himself. *“He drew us with an everlasting love,”* He set His love upon His people from eternity. We love Him in response to His love for us.

The glory alone is due unto God. He said in, 1 Corinthians 1:26 through verse 31. *“Not many mighty, not many noble, not many strong, not many wise, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. God hath chosen the base things of the world and the things which are despised and the weak things of the world to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh can glory in His presence. Of Him are you in Christ Jesus who of God has made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.”*

Our election is of the grace of God:

“Tis not that I did choose Thee,  
Lord that could not be  
If Thou had not chosen me,  
I would have never chosen Thee.”

I have no problem with that, do you? God chose us; our election is by pure grace. We aren't better than this man or that man; we are all the same. *“We were chosen according to the good pleasure of His own will.”* Not only is that so, but also our call is by the grace of God.

All of you know or have heard of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Paul was a writer, evangelist, missionary and preacher. He summed up his conversion this way in Galatians 1:15, as Saul of Tarsus became the apostle Paul; *“But, when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb to call me by His grace to reveal His Son in me.”*

There is a general call that goes to all men. *“There is a light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”* There is God's judgment, God's providence and God's Law *“that is written in every heart so that they are not without excuse.”* There is a general call that goes forth like I am preaching right now; this is what you call a general call of the gospel.

There is an effectual call of the gospel. That is what Paul is talking about here; there is an effectual call that God extends to His own elect in which He says, *“My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give them Eternal life. They will hear my voice.”*

In 2 Timothy 1:9, Paul wrote; *“He has saved us and called us with a holy calling not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace.”* It is a call of grace and it is a gracious call; *“according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ before the world began.”*

One of our dear listeners said to me just two weeks ago (because she had an interest in the Gospel, in prayer, and in Christ); *“I believe that I have been effectually called.”* Have you been effectually called?

Peter said, *“Make your calling and election sure.”* God’s call is called a *“Holy calling;”* it is a calling by the Holy Spirit and the Word. It is an effectual call and an invincible call; it will get the job done.

Thirdly: I have been elected by grace and called by grace. The Scripture says, our justification is by His grace. Listen to Romans 3:24, *“Being freely justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*

Do you know what it means to be justified? I was preaching to a prison down in Saint Kitts Island last year. There were, I suppose, 80 or 85 inmates in this Her Majesty’s Prison on Saint Kitts Island in the West Indies. I didn’t know exactly what I was going to talk about to these men.

They wanted me to bring a message. We had some songs and then I stood up to preach. I wanted to talk to them about salvation, forgiveness, mercy, and life in Christ. I said to these men, *“Do you men know what it means to be pardoned?”* They all nodded their heads, yes; they knew what it meant to be pardoned. Some of them even smiled.

I told them that they could be pardoned but they were still guilty. I said, *“How many of you know what it means to be paroled?”* They all smiled again and nodded. I said, *“You can be paroled and still be guilty.”*

I asked them, *“How many of you know what it is to be forgiven?”* They knew what it meant to be forgiven. I told them that the people to whom they committed this crime may forgive you but you are still guilty. I told them that what the Bible teaches and what I am interested in and what we need in the sight of God is justification.

I asked them, *“Do any of you know what justification means?”* They all shook their heads no. I told them justification means not guilty, just as if I had ever sinned. My friends, that is what we have in Christ; we are cleared of all charges.

A man can be found guilty. You can parole him, pardon him and forgive him. To justify him is to mean that he is not guilty. The Scripture says; *“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, being freely justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*

Then, you can say with the apostle Paul when he wrote in Romans 8:33, *“Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect it is God that justifieth.”* You are not guilty and are cleared of all charges. *“Who is he that condemneth?”*

So, you see, our justification is by His grace and not by works. You can’t work off guilt. Guilt is still there and you can’t work it off. A fellow may be charged with a crime and he may pay his fine but he is still guilty; he has a record.

God’s people in Christ have no record; God says, *“Their sins I will remember no more.”* They are justified and they are not guilty. The hymn writer said, *“With His spotless garments on we are as holy as God’s Son.”* Do you see what I am saying? What a gift of grace!

Fourthly: Our daily strength in time of trouble, trial, and affliction is by His grace. Our daily strength is not in having a positive, mental, attitude alone; it is by His grace; He is our strength. *“He is a very present help in time of trouble.”*

Let me illustrate again, the apostle Paul was a man of great blessings, visions and revelations. God spoke to him and taught him the Gospel. God took him to the Third Heaven and used him to write the Scriptures. Paul was a mighty man and used of God.

The Lord told him, *“Lest he be exalted above measure, (which is in all of us, the potential and possibility of being lifted up in pride); God sent him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him.”* God sent him a real trial, a real thorn, and trouble in the flesh.

Paul said, *“I prayed; I besought the Lord three times to move that thorn.”* But the Lord said to me, *“keep on working, keep on trusting, keep on believing, keep on looking up.”* No sir, he did not say that, our Lord said; *“My grace is sufficient for you.”*

This is what I am saying to you. It doesn’t matter if it is a trial, affliction or trouble; you will find your strength in the living God, Christ Jesus. Do you know what David said in Psalm 119:72? David said, *“It is good for me that I have been afflicted.”* That’s strange language isn’t it? *“It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn Thy statutes; whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.”*

Our Lord said, *“In the world you shall have tribulation. They that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”* One thing I know; His grace is quite sufficient. It doesn't matter whatever the valley is or whatever the mountain or trial is; *“His grace is sufficient.”* Where He is His grace dwells. You can't have His grace without Him.

This is not applicable to people who do not know Christ by saving faith. Just like in Romans 8:28; that is not a blanket-promise to this whole, evil, world; *“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.”* This is for the people who love God and are called according to His purpose.

My friends; not only is our election by grace, our call by grace, our justification by grace and our strength is in His grace; our prayers ascend to a throne of grace. Listen; *“Let us therefore, come boldly, unto the throne of grace.”*

We are beggars; did you know that? Everything that we have is by grace. We don't earn a thing; the only thing that we do earn is the wages of sin which is death; *“the gift of God is eternal life.”* The Scripture says, *“Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Not many of us know how to pray. Do you know how Abraham prayed? He said, *“Lord; if I have found grace in Thy sight; do this.”* How did Moses pray? Moses said, *“Lord; if I have found grace in Thy sight; I ask this of Thee.”*

A man will only learn to pray when he learns something about the grace of God. You don't do it deserving it. You don't back God in a corner; no you don't; you don't demand of God. *“He is the potter and we are the clay.”*

Then, our spiritual growth is a growth in grace. In 2 Peter, he says; *“Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour to whom be glory both now and forever.”* Do you know what spiritual growth depends on; its growth depends on four things?

First of all: Spiritual growth depends on spiritual life. You have to have life before you can have growth. Dead things do not grow; living people are what grow. You have to be alive spiritually to grow. You have to be alive in grace to grow in grace.

Second: There is the Holy Spirit, Who teaches us. *“He shall receive of mine and show it unto you.”*

Third: There is the Word of God. *“Desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow.”*

Fourth: There is the grace of God. *“We grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.”*

We are called to be *“stewards of the grace of God.”* My friends, there is nothing that we have naturally or spiritually that is not the gift of God’s grace. As we have therefore received what we have, let’s minister that gift (or those gifts) to others, remembering that we are what we are, we have what we have and we know what we know, is all by the grace of God:

“Oh to grace, how great a debtor  
Daily, I’m constrained to be.”