

FROM GRACE TO GLORY

FROM GRACE TO GLORY

WALKING THROUGH KEY ASPECTS OF
GOD'S GRACE

By **Pastor Martin. C. Jackson**

PASTOR MARTIN. C. JACKSON

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Scripture quotations are taken from the **King James Version (KJV)** of the Bible.

This book is intended for educational and inspirational purposes. The views expressed are those of the author and are based on personal experience, biblical study, and spiritual reflection.

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Dedication

*I dedicate this book to grace.
I dedicate it to grace because grace has been the
only true constant in my life. From the beginning
of my journey until now, grace has been present.*

*It was grace that brought me thus far, and grace
will lead me home.*

About the Author

Pastor Martin C. Jackson is the Pastor of Sandy Lane Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, where he has served his congregation with a shepherd's heart since 2021. He is also a Senior Recreation Programmer within the City of Fort Worth Parks and Recreation Department, where he supervises one of the city's FW@6 program sites a late-night initiative designed to provide at-risk teenagers with a safe place, positive direction, and someone who shows up for them consistently.

His journey in ministry spans decades. He founded and led Nehemiah Ministries during his years in the homeless arena, where every Sunday he and his team served meals to men and women living on the streets breakfast before or lunch after because grace that does not feed the hungry is not grace fully expressed.

For more than twenty-five years he walked alongside the forgotten, the broken, and the overlooked, and he would tell you that they gave him far more than he ever gave them.

Every story in this book is his personal testimony. Nothing was fabricated. He has lived the dialysis. He has lived the canceled transplant.

He has lived the midnight prayers with no immediate answer. He has lived the seasons of invisible suffering that nobody sees but God.

And he is still living it sustained, graced, and moving forward.

He wrote this book because he knows what grace has done in one ordinary life from South Central Los Angeles, and he is convinced of this God has no respect of persons. If He did it for me, He will do it for you.

Forward

By Dr. Coakley

Coming soon

Foreword

(By Lady Robbie Jackson)

*For more than thirty-five years, I have walked
beside my husband.*

*Not just in the good seasons...
But in the hard ones too.*

*I have witnessed his life up close.
I have seen his strength.
And I have seen his weakness.*

*I have seen him give to others.
And I have witnessed the moments when he needed
God to restore him.*

*I've seen the weight he carries for people's
situations constantly making their problems his,
without them ever knowing.*

*I saw him pour himself out when he had little left. I
watched him love the unlovable, and I witnessed his
steady commitment when leaving would have been
the easier path.*

*There were times when the burden felt heavy and
the outcome remained unseen.*

Yet he continued to show up, day by day, year after year. In it all, I have seen the grace of God at work.

There were hospital nights when machines carried what his body could not. Nights marked by broken sleep and empty reserves of strength. Nights when trusting God was all we had, and standing was all we could do.

I was there.

I sat with him through dialysis, watching the toll it took on his body. I saw the exhaustion. I felt the weight he carried. And yet he kept going showing up to church to pour into others.

There were times I got angry, believing he was doing more than his body could bear. Yet he pressed on, trusting God to give him the strength he needed for the journey ahead.

Many see my husband as a strong man. I see something deeper a man who places his trust in a strong God and lives at rest in His promises.

The same grace that carries his life can carry yours. Read this book and discover it for yourself.

Opening Prayer

Lord, I thank You.

Before I begin to ask you for anything, I want to thank you for everything.

Lord, I ask that You shine through every page of this book. Not my words but Your grace. Not my story but Your glory. Let grace be the hero of every chapter.

Let the reader see not the man who wrote it, but the God who sustained him.

I pray for the person holding this book right now. I do not know their name. I do not know their story.. But You do.

Meet them where they are. Let grace find them the way it found me — not because they deserve it, but because You give it freely.

Lord, I ask that you move me out of the way, place the cross out front. Hide me behind its glory so that I won't be seen but you will be heard.

If this book reaches only one person if only one life is changed, one burden lifted, one soul brought closer to You then every word written was worth it.

I seal this prayer in the mighty name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Amen.

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*"I remember two things: I am a great sinner, and
Christ is a great Savior."*

*John Newton Slave trader. Preacher. Author of
Amazing Grace.*

WHY GRACE

A story is told of a man who once stood in line at the courthouse, waiting to see the judge. He knew he was guilty. He did not argue his case, nor did he attempt to explain it away. The record was clear, and so was the truth. All he could do was wait for the verdict.

When his name was called, the judge reviewed the record, declared him guilty, and pronounced the sentence. Justice required a significant fine as the penalty for what he had done. The man's heart sank. He lowered his head, knowing the fine was more than he could ever afford.

Then something unexpected happened.

The judge stood, stepped down from the bench, removed his robe, reached into his own pocket, and paid the fine himself. Then he looked at the man and said, "You are free to go."

That man did not leave the courtroom forgiven because the law was ignored.
He left forgiven because the penalty was paid.

That is grace... Unmerited favor.

And that is precisely what the Apostle Paul is describing in Titus 2:11–13 when he writes, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” Grace stepped down from the bench. Grace satisfied what justice required. Grace accomplished what you and I could never accomplish for ourselves.

But Paul does not stop with salvation.

In this short passage, he reveals that grace does far more than rescue us from sin. Grace teaches us how to live in this present world. Grace sustains us as we seek to live soberly, righteously, and godly. And grace fixes our eyes forward as we live in expectation “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

In these verses, grace is not passive. It is active. It saves, it teaches, it strengthens, and it directs our hope.

This book is written to explore those truths.

As we walk through Titus 2:11–13, you will see grace revealed in its fullness. You will discover that grace does not merely forgive your past—it trains you for the present, sustains you through the journey, and prepares you for the glory that is yet to come.

Paul describes God's grace in a unique and comprehensive way in his letter to Titus. I encourage you to read the entire epistle. Yet in this study, we will focus particularly on verses 11–13, because within these few lines we find a complete picture of grace at work in the life of the believer.

Before we can speak of how grace saves, sustains, strengthens, or prepares us for glory, we must first understand where grace begins. Grace does not originate in human effort, human decision, or human worthiness.

But before we go any further into what grace does, we need to make sure we understand what grace is.

WHAT IS GRACE?

Before we go any further, we need to understand one word grace.

Grace: Undeserved favor

The word grace comes from the Greek word *charis*. It means favor that is freely given.

Grace is literally God's favor that you don't deserve.

Not earned. Not deserved. Not achieved.

Grace is God giving to us what we could never obtain on our own.

Because of sin, what we deserve is death. But God looked at our condition, and instead of giving us what we deserved, He gave us what we could never deserve. He sent His Son to die in our place.

In its simplest form, grace is this:

God giving freely what we could never deserve and could never earn.

Grace is the opposite of karma,

Karma is about you getting what you deserve.

But grace is about you getting what you do not deserve.

And grace is not the same as mercy either.

Mercy withholds what we deserve. Grace gives what we do not deserve.

Mercy says, “You will not receive the judgment you earned.”

Grace says, “You will receive the blessing you never earned.”

When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day’s pay for his time, that is a wage.

When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize.

When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award.

But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award

Yet receives such a gift anyway that’s grace ...

Unmerited favor of God.

Everything you are about to read flows from this one word grace and from the God who gives it.

If you misunderstand grace, you will misunderstand everything that follows.

But if you see it clearly, it will change the way you see God, yourself, and your life.

So before we move forward, settle this in your heart:

You are not standing in what you earned.

You are standing in what God freely gave.

And now, let's begin.

Before you can understand how grace works in your life, you must understand where grace begins. Grace does not rise from human effort or moral resolve; it flows from the heart of God. In the pages ahead, you will see grace purposed in eternity, revealed in Christ, and applied in redemption. What you are about to study is not human religion reaching upward, but divine initiative reaching downward. Everything that follows rests upon this foundation.

SECTION I

The Foundation of Grace
Grace Purposed and Revealed

Sovereign Grace — Grace That Reigns
Grace Purposed in Eternity

Appearing Grace — Grace That Entered History
Grace Revealed in Christ

Saving Grace — Grace That Rescues
Grace Applied in Redemption

Justifying Grace — Grace That Declares Us
Righteous
Our Standing Secured

Abounding Grace — Grace That Overflows
Grace Exceeding Sin

SOVEREIGN GRACE - GRACE THAT REIGNS

There was a season in my life when I was convinced I knew exactly what God was doing.

Coming from South Central Los Angeles, a place that at the time had one of the largest homeless populations in America, I did not like homeless people.

I moved to Texas, forgetting about the homeless because I did not see it as visibly as I did in Los Angeles. I started working at a community center in South Dallas. Everything was going good until it wasn't.

I was let go from the community center. Not for disciplinary reasons, but budgetary constraints. I was getting along just fine, making decent money, loving what I was doing, and all of a sudden the bottom fell out. I did not know what was next. I asked the Lord, "What is going on?" I did not get an answer.

The next Monday, I started my job search. Back then they had an employment section in the newspaper. I was looking through the want ads, as we called it, and did not see anything I would be interested in.

At a second glance, I saw an ad for a job at a local homeless mission. I looked right past it because I did not like homeless people, and I knew that job wasn't for me.

I stopped looking for the day and told myself I would get back on the job hunt tomorrow.

I went to bed, and about 2:00 a.m., the Lord interrupted my sleep. I heard a voice say, "Go fax your resume to the mission." I said to myself, I must be dreaming because God knows I don't like homeless people. The voice said again, "Go fax your resume." So I got out of bed and went and faxed my resume to the mission. It was about 2:30 by then, and I went back to sleep.

At 8:15 that same morning, I got a phone call from the mission asking if I wanted an interview. I hesitated, but I said yes. We scheduled the interview for two days later.

Now here's where the story goes left.

My wife and I had a dilemma. At that time my son Josh was only four years old, and we had no babysitter. She had to go to work, and of course we could not leave the child at home alone, so we had a problem.

We came up with a plan, and this is what we decided to do.

She would schedule her lunch break during the time of my interview.

She would come to the mission and sit in the parking lot with Josh until the interview was over. I would then get him, and she would go back to work.

It was a good plan, but the problem was I gave her the wrong address.

I arrived at the mission and sat in the car with Josh, waiting for her arrival.

She was sitting across town waiting for me to show up.

I did not mention that this was before cell phones were readily available, and we did not have one.

When my wife did not show up and I knew I would be late for the interview, I took Josh inside with me to talk to the president of the mission. I told him the story, and he said, “We have a few minutes let’s just wait a while and see if she shows.” All the time we waited, he played with Josh, keeping him entertained while I waited in frustration.

After about twenty minutes went by, he said to me, “Let’s try it again tomorrow.”

I went home upset at my wife for not showing up, and she was upset that she waited her whole lunch break and I didn't show up. After discussion, we realized I had given her the wrong address.

At that point, I knew that I was not going to get that job. But I went to the interview the next day anyway.

We toured the facilities. I met a few of the residents, and then we sat down for the interview. The interview went well, and the president told me he had one more interview later that day and he would let me know.

I left for home, and something changed. I started to see that homeless people were not bums. Some of them were hardworking people who were down on their luck. I had talked to very intelligent people who, because of circumstances beyond their control, found themselves in the situation they were in. I started to see that but for the grace of God any one of them could be me. My heart started to change, and I started to feel like I wanted the job.

By the time I got home, I told my wife I really wanted the job, but I still thought that I would not get it because of the interview debacle.

Later that evening, my wife and I were in bed, and I told her again that I really wanted the job. She said, “Okay, let’s pray about it.” We started to pray. It was around midnight.

The next day, I got a call to come back for another interview.

When I got there, the president said to me, “Last night around midnight the Lord told me to hire you.”

Midnight.

The same time we were praying.

I spent the next twenty years working in the homeless ministry.

I went from not liking homeless people to loving homeless people. From not wanting to be around homeless people to not being able to imagine not serving homeless people.

It wasn’t me that decided to go into homeless ministry. It was God that guided me there.

I thought it began with a newspaper ad.

But it had already been settled in eternity.

That is sovereign grace. Grace that does not originate with our decisions or our worthiness but with God's eternal purpose.

Long before time began, long before God stooped down to fashion Adam's clay, grace already reigned in the heart of God. Before there was a world to fall, there was a God who knew redemption would be required. Before there was a sinner in need of mercy, there was a Savior prepared to give it. Grace was not an afterthought it was already seated on the throne of God's purpose.

When the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the council chambers of eternity, decided to create the universe, they did so with full knowledge of what creation would cost. They knew that if they acted in creation, the time would come when they would need to act in redemption. And grace would be the requirement.

Creation was not an experiment.
Redemption was not a reaction.
Grace was the plan from the beginning.

This means grace did not begin in Bethlehem, nor did it originate at Calvary. Grace was revealed there but it did not begin there. The cross did not create grace; it displayed it. What we see in time was already settled in eternity.

Sovereign grace reminds us that God is never caught off guard. Sin did not surprise Him. Failure did not force His hand. Redemption was not God scrambling to fix what went wrong it was God carrying out what He had already purposed. Grace reigns because God reigns.

But sovereign grace is not just theology to explain it is something I have lived.

This truth humbles us. Sovereign grace leaves no room for boasting. If grace depended on our initiative, we might take credit. If grace depended on our obedience, we might feel superior. But sovereign grace strips us of pride and reminds us that salvation begins with God not us.

Sovereign grace also gives us confidence. Because grace flows from God's authority, it is not fragile. It does not rise and fall with our performance.

It is not weakened by our weakness. What God begins by grace, He sustains by grace.

Grace pours out from the heart of God, and when He purposes grace for you, nothing can stop it. Not your past. Not your failures. Not your doubts. Sovereign grace means that God's mercy is not accidental it is intentional.

Grace is sovereign because God is sovereign and He gives it freely, fully, and faithfully according to His perfect will.

This is exactly what the Apostle Paul declares in Titus 2:11–13 when he writes, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” Grace does not originate with humanity it appears. It comes from God. It enters history by divine initiative, not human invitation. Before grace ever teaches us how to live, it first reveals who God is.

Paul’s words remind us that grace is not reactive it is sovereign. It does not wait to be summoned; it appears according to God’s will.

And because grace appears by God’s authority, it reigns over every stage of the believer’s life.

And if grace reigns in eternity, then grace will surely reach us in time.

Sovereign grace means God was reigning long before I recognized He was moving.

He was not reacting.
He was not adjusting.
He was reigning.

And what He purposes in eternity, He accomplishes in time.

Such is the sovereign grace of God.

APPEARING GRACE - GRACE THAT ENTERED HISTORY

Grace did not remain a decree in eternity past. It did not stay seated in the counsel chambers of heaven. It stepped out of eternity and into history.

Grace appeared.

Titus 2:11 declares, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."

That word *appeared* is powerful. It means more than arrival. It carries the idea of shining forth, becoming visible, stepping into view.

God, in His infinite wisdom, knew that grace could not remain a conversation in heaven.

It had to be displayed on earth.

The grace that was sovereign in heaven had to step into time. So grace entered history

Grace appeared.

Imagine the night when it happened.

Bethlehem was quiet. No palace lights, no royal announcement, no gathering of kings. The world did not know that eternity had just stepped into time.

In a borrowed stable, a young mother held a newborn child. The One who spoke the stars into existence now lay wrapped in swaddling clothes. The hands that formed the mountains now rested in the arms of Mary.

Heaven's grace had stepped into earth's darkness.

The grace that ruled in eternity had now entered history.

Grace had appeared.

Appearing grace reminds us that Christianity is not built on human philosophy, but on divine intervention. This is where Christianity separates itself from every other belief system.

Religion teaches man to reach up.
Grace shows God reaching down.
It is not about man climbing upward.
It is about God stepping downward.

Grace did not wait for us to climb up.
Grace came down.

And it did not come down as an idea. It was not a theory. It was not a philosophy. No, it came as a Person. God wrapped Himself up in His sovereign grace and clothed Himself in flesh.

God, in His grace, stepped into the very world that had rejected Him.

He who reigns in eternity walked into time. Grace did not stay in heaven. It came for us.

Grace came for us because it was the only way that we could be redeemed.

The One who rules the universe entered human history to die for a world that was lost.

The appearing of grace proved that God is not distant. He is not removed from our struggle. He is not unaware of our condition.

He proved it to me when He stepped into my confusion, stepped into my questions, stepped into my need, and stepped into my sin.

This was when appearing grace stopped being theology and became reality to me the day I realized Jesus did not just come into the world, He came into my world.

At that point, grace was no longer a doctrine I could explain.

It became a Savior I had to receive.

That is what appearing grace does.

It moves from being a story about the world to becoming a reality in your life.

The same Christ who stepped into time two thousand years ago still steps into hearts today.

Grace did not just appear in Bethlehem.

It appeared in me.

Christ did not merely appear in history; He appeared to me.

And He alone brought salvation.

Sovereign grace planned it.
Appearing grace revealed it.

What was hidden in the heart of God became visible in the life of Christ.

The appearing of grace was not the end of the story—it was the beginning of a new one.

It marked the moment when eternity touched time.

We did not summon it.
We did not deserve it.
We did not prepare for it.

Grace appeared.

Grace did not stay in heaven.

It came for you.

Such is the appearing grace of God.

SAVING GRACE - GRACE THAT RESCUES

I have wondered at times about the route God took to save us. He did not simply instruct us about grace from a distance. He did not send an example. He did not send a messenger.

He came Himself.

Notice what Paul says: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”

Grace did not come for only one nation.
It did not come for only one class of people.
It did not appear only to the religious or the morally upright.
It appeared in a way that makes salvation available to all.

What God sovereignly declares, He also lovingly delivers.

That is where saving grace steps in.

I like to explain it this way.

Imagine I take a one-hundred-dollar bill out of my pocket and hold it out toward you.

As long as that bill remains in my hand, it has value but it does you no good. It represents purchasing power, but it is not yet yours.

The moment you reach out and receive it, it becomes yours. Nothing about the bill has changed. The value was always there. The only difference is that you accepted what was already being offered.

That is saving grace.

Christ stepped into history. His hand is extended. The gift has already been purchased at the cross. The price has already been paid. But grace must be received. It cannot be admired from a distance. It must be accepted by faith.

Saving grace is not us earning salvation.

It is us receiving what God has already accomplished.

I grew up in church. My parents were saved before I was born. I knew who Jesus was my whole life. I knew the Scriptures. I knew the songs. I knew the language of faith.

But there was a night when knowing about Christ became knowing Christ.

I do not even remember what had upset me. I just remember my heart being heavy. I was sitting alone, listening to my iPod. A song by Shirley Caesar came on “There Will Be Peace in the Midst of the Storm.”

As she sang, something shifted.

It was not emotional hype. It was not pressure from a preacher. It was not an altar call.

It was quiet.

But it was real.

In that moment, I felt the presence of God in that room. Not theory. Not tradition. Presence.

And I realized something I had always known intellectually but had never embraced personally. Christ was not just my parents’ Savior. He had to be mine.

That night, grace stopped being information and became invitation.

And I received it.

Saving grace did not rescue me from a life of open rebellion. It rescued me from living near God without personally surrendering to Him.

I did not need more church.

I needed Christ.

And that night, in the quiet of my own room, grace found me.

That is why the text says, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation.”

People could not save themselves. No amount of effort, morality, or religious activity could rescue humanity from sin. Salvation could not originate with mankind God’s grace had to bring it to lost humanity.

Saving grace is captured clearly in this declaration: “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” This is the heart of the gospel. God did not wait for repentance before He demonstrated love.

He did not require reform before He extended mercy. While we were still sinners Christ died. That is saving grace.

This salvation was not discovered by sinners searching for God; it appeared to sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Many people talk about the moment they “found Christ,” but the truth is we did not find Christ. Grace found us. While we were yet in sin, grace took the initiative. Grace moved first, because there was nothing in us capable of moving toward God on our own. Grace did not wait for us to change, improve, or become worthy. Salvation was not us reaching up to God it was God reaching down to us.

There was a universal need, and God provided a universal remedy for all who will believe through grace. Grace is unmerited favor, receiving what we do not deserve. What we deserve is punishment commensurate with our sin. The Bible declares that the wages of sin is death, and justice demanded that the penalty be paid.

Yet instead of pouring out His wrath upon us, just like the judge in the opening story, God extended His grace toward us.

In His grace, God sent His Son to redeem those who were in bondage to sin. Grace made salvation accessible, not exclusive. It opened the door of redemption to every heart willing to trust in Christ. Grace does not discriminate based on background, failure, or past mistakes. It meets humanity at its lowest point and offers divine rescue.

God's unmerited favor does not mean He ignored sin or minimized its seriousness. His holiness would not allow that. Nor did He treat sin as though it carried no cost.

Instead, He offered complete justification. God declares us righteous not because we are righteous, but because Christ is righteous. This declaration was not based on human goodness, but on divine substitution.

He removes our sins by an act of mercy and grace grounded in the plan of salvation proclaimed throughout Scripture a plan built on the principle of one life given in place of another.

God pronounced the maximum sentence demanded by His holiness eternal separation from His presence yet, in an act of unfathomable grace, He bore the penalty Himself. God did not send an angel, nor did He delegate redemption to another. He came Himself. In Jesus Christ, God stepped into human history, took on human flesh, and entered the very condition that stood condemned by sin.

Because God is holy, the penalty for sin had to be paid. Because God is love, He chose to pay it Himself. In Christ, God lived the life we could not live, obeying the law perfectly. Then He died the death we deserved to die.

On the cross, Jesus bore the full weight of divine judgment not as a third party, but as God in the flesh standing in our place. Humanity owed a debt it could never repay, but God assumed the debt. The Judge stepped down from the bench, took off the robe of glory, and stood in the place of the guilty.

Justice was not dismissed it was satisfied. The penalty was not reduced it was fully paid.

The cross stands as the meeting place of justice and mercy. There, justice was satisfied, holiness was upheld, and mercy was extended all at the same time.

This is the wonder of saving grace. It does not deny sin it overcomes it. It does not weaken holiness it fulfills it. It does not excuse guilt it removes it. Saving grace tells the sinner, “You are guilty,” but then declares, “Your debt has been paid.” It tells the broken, “You are lost,” but then announces, “You have been found.”

Such is the saving grace of God.

JUSTIFYING GRACE - GRACE THAT DECLARES US RIGHTEOUS

Have you ever replayed a failure in your mind and wondered if you had disappointed God beyond repair?

I have.

As a pastor, I have sat across the table from believers who love God but quietly carry this fear. They wonder if one mistake has erased years of faithfulness. They question whether God still sees them the same way. I understand that fear, because I have felt it myself. There have been moments when I replayed a failure in my mind and wondered if I had disappointed God beyond repair.

Justifying grace speaks into that fear and says, “The verdict has already been declared.”

Justifying grace is God’s declaration that the believer is righteous in His sight. It is not based on what we have done, but on what Christ has done.

To justify means to declare righteous not to make excuses, not to overlook sin, but to pronounce a right standing before God.

This is where grace must be clearly understood. God does not justify us because we are righteous. He justifies us because Christ is righteous. Our standing with God is not built on our performance, our consistency, or our ability to live perfectly. It is built on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

That means God has already rendered His judicial decision concerning the believer. He has already pronounced us righteous in Christ. The declaration was not postponed until our next act of obedience, nor is it suspended every time we stumble. It was settled at the cross.

When Jesus said, “It is finished,” the payment was completed. When God justifies, He does not issue a temporary ruling. He does not place us on probation. He does not revisit the case each time we fail. The gavel has already fallen.

The verdict is not “partially accepted.”
It is not “accepted until further notice.”
It is not “accepted as long as you perform.”

It is declared righteous in Christ.

That declaration does not ignore our failures, but it does anchor our standing. Our fellowship may need restoring, but our position does not need re-earning. The courtroom decision has already been made.

Grace assures us that our acceptance with God does not rise and fall with our obedience. Our obedience matters, but it does not determine our standing. That standing was settled at the cross.

When God justifies us, He does not pretend we have never sinned. He declares that our sin has been dealt with.

Jesus shed His blood on the cross to justify the believer. Because of that sacrifice, the believer stands before God covered by the blood that was shed at Calvary.

Our acceptance with God is not based on what we have done, but on what Christ has done for us.

When God looks at those who are in Christ, He sees them through the finished work of His Son. There is a clear distinction not in value, but in standing between those who are covered by the blood of Christ and those who are not. Justifying grace rests entirely on that difference.

The penalty has been paid. The debt has been canceled. Justice has been satisfied.

Imagine a man who has been tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. His guilt is not in question. The verdict has already been read. The sentence has already been decided.

On the appointed day, he is walked down the final hallway and secured in the chair. Everything is ready. Justice is about to be carried out.

But just before the sentence is executed, someone steps forward and says, “I will take his place.” The man is removed.

The substitute is strapped in. The penalty that belonged to the guilty is carried out on another.

The man who was sentenced walks away—not because he was innocent, but because the sentence was fully carried out on someone else. The law has been satisfied. Justice has been served. His record is no longer marked by condemnation.

That is justifying grace.

We were guilty. The sentence was deserved. But Jesus stepped into our place and bore the judgment we could not escape. Because He took the penalty, the believer is no longer condemned. Our record is clean not because we were faultless, but because Christ took our place.

God remains holy while making the sinner righteous through Christ.

This is why restoration is possible. We are not restored on the basis of apology alone, but on the basis of justification.

God restores us because we are already declared righteous in Christ. Restoration does not re-earn our standing it flows from it.

Justifying grace removes the burden of trying to prove ourselves to God. It frees us from living in constant fear of rejection. When God looks at the believer, He sees the righteousness of His Son. Our failures grieve Him, but they do not surprise Him. And they do not cancel what grace has already secured.

This grace does not produce careless living it produces grateful living. When we understand that we are justified by grace, we are not motivated to sin more; we are motivated to love more, obey more, and walk humbly with God. Justifying grace does not weaken holiness it gives us a secure foundation from which holiness can grow.

Justifying grace reminds us that our relationship with God is not fragile. It is anchored in Christ.

We are not held by our grip on God, but by God's grip on us. And because that grip is grace-based, it does not loosen every time we stumble.

In justifying grace, God declares, "You belong to Me."

Not because you earned it.
Not because you maintained it.
But because Christ secured it.

This grace gives us peace with God, confidence before Him, and assurance in our walk. It allows us to approach God honestly without fear, without pretending, and without hiding.

We stand before God justified, not because we are flawless, but because grace is faithful.

Such is the justifying grace of God.

ABOUNDING GRACE - GRACE THAT OVERFLOWS

The declaration has been made, yet the struggle continues. Though our standing is secure, we still live “in this present world” a world where temptation exists and weakness surfaces. That is where abounding grace comes in.

Abounding grace assures us that no failure, no weakness, and no lingering struggle can outrun the grace that now reigns in our lives.

God does not give grace in limited supply. He does not give it out based on how good we have been. He does not hold it back because we sin or fall short of what pleases Him. The more grace we need, the more grace He has. That is what Scripture means when it speaks of abounding grace.

Romans 5:20 declares, “Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” This means God’s grace always exceeds human wrongdoing. Where sin increased, grace increased even more.

Where failure multiplied, grace multiplied much more. Grace is never overwhelmed by sin, nor exhausted by weakness. It does not merely meet our need it exceeds it.

I had a good friend who went to prison. He was guilty of the crime, and he had to serve his time. There was no denying what he had done, and there were consequences he could not avoid.

But while he was in prison, something unexpected happened. He enrolled in classes. He earned his undergraduate degree. Then he earned his graduate degree. When he came out, he was more educated and more employable than he was when he went in.

He went in guilty. He came out better prepared.

While he was serving time, grace was serving him. Even though he was locked up, grace was not locked in. Even though he was confined by consequence, grace was not confined by circumstance.

Grace did not deny his guilt. Grace did not erase the sentence. But grace worked inside the sentence. What could have destroyed him instead developed him.

That is abounding grace.

Sometimes we think that because we are facing consequences, grace has stepped back. But grace is often working most powerfully in the very place we feel most restricted.

Even in seasons of weakness, correction, or difficulty, grace is still greater than our situation.

When I was in college, I played baseball. Before the season started, the team was tasked with running one mile in six minutes. That was the standard.

Halfway through that run, I could see I was not going to make it. My legs were heavy, my breathing was off, and I knew I would not hit the mark. So I stopped running and went to the coach. I told him I was done. I said I could not run any further.

He looked at me and said something I never forgot: “It’s supposed to be hard. Own it. Keep running you’ll make it.”

He did not lower the standard. He did not shorten the mile. He told me it was supposed to be hard.

I never did make the mile in six minutes. But I kept running. And by the time the season started, I was definitely in better shape than when I began.

Titus tells us that we are to live soberly, righteously, and godly “in this present world.”

That means grace is not only preparing us for heaven it is sustaining us right now. The world is present. Temptation is present. Weakness is present. But grace is present also and it is greater.

Some live as though grace is barely enough just enough to forgive, just enough to survive, just enough to hold on. But Scripture declares something greater.

God's grace is not just sufficient; it is abundant. It is more than enough for what we have done in the past, and more than enough for what we are facing now and in the days to come.

Abounding grace assures us that no failure is final, no sin is fatal, and no situation is beyond redemption. Grace does not simply match the depth of our need it surpasses it. God always has more grace than we have sin.

Such is the abounding grace of God.

Now you are about to see something even more personal. Grace did not simply rescue you from sin and declare you righteous before God. The same grace that saved you now sustains you in your everyday life. In the next section, you will discover how grace strengthens you in weakness, shapes your character, teaches you obedience, and walks with you through the realities of this present world.

SECTION II

The Sustaining Work of Grace
Grace in the Daily Christian Life

Sufficient Grace — Grace That Sustains
Daily Dependence

Empowering Grace — Grace That Enables
Strength for Obedience

Transforming Grace — Grace That Changes Us
Inward Renewal

Sanctifying Grace — Grace That Shapes Us
Set Apart for Holy Living

Denying Grace — Grace That Teaches Us to
Say No
Renouncing Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts

SUFFICIENT GRACE - GRACE THAT SUSTAINS

For most of us, family is everything.

Family gives us the confidence to face the world. When life gets hard and it will family is what holds us up. Family means you are not facing it alone. There is someone in your corner. Someone who knows your name, knows your story, and shows up anyway.

That is what it means to belong.

Now imagine carrying that same confidence into every moment of every day not because of who is in your family, but because of whose family you are in.

Grace not only brings us into the family of God; it sustains us once we are there. The same grace that saves us from sin strengthens us for life.

That is where sufficient grace comes in.

We know that God's grace is sufficient because it "hath appeared to all men." Grace is not limited in its reach, nor is it reserved for a select few. Because it has appeared, it is present.

Because it is present, it is enough. It is sufficient to cover every need we face spiritual, emotional, or physical.

It is sufficient for every season, every struggle, and every demand of life, even those needs we do not yet recognize. The same grace that saves us is the grace that sustains us. God never calls us to face anything without first supplying the grace to endure it.

The Apostle Paul understood this firsthand. Paul had a problem that he took to God three times. He prayed for it to be removed. He asked God to fix it. But instead of removing the problem, God gave Paul a promise: “My grace is sufficient for thee.”

I like the fact that we are never told what Paul’s problem was. Scripture leaves it unnamed so that every believer can see themselves in the text.

Some of us like Paul has invisible suffering going on in our lives. Times when we are suffering on the inside with no visible marks, no dramatic story, nothing screaming there’s something going on. Outwardly everything looks fine. We show up. We smile. We function. But that inner turmoil is killing us on the inside and nobody sees it. Nobody but God.

God does not always bring us out of it. Sometimes He chooses something deeper He asks us to trust Him through it. I am currently in that season with my kidney situation. It's an ongoing situation within my body.

God has not removed it, but he has sustained me, graced me and tremendously blessed me in it.

Because it does not matter what the problem is, what the struggle looks like, or how long it has lasted. Whether it is sickness or sorrow, weakness or weariness physical, emotional, spiritual, or circumstantial

God's grace is sufficient. Whether the issue is in your body, your mind, your family, your finances, or your faith, God's grace is enough.

I understand this personally.

For eight years, I was on dialysis. Three times a week, five hours each session, my life depended on a machine that did for me what my body could no longer do for itself. Dialysis is draining and it is repetitive. It is scheduled weakness. It is being tired of being tired. It teaches you that strength is no longer something you assume; it is something you depend on.

After five and a half years on dialysis, I got the call for a kidney transplant. I went to the hospital, ran all the final tests, completed what I believed would be my last dialysis treatment, and was on my way to the operating room, excited that relief was on the way.

No more dialysis. The long season of feeling like I had no energy felt like it was finally coming to an end.

Then a nurse came running down the hall. She informed us that they had called the transplant off.

My COVID test had come back positive.

I was devastated. I asked God, “Why?” and got no answer.

They unhooked the IV. I got dressed. I went home disappointed.

The next day, I re-took the test. It came back negative. The first result had been wrong.

Now I wasn’t just disappointed I was angry.

And then I prayed.

It was not a long prayer. It was not polished. It was just honest. “Why?”

And the Holy Ghost spoke to me clearly: that kidney was not for me. It was better for me not to have it.

Peace came quickly.

The situation had not changed. Dialysis was still ahead of me. But something inside of me had settled. I accepted it.

I had to return to dialysis for another two and a half years before I received another call. And through those years, the acceptance held steady. God did not give me relief. He gave me strength.

Then the second call came.

This time, I prayed, sang, and praised all the way until they put me to sleep. Not because I was confident in the outcome but because I was confident in God regardless of the outcome. God had already shown me that He was with me through anything.

Sufficient grace means God may not always change the situation, but He will always provide the strength to endure it. He may not remove the burden, but He will sustain you while you carry it. Sometimes He does not explain the delay. Sometimes He does not answer the “why.” But He will anchor your spirit in the middle of it.

God sustained not only my body, but my mind and my spirit. *I am living proof that God's Grace is Sufficient.*

It does not matter where you are or what you are dealing with God's sufficient grace has no bounds. There is no limit to it, no expiration date on it, and no situation beyond its reach. There is no situation too messy, no failure too great, and no weakness too deep for the reach of His grace. And that grace is not just something God gave in the past it is grace that is present, active, and available to you today.

If relief has been delayed...

If something you thought was yours was taken away...

If you have asked God "why" and have not received an explanation...

His grace is still sufficient.

Such is the sufficient grace of God.

EMPOWERING GRACE - GRACE THAT ENABLES

There have been times in my life when I felt like the motor that pushes me was losing power. Not all at once, but slowly and surely I was getting weaker and weaker. It was the kind of tired that a goodnight's rest won't fix.

Have you ever felt that way? *Most of us have. We just don't always say it out loud.*

Most people never talk about that kind of weak. We push through. We make a plan. We try harder. We tell ourselves that if we just had more discipline, more focus, more determination, we could get there. And for a while it works. Until it doesn't.

Because there are some things in the Christian life that effort alone was never designed to handle. You cannot willpower your way into genuine peace. You cannot discipline yourself into lasting joy.

But you know what?

God never intended for you to live the Christian life in your own strength.

Empowering grace steps in where human effort runs out.

Titus tells us that grace is “teaching us... that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” That kind of living cannot be produced by human determination alone. It requires empowering grace.

Empowering grace is God giving us the ability to do what we could never do on our own. It is grace that enables obedience, endurance, service, and faithfulness. God never commands what His grace does not empower. Whatever God calls us to do, His grace provides the strength to do it.

Left to ourselves, we are weak. We try, we fail, and we grow weary. But empowering grace reminds us that the Christian life was never meant to be lived in human strength. God never expected us to rely on willpower, discipline alone, or personal resolve. He intended us to live by grace.

Paul understood this truth firsthand. Writing to Timothy, he said, “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Strength was not something Timothy had to produce it was something he had to depend on. Paul knew that obedience, endurance, and faithfulness would require more than effort; they would require grace at work within the believer.

The strength we need does not come from ourselves; it comes from grace at work within us. Empowering grace enables the believer to stand when quitting seems easier, to serve when energy is low, and to obey when obedience is costly.

For more than twenty years, I worked in homeless ministry. I walked alongside men and women who were broken, addicted, discouraged, and often forgotten. Ministry in that context is not glamorous. It is not always celebrated. It is often repetitive. You pray with someone today, and tomorrow they are struggling again. You help someone stand, and next week they have fallen.

There were moments when I felt tired mentally, emotionally, even spiritually. Times when the weight of responsibility felt heavier than the strength I had to carry it. There were days when I wondered if anything was changing. Days when I gave out more than I felt I had left to give.

In those moments, I realized something: God was not asking me to manufacture strength. He was asking me to depend on grace.

When I felt like stepping back, grace strengthened me to step forward. When I felt like saying, “I’ve done enough,” grace reminded me that obedience is sustained not by energy, but by empowerment.

When compassion felt drained, grace refilled it.
When patience felt thin, grace extended it.

I learned that empowering grace does not mean you never feel tired. It means you are never alone in your tiredness.

That is empowering grace.

It does not remove responsibility it makes obedience possible. It does not eliminate effort but it supplies strength for the effort. Grace does not work instead of us; it works through us. What we could not accomplish in our own power, God accomplishes through His grace.

Many believers struggle not because grace is lacking, but because they are trying to live in their own strength. They are saved by grace, but they attempt to walk by effort. Empowering grace calls us back to dependence daily, moment by moment on God's provision.

Empowering grace meets us in weakness. In fact, weakness is often the place where grace works best. When we come to the end of ourselves, grace steps in. When we admit our inability, God supplies His ability. Where human strength runs out, grace takes over.

This grace enables us to live out our faith in real life. It empowers us to love when love is hard, to forgive when forgiveness is painful, to serve when serving costs us something.

Empowering grace allows ordinary people to live extraordinary lives not because they are strong, but because God's grace is.

God does not give empowering grace for display, but for daily living. It is grace for the workplace, the home, the church, and the quiet battles no one else sees. It is grace that enables us to keep going when circumstances say stop.

Such is the empowering grace of God.

TRANSFORMING GRACE - GRACE THAT CHANGES US

I want to tell you about a man whose life is the most powerful example of transforming grace I have ever encountered outside of Scripture.

His name was John Newton.

He was not a pastor when grace found him. He was not a theologian. He was not a man seeking God.

He was a slave trader.

He transported human beings in chains across the ocean. Men, women, and children packed below deck in conditions no human being should ever endure. Newton profited from their suffering. He built his life on their bondage.

Grace did not find him in a church pew. It found him in a storm.

In 1748, his ship was being torn apart by waves in the North Atlantic.

The cargo was shifting. The vessel was taking on water. Death felt certain. And in that moment of desperation, John Newton cried out to God.

Grace answered.

Not because he deserved it. Not because he had earned it. Not because he was a good man.

He wasn't.

But grace is not about what you deserve. It is about what God gives.

Newton survived that storm. And something began to change inside him. Not all at once transforming grace rarely works all at once. But over time, the man who had chained people below deck became a man who preached freedom from sin. The man who had profited from darkness began to fight against it. He eventually became an abolitionist using his voice and his testimony to help bring the slave trade to an end.

And somewhere in that journey of transformation, he sat down and wrote a hymn.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

He knew what he was writing about. He was not using poetic language. He was writing his own testimony. He had been that wretch. He had been that lost man. He had been that blind.

And grace had found him anyway.

Years later, when his memory was fading with age, someone asked him how he was doing. He said

"I remember two things: I am a great sinner, and Christ is a great Savior."

That is transforming grace.

Not improvement. Not rehabilitation. Not moral adjustment.

Grace did not make Newton a slightly better version of who he was. It made him into someone he could never have become on his own.

Grace does not excuse the past. It transforms beyond it.

That is what transforming grace does in every life it touches, including yours.

God never saves us just to leave us the same. The same grace that strengthens us also reshapes us. It begins to work on our desires, our thinking, our behavior, and our direction. This is not outward adjustment or religious behavior, it is inward change. Transforming grace changes who we are, not just what we do.

Titus tells us that grace is “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly.” Grace does not merely point out what is wrong it gives us the power to walk away from it. It teaches us how to say no to sin and yes to God. That is transforming grace at work.

Transforming grace does not happen overnight, but it does happen intentionally. God works patiently and faithfully, shaping us day by day. Old habits begin to lose their hold. Old desires begin to weaken. New desires begin to form. We start wanting what God wants. What once pulled us no longer has the same power, because grace is changing us.

For many years in homeless ministry, I watched transformation happen. It did not happen overnight. It did not always come with a dramatic moment. It happened slowly and often quietly.

I’ve seen men who once refused accountability begin asking for it. Women who once lived in constant anger begin choosing patience. The change did not happen overnight, but week after week, I saw something different.

Quietly and confidently, I watched caterpillars transform into butterflies.

And the most fascinating thing is this they often did not realize it was happening until it had already happened.

That is what grace does. It works before you notice it. It changes you before you can take credit for it.

It reshapes the inside so it can shine on the outside. The caterpillar that has been transformed into a butterfly will never crawl the same way again. Transformation is not effort; it is change of nature. The creature that once crawled now flies not because it trained harder, but because it was transformed.

But I did not just see transformation in others. I experienced it myself.

There was a time in my life when I was strong, independent, confident, financially stable, and living life with no real worries. I was used to being the provider. I was used to deciding what I wanted to do and when I wanted to do it.

I did not realize how much I depended on my own strength until that strength began to leave.

Dialysis did more than affect my body it exposed my heart.

The financial shift was hard because I was used to being the provider. The loss of control was hard because I could no longer just decide what I wanted to do anymore. My schedule was no longer mine. Treatments dictated my week. And the physical weakness was hard because I was not used to feeling limited. The more I did dialysis, the weaker I became.

Grace was not just sustaining me it was reshaping me.

It was teaching me dependence.

Before, I leaned on my strength. Now I had to lean on God daily. Before, I moved without thinking twice. Now I had to pray about simple things. Before, I lived with no real worries. Now I understood what it meant to trust God in uncertainty.

Before dialysis I thought I was close to God. After dialysis I knew I was close to God.

Transformation did not happen overnight. It happened slowly. Quietly. Through weakness.

And I can say this without hesitation that journey brought me closer to God than I had ever been.

I could not preach, teach, write, or do anything spiritually as well as I can now if I had not gone through it.

Grace changed me.

Not just my schedule.

Not just my finances.

Not just my body.

It changed my dependence.

This grace does not mean we become perfect, but it does mean we become different. We may still struggle, but we no longer settle. We may stumble, but we no longer live comfortably in sin.

Transforming grace creates a holy discomfort with the things that once felt normal. It makes us aware that God is doing something new within us.

Transforming grace also teaches us how to live. It trains us to live soberly with self-control; righteously with integrity toward others; and godly with reverence toward God. This kind of life cannot be produced by rules alone. It must be formed by grace working in the heart.

Many misunderstand grace and think it gives permission to stay the same. But true grace never leaves us unchanged.

Grace does not excuse sin it confronts it. Grace does not ignore growth it produces it. Grace does not weaken holiness it strengthens it.

Transforming grace is evidence that God is at work. If grace has truly entered a life, change will follow. Not instant perfection, but steady transformation. Not human effort, but divine influence.

This grace reminds us that salvation is not just about where we are going it is about who we are becoming. God is not only preparing us for heaven; He is shaping us for holy living right now.

And as grace transforms us, it prepares us for the journey ahead. Because once grace changes us, grace must also keep us.

Such is the transforming grace of God.

SANCTIFYING GRACE - GRACE THAT SHAPES US

Have you ever done something you knew was wrong the moment you did it?

Not a mistake. Not an accident. But a moment where your flesh took over and you said or did exactly what you felt in the moment.

I have been there. But there is something happening even in those moments. The fact that it bothers you means that God is working in you. It is in those moments when sanctifying grace is there to develop us.

I had a co-worker that I handled very badly. They were mean to everyone. No one liked them. When they needed help, no one would help them because of their terrible attitude. They were even terrible to me at times. But when they needed help, I was the only one that would help them.

One day I found out that person was talking about me behind my back. We had a one-on-one meeting with the supervisor present.

I talked so bad to that person. I told them that they were a horrible human being and nobody liked them because they did not like themselves. That person cried and I did not stop.

I spoke everything that was on my mind and told them to never speak to me and forget I even existed.

I went home that night and the Holy Ghost started to deal with me. He told me that now that person might look at every preacher through the lens of how I spoke to her. Now they might feel as Christians deal with situations the same way the world does.

That broke me.

The first thing the next morning I went to their office and sincerely apologized. I truly did not handle that the Christian way. And it definitely changed how I handled situations in the future. I now let the Holy Spirit speak to me before I speak to them.

That is sanctifying grace at work. Not a dramatic transformation but a quiet conviction that would not let me stay where I was. To sanctify means to set apart.

It carries the idea of belonging to God in a way that is evident. Sanctifying grace does not merely change our desires; it begins to order our daily decisions, our habits, our speech, and our priorities. It shapes our conduct.

Once grace has saved us, restored us, and secured our standing with God, it does not leave us where we are. Grace continues its work. Sanctifying grace is the grace that shapes our daily lives, conforming us more and more into the image of Christ.

Sanctifying grace is not about becoming perfect overnight. It is about being set apart for God and gradually changed by Him. To sanctify means to set apart, to make holy, to shape our desires, our actions, and our direction. This work does not happen by human effort alone it happens by grace.

This is where many believers become confused. Some think sanctification means trying harder. Others believe it means avoiding failure at all costs. But sanctifying grace is not driven by fear or pressure. It is driven by relationship.

The same grace that justifies us now works within us to change how we live.

Sanctifying grace does not make us sinless, but it does make us sensitive to sin. Sanctifying grace works from the inside out.

It reshapes our desires before it reforms our behavior. Over time, what once felt normal begins to feel wrong, and what once felt difficult begins to feel necessary.

This is not because we suddenly became strong, but because grace is doing its quiet work within us.

This process is often uncomfortable. Sanctifying grace exposes what does not belong, challenges habits we once justified, and confronts attitudes we once excused. Grace does not only forgive it confronts. Not to condemn us, but to change us.

Many believers become discouraged here because sanctification is slow. Growth does not happen all at once. There are steps forward and moments of struggle. But sanctifying grace is patient.

God is more committed to our growth than our comfort, and He is faithful to work in us even when progress feels uneven.

Sanctifying grace teaches us that holiness is not about perfection it is about direction. It is not about never falling, but about continually being shaped into the likeness of Christ.

It does not remove temptation, but it strengthens our resistance. It does not eliminate struggle, but it reshapes our response. Grace trains us not just to say no to ungodliness, but to say yes to godly living.

This grace works over time. Growth is often slow, uneven, and unseen. But sanctifying grace is faithful.

It continues shaping us even when progress feels small. God is patient with our growth, committed to our maturity, and faithful to complete what He started.

Sanctifying grace also reminds us that obedience is not the cause of God's love—it is the result of it.

We do not pursue holiness to earn grace; we pursue holiness because grace is already at work in us. Grace changes what we want, not just what we do.

As sanctifying grace works within us, our values begin to change. Our habits begin to change. Our speech, our choices, and our priorities begin to reflect the work God is doing inside us. This is not about outward performance for approval—it is about a life set apart because it belongs to God.

Sanctifying grace is not harsh or condemning. It is patient and purposeful. It corrects us when we drift, convicts us when we wander, and calls us back when we stray. Grace does not shame us into holiness it shapes us into it.

God sanctifies us not because He is disappointed with us, but because He loves us too much to leave us unchanged. Sanctifying grace is proof that God is still working on us.

We are justified by grace.
We are restored by grace.
And we are sanctified by grace.

Grace saves us, keeps us, restores us and then steadily shapes us into who God has called us to be.

Such is the sanctifying grace of God.

Grace is not only something you receive—it is something you reflect. What God does in you will begin to show through you. In this section, you will see how grace expresses itself through service, guards the truth of the gospel, and calls you to live faithfully within the family of God. The grace that transforms your heart will also transform your witness.

SECTION III

The Outworking of Grace

Grace Lived and Guarded

Serving Grace — Grace That Sends Us to Work

Grace expressed outwardly.

Guarding Grace — Grace That Protects the Gospel

Living in a way that preserves doctrinal integrity.

Particular Grace — Grace for God's Family

Grace within covenant relationship.

Prevenient Grace — Grace That Goes Before Us

Grace preparing and enabling response.

SERVING GRACE - GRACE THAT SENDS US TO WORK

What God has for you is for you, but what God gives to you is not for you. God give you grace to give to someone else.

There was man who felt unloved. He went through life feeling this way. One day he ran into an old friend. After a while of reconnecting the friend said to him “man I Love you”. He replied no one loves me and I don’t believe you love me. The friend said ok, I don’t love you. God loves you through me.

That’s exactly what serving Grace does. Serving Grace is not only you serving God. It is God reaching down through you to serve someone else.

Grace was never meant to stop with you.

God never gives grace just so we can sit still. The same grace that enables us to stand also sends us to work. Serving grace is God’s grace at work through our lives for His purpose and His glory

Serving grace reminds us that service is not the means by which we earn grace, but the evidence that grace has already been received. We do not serve to get grace we serve because of grace.

Service is not our attempt to qualify ourselves before God; it is our response to what God has already done for us.

Many people struggle with serving because they try to serve in their own strength. They burn out, grow resentful, or become discouraged. When service is driven by works, it becomes heavy. It produces pressure, comparison, and obligation. We begin to measure our value by how much we do and our faithfulness by how tired we are. But serving grace reminds us that God never intended service to be sustained by pressure or obligation. Service that flows from grace is fueled by gratitude, not guilt.

Works say, “If I do enough, God will accept me.” Grace says, “Because God has accepted me, I am free to serve.”

Serving grace also teaches us that faith is meant to be lived out. Grace does not make us passive it makes us available. It moves us beyond intention into action. When grace is at work, it does not ask, “What can I avoid?” It asks, “How can I help?”

Serving grace keeps us grounded in the truth that we are not working for God’s favor we are working from God’s favor. Our service does not add to the cross, nor does it complete what Christ has already finished. It simply puts on display the grace that has already transformed our lives.

Serving grace also frees us from comparison. We do not serve to compete, and we do not serve to be seen. We serve because grace has been given to us.

I learned this lesson personally one time when I went to preach in Mississippi. I thought I had preached well. People were complimenting me, and I started feeling like I was the big man on campus.

After church, they had dinner outside in the yard. There was a place reserved for me to sit, so I sat down and waited for someone to bring me a plate. I assumed that was how it worked. I was the guest preacher.

After a while, I noticed something. The pastor of the church had not come to sit with me. No one had brought me a plate.

So I got up and went to stand in line to fix my own plate.

While standing in line, I observed two things.

First, all the chicken was gone.

Second, the pastor of the church was serving food to the congregation.

And that is when it hit me.

I had been waiting to be served because I thought I was important. I had forgotten that preaching is not about being elevated it is about serving.

I was thinking about being recognized instead of being useful.

And because I lost sight of that, I did not get any fried chicken that day.

Grace used that moment to remind me that serving is not about position it is about posture.

Serving grace corrects our motives.

It reminds us that the greatest in the kingdom is the servant of all.

Grace does not elevate us above others it places us among them.

Serving grace reminds us that our lives are not our own. We have been saved by grace, strengthened by grace, and empowered by grace and now we are sent by grace. Grace never stops with us; it always flows through us.

Think about a mail carrier. A mail carrier does not own the mail. He simply delivers what has already been sent. He does not open it, rewrite it, or take credit for it. He just faithfully carries it where it needs to go.

Serving grace reminds us that we are not the source we are the vessel. What God has given to us, He intends to deliver through us.

Wherever God has placed us, His grace equips us to serve faithfully, love generously, and give willingly. We do not serve to earn His favor we serve because His grace has already been given.

Such is the serving grace of God.

GUARDING GRACE - GRACE THAT PROTECTS THE GOSPEL

Have you ever known the truth and felt the pressure not to say it?

Not because you did not know what was right. But because you knew saying it would cost you something a relationship, an approval, a moment of peace.

I have been there.

I had a person I loved dearly come to my office about a marital issue. He was completely wrong in his biblical assessment of the situation. I wanted to spare his feelings. I wanted to find a way to meet him where he was. But I could not find a way to get there, because the truth would not bend.

I had to tell him the truth even knowing it would upset him. And it did.

But he eventually accepted it, and his marriage was stronger because of it.

I have never had medicine that tasted good. It doesn't taste good going down but it is good for you. The gospel works the same way. The truth may not taste good to the person receiving it, but it is good for them. Our job is not to make it taste better. Our job is to make sure it is real.

Guarding grace requires us to understand stewardship rightly.

Biblical stewardship is about managing everything God has entrusted to us in a way that honors Him. The word *steward* comes from a Hebrew term that literally means “the one who is over the house.” This referred to someone entrusted with managing the affairs of a household like a chief servant or manager. In biblical times, this person was not the owner but was entrusted with full responsibility to manage another man’s possessions.

In other words, stewardship is more like the role of a household manager someone given the responsibility to wisely oversee resources that belong to someone else.

In the same way, we are not owners of the gospel we are stewards of it.

Guarding grace calls us into responsibility. The gospel belongs to God. It originated in His heart, was accomplished through His Son, and was revealed by His Spirit.

The first thing we must understand is that we are managers, not authors.

The gospel is the Lord's.
The grace we preach is the Lord's.
The truth we proclaim is the Lord's.

We did not design it, and we do not have permission to improve it, alter it, or treat it as if it were ours to adjust.

Paul warned Titus about this very thing.

In the same letter where he wrote, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,” he also instructed him to “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” Grace must be proclaimed, but it must also be guarded.

We are ambassadors of Christ, and we must understand our role.

An ambassador is an authorized messenger or official representative who speaks and acts on behalf of someone else.

An ambassador does not represent personal opinions, personal agendas, or personal interests. He represents the will, the message, and the authority of the one who sent him.

That means we do not speak for ourselves. We do not adjust the gospel to fit our preferences. We do not soften truth to make it more comfortable, nor do we sharpen it to make it more severe.

That is why guarding grace matters.

Guarding grace is the commitment to deliver what was given to us unchanged, undiluted, and unedited.

Guarding grace is not about protecting people's feelings it is about protecting the Gospel message.

We guard grace when we refuse to distort it.
We guard grace when we refuse to dilute it.
We guard grace when we live in a way that aligns with it.

Some twist grace into permission for sin. Others reduce grace to mere sentiment, stripping it of holiness and power.

Guarding grace means we protect the gospel message from corruption.

But how we do this matters. Guarding grace is not about being argumentative or aggressive.

It is done by accuracy, not hostility. Not by fighting people, but by remaining faithful to the Word of God.

The gospel does not need to be reinvented. It needs to be remembered.

Guarding grace is living daily with the awareness that the gospel we carry does not belong to us. It belongs to God.

In every generation, grace is either preserved or distorted, and every believer plays a role in that outcome. When we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, we are not only expressing grace we are protecting it.

Such is the guarding grace of God.

PARTICULAR GRACE - GRACE FOR GOD'S FAMILY

Guarding grace reminds us that we are stewards of the gospel. We do not own the message we protect it, preserve it, and proclaim it faithfully.

But stewardship assumes relationship. We are not merely caretakers of a truth that stands outside of us; we are recipients of the very grace we guard.

Before we can faithfully represent the gospel, we must understand who we are within it. That brings us to a deeper question found in Titus 2:12, which declares, “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

But when the text says “teaching us,” we have to stop and ask who is “us”?

That question brings particular grace into view.

This grace is not different in source from sovereign grace, but it is different in experience. We have already seen that sovereign grace extends to all of God's creation. God is sovereign over all, and His grace is offered broadly. Every person benefits from God's sovereign grace simply by living in the world He created and continues to sustain.

But particular grace is just that particular. It is not universal in function; it is relational in nature. It is not grace for the world at large, but grace for a specific people those who belong to the family of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

This does not mean God's love is limited, nor does it mean grace is withheld unfairly. It means that God relates to His children differently than He relates to the world. Just as a parent may show kindness to all children, yet has a unique responsibility to their own, God pours a distinct grace into the lives of those who are His.

Scripture gives us a clear picture of this distinction. When judgment came in Noah's day, it was not all of creation that entered the ark it was Noah and his family. They were safe not because they were better than others, but because they were inside what God had provided. In the same way, particular grace operates within God's family.

Particular grace is the grace that teaches, corrects, shapes, and matures believers.

Once, when my son was in elementary school, he got in trouble for fighting. The teacher called me and told me my son was being suspended. I went to the school, and they explained to me that another kid had been bothering my son for a while.

On this one particular day, that kid hit my son, and my son retaliated. Apparently, my son got the better of the kid before the teachers broke up the fight. I could have defended my son because the other kid hit him first, and he was allowed, in his sight, to defend himself. We accepted the suspension because the rules say if you fight at school, you get suspended.

But during the suspension, he did not get in trouble at home. We had a long talk, and I explained to him lovingly that he broke the rule, so he had to be corrected. And the suspension was his correction. But in that correction, his father was going to teach him how to learn from that situation so he could handle it differently if it ever were to happen again.

There is a difference between how a teacher corrects a situation and how a father corrects his child. A teacher may instruct, but a father invests. A teacher may guide, but a father shapes because the relationship is permanent. When God corrects His children, it is not rejection it is relationship.

He does not discipline strangers. He trains sons and daughters. And the very fact that He teaches us is evidence that we belong to Him.

Maybe you are in a season of correction right now. If so, remember it is not rejection. It is relationship.

A stranger does not get corrected; a child does. The very fact that God is dealing with you is proof that you belong to Him.

It is the grace that trains us to deny ungodliness and live godly lives. This kind of grace is only experienced inside the family of God, because it flows from relationship, not from creation.

When we receive saving grace, we are brought into that family. And once we belong to God, we live under a grace that is personal, instructive, and sustaining a grace designed not just to save us, but to grow us.

Such is the particular grace of God.

PREVENIENT GRACE - GRACE THAT GOES BEFORE

Have you ever walked into a room not knowing what to expect and discovered that someone had already been there on your behalf?

When I was volunteering as a baseball coach, I had a player whose father was a top executive at a local company. I heard that his company was hiring for the Christmas season and I knew I could use the money, so I decided I was going to apply.

So I went to my player's father and told him I was planning to apply. I applied for the job and was granted an interview. When I arrived to the interview there were about twenty people there waiting to interview for the same positions. When my name was called I walked in and sat down across from the interviewer.

She asked me my name, I told her who I was. She looked at me and said something I was not expecting. She said "I've already been told to hire you."

Let's just sit here for a few minutes and then you can go home and wait for your start date."

The father of my player had called ahead. He had already spoken on my behalf. Before I ever sat down in that chair, my position had already been secured.

I did not earn it in the interview room. It was settled before I got there

That is what *prevenient* grace does. It goes before us.

Before you ever walked into the room of salvation, someone had already spoken on your behalf. Grace got there first.

The word *prevenient* comes from a Latin root that means to come before or to precede. Prevenient grace is the grace that comes before. It is grace at work ahead of us, preparing and enabling us to respond to God's call.

Prevenient grace precedes human decision. Before we chose God, grace was already moving. Before we responded, grace was already working. It is the grace that awakens the heart, stirs the conscience, and makes response possible. This is not grace reacting to us it is grace reaching for us.

Prevenient grace preceded you. Long before you said yes to God, grace was already present. It was drawing, convicting, and preparing you for the moment you would respond. You did not come to God on your own grace made the way.

I remember when I was in the ninth grade. I wanted to go to the Fresh Fest in Long Beach. My mother told me clearly that I was too young and that I was not allowed to go.

But my friends and I came up with a plan. We would tell our parents we were going to the movies, but instead we would go to the concert. The plan was working. One of my friends had borrowed his mother's car, and we were sitting in it, ready to leave.

As we began pulling out of the driveway, something in my spirit did not feel right. I cannot explain it any other way. Before we even got off the block, I said, "Stop. I'm getting out."

They called me names. They laughed. But I got out of that car and walked home. I went inside and went to bed.

The next morning, one of my friends knocked on my door. He said, "Man, last night was terrible." They went to the concert, got into a fight inside, came out afterward, and the car was gone.

It had been towed. The police called his mother, and she had to drive to Long Beach in the middle of the night to pick them up.

As he told me what happened, my heart started shaking. I began thanking God that I had gotten out of that car.

Looking back, I realize something deeper. That was more than teenage intuition. That was grace. Grace interrupted my plan. Grace restrained my steps. Grace protected me from consequences I was heading toward.

That just might have been the day I began to realize God was keeping me even when I was not consciously trying to follow Him.

Grace got me out of that car.

And if grace had not intervened that night, I do not know what direction my life would have taken.

Prevenient grace is like the wind behind a hurricane. A hurricane only has power because the wind is driving it. Without the wind, the hurricane could do no damage and carry no force. In the same way, without prevenient grace, there would be no spiritual movement toward God at all. Grace is the unseen force that makes response possible.

But prevenient grace is not only powerful it is also patient. My grandfather was a farmer. Before he ever planted a seed, he prepared the soil. He would plow it, turn it, remove what did not belong, and make it ready. The seed did not prepare the ground the farmer did. In the same way, grace prepares the heart before the Word ever takes root.

Without God's prevenient grace, we could not deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Without God's prevenient grace, we could not live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. The ability to respond to God's instruction does not originate with us it begins with grace.

Prevenient grace makes it possible for us to respond to God and walk in what He has called us to do. It does not remove responsibility, but it makes obedience possible. It does not force a response, but it makes response available.

This grace reminds us that even our first steps toward God were not taken alone. Grace went before us, prepared the ground, and opened the door. Our response mattered but grace made that response possible.

Such is the prevenient grace of God.

The journey of faith is not without struggle, weakness, or seasons of trial. Yet grace does not abandon you when the road becomes difficult. In this section, you will discover how grace preserves you, restores you when you fall, strengthens you in frailty, and refines you through fire. You will see that your security is not rooted in your grip on God, but in His grip on you.

SECTION IV

The Persevering Grace of God

Grace That Keeps and Restores

Preserving Grace — Grace That Keeps Us
Perseverance in the journey.

**Restoring Grace — Grace That Lifts Us
When We Fall**
Failure is not final.

**Doubting Grace — Grace That Holds Even
When You Let Go**
Grace that holds when faith feels unsteady.

**Strengthening Grace — Grace That Holds
Us Up**
Sustaining power in weakness.

**Refining Grace — Grace That Grows Us
Through Trials**
Fire that purifies, not destroys.

**Completing Grace — Grace That Finishes
What God Starts**
Grace that does not abandon its work.

PRESERVING GRACE - GRACE THAT KEEPS US

Grace does not only bring us to God it keeps us with God.

After grace has gone before us and begun its transforming work within us, the question becomes how we continue. Titus tells us that we are to “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” God knew that kind of living would require more than good intentions. It would require preserving grace.

The word *preserving* carries the idea of caring for, maintaining, and continuing in something. Preserving grace is the grace that allows us to keep going. It is not just grace to start the walk it is grace to stay in the walk.

God does not only give us prevenient grace to enable us to respond to Him. He does not only give us transforming grace to change us. He also gives us preserving grace so that we can continue living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. In other words, God gives us the power to live right, and He gives us the power to keep living right.

I am often disturbed when Christians say, “I’m saved, and that’s enough.” While it is true that salvation is enough to get us to heaven, salvation was never meant to stop there. In salvation, God calls us to a life that reflects His work within us. Even in this text, grace does not just save us it teaches us how to live.

That word *live* matters. It is a verb. It means to remain alive, to keep going, to continue forward. It means living godly today, tomorrow, the next day, and the day after that. It means continuing in that life until Jesus returns or God calls us home.

Preserving grace is what makes that possible. It sustains us when the journey is long. It steadies us when temptation presses in. It strengthens us when obedience becomes difficult. This grace does not promise an easy path, but it does promise God’s faithful presence along the way.

While we are living this way, we are not only letting our light shine we are walking in a manner that pleases God. This is not perfection, but perseverance.

Not sinless living, but faithful living. Preserving grace keeps us moving forward even when progress feels slow.

There was a season in my life where it seemed as if everything was against me.

I was working on a job (I won't say which), and I had a supervisor that was out to get me. Every day I walked into that job telling myself it would be my last. Every day I wanted to quit. There were three or four times I actually sat down and wrote my resignation letter and meant it.

I prayed and prayed for God to give me relief. He never did.

What He did do in that situation was sustain me while I was in it.

For about four or five months, God held me in that season when everything in me wanted to quit. I really hated that season. I couldn't see it then, but on the other side of it, I could see clearly what God had been doing all along.

He wasn't ignoring my prayers. He was using the very thing I was praying against to sustain me and grow me.

Maybe that is where you are right now.

I hated that season, but I came out of it better, stronger, and more developed because of it.

That's what Romans 8:28 is speaking to when it says all things work together for the good of them that love God, those who are the called according to His purpose. God has a plan that He is always working, and it's always for your good. So be strong where you are. You cannot see it yet, but God's plan for you is in motion. And you will be better because of it.

God's preserving grace keeps us it sustains us day by day as we walk with God in this present world.

This grace does not promise that the journey will be easy, but it assures us that we will not walk it alone. It does not remove every struggle, but it provides the strength to endure.

Preserving grace is God's faithful hand holding us steady as we live, grow, stumble, and press forward in faith.

We are not kept by our own strength, our own discipline, or our own consistency. We are kept by grace. And because grace keeps us, we can keep going living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world until the day our journey is complete.

Such is the preserving grace of God.

RESTORING GRACE - GRACE THAT LIFTS US WHEN WE FALL

Preserving grace keeps us but what happens when we stumble along the way?

Scripture is honest enough to admit that even those who belong to God can fall short. Though grace goes before us, transforms us, and preserves us, there are moments when we fail to live as we should. That is where **restoring grace** comes into view.

Restoring grace is God's grace that meets us after failure. It is grace that does not abandon us when we fall, but lifts us up and sets us back on the path. God never promised that His people would never stumble, but He did promise that grace would be sufficient to restore them.

Restoring grace does not deny sin, it does not excuse it, or pretend it does not matter. Grace is never careless with holiness. But restoring grace meets us honestly where we are and offers forgiveness, healing, and renewal. It does not push us away in shame but it does draw us back in love.

Many believers struggle not because they have fallen, but because they believe falling disqualifies them forever.

Restoring grace reminds us that failure is not final and falling is not the end of the story. Please understand because this is important. **God's grace is greater than our worst moment.**

When we fall, restoring grace calls us to repentance not condemnation. Repentance is not God pushing us away; it is God inviting us back. Grace gives us the courage to confess, the humility to turn, and the assurance that forgiveness is available.

Restoring grace is seen throughout Scripture. God restored David after his sin. He restored Peter after his denial. Again and again, God proves that He is not only the God who saves and keeps, but the God who restores. Grace does not erase consequences, but it does restore relationship.

This grace lifts the weight of shame. Shame tells us to hide, withdraw, and give up. Grace tells us to come, confess, and begin again.

Restoring grace reminds us that God is more interested in our repentance than our punishment, and more committed to our growth than our guilt.

Restoring grace also puts us back on our feet. It does not leave us broken on the ground it helps us walk again.

God does not restore us so we can return to the same patterns; He restores us so we can move forward with greater wisdom, humility, and dependence on Him.

This grace reminds us that the Christian life is not marked by flawless performance, but by continual dependence on God. We are not defined by our failures, but by God's faithfulness. And even when we fall, grace is still at work.

Restoring grace assures us that God has not finished with us. He restores what sin damaged, renews what guilt weakened, and strengthens what failure shook. Grace does not give up on us and because of that, we don't have to give up either.

Preserving grace keeps us on the path when our feet are steady.

Restoring grace lifts us when we stumble and fall.

There is a familiar song that captures this truth so simply: *we fall down, but we get up*. That line resonates because it reflects real Christian experience. We do fall. We do stumble. But we are not left where we fall. Grace meets us on the ground and helps us rise again.

Together, preserving grace and restoring grace remind us that God's grace is sufficient for every step of the journey whether we are walking faithfully or getting back up after failure. Grace does not abandon us when we fall, nor does it withdraw when we disappoint ourselves or others. It meets us where we are, lifts us in mercy, and leads us forward in hope.

This grace reminds us that our relationship with God is not held together by perfect performance, but by faithful grace.

When we fall, grace does not say, "Stay down." It says, "Get up and walk with Me." God restores us not to shame us, but to heal us; not to disqualify us, but to continue His work in us.

Because of restoring grace, failure is never final, repentance is always possible, and hope is never lost. God does not restore us so we can remain stuck in yesterday He restores us so we can move forward into what He still has for us.

Such is the Restoring grace of God

DOUBTING GRACE - GRACE THAT HOLDS EVEN WHEN YOU LET GO

There is a kind of struggle that nobody talks about in church.

Have you ever believed... and struggled at the same time?

I have.

I had preached grace. I had taught it. I had watched it change people's lives.

But when grace had to show up at my own door I wasn't sure.

There was a night when I lay in a hospital bed in the dark and I was not sure grace was working in mine.

Maybe you know that place.

You still believe... but you're struggling. You're still praying... but something feels different. You're still showing up... but you're tired.

There is a kind of struggle that nobody talks about in church. But it is real. And grace meets you right there.

Doubting grace is the grace of God that holds you steady even when your faith feels unsteady.

It is the grace that keeps you even when your confidence is shaken.

The grace that stays with you even when your emotions don't line up with what you believe.

Doubting grace is this:

God holding on to you... even when you are struggling to hold on to Him.

In Mark 9:24 (KJV), there was a moment in Scripture where a man came to Jesus with a request. His son was in trouble, and he needed help. Jesus told him that all things are possible to him that believes.

And the man said something honest:

“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

That is one of the most honest prayers in the Bible.

“I believe...
But I'm struggling.”

And Jesus did not reject him.

He helped him.

That is doubting grace.

God did not require perfect faith.
He responded to honest faith.

I remember back in 2015 when I was diagnosed
with kidney failure.

I went to the doctor because I wasn't feeling well.
He ran some tests and told me that I needed to go to
the hospital.

I went home instead.

He called my wife and told her I needed to go to the
hospital because my kidneys were failing. After an
argument with my wife which she won I went to the
hospital.

They told me that I was in end-stage renal disease.

But worse than that, my potassium was so high that
my heart could stop at any moment.

Immediately, I began to feel as if God had let me
down.

The next day, the nephrologist came in and said that
I would have to start dialysis three days a week for
the rest of my life.

I told him I was not going on dialysis, and he could stop talking to me about it.

Later that night, I was lying in the hospital bed, and I felt myself getting depressed. I was laying there at death's door, feeling like God had abandoned me.

I was doubting everything I had preached.

I didn't even ask God why.

I didn't give Him a chance to minister to me...

Because at that moment, I wasn't talking to Him.

But as I was lying there in the dark, crying...

The Lord spoke to me.

I wasn't talking to Him but He spoke to me.

I had shut the door but grace walked through it anyway.

He reminded me of a story that the late, great Bishop J. O. Patterson, Sr. shared about how he learned to face death.

He told of a young man who had lost his wife. It was a gloomy day when they returned from the cemetery just the two of them. They went into an empty house, just him and his seven-year-old daughter.

He put his little girl to bed in her room, then went into his own.

A few minutes later, he heard a small voice at the door.

“Daddy, are you asleep?”

He answered, “No baby, I’m not asleep.”

She said, “Daddy, it’s dark, isn’t it?”

He said, “Yes baby, it’s dark.”

She said, “Daddy, I’ve never seen it this dark before. Have you?”

He replied, “No baby, it’s never been this dark before.”

Then she said, “Daddy, I’m afraid. Can I come get in the bed with you?”

He told her, “Yes, baby.”

She climbed into the bed, lay there quietly for a moment, then whispered,

“Daddy, it’s so dark I can’t see your face. Is your face turned toward me?”

He said, “Yes baby, my face is turned toward you.”

She closed her eyes... and went to sleep.

Bishop Patterson said that was his consolation. He told the congregation:

“It’s dark. I’ve never seen it this dark before. But thanks be to God the Lord’s face is turned toward me.”

And just knowing that gave him peace.

That story helped me. Not just the story... but the fact that God was still showing grace even when I was doubting Him.

I was still in the hospital. The diagnosis had not changed. The dialysis was still coming. The darkness was still dark.

But in the middle of my doubt, the Holy Spirit reminded me that His face was turned toward me.

Even though I was not looking at Him. Even though I had stopped talking to Him. His face was still turned toward me.

That's where my kidney journey began. Not with answers. Not with healing. Not with understanding. But with the assurance that grace was always there.

And I learned something I will never forget: Grace is not dependent on the strength of your grip... But on the strength of God's grip on you.

Doubting grace reminds us that God is not fragile.

He is not threatened by your questions.

He is not shaken by your struggle.

He is not offended by your honesty.

He would rather you come to Him with real questions...

Than walk away pretending you have none.

So if you are in a place right now where your faith feels weak...

If you are asking questions you don't have answers to...

If you are trying to hold on, but it feels like your strength is fading...

Hear this:

You are not being held by your faith.

You are being held by His grace.

And His grace does not fail.

Such is the doubting grace of God.

STRENGTHENING GRACE - GRACE THAT HOLDS US UP

Have you ever been so tired that you felt like giving up? Not tired from a long day, but deeply tired the kind of tired that drains your soul. Most people will not say that out loud, but most of us have felt it.

There were moments during my years on dialysis when I had absolutely nothing left. No energy. No strength. No desire to do much of anything.

But I could always pray.

Not long prayers. Not polished prayers. But honest ones. And in those moments, I discovered something I could not have learned any other way that when everything else runs out, grace does not.

That is strengthening grace.

The Christian life is not only about beginning well or getting back up when we fall it is about enduring faithfully over time.

As grace works to shape our lives, we quickly discover that growth is not easy. Living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world places demands on us that exceed human ability.

There are pressures to resist, temptations to overcome, losses to endure, and seasons where obedience feels costly. That is where strengthening grace becomes essential.

Strengthening grace is God's grace that sustains us when the work of sanctification becomes difficult. It is grace that holds us up when our strength runs low. God never intended us to grow by willpower alone. The Christian life was never designed to be lived on spiritual fumes. God supplies strength by grace.

If you have read my previous book, *God Is Not Controlled by Circumstances*, then you know that I went through a kidney transplant and spent a great deal of time in the hospital. I did not share that experience to focus on personal matters, but to testify to the sustaining grace of God.

There were moments when my body was weak and my strength was gone. I could not eat. I could not move much. I could not supply what my body needed on my own. Yet life was sustained through an IV constantly, quietly, faithfully supplying what I could not provide for myself.

Strengthening grace works the same way. We do not endure the Christian life because we are strong, but because grace is continually supplied.

Just as that IV did not depend on my effort, strengthening grace does not depend on ours. As long as the supply flows, strength is available.

God does not give strengthening grace in one dose and expect it to last forever. He supplies it moment by moment, day by day, exactly when it is needed. When our strength runs out, grace keeps flowing.

This grace meets us in moments of weakness. When patience wears thin, strength comes by grace. When temptation presses hard, strength comes by grace. When discouragement threatens to stop us, strength comes by grace.

Strengthening grace does not remove the struggle, but it provides the strength to remain faithful in the struggle.

Many believers become weary not because they lack desire, but because they are trying to carry spiritual weight alone. They love God, want to live right, and desire to grow but they attempt to do so in their own strength. Strengthening grace calls us back to dependence. It reminds us that God never asked us to supply what only grace can provide.

This grace does not promise ease, but it promises endurance. It does not always lighten the load, but it strengthens the one who carries it.

God gives grace not just to start well, but to keep going when the journey is long.

Strengthening grace also teaches us how to lean on God daily. Strength is not stored up once and used forever it is supplied continually. Day by day, moment by moment, grace provides what is needed for the next step. Yesterday's grace will not carry today's burden, but today's grace will be sufficient for today.

This is why Scripture reminds us that God's strength is made perfect in weakness. Our weakness does not disqualify us it positions us to receive grace. When we admit we cannot do this on our own, grace steps in with divine strength.

Strengthening grace keeps us steady when sanctification stretches us. It holds us upright when obedience costs us something. It sustains us when faith feels heavy and the path feels narrow. Grace does not ask us to be strong it invites us to rely on His strength.

Because of strengthening grace, we do not grow weary and quit. We do not collapse under pressure. We may bend, but we are not broken. We may struggle, but we are not abandoned. Grace supplies strength for the long obedience, the quiet faithfulness, and the unseen battles no one else knows about.

Sanctifying grace shapes us.
Strengthening grace sustains us.

And together, they remind us that God never begins
a work He does not also provide the strength to
continue.

Such is the strengthening grace of God.

REFINING GRACE - GRACE THAT PURIFIES US

Strengthening grace holds us up in the struggle but refining grace explains why the struggle exists at all.

In our journey through life, we all face days that seem overwhelmingly difficult days when nothing goes right and days when we feel like giving up. These are the days that test our patience, challenge our faith, and push us to our limits. But what if those days are not random? What if they are not wasted? What if grace is using them?

Refining grace is God's grace at work in the fire. It is grace that does not remove the heat but uses it to purify what is inside of us. It is not punishment it is preparation. It is not destruction it is development.

Most of us instinctively resist discomfort. We run from it. We pray it away. We interpret it as spiritual attack or divine displeasure. But what if some of the very things we are asking God to remove are the tools He is using to refine us?

Most of us look at uncomfortable situations as something the devil is doing to try and keep us down. Let's look at these challenges from a different perspective.

Instead of the devil trying to keep you down what if it's God sending storms to build you up?

When we look at it that way, we see there is a benefit to our struggles and hard times.

One of the dangers of comfort is that it quietly slows growth. Being comfortable all the time has consequences. Comfort can make us spiritually sluggish. Comfort can make us complacent and, as my old pastor would say, "Being comfortable makes us fat." Being comfortable causes us not to do all that we can do and can convince us that we have arrived when God is still working. In other words, comfort can cause us to settle into routine instead of pressing toward maturity.

That is why refining grace often allows discomfort.

Sometimes God allows uncomfortable days not to tear us down but to build us up because being uncomfortable has its benefits. Being uncomfortable makes us work hard. Being uncomfortable makes us challenge ourselves.

Being uncomfortable makes us look at things in a different way. God uses our uncomfortableness to make us better.

Discomfort makes us pray differently. It makes us examine ourselves honestly. It makes us look at life from a perspective we would never choose on our own. Refining grace understands something we often forget, and that is that growth rarely happens in ease.

There is purpose in the pain.

The reality is that to fully appreciate joy, sometimes it must come from having experienced pain. To ignore or dismiss this leaves us vulnerable in managing future bad situations.

One of the benefits of pressure is learning how to overcome its effects. You can't know God is a healer if you have never been sick.

But when you have been sick and God has healed your body, it's way easier to trust Him for healing the next time.

Pressure will allow you to see where your faith lies. Pressure will make you say, "Father, I stretch my hand to Thee, no other help I know." Yes, there is a benefit to pressure because pressure produces.

Pressure makes something plain into something valuable. The grapes must be crushed under pressure in order to make the wine the more that they are crushed, the better the wine.

Coal must endure pressure to make a diamond. The longer the pressure on the coal, the better the diamond.

That is why people are often like tea bags you do not know what is in them until they are placed in hot water.

When life dips us in hot water, what is on the inside shows up on the outside. If fear is inside, fear surfaces. If faith is inside, faith rises. If pride is inside, pride appears. If trust is inside, trust stands firm.

Refining grace does not create what is inside us it reveals it.

God does not waste our pain. Your suffering may be the very soil where your deepest revelation of God is planted.

A seed must be buried before it can bloom. The soil is dark and heavy. It is uncomfortable. But beneath the surface, roots are growing.

A vine must be pruned in order to bear more fruit. The cutting feels like loss. It looks like reduction. But pruning is never about destruction it is about increase. The gardener cuts back what is good to make room for what is better.

Sometimes God allows us to be buried so we can bloom. Sometimes He prunes what He intends to prosper.

So remember, whatever you are going through, God is not silent He is purposeful. He's planting something eternal, something sacred.

You may not see it yet, but underground, in the hidden places of your heart, God is at work. He's cultivating a strength, a faith, a glory in you that could never grow in sunshine alone. So hold on. Keep trusting. What God is growing in you will one day break through the surface and it will be beautiful, because the revelation that rises from suffering may be the one that anchors your soul for a lifetime.

Refining grace reminds us that the fire is not meant to consume us it is meant to cleanse us. God does not send heat to harm His children but to refine them. The very thing that feels uncomfortable may be the very thing God is using to shape us into something stronger, steadier, and more surrendered than we were before.

Refining grace reminds us that discomfort is not always the enemy. Sometimes it is the instrument of growth.

And perhaps most importantly, refining grace assures us that the fire is temporary but the purity it produces is lasting.

The believer is not thrown into the furnace alone. Grace is there. God is there. And when the refining is complete, what emerges is not a destroyed faith but a deeper one. Not a broken believer but a matured one. Not ashes but clarity.

Before my kidney transplant, I was on dialysis for eight years. There were days I had no energy, no desire to do anything. But in those days, God was building me. Even though I had no desire to keep pushing, refining grace helped me push on. Refining grace always let me know that this is temporary and that through this storm God is going to use you to do something great for the kingdom. And He did. God used my testimony of fortitude to bless others facing that same situation. The doctors would come to me and ask me to speak to their patients who were struggling with being on dialysis. I got to share my story with many people. God used that situation to prepare me for ministry today.

When I look back on those dialysis years, I see nothing is wasted. Not the dialysis machine. Not the hospital room. Not the long nights. Not the tears. Not the waiting. Not the pressure. Every trial, every stretch, every uncomfortable season becomes part of the shaping hand of God.

There were days I did not understand it. Days I did not enjoy it. Days I wanted it to end. But refining grace was working even when I could not see it. It was building endurance. It was deepening trust. It was preparing purpose.

Strengthening grace holds us up.
Refining grace shapes us through pressure.
And both are working together for something greater than we can see.

So if you are in the fire right now, do not assume you are forgotten.
If you are under pressure right now, do not assume you are failing.
If you are uncomfortable right now, do not assume God is absent.

No. God is right there. And He is refining you.

For me, refining grace made what felt like weakness become my witness.
Refining grace made what felt like delay become development.
Refining grace made what felt like pressure become preparation.
Refining grace made what felt like pain become purpose.

The struggle is real. But so is the grace.

And if He did it for me, He can do it for you.

And when He is finished, you will not look like what you went through.

Such is the refining grace of God.

COMPLETING GRACE - GRACE THAT FINISHES WHAT GOD STARTS

Have you ever wondered if what you are doing is making any difference at all?

I have.

When I was serving in the homeless shelter, the weight was constant. The needs never stopped. The brokenness was real. Some days it felt like I was pouring into people who were losing hope faster than I could give it.

I was tired not physically, but deeply tired. The kind of tired that makes you question whether you are making a difference at all.

There were moments when I wondered if someone else could do it better. Moments when I felt like I had given all I had to give.

In those moments, I wanted to walk away.

But I'm so glad that I did not quit.

Not quitting built me into the pastor I am today. God knew what He had in store for me long before I did. He knew I would be writing this book.

He knew I would need those years of quiet obedience to shape my heart, my endurance, and my compassion.

One day, as I was leaving the shelter, a young man approached me. His face looked familiar, but I could not place him. He said, “Thank you, Mr. Jackson. You saved my life.”

I was confused. I did not know what he was talking about.

He told me that a year earlier, he had been on the streets.

He said about a year earlier, somewhere along the way, he started using drugs. His family put him out. He lost communication with his wife and children. He said he had given up.

During his season on the streets, he got the opportunity to work at a job in another state. To get the job, the only thing he needed was a pair of glasses.

He went to his family for help, but he had burned them so many times that they said no. He almost gave up but decided to come into the shelter to ask me for help.

He said I made arrangements for him to get the glasses from Walmart and gave him food and a little money for the bus ride.

I did not remember any of it.

He reminded me that when he told me about his opportunity, I did not hesitate. I simply helped him. He said, “The people who knew me would not help me. But Mr. Jackson, you did.”

He told me he got the job and had been working there for a year.

Now he was working again. He reconnected with his wife and children.

And now he had come back to pick them up and bring them to the city he works in.

As he stood there talking to me, I was both heartbroken and proud.

Heartbroken because I did not even remember helping him.

Proud because God had used a moment I considered small to change someone’s life forever.

That one insignificant moment in my life became a turning point in his.

It was that day God allowed me to see the fruit of obedience.

That day, that moment, I will never forget.

And I realized something powerful: completing grace would not allow me to quit.

If I had walked away during the tired seasons... if I had resigned when I felt empty... if I had stepped back when I felt unseen... that young man's story might have been different.

He said, "You saved my life."

But I knew the truth.

I did not save his life.
God did.

God saved his life by not allowing me to quit because if I had quit, I would not have been there when he needed someone to say yes.

Completing grace kept me in place long enough for God to finish what He had started not just in me, but in that young man also.

That is completing grace.

God does not start a work and abandon it. Not in that young man. Not in me. And not in you.

There are times in life when we start things with good intentions but lose momentum somewhere along the way. We set goals. We make promises. We begin with excitement. But then life happens. Distractions come. Discouragement sets in. And before we know it, what we started is left unfinished.

But God is not like us.

We may leave things incomplete.
God does not.

Be thankful that we serve a God who finishes what He starts.

That is completing grace.

Titus tells us that grace teaches us to live “soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” That phrase matters in this present world. Grace is not only preparing us for heaven; it is actively working in us here and now. The grace that appeared is not temporary. It is not seasonal. It does not abandon its work midway. If grace is teaching us to live, then grace must also sustain what it teaches.

That is why, when Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, he did not offer a casual encouragement. He made a confident declaration: “Being confident of this very thing...”

Being confident. This is strong language. It means to be fully and firmly persuaded or convinced.

It means here that Paul was entirely convinced of the truth of what he said. It is the language of a man who had no doubt on the subject. Paul is fully persuaded not based on emotion, not based on human effort but based on who God is. Paul had a history with God. You see, God had brought him through some things. He had been shipwrecked and God brought him out. He had been stoned and God brought him out. He was in prison a few times and God brought him out. He had seen what God would do, and that's why he could make this statement with confidence.

Being confident of this very thing. What is this very thing, or this specific thing? The specific thing that he is very confident in is completing grace the grace that guarantees that what God begins, God finishes.

The good work was begun by God, not in man in any sense. It did not originate in human willpower, discipline, or effort.

We are too weak to keep ourselves. Too changeable, too ready to be led astray; too much disposed to yield to temptation.

Too prone to wander. But the foundation of our confidence is not our grip on God it is God's grip on us.

Paul's assurance was anchored in this truth: anything begun by God will be carried through to completion. The word used means to carry forward to its intended end to finish fully and completely. God does not abandon what He undertakes.

Anything a man does today is capable of changing tomorrow, but what God does never changes.

And He will not begin a work in you and not complete it.

So what is the good work?

The "good work" here referred to is the work of the kingdom, the work of God, the work of the Lord, or the work of Christ. Paul says He will perform it to completion. In other words, God is going to finish what He started. The Greek word *epitelesei* means that He would carry it forward to completion.

It is an intensive form of the word, meaning that it would be carried through to the end. It means that God would carry on the work which He had begun to completion. God abandons nothing that He undertakes. God doesn't start a project and abandon it.

He doesn't give up halfway. There are no unfinished projects in Heaven. There are no unfinished worlds or systems, no half-made and forsaken works of His hands.

There is no evidence in His works of creation of a change of plan or of having forsaken what He began from the beginning. If God started it, He won't leave it unfinished.

My brothers and sisters, Paul believed in the perseverance of the saints. He was persuaded that if God starts it, God finishes it.

Completing grace isn't about holding yourself together it's about being held together by the One who called you. So when the enemy whispers, "You'll never make it," tell him, "God's not finished with me yet." When doubt tries to rise and storms begin to rage, remind yourself:

"He which hath begun a good work in me will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Hold on to that truth. Let it strengthen you. Let it steady you. Let it remind you: you are not a project abandoned. You are a work in progress and God always finishes what He starts.

Sanctifying grace shapes us.
Strengthening grace holds us.

Refining grace shapes us.
Completing grace secures us.

And what God has begun in grace, He will complete
in glory.

Such is the completing grace of God.

Grace has saved you, sustained you, shaped you, and kept you but it is also carrying you somewhere. Your story does not end in this present world. In this final section, you will lift your eyes toward the blessed hope and the promise of glory still to come. Grace not only works behind you and within you it is leading you forward.

SECTION V

The Future of Grace

Grace That Leads to Glory

Promised Grace — Grace That Carries Us to Glory

The blessed hope and glorious appearing

PROMISED GRACE - GRACE THAT CARRIES US TO GLORY

Grace does not only save us, shape us, strengthen us, and sustain us it also points us forward. Grace gives us a promise. That is promised grace.

Titus tells us that we are “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Promised grace teaches us how to look not with uncertainty, but with expectation. It teaches us to lift our eyes beyond the present moment and fix them on what is certain to come.

We are not looking as if we are searching for something lost. We are not looking like someone chasing a pot of gold or digging for a hidden treasure. We are looking with assurance. We are looking the way we look for the sunrise. We know it is coming we are simply waiting for it to appear. The night may feel long, but the dawn is guaranteed.

To be “looking” means we live each day in anticipation. It means we walk, serve, endure, and persevere with the settled conviction that Jesus is coming back and He could come at any moment. That is the posture of promised grace. It shapes how we suffer. It steadies how we serve. It strengthens how we stand.

This is why Scripture calls it the blessed hope. And this hope is not a “hope so” kind of hope. It is not wishful thinking. The word hope here does not communicate uncertainty, as if something might happen. It communicates glad assurance complete confidence that what God has promised will surely come to pass. It is the confidence that the One who cannot lie has spoken.

Promised grace assures us that history is moving toward a conclusion, and that conclusion is not chaos it is Christ. The world may tremble, nations may rage, and systems may shift, but history is not spiraling out of control. It is unfolding according to divine promise.

One day, the same Jesus who saved us by grace will appear in glory. We will see Him face to face. The One who justified us, sanctified us, strengthened us, preserved us, and restored us will come to receive us unto Himself. Faith will become sight. Hope will become reality. Prayer will become praise.

That will be a glorious day.

The trials of this life will be over. The struggles that weighed us down will be behind us. Every tear will be wiped away. Every burden will be lifted. Every question will be answered. The sufferings of this present time will not be worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

What felt heavy here will seem light there. What felt long here will seem brief there.

Promised grace gives meaning to perseverance. It reminds us that our faithfulness is not wasted, our suffering is not pointless, and our endurance is not forgotten. Every unseen act of obedience, every quiet sacrifice, every tear shed in secret none of it is overlooked by heaven.

Grace assures us that what God began, He will finish and He will finish it in glory.

We shall see Him and be like Him.

No more praying toward heaven we'll be in heaven.

Every sacrifice, every struggle, every faithful step taken here will be rewarded. The believer receives a crown, not for fame, but for faithfulness.

Rest from labor.

Freedom from suffering.

Presence with the Lord.

As Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 5:8,
“...to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

That is the greatest benefit of all eternal, uninterrupted fellowship with Jesus.

Face to face.
Heart to heart.
No veil.
No barrier.
Just glory.

Because of promised grace, we do not lose heart.
We live with hope. We serve with expectation. We
endure with confidence. Grace carries us all the way
from eternity past, through the present journey, and
into eternal glory.

Grace saved us.
Grace shaped us.
Grace strengthened us.
Grace kept us.
Grace restored us.

And promised grace will carry us home.

From grace to glory, He has never left us not for one
moment. The same grace that met us at the cross
will meet us at the throne.

Such is the promised grace of God.

ONE LAST THING ABOUT GRACE

One last thing about grace must be understood.

Grace will not always be available in the way it is now.

Grace has walked with us from eternity sovereignly purposed in the heart of God before the foundation of the world. Before we knew Him, He knew us. Before we sought Him, He sought us. Grace was not an afterthought. It was not a reaction. It was an eternal design.

Grace found us when we were lost and saved us when we could not save ourselves. Saving grace met us in our ruin and raised us in Christ. It justified us freely and declared us righteous not because we deserved it, but because Christ paid for it.

Grace sustained us when we were weak, overflowed when sin abounded, empowered us to obey, and sent us to serve. Strengthening grace held us up when we were ready to collapse.

Restoring grace picked us up when we fell. Refining grace shaped us through fire and formed Christ in us. Completing grace refused to abandon the work God began in us.

Grace went before us, changed us, kept us, restored us when we stumbled, declared us righteous in Christ, shaped us through sanctification, strengthened us for the journey, and preserved us through every season of life. Sovereign grace chose us. Saving grace redeemed us. Sustaining grace carried us. Refining grace matured us. Completing grace secured us. Promised grace lifted our eyes toward glory.

Grace has been with us every step of the way.

From the first awakening of conviction to the settled assurance of hope... from brokenness to boldness... from fear to faith... from grace to glory.

But grace is also moving us toward a moment.

There is coming a day the blessed hope the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. And when that day comes, Jesus will take His people home, and grace will go with Him. Grace, as we know it now, will no longer be extended in invitation. Salvation will no longer be offered in the same way. The door will be closed.

And when grace is gone, there will be tribulation.

Not because God is unloving but because grace was rejected. Judgment will not come because grace was absent; it will come because grace was ignored.

The same grace that saves also testifies. The same grace that invites also warns.

But you do not have to experience that.

God's grace is available right now.

Grace is still calling.

Grace is still forgiving.

Grace is still saving.

Grace is still sustaining.

Today, grace still reigns. Today, grace still invites. Today, grace still offers salvation, restoration, strength, and hope. But grace is not promised forever it is promised now.

Do not wait for tomorrow what God is offering today.

Do not delay what grace is ready to do now.

Grace has carried us from eternity to this moment. And grace can carry you into glory if you receive it.

For the believer, this is not a message of fear but of gratitude. The grace that saved you will not abandon you. The grace that justified you will glorify you. The grace that began the work will complete it. You are not holding on to grace grace is holding on to you.

For the one who has not yet believed, this is not condemnation but invitation. The same grace that found us when we were lost is calling you now. The door is still open. The cross still stands. The Savior still saves.

But grace must be received.

For the one who closes this book and the situation is still the same the diagnosis unchanged, the prayer still unanswered, the burden still heavy hear this.

Not yet is not never. Unanswered is not ignored. Delayed is not denied.

Grace has not failed you. You are not at the end of your story. You are in the middle of it. And the God who brought you this far has not lost sight of where He is taking you.

Until then, grace reigns.

One day, faith will become sight. One day, time will give way to eternity. One day, grace as invitation will become grace fulfilled.

It was grace that planned our redemption.
It was grace that purchased our salvation.
It was grace that carried us through every valley
and every victory.
It was grace that fixed our eyes on the blessed

hope.

And it will be grace that welcomes us home.

From eternity past to eternal glory, the story has always been the same.

It was grace.

It is grace.

It will forever be grace.

Such is the grace of God.

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COMPANION RESOURCES

A companion workbook and teacher guide are available for personal study, small groups, and classroom settings.

To connect with Pastor Jackson or find resources related to this book, visit

sandylane.org

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