

Grace Enough For Now  
I Peter 1:2

This week as I began to prepare for the message it became abundantly clear that it would be a foolish attempt to try and cover both grace and peace in a single message. So I made the decision to separate them out and give them equal time on separate Sundays. The truth is we could take a few Sunday's on both in order to discuss the richness of these two beautiful words, grace and peace, and how they apply to us. But I'm going to only take one Sunday on each topic.

I do want to recommend a couple books to you that would be good additions to your library for further reading on the topic of grace that we are dealing with today.

Chuck Swindoll – *The Grace Awakening*

Jerry Bridges – *Transforming Grace – Living confidently in God's unfailing love*

Jerry Bridges – *The Discipline of Grace – God's role and our role in the pursuit of holiness*

So with that, turn in your Bibles once more to I Peter 1. Let me again read for you verses 1-2.

In his opening remarks, Peter addresses his audience of believers in Asia Minor, which is known today as what? (Turkey) They have been specially called by God through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, saved through the blood of Christ by the sinner's obedience to that call through faith.

Then he concludes his greeting with this statement: "Grace and peace be yours in abundance."

Ray Stedman calls grace and peace the "two great heritages of the Christian."

Would you consider with me these five benefits of grace?

Grace that is salutatory

Grace that is supernatural

Grace that is saving

Grace that is sufficient

Grace that is superabundant

We could consider other aspects of grace like grace that is satisfying and grace that is sanctifying, but we will just consider these five today.

What do we mean by grace that is salutatory?

## I. GRACE THAT IS SALUTATORY

Some will refer to grace as that prayer offered at the beginning of a meal. "Johnnie would you like to say grace before eat?" In that sense it is taken to mean a blessing on or thanksgiving offered for the food we are about to eat. Jews said "grace" before and after every meal. But grace is more than that. It was also used in that culture as part of their greeting, a salutation.

A salutation is a term that speaks of an opening address to a particular audience. These opening words are a way of extending a welcome. The Apostle Paul is quite noteworthy in that regard. He wrote 13 letters and in each letter he begins and ends with a word about grace to those to whom he is writing. Peter also uses the term as a greeting in both letters as well as in his closing remarks. Please understand and underscore that this is a term for believers who have experienced both the grace and peace of God. There are subtle nuances in meaning to those statements that call to mind something unique about their relationship with God.

For example at times it is just a simple reminder that God's grace might be theirs.

At other times it is a reminder that grace comes from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. On another occasion he accompanies grace with the love of God and the fellowship of the Spirit.

Peter tells us that God is the God of all grace and that we come to understand grace through the

knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus Christ and then concludes in his second epistle that grace is something we are to grow in.

Sounds like God has given us all the grace we need but we also have a responsibility to increase in it as well, and perhaps in the latter case related to our responsibility it means that we come both to understand God's grace more clearly and then apply it more regularly. If grace is an attribute of God then it is an attribute the Holy Spirit wants to develop in us as we become more like Him in character so that we demonstrate His grace to others. Every day when I pray for Robyn, knowing she is on the phone with patients and caregivers and nursing staff, I pray that she might demonstrate God's grace to them.

Used as a greeting it is appropriate for Peter to begin with grace and peace to a group of believers who were undergoing some level of persecution for their faith. They would need both grace and peace to endure the trials. So grace as a greeting is more than just a "hi, how are you? hope you fare well today" kind of greeting or even having to do with grace as the means of salvation.

So while grace is an appropriate salutation there is also more to it as we understand where it comes from. Let's consider grace that is supernatural.

## II. GRACE THAT IS SUPERNATURAL

Grace is an interesting word that has a variety of meanings or nuances. In its simplest form it means favor. We see it used in Genesis 6:8 when Noah found favor in the sight of God or in Luke 2:52 where it says that Jesus grew in stature and in favor with God and man. Grace is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of meanings. It can describe all of God's activity or just one segment of that activity. We most often associate grace as God's unmerited favor on the sinner who believes resulting in salvation.

But at the end of the day, let's be clear that the grace we are talking about comes from God. Everything we have, all that we are is from God. Pastor John Piper states "What makes grace grace is that it starts "from God," freely, without being merited or earned. So the little phrase "from God" is rich with meaning. Grace is the overflow of God's total self-sufficiency. He has no deficiencies that we could remedy by our works, and so he cannot negotiate with us for some good we could offer."

Romans 11:35 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"

God is the One who extends His grace to man. It doesn't come from anywhere or anyone else and it is not given to us based on anything we are or have otherwise it wouldn't be grace.

Paul speaks about grace coming from God and refers to Him as the God of all grace or the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the benefactor and we are the beneficiaries of His grace.

In I Corinthians 15:10 Paul acknowledges that he is who he is because of the grace of God. He is an apostle because of God's grace, because God extended that favor to him.

I am a pastor by the grace of God.

If you are a nurse it is because of the grace of God.

If you are an engineer it is because of the grace of God.

If you are a carpenter it is because of the grace of God.

If you are a salesman it is because of the grace of God.

If you are a factory worker it is because of the grace of God.

If you are a homemaker, computer analyst, retiree, athlete, whatever you are it is because of the grace of God – period. Now I'm not suggesting that it didn't take any effort on your part, but I want you to understand that you are who you are because of God's grace.

I think God's supernatural grace is really evident right out of the gate following the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden. He gave them something they didn't deserve.

God told them if they sinned they would die. Now when He cast His judgment on them with a curse because of their sin, they didn't die, not in a physical sense anyway at least not right away. He could have snapped His finger and they would have been gone and in the same second someone else appeared to take their place. But His grace allowed them to live even though they would from that moment on experience death physically as they aged and began to experience all the physical changes that come with the curse. Yet in the moment of their sin they did die spiritually. And He showed them what a spiritual separation of broken fellowship would look like by thrusting them out of the garden. But then He extended His grace by giving them a picture of how they could have a restored relationship. It would come through a sacrifice. If they ever wanted to have a restored relationship with God it would have to come through a redeemer. The demonstration of God's grace was in the sacrifice of Christ. His grace allowed them to live. His grace showed them redemption.

Grace has been and always will be divinely bestowed to us by God whose nature it is to extend it to those who don't deserve it. If in some way we could earn it, then it wouldn't be grace and it wouldn't be divine.

Grace is supernatural.

Again from the words of John Piper "Grace is the overflow of God's free goodness and power and wisdom. Saying that God is a God of grace is a way of saying that God is God – that He is the infinite, all-sufficient, self-existent, complete source and sustainer and owner of all being and all value and all worth in the universe. When goodness comes from Him, it comes freely. It can come no other way. Therefore all His goodness is grace. That's

what's implied in the centrality of grace in Paul's thinking and in the words "Grace to you from God."

Scripture is clear to articulate about a grace that is supernatural.

If grace is supernatural it's logical to conclude about grace that it is saving.

### III. GRACE THAT IS SAVING

In his work *Systematic Theology*, Lewis Sperry Chafer states "Grace is what God may be free to do, and indeed what He does, accordingly, for the lost after Christ has died on behalf of them."

We need to remember that grace and mercy are two distinct attributes of God. This is evident in Ephesians 2:4-5 "But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved."

Mercy is the compassion God showed that moved Him to act in sending a Savior. If God could have saved us on the act of His mercy alone, the death of Christ was unnecessary. His love is what motivated Him to save us, but even love is inadequate to meet His own holy and just demands for a sacrifice that would satisfy those judicial demands. *Unger's Bible Dictionary* states "This satisfaction makes possible the exercise of God's grace (inferring here the sacrificial/atonement death of Christ on the cross). Grace thus rules out all human merit... Grace perfects forever the saved one in the sight of God because of the saved one's position 'in Christ.'"

The best passage I know that supports this is found in Ephesians 2:8-9 ("For by grace are you saved).

The message states it this way: "Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did,

we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing!" (The Message)

This passage tells us where salvation comes from. It comes from God.

It comes from God's grace.

It comes from faith God gives for us to believe.

It is a supernatural/saving grace.

We respond to God's gift of salvation by His grace through faith. But even that faith to believe is a gift from God.

John MacArthur writes that "Faith is nothing that we do in our own power or by our own resources... Otherwise salvation would be in part by our own works, and we would have some ground to boast in ourselves." The word "that" refers to the act of believing not to faith, which tells us then that the act of our faith is a gift from God so that we can believe making salvation and faith both something God gives us by His grace.

If, in some moment of insanity, I decided I want to go bungee jumping and I walked out onto the bridge and jumped my faith is not in any ability of my own, but totally in the equipment I am strapped to.

If our salvation is by grace, then it is a gift of God that we do not deserve, but that He gives to us through faith not based on anything we do or on who we are. Otherwise we have something on which to boast. Otherwise we have something on which we feel entitled to. Instead, it is only by God's unmerited grace who showed His love to the unlovely.

In his book *Transforming Grace*, Jerry Bridges offers this thought about grace: "My observation of Christendom is that most of us tend to base our personal relationship with God on our performance instead of on His grace."

Let me add that it would cease to be grace if we

could add even just one good work to our salvation.

Once again the sound theology of hymns is helpful.  
#338 *Marvelous Grace of Our Loving Lord*

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,  
grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!  
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,  
there where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Refrain:

Grace, grace, God's grace, (supernatural provision)  
grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
grace, grace, God's grace,  
grace that is greater than all our sin!

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,  
threaten the soul with infinite loss;  
grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,  
points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.  
What can avail to wash it away?  
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,  
brighter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,  
*freely* bestowed on all who believe!  
You that are longing to see his face,  
will you this moment his grace receive?

Again MacArthur adds "When we accept the work of Christ on our behalf, we act by the faith supplied by God's grace. That is the supreme act of human faith, the act which, though it is ours, is primarily God's – His gift to us out of His grace."

To that Oswald Chambers writes "We have the sneaking idea that we earn things and get into God's favor by what we do – by our praying, by our repentance: the only way we get into God's favor is by the sheer gift of His grace."

Salvation that is worth having at all is salvation that is only and always given by grace and it only comes

from God. It is both supernatural and saving to those who by faith believe. It is limitless. It is endless. The depth of His grace is beyond measure both in its extent and in its scope. The Bible says that where sin abounded grace did much more abound meaning that there is no sin so great that grace is not greater, so that His grace not only saves you but keeps you for eternity, it will never run out. That is saving grace. That is amazing grace. That is God's grace. And then once we are saved by grace we continue to live by grace because God's grace is sufficient.

#### IV. GRACE THAT IS SUFFICIENT

Now a lot can be said about grace, but as we consider the passage before us in I Peter 1, it is my belief that the grace spoken of here is not saving grace, but grace that keeps the believer through the thick and thin of life.

II Corinthians 12:1-10

Paul describes an incredible event that occurred to someone, who I believe to be Paul himself. This person, who is described as "in Christ", meaning he was a believer, was caught up to heaven or into the very presence of God. Now he didn't know if it was an out of body experience referring to something that only his spirit was witness to or if it happened while still in the body. He continued by noting that while he was there he heard some "inexpressible things", things that were both indescribable and things that he was not permitted to repeat. He then stated that what was heard was so wonderful, such a person would have good reason to brag about it, and then adds "but I will not boast about myself except about my weaknesses."

Paul recognized that he had no grounds on which to boast about anything even though what he said would be the truth. God then took Paul and thrust him into a season of intense pain. There has been a lot of speculation about what it was, but suffice it to say, it was tough going for the Apostle. What ever

he was going through was so difficult Paul said he earnestly pleaded with the Lord in prayer three different times that it would be removed from him. It's a word that is used in the gospels to speak of people who came to Christ pleading to be healed. Paul pleaded with the Lord in persistent prayer asking the difficulty to be removed.

Maybe you know something of what he speaks. Some would say shingles or kidney stones are the worst type of pain they have had. Some would say a ruptured disc or multiple compound fractures from a severe accident. Some would say being paralyzed. Some would say financial loss or bankruptcy or losing everything in a fire. Some would say divorce. Some would say the passing of a loved one. Some would say the emotional pain of betrayal or when a loved one walks completely away from God.

The recent Daily Bread Ministries magazine covered a story about 28 year old Laura Morgan. She was gifted with a love for music, playing the piano, hand bells, the banjo and cello. She played at Carnegie Hall as a high school student and then auditioned with Yo-Yo Ma, the world's foremost contemporary performer on the cello. She has a Master's degree in speech pathology and was half way through a fellowship in that discipline when a tragic accident ended all that. She had to relearn how to walk and talk.

Some in her condition would choose to become bitter and angry. She has chosen a different path stating in the article that for whatever reason God has given her the grace to handle it.

God's supernatural grace in this and any trial we encounter is not the removal of those difficult challenges, it is His strength to get us through.

When God says that His grace is sufficient, that is a

promise you can claim because He is faithful to pour it out on you.

We could have an endless list of life circumstances and events that to us are more than we can bear and we have cried out to God and asked Him to remove it.

Paul's experience brought him to the point of distress so that he cried out to God and each time he received the same answer from God "My grace is sufficient for you."

Stop for a moment a wrap your noodle around that. "My grace is sufficient for you." Repeat it. Here's the question: Do you believe it?

I'm sure I'm not alone in suggesting that in the difficulties of life that I encounter whether big or small that is not often on the radar screen. I'm not thinking about the grace of God in that moment, but it's true and it's true every day and its true for every trial I go through – every one.

Do you remember when the Israelites were wandering around the wilderness and right away they started complaining to Moses that they were hungry. Sounds like your kids when you start out on vacation. You're an hour down the road and they bark from the back seat "I'm hungry. What's there to eat?"

Moses had over 2 million people complaining about a lack of food. So what does God do? He sends them manna.

Exodus 16:4-5, 13-20 (ff)

That so very clearly illustrates the principle of God's sufficient grace. Sufficiency means enough or to be content or to be equal to what is specified or required.

Every day the Israelites had just what they needed, not too much and not too little. And did you notice that they couldn't save anything for the next day.

Paul would experience the same thing. He would have enough grace for what he needed that day. Grace isn't something we can bottle up for a rainy day when we really need it. It's sufficient for what you need right then in that moment or event and whenever you need it. It's never early and it's never late. And it never runs out. All that to say, God gives you the grace you need to get through whatever you're going through.

In his song Amazing Grace John Newton explains it this way:

Through many dangers, toils, and snares  
I have already come.  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

God's grace will be there at the beginning of the trial and will be there all the way to the end. Count on it. Twice in the books of Acts Paul speaks of the Word of grace that has come to the believers. As a salutation we could say it refers to the words that are about to read, that they have come from God. But then we could also say that that same word of grace is going to be with the readers after they are done reading as they live by and in God's grace every day of their lives. It is sufficient for the deepest pain you will ever experience.

What is the result when we live by such grace? Paul gives us the answer. "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses (my suffering, my pain), so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships. **FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG.**" (I Corinthians 12:9b-10)

Strength to endure comes from God's grace.

Paul would say it this way to the Philippians (4:13): "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." It is made possible by the sufficient grace of God.

I want to return to another wonderful hymn.

#707 *He Giveth More Grace*

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater;  
 He sendeth more strength when the labors increase.  
 To added affliction He addeth His mercy;  
 To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.  
 His love has no limit; His grace has no measure.  
 His power has no boundary known unto men.  
 For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,  
 He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,  
 When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,  
 When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,  
 Our Father's full giving is only begun.

Again Lewis Sperry Chafer writes "Grace also undertakes to direct the saved one in the new manner of his daily life after he has been saved... Grace teaches the saved one concerning his holy walk in daily living."

So if you are experiencing any trials today God's grace is sufficient.

As you endeavor to live a godly life each day His grace is sufficient. It is His grace through the indwelling, empowering Holy Spirit that helps us exhibit His "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

God's grace is sufficient.

I want to close with one final thought. It's found once again in I Peter 1:2.

"Grace and peace be yours in abundance."

I leave you with this thought about a grace that is superabundant.

There is no limit to this grace and he wants his hearers to experience it in an abundant way, or in a way that is multiplied. God's grace is beyond measure.

Think of it in terms of a small guppy swimming in the vast oceans of the world who tells the ocean that he is going to drink all the waters contained in the ocean. The ocean tells the guppy to go ahead and try. It will never run out of its resources because of its abundance. Are you experiencing His grace in abundance? You can, because it's sufficient.

Now next week we will consider the peace of God, because without the grace of God we will never know His peace. As we close let me ask you this parting question: Are you resting today in the all-sufficient, superabundant grace of God?

## V. GRACE THAT IS SUPERABUNDANT