

Jesus was full of grace and truth. He grew in wisdom, and in favor (grace) with God and man.

We often take this word grace and apply it in scripture to the idea of unmerited favor- undeserved blessing so to speak. We are saved by God's grace- we don't deserve it but we have received it none the less.

Several years ago I had a conversation with a man, who grew up Mormon but had since left the church. The hardest thing for him to resolve was that God would send people to hell. He asked me plainly: "do you think I deserve to go to hell?" I answered him: "no, I don't"

I wish I would have added to that statement saying, "and neither does God." It is not God that condemns us to hell, but our sin. The wages of our sin is death. God does not believe that his creation, something he described as 'very good' deserves this punishment. That is why He made a way for own created likeness to escape this death- through faith in the name of His son, Jesus Christ, and faith in the Jesus' death and resurrection. This, as we know is a the gift of God. This is the grace of God. This gift goes beyond unmerited favor. This gift is favor.

This is what Jesus grew in, not in God's unmerited favor- we don't grow in God's unmerited favor, but in His character; in His grace. This grace is His divine influence upon our heart.

This grace is a mark of the believer.

Acts 2:42-47

"The Fellowship of the Believers

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

Acts 4:33

" And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all."

Acts 11:22-26

" The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians."

Barnabas, he went to Antioch a little anxious. There's been some weird teaching going, some false teaching, what am I going to find? But when he saw the grace of God, he was glad.

This grace connects us. (Georgia's message about her spirit connecting with a woman she had never met.)

Meeting Nicole Higgins.

This grace was something new in the world. A people that cared for the needy, a people that were unashamed to spread the gospel, a generous people, a people full of love. This was a new movement that needed a name- Christians.

What is this grace?

The beatitudes?

A characteristic?

Is it learned? John 1:17, For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

It cannot be taught, but it can be learned. As we walk in God's presence and spend time with him.

Where is this grace manifest in your life?

Luke 6:32-34

"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount."

Colossians 4:6

"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."

Hebrews 12:14-16

"Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no 'root of bitterness' springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal."

This theme of growing in the grace of God is throughout the New Testament (156 times in the KJV). It is not overlooking sin, it is not waiving a hand and saying do not worry about it, it is not be a pacifist, it is walking in the spirit of God. It is allowing his spirit to influence our lives and hearts, our minds. This grace must grow within us. It teaches us what to speak, when to speak, when not to speak. It stands for the truth, it speaks it in love and boldness.

This grace works in unity with truth and wisdom. How is this grace cultivated? Through the pursuit of God. Spending time in his presence, seeking Him, I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. The pervasive theme in my messages, the theme of many of the messages we have heard is to pursue God. It is time to get back into the foundation of our faith, back into Jesus, back into the word of God! Grow in him, grow in his grace, pursue him, let his

spirit change you. Let his mind be in you, let his grace be on you. Get back to the scripture of God, get back to the heart of God.

We are the continuation of Jesus' ministry. We are the light of the world.

2 Peter 3:14-18

"Final Words

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."