

By the Grace of God; Mark 10:25-27

I. John Bradford (1510-1555)

A. Converted from Catholicism to Protestantism

B. Was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London for his faith

C. It is said, while he was there, that he witnessed a group of prisoners being escorted to the hangman's noose and said, "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford"

D. Here is the idea

1. I too, like someone seen to have suffered misfortune, might have suffered a similar fate, but for God's mercy.

2. We were all destined for God's judgment

3. Our actions separated us from God

4. God's grace intervened and changed my life forever!

II. Characteristics of God's Grace

A. Abundant

1. David numbers the people, against God's will

a) 2 Samuel 24:10–14; ¹⁰ But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly." ¹¹ And when David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, ¹² "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the Lord, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'" ¹³ So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me." ¹⁴ Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."

2. Yet David would rather be judged by God than by man

3. Ephesians 2:4–8; ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

4. God's grace is indeed abundant to save a wretch like me

B. Unearned and unmerited

1. There is nothing we have done that could make God say "He deserves My salvation"

2. Romans 3:10; ¹⁰ as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;

3. It is God's love and mercy that drives the grace he shows to us

4. Titus 3:4–5; ⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness,

but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

C. A source of blessing

1. Ephesians 1:3–7; ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,
2. The spiritual blessings (vs. 3-14); forgiveness, redemption, an inheritance, sealed with the Holy Spirit
3. We can talk about earthly blessings such as healthy body, a home, food on the table, a job, etc
4. But those all pale in comparison to our spiritual body, our heavenly home, our sinless standing with God

D. The characteristics of God's grace are plain to see to those who desire a relationship with Him

E. To be the recipient of God's grace, me a wretched sinner, is truly amazing.

F. John Newton

1. Denounced his faith as a young sailor; his seagoing career marked by headstrong disobedience
2. He was pressed into service in the Royal Navy because of his disobedience
3. Deserted the Royal Navy, was caught and then traded to a slave trading ship
4. Newton openly mocked the captain of the ship, creating obscene poems and songs about him
5. Newton was punished, almost starved to death, and chained to the ship like the slaves they carried, then outright enslaved in Sierra Leone
6. His father intervened and Newton found himself on the Ship "Greyhound"
7. The captain said he was one of the most profane men he had ever met (these are sailors, mind you)
8. He was admonished for his profanity
9. In March 1748 a violent storm came upon the ship that was so rough it swept overboard a crew member who was standing where Newton had been moments before.
10. Newton and the crew spent hours bailing water, expecting to capsize and drown
11. Newton turned to the captain and said, "If this will not do, then Lord have mercy on us!"
12. Newton credits that moment as his return to God
13. John Newton is the author of *Amazing Grace*; knowing his story makes those words we sing mean so much more

III. The source of our salvation

A. Titus 2:11; For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,

B. Punishment is withheld

1. The golden calf in Exodus 32:9-14; God wants to destroy all of Israel except Moses and make a great nation from Moses' descendants... But he relents
2. Ezra 9:13; And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that you, our God, have punished us less than our iniquities deserved and have given us such a remnant as this,
3. Joel 2:13; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

C. Offered to sinners

1. Sin is forgiven

- a) Micah 7:18; Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love.
- b) 1 John 1:9; If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- c) 1 John 2:12; I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

2. Answer to prayers

- a) Psalm 51:1-3; ¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
- b) Luke 18:10-14; ¹⁰ "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

D. Expressed through the sacrifice of Jesus

1. Romans 3:23-26; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

IV. The influence in our Lives

A. Our character and conduct

1. Romans 6:1-2; ¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
2. Titus 2:11-12; ¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

3. Who we are, as a person, should reflect the grace of God.
4. When we look in the mirror each morning we see ourselves without any pretense. We can look deeply inside, determine to have the mind and actions of Christ

B. Our reliance

1. We cannot rely on our own "goodness" to atone for our sins.
2. We must rely on God's grace and mercy; His steadfast love
3. We cannot receive His grace through our own works of righteousness, but only through the Blood of His son
4. Titus 3:5; he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

C. By the Grace of God

1. We have access to God's grace because He loves us
2. We are saved by God's grace
3. Our lives should reflect God's grace