

*[<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

[Ephesians 2:4-7]

In Yesterday's Thought I reminded you of the *GREAT LOVE* God had for the world and for you as an individual. In Yesterday's Thought we also looked at the *MERCY* of God, the first of two gifts God wants to give you because of His *GREAT LOVE* for you as an individual. In Today's Thought you will see the second gift, which is GRACE. Look again at Ephesians 2:4,5,7. Did you see that it is "*because of His great love with which He loved*" you that God, in the *RICHNESS* of His *MERCY* "*SAVES*" "*by GRACE*"? This God does so that through the example of those who are saved, "*He might show the surpassing riches of His GRACE in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus*" "*in the ages to come*"!

GRACE<sup>1</sup> in the Old Testament is the Hebrew noun חֵן (chen) having the meanings of 'favor', 'grace', or 'acceptance'. Genesis 6:8 stands as the fundamental example of this word, when we read, "*Noah found GRACE in the eyes of the LORD*"; where it has the meaning of an unmerited favor or regard in God's sight. Beyond this, however, the word conveys a sense of acceptance or of being one who is favored.

In the New Testament, GRACE<sup>2</sup> is χάρις (kharis). For our purpose in Today's Thought, it is the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to His human creation finding; its only motive in the unearned and unmerited favor of God the Giver. Kharis, when received by faith transforms, and causes those receiving God's GRACE to love and to seek after the righteousness of God.

Someone once wrote: "GRACE is a five-letter word that is often spelled **J-E-S-U-S!**"<sup>3</sup>

With that thought in mine, consider that John 1:14 is speaking of Jesus when it teaches you that,  
*... the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of GRACE and truth*".

Then John 1:17 adds,

*For the Law was given through Moses; GRACE and truth (were realized) through Jesus Christ.*

With those truths in mind listen closely to Romans 5:15 where you are taught,

*"But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the GRACE of God and the gift by the GRACE of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.*

Now listen to the goal of GRACE in Ephesians 2:8 where you learn that, *For by GRACE, you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, IT IS THE GIFT of GOD.*

<sup>1</sup> In the Old Testament, "grace" is the Hebrew noun חֵן (chen), Strong's Hebrew dictionary noun number 2580.

<sup>2</sup> In the New Testament, "grace" is the Greek noun χάρις (kharis), Strong's Greek dictionary noun number 5485.

<sup>3</sup> Emphasis mine, tnb.

Someone once said that,

*"God's GIFT of GRACE is the GIFT UNSOUGHT; the GIFT UNMERITED; the GIFT UNLIMITED".*

From 1 Peter 5:10 you also learn that "... after you have suffered for a little while, the God of ALL GRACE, Who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself PERFECT, CONFIRM, STRENGTHEN, and ESTABLISH you."

Now here is a lesson you must understand. GRACE and MERCY work together for your good and for God's glory. As well as being the God of all GRACE, God is the One Who abounds with MERCY for the MERCILESS; HELP for the HELPLESS; and REDEMPTION for the UNREDEEMED.

Please understand, MERCY is God withholding the punishment we who have sinned rightfully deserve! While GRACE is God not only withholding our punishment but also giving us precious gifts instead!

Look at some examples of this truth:

- MERCY withheld the knife from the heart of Isaac. Then GRACE provided a ram in the thicket!
- MERCY ran to forgive the prodigal son. Then GRACE threw a party to celebrate his return!
- MERCY bandages the wounds of the man beaten by the thieves. Then GRACE covered the cost of nursing care during the recovery!
- MERCY heard the cry of a thief on the cross. Then GRACE pardoned his sin and promised paradise that very day!
- MERCY paid the penalty for our sin at the cross. Then GRACE substituted Christ's righteousness for our sinfulness!
- MERCY converted Paul on the Damascus Road. Then GRACE called him to be an apostle of Jesus!
- MERCY closes tight the gates of Hell. While GRACE opens wide the gates of Heaven!
- MERCY withholds what we deserve, eternal damnation. Then GRACE FREEY GIVES the Heavenly blessings we have not earned!

Now, would you please pray with me?

O God, the loving Father of mercy and grace. I offer You thanksgiving today because, You in Your great love have richly shown us mercy and grace in our times of need. I pray and ask that You teach us, Your children to recognize the times in our lives when You have shown us mercy and given us Your grace. Give us a heart of mercy that we can show mercy to others and give them grace as You have given grace to us. I now offer this prayer of thanksgiving for Your mercy and grace in the power and authority of Your love in the Name of Jesus Your Son. Amen!

Please meditate and pray on these things!

Louise and I pray this will help to both enlighten and encourage you to **know in a greater way** the **One** promising in His Word to never leave you or forsake you [Hebrews 13:5; Deuteronomy 31:6, 8]!

*BECAUSE HE HAS GIVEN ME MERCY AND GRACE,  
I MUST GIVE MERCY AND GRACE TO OTHERS! – tom*