

October 20 Worship

Announcements/Joys-

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“And from His fullness have we all, grace upon grace.”* John 1:16

Opening Scripture- Psalm 34:1-8(page 481)

Opening Chorus- 443- My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less(vs 1,2)

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.

People: O taste and see that the Lord is good. Happy are those who take refuge in him.

Leader: O fear the Lord, you his holy ones, for those who fear him have no want.

People: Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Leader: Which of you desires life, and covets many days to enjoy good?

People: Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it.

Hymn- 4- All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name

Unison Prayer- O God, You are an awesome God. You are almighty, all-knowing, and everywhere present. In love, You created all things, and by Your gracious will all things exist moment by moment. We praise You this day, because You have called us into Your family and You have honored us by making us Your servants. Help us to faithfully represent You before the world. We thank You for the blessing of friendship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray in the power of Your Holy Spirit:.....*Lord's Prayer*.....

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Job 38:1-7(Page 460)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- - Mark 10:35-45(Page 878-879)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 41-Ye Servants Of God, Your Master Proclaim

New Testament Scripture- Hebrews 5:1-10(Page 1046)

Message

“By The Grace Of God”

Have you ever observed or known someone who seems to be living in a place of hard times or less than good circumstances? How about those who may be living a life style that you find to be detrimental, in your opinion, to how we think “normal people” should live? As human beings, we have a tendency to make judgements about those who we think are maybe not as we are, you know, us normal people. Have you ever used the phrase; “There, but for the grace of God, go I?” If we have ever used that saying, are we aware of just what that means? It is easy to say but we must be careful about what we are claiming when we say it. We know that words have meaning but some things we say require us to look deeper inside ourselves than we may find comfortable.

These words; “There but for the grace of God, go I,” are attributed to an English evangelical preacher, John Bradford, who lived from about 1510-1555. He was burned at the stake in 1555 when he fell out of favor with the powers in the church and as his last words, he said to a fellow victim; “We shall have a merry supper with the Lord this night.” While that statement was recorded, there are no verified records about the grace of God statement and scholars do not believe that he actually said it.

Making claims as to whether or not we have received God's grace should not be made without knowing just what God's grace truly is. Grace is a constant theme in the Bible, and it culminates in the New Testament with the coming of Jesus; “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”(John 1:17) The word translated "grace" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *charis*, which means “favor, blessing, or kindness.” We can all extend grace to others; but when the word grace is used in connection with God, it takes on a more powerful meaning. Grace is God choosing to bless us rather than curse us as our sin deserves. It is His benevolence to the undeserving.

God shows both mercy and grace, but they are not the same. Mercy withholds a punishment we deserve; grace gives a blessing we don't deserve. Grace is an essential part of God's character. Grace is closely related to God's benevolence, love, and mercy. Grace can be variously defined as “God's favor toward the unworthy” or “God's benevolence on the undeserving.” In His grace, God is willing to forgive us and bless us abundantly, in spite of the fact that we don't deserve to be treated so well or dealt with so generously. The Bible repeatedly calls grace a “gift”; “But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. (Ephesians 4:7) This is an important analogy because it teaches us some key things about grace; it is a gift and as such cannot be earned, borrowed, taken, or expected. There is no cost, either presumed or asked for, it is 100% free to the recipient but not to the giver who bears the expense. The gift of salvation, for example, cost us sinners nothing but it cost Jesus His life when He died for us on the cross.

Why did I decide to do a sermon about grace this Sunday? I am sure that you all saw the picture of the back of my head as I was looking out over the ocean in North Carolina. It made me aware of something that I have known for a long time but never really paid much attention to. I have, without understanding it, been living in God's grace for far longer than I have been in a good relationship with Him. I say this because my life has not always been in line with what God expects of me. I have been blessed by the ability to travel and see places and things most people only dream of; the desert of north east Africa and Saudi Arabia, the mountain ranges of

the European Alps, the Appalachians, the Rocky Mountains. I was able to cross the Atlantic Ocean multiple times, by air and by ship, and many other magnificent sights both God and man-made. It has taken me a lot of years to come to the realization that the beauty and vastness of the things I have been blessed to see confirm just how expansive God's grace truly is.

Looking out over the ocean while on vacation brought home to me how vast and unending the grace of God is. The extent of the ocean, spreading from horizon to horizon, the beauty and grandeur of the mountains, desert sands as far as you can see, are all reminders of how never-ending God's love for all of us is. It is my belief that, while God's grace is meant for believers who have accepted Christ's sacrifice for us, there are many people who are enjoying a kind of preview of what God can do. I know of people who have not accepted Christ but seem to live a life in grace. They are happy and content with what they have, they are good about sharing with others, they do the right things when it comes to loving people, and accept life as it comes. Think how much more they could be experiencing with a relationship with God.

Having grace does not mean that we are all going to go through the rest of our lives like happy little puppies. Grace does not guarantee that we will be well off and have what we want. God's grace does not keep us from hard times or heartache or even pain. God's grace does get us through them and helps us to understand. Having grace is, in some ways, like any gift that is given to us. We can take the gift, say thank you, and put it on a shelf to look at once in a while, or we can use that gift as an everyday tool to guide us through anything and everything that the world throws at us.

Let's go back to the saying; "There, but for the grace of God, go I." When and if you ever say it, be sure that you are saying it in humility and gratitude, acknowledging your own sinful nature and your personal need for God's grace. It is far too easy to say it and put yourself above the person you are seeing. If we are not careful, we find ourselves using the phrase as a form of judgement about how someone else is living. Whatever condition we think another person is in, we must have compassion and empathy for them.

God's grace is a gift that is beyond measure and it makes even the worst of situations bearable, if we allow it. By taking the grace of God and giving our lives to Christ we will obtain something far more important; God's mercy. Remember, mercy withholds a punishment we deserve, grace gives us a blessing we don't deserve. How about, instead of saying "There, but for the grace of God, go I," we say "Here, because of the grace of God, I go." Praise be to God. Amen.

Prayers of People/Prayer- God of Grace, you blow the breath of life into our lungs, you have formed us in your image. And yet we acknowledge that sometimes we are not who you would have us be. You challenge us to embrace the refining fire of your love, to meet you on the threshing floor of life, to be washed as with fuller's soap. But in our heart of hearts we would rather keep those things that would be removed in such an encounter. Through your Grace, life-giving God, accept us as we are, Unrefined, unwashed, the chaff mixed in with the grain. And help us to move into a new way of being. Listen! For this is Good News! God's Grace is wider than our wildest imaginings. God's Grace embraces us as we are and where we are and draws us out to be the people we were created to be. In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 42- Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Benediction- May God, our glorious Father, open the eyes of your heart, so that you might see the hope to which he is calling you, the richness of the inheritance he has prepared for you, and the power that is at work among you. Go in the grace of God! Amen.