

Series: 1 Corinthians
Title: The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
Text: 1 Cor 16: 23
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1 Corinthians 16: 23: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

Our subject is “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The apostle Paul, nor any of God’s saints, can bestow the grace of our Lord Jesus on anyone. But we ask him who can to bestow grace, the Lord Jesus himself. Remember, this is the word given to Paul by our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no sinner who can bless another with grace, therefore, these are the words our Lord would have us desire for all his saints from the hand of our Lord himself. This is how our Savior would have us express our love for one another—nothing could express more love—than to desire the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

What does it mean to have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with us?

Proposition: Having the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with us is how we are kept always looking to Christ alone for all things.

MAKING US KNOW

By the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ being with us we are made to know we have full acceptance in Christ.

It is one thing to know *about* the grace of our Lord Jesus but it is another to have his grace with you so that you *know him* and his free forgiveness.

When we hear his name is “Jesus for he shall save his people from our sins” the grace of God is revealed in Christ by the fact he came to save sinners. It is only by grace that God has a chosen people which he calls “his people.” It has to be by grace that we are saved because Christ came to save sinners who cannot save themselves, which is clearly revealed in the fact he came to save us “from our sins.”

Then as we behold Christ call some and leave others in their sins it is clear that God saves by grace. It is grace by which God quickens all God’s elect to faith. So the grace of God is clearly revealed in Christ.

This doctrine is logical, it is clearly revealed in scripture and many understand it intellectually. But there is a great difference in knowing the doctrine of grace and having the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with us personally.

Only by the grace of our Lord Jesus being with me am I made to know and confess that I am the helpless sinner. When we have the grace of the Lord Jesus with us then we cease exalting ourselves, especially by comparing ourselves with others, because then we personally see ourselves as the very chief of sinners.

Only by his grace being with me am I made to know God my Father and to own him as my Father. It was God my Father who made me one of his people. My Father chose me by free grace apart from any good or evil in me. Grace has not only made me his son, grace has made me know I am his son and he is my Father.

Only by his grace being with me am I made to know Christ Jesus my Lord and to own him as my Lord and my Savior, my All. Grace has made me know that I am one he saved by his precious blood fully, freely, forever.

Only by his grace being with me am I made to know that my God, the Holy Spirit, is life within me. He makes me look outside of me. He makes me look only to Christ.

By the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ being with me I am made to love the family of God, my brethren, by whom this blessed gospel of my Redeemer is supported so I can have it preached unto me.

So to have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with us is, not to merely have learned a system of doctrine, but to be able to hear our triune God speak to each of us personally as the gospel is preached. By grace we hear him say to us,

Isaiah 1:18: Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Isaiah 43:25: I, *even I, am* he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Isaiah 44:22: I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Colossians 2: 9: In [Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him,...

Believer, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you revealing more and more that Christ Jesus the Lord truly is your All with the Father.

KEEPING US IN HIM

By the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ being with us we are kept by his constant keeping hand.

At certain seasons, God's saints experience in our hearts what the church at Ephesus experienced—we "leave our first love"—the first love we had for our eternal Husband. (Rev 2: 4) "First love" is the love we had for Christ when we were newlyweds to Christ. He was first in our hearts and our lives and everything else was a distant second. Our thoughts were always on him. We loved to read his word, hear his gospel, sing his praises, and pour out our hearts to him. In everything we did, his honor, what he would think, motivated us. We loved his people, doing whatever we could for them.

But Christ says that "first love" requires work to maintain or we will leave our first love. When we become complacent, we leave our first love. When we take for granted that our Husband loves us and knows we love him, we leave our first love. When our lives become too busy and the world steals our affection, we leave our first love. And Christ our Husband is jealous over his bride.

Zechariah 1:14: the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

So we need the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be with us—to correct and keep us—and that is how he does so—by grace! We see how he works toward us in grace, by how he corrected and kept his apostles. He always corrects his people by grace.

The past few places I have visited, I have heard stories of the unscriptural disciplinary actions taken in reformed churches. They send fruit inspectors to people's homes trying to find something to correct using the law. They bring sinners before their counsels, requiring submission to church traditions and creeds, threatening with punishment and excommunication. Then when a person repents to their satisfaction they put them on long probationary periods so they can watch them for a while.

Christ is the Head of his church. He never once corrected his apostles using the whip of the law, but in grace and truth.

John 1:17: For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

When they brought the woman to him caught in adultery—he did not condemn her—he said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” (Jn 8: 7)

John 8: 10: When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11: She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

When his apostles argued over who would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he did not use the law to correct them. He reminded them of what he had done for them, pictured in him washing their feet. That is how he rebukes and corrects his child. He reminds us of how he came down for us—thus he brings our hearts down by grace. He reminds us how he washed us—thus his grace makes us willing to wash one another, forgiving each other in humility. This is what it is to have his grace be with you.

When the apostle Peter denied the Lord three times, did he rail on Peter? Did he set the apostles against Peter? Did he excommunicate Peter? No. He converted him by grace. He went to him by grace. He sent him forth to feed his sheep with what he had learned by grace.

When it comes to offenses, Christ gave us three steps that require much time and prayer to carry out toward a member of his church. The point is to be very slow and take much time, to pray and wait on the Lord, before accusing a fellow believer. Then he followed it up telling us to forgive one another without limit.

So when we leave our first love, he comes to us in grace by sending his preacher, saying,

Jeremiah 2: 2: Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown...5: Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?

The Lord Jesus Christ reminds us that he never leaves his first love for his bride. His love never diminishes in the least degree. His grace is upon his bride with an everlasting love.

Isaiah 43:4: Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Jeremiah 31:3: The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Revelations 3:9: Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

By his grace being with us, he speaks effectually in our hearts, saying as he did to the church at Ephesus,

Revelation 2: [ye have left your first love] 5: Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;

Then, as it was at first, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ignites the fire of that first love in our hearts. So we repent from complacency, from taking love for granted and we do those first works showing our heavenly Husband he is preeminent in our hearts. So the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ being with you, is to have not only his grace in salvation, but his grace in correcting you and keeping you.

GROWING US IN GRACE

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ being with you is to have Christ grow us in grace.

None of us will have the perfect fullness of grace that Christ possesses. But “of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” (Jn 1: 16) We receive all fruit by his grace from Christ, “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” (Php 1: 11) We do not all have the same measure of grace but all receive some measure of grace. And we depend upon Christ to grow us in these graces by his grace

Galatians 5: 22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love,...

Over and over Paul exhorts saints to grow in love for Christ and one another.

Galatians 5: 22...joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness,...

Seek to grow in joy and peace, in longsuffering and gentleness and goodness toward brethren.

Galatians 5: 22:...faith, 23 Meekness, temperance:

As we grow in faith, we grow down to be more meek depending upon God, and we grow in self-control, temperance. Christ teaches us to seek to grow in these fruits.

Galatians 5: 23:...against such there is no law.

1Thessalonians 4:1: Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, *so* ye would abound more and more.

1 Thessalonians 4:10...we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

2 Peter 1:5: And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6: And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7: And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8: For if these things be in you, and abound, they *make you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9: But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10: Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your

calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

How will Christ make us grow in the grace he has given us by his grace? First, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ being with us, he keeps us hungry for the word.

1 Peter 2:2: As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

Secondly, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ being with us makes us grow in the knowledge of him. Reading scripture and hearing the gospel alone will not do it, it is his grace making us to behold Christ in his word and his gospel. This is how we grow in grace. It is by growing us in the knowledge of Christ.

2 Peter 3:18: But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

God is so wise. By grace he produces fruit in us. Then by grace, he makes us want to grow in the fruits of grace. Then by grace, he makes us flee to him for all growth in grace. So the third thing he does to make us grow in grace is that his grace being with us makes us come to him for more grace.

Hebrews 6: 14: Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. 15: For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, *yet* without sin. 16: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Grace makes us ever flee to Christ. So my prayer for you, my brethren, is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Amen!