

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 21 (May 18-24, 2014)

The subject of God's **grace** is so important that we will spend another week studying passages pertaining to it.

Sunday, May 18 (read Psalm 90)

The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. (Psalm 90:10)

What does this have to do with **grace**? You will not ask that question if today is your 70th birthday, as it is mine. God, in His **grace**, tells me that the next ten years are going to be tough physically and emotionally, so I need to “number my days” and make wise use of the time I have left so that I may “gain a heart of wisdom” (v. 12). Are you amazed that God gave Moses such an accurate prediction of **today's** average life span back in his day when many people were living well past one hundred? Moses reminds us that God has always been our dwelling place and that He existed before creation (v. 1-2). He determines the length of our days on earth (v. 3), and to Him, a day is like a thousand years (v. 4). Can you join me in praising Him for the days we still have to get to know Him better? These devotions are my effort to pass along to you the new truths He is teaching me.

Monday, May 19 (read Romans 6:1-14)

*What shall we say, they? Shall we go on sinning so that **grace** may increase? (Romans 6:1, emphasis mine)*

Early in my life and ministry, I struggled with the doctrine of **eternal security** because of the question printed above. I observed those “who change the **grace** of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord” (Jude 1:4b). My young eyes were fixed on the **performance** of people instead of being anchored in the **promise** of God. For years, I majored on the Lordship of Jesus and seldom preached a message on basic salvation. When I finally came to understand His **mercy** and **grace**, I truly fell in love with Jesus. That's what I want you to experience. You don't have to worry about all the “do's and don'ts” when you operate out of love because you never want to purposely hurt someone you love. Read the rest of today's text with the love of Jesus in your mind and heart. You will see the passage through entirely different eyes.

Tuesday, May 20 (read 1 Corinthians 3:10-17)

*By the **grace** God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. (1 Corinthians 3:10, emphasis mine)*

Maybe no one knows the truth of the above verse better than I. Through His **grace** alone, God called me from the outside of a bridge to the inside of a church ministry. I brought no credentials except for a broken heart. I deserved the death I almost brought upon myself before I heard His voice say, “I choose you!” Maybe, like Mary Magdalene (see Luke 8:2), I love Him because He reminds me where He brought me from and where I could have been. When I take a moment to think about all the miracles He has allowed me to see and experience in the past 32 years since March 29, 1981, I can only fall to my knees and worship Him! Someone else is building on the ministry I once led at Maple Grove, but I am privileged to build on the foundational teachings of my predecessors at New Hope Christian Church using “gold, silver and costly stones” (eternal lessons from God's Word). Read this entire passage with **your** testimony in mind. Knowledge of the final two verses (v. 16-17) brought me off the bridge and into center of the will of God. Praise His holy Name!

Wednesday, May 21 (read 2 Corinthians 4:13-18)

*All this is for your benefit, so that the **grace** that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 4:15, emphasis mine)*

If you are anywhere near my age, you don't need anyone to explain what v. 16 means. Our tired old bodies do not allow us to do the things we could do years ago. We should be well aware of the **grace** it took to get us to this point in life, so our mission is to tell others about the death and resurrection of our Lord (v. 13-15) and about His wonderful **grace**. The next years of my life (and probably yours) will not be as physically active as the previous seventy, but the knowledge and wisdom I (we) have gained is worthy of passing along to the younger generation. God calls our aches and pains "light and momentary," but these "troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (v. 17). This passage concludes with another KLUFROG verse (Keep Looking Up—Fully Rely On God). Focus on things that are eternal (v. 18)!

Thursday, May 22 (read 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2)

*As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's **grace** in vain. (2 Corinthians 6:1)*

I return to a passage I used on April 5 to add today's printed verse to the thoughts I shared on that day. We are commanded to be witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus as we fulfill our calling to be ambassadors for Christ (v. 11-20). Jesus became sin for each of us "so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (v. 21). Those who understand the truth of v. 21, but who never accept Jesus into their hearts for full salvation are guilty of receiving God's **grace** in vain (v. 1). This **grace** is meant for everyone, but only those who receive it will possess eternal life. If anyone you know has put off making this life-changing decision, do your best to encourage him/her to come to Jesus now during His **Day of Grace** (v. 2). The future will be horrible for those who reject His offer of **grace**!

Friday, May 23 (read Ephesians 2:1-10)

*For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9, emphasis mine)*

Become very familiar with the ten verses in today's text. They will form the foundation for most of the other truths you will learn. Long ago, someone taught me an acronym for **grace** (God's Riches At Christ's Expense). All of us have sinned (Romans 3:23) and all of us used to live to gratify the desires of our flesh (v. 1-3), but because of His love and mercy, He saved us by His **grace** (v. 4-5). He has raised us up with Christ so that some day we can see His glory and understand His marvelous **grace** (v. 6-7). He has a specific work for each of us to complete (v. 10), but it is imperative for us to understand that all of our personal accomplishments come as a result of His **grace**.

Saturday, May 24 (read Titus 2:11-15)

*For the **grace** of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. (Titus 2:11, emphasis mine)*

Today's reading passage is my personal favorite on the subject of salvation. I said earlier that everyone experiences God's common **grace** in the rain and sunshine and the beauty of the seasons, etc. The printed verse above tells us that everyone also has an opportunity to experience "the **grace** of God that brings salvation." I cannot tell you how this applies to all the people of this world, but I can tell you that He made His plan known to **me** "while I was still a sinner" (Romans 5:8). Don't get hung up on trying to explain God's ways and thoughts, because they are too marvelous for us to fully comprehend (see Isaiah 55:8-9). Simply ask Him to extend His **grace** to your loved ones who have never heard and received salvation.