

## Times of Greater Grace Series: 5

### Acts 4.33

#### The Exalting Nature of Grace

*“And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And **great grace** was upon them all.”*

Last time we saw that Grace is all sufficient for every trial and test we face:

*“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest on me... for when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12. 9-10)*

All that Jesus IS GOING TO DO for us has ALREADY BEEN DONE – all we need to do is receive the grace of God through faith.

Paul was going through a trial and test when these words were given to him by Jesus, “My grace is sufficient for you...”

- God's reply to Paul's pleadings to remove this from him were “My grace is sufficient for you” - grace was all he needed to lift him up.
- “My strength is made perfect in weakness” - When we need it most we find God's power is at its most effective
- Because of the grace of God, Paul could declare “when I am weak, then I am strong”.
  - Grace lifted him from a time of weakness to a time of strength.

### **1 Peter 5.5-6 and James 4.10**

Both these verses tell us to humble ourselves under God and He will exalt us and lift us up. When we humble ourselves we are raised up by God – but there is a force working with humility that raises us.

We have just read in 1 Peter 5.5 and we see it again in James 4.6 that “God gives grace to the humble” - It is the *grace of God* that exalts us and lifts us to a higher level, above the storms and trials of life.

When we take-off in an aircraft on a really stormy day with black clouds and torrential rain, the forces of thrust and lift working with the aircraft cause us to rise above the clouds and beyond the storm. Soon we are under blue sunny skies looking down on the storm clouds - but they no longer have any effect on us.

That's how grace works – in cooperation with God when we humble ourselves, the grace causes us to rise to a higher level.

## 1 Peter 5. 8-12

- Here the apostle exhorts us to not only to be humble under God, but that we should be aware and alert of the schemes of the devil and resist him (v8-9).
- He goes on to say that God is the God of all grace and by that outworking of grace in our lives He will perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you.
- In verse 12, Peter confirms that what he had just declared to them was the same message of grace which Paul had preached to them.

Let us briefly then look at some of Paul's teachings on this message of grace. We will probably look at these again in future weeks.

## Ephesians 2.4-9 (Amp)

“But God--so rich is He in His mercy! Because of and in order to satisfy the great and wonderful and intense love with which He loved us, Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ; [*He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him, for*] it is by grace (His favour and mercy which you did not deserve) that you are saved (delivered from judgement and made partakers of Christ's salvation). And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [*giving us joint seating with Him*] in the heavenly sphere [*by virtue of our being*] in Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One). He did this that He might clearly demonstrate through the ages to come the immeasurable (limitless, surpassing) riches of His free grace (His unmerited favour) in [*His*] kindness and goodness of heart toward us in Christ Jesus. For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favour) that you are saved (delivered from judgement and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [*your*] faith. And this [*salvation*] is not of yourselves [*of your own doing, it came not through your own striving*], but it is the gift of God, Not because of works [*not the fulfilment of the Law's demands*], lest any man should boast. [*It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.*]”

- We are saved by the grace of God
- The grace of God has quickened us though we were dead in trespasses and sins – it has raised us to newness of life
- The grace of God has raised us up and made us sit together in the heavenly places
- The grace of God lifted us from one level to another – as the Psalmist could say “*He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps*” (Psalm 40.2)

## Acts 20.32

“*Now I am putting you in the care of God and the message about His grace. It is able to give you strength, and it will give you the blessings God has for all His holy people*” (NCV)

- In Ephesus, Paul was teaching the disciples that after his departure they would face trials – wolves would come into their midst to distract, deceive and draw them away from the truth. (vs29-31)
- He commends them to God and the word of God's grace
- God's grace was sufficient to keep them and give them strength
- God's grace would build them up and give them an inheritance – God's grace would raise them up

## **2 Corinthians 8.9**

- He became poor so that we might become rich
- This verse tells us that Jesus humbled himself so that we could be exalted by His grace - the grace of God.
- Jesus laid aside everything (*became poor*), His Deity, his reputation, his stately form and became as a man, so that we could be beneficiaries (*become rich*) of grace – favour, kindness, goodness and the blessing of God

## **2 Corinthians 9.7-10**

- Purposeful & bountiful giving is honouring God with your substance – act of worship, also humbling yourself to God.
- God is able to make all grace [all favour, all kindness, all goodness, all blessing] abound toward you.
- That you might abound - to cause to overflow, exceed, excel, be pre-eminent – to cause to rise above and beyond.
- This type of giving causes the grace of God to go to work on your behalf increasing and blessing you – raising you up to a new level