

Times of Greater Grace Series: 8

Acts 4.33

Grow In Grace

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

We will conclude this topic of grace by studying one more aspect – growing and continuing in grace. Like love, faith and everything else we must develop and grow in grace and continue in it.

2 Peter 3.18

*“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever”*

The work of grace is gradual, like natural growth; we must grow up in to it . We do that simply by walking with God and being obedient to Him, doing what He asks us to do through His word. A newborn baby requires milk in order for it to grow, in the same way it is the Word that causes growth in our lives, not just by hearing it but practising it as well.

1 Peter 2.2 - *“as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby”*

Paul urged and encouraged the believers in Antioch (in Pisidia) to continue in the grace of God. They responded by coming together to hear the word of the Lord

Acts 13.43-44

“Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God”

But as we have just seen, it is not enough just to hear the word, it needs accompanying works, in this case walking with God in obedience.

Luke 2.51-52

Jesus, in obedience, increased (grew) in wisdom, stature and in favour with God and men. This word favour is the Gk word *charis* = grace. Jesus continued and grew not just in wisdom and stature (maturity) but also in grace with God – He walked with God in obedience.

Let us look at a man in the Bible who grew in grace by walking with God and continuing to be obedient to the Word of God.

Noah – Genesis 6.8-9

We know nothing of Noah's early life, the first time he is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis 5.29-32

- Noah was son of Lamech and great-grandson of Enoch
- Apart from v29 which tells us he was born, we first read of Noah when he was 500 years old (v32)
- Noah was father to Shem, Ham and Japheth.
- His name means 'rest, comfort and consolation'.
- Noah is a type of Christ -
 - (a) It was said of Noah that he would bring comfort, consolation and rest – He would be the saviour of his time.
 - (b) Jesus call to all men was 'come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11.28).
 - (c) any man that trusted in the Ark [*God's means of salvation*] and got on board was saved from the judgement of God, any man that trusts in Jesus will also be saved.

Going on into chapter 6 we read concerning Noah -

- He lived in a time where the world was evil, corrupt and morally dark (vs1-7)
- **Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.** This is the first mention of grace in the Bible. This word grace as it is used here means 'to be accepted, favoured, to bestow kindness and mercy'.
 - (a) When all other men were only continually evil, God found in Noah a man that pleased Him, a man whom He could use and God accepted Him, he bestowed His mercy to him. 2 Corinthians 5.9, "*Therefore, we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him*" - the AV says "...we may be accepted of Him".
 - (b) God searched for a man and found one that He could use – God looks for those who have a heart for Him, those whom He can use to accomplish His purpose and plan.
 - (c) Noah was a man of faith - faith pleases God (Hebrews 11.6), Noah is found among the names mentioned in the record of faith in Hebrews 11.
- **He was a just man**, perfect in his generations – He was a man of integrity and truth; he was blameless and righteous, not in his own merit, grace was at work in his life. This perfected him and it was accounted to him as righteousness (Hebrews 11.7), he became "*heir of the righteousness which is according to faith*"
- **He walked with God** – like his great-grandfather Enoch before him he had an intimate relationship with God. God revealed to him what He was about to do. God reveals His plans to His servants the prophets (Amos 3.7), not for their sole benefit but that they might be the vessels through which the grace of God is extended.
- **He was obedient** to the call of God (v22). Noah did what God put on his heart, even though it was a long and difficult task, and suffering ridicule. He did this out of 'godly fear', reverence for God, it was an act of his love and worship for God, he put all he had into that work.
- **Noah was a preacher of righteousness** to his generation (2 Peter 2.5) – warning them of the impending judgement, and pleading with them to 'repent and be saved'

Grace Elevated Noah

Noah was a man that was submissive and obedient to God. He walked in the ways of God. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord – and that grace lifted him up.

God used this humble man Noah as a saviour to his generation.

At 600 years old, Noah and his family entered the Ark that he had prepared and God shut the door. He had preached and been faithful to the call of God for up to 100 years. The grace of God saved him and his family and **lifted** them up on the flood waters (Genesis 7.11-17)

After the flood had subsided, God honours Noah with an everlasting covenant – still in force today Genesis 9.11-17

God promises never again to destroy all flesh by the flood.

The rainbow is the sign of the covenant.

Every-time the rainbow appears in the clouds, God remembers Noah. He remembers His covenant with a man that walked with Him and found grace in His eyes – will we find grace in His eyes?

If we want to see greater things, we need to allow the grace of God to grow and work in us as it did in the life of Noah.