

The Need for Grace

In our world today there is an unquenchable thirst for vengeance, justice, and revenge. The desire to point out fault runs deep. That is all we can see, sometimes. This all leads to major breakdowns in society as we expect everyone to be perfect and at the same time expect forgiveness for our own mistakes, great and small.

The concept of grace has almost entirely disappeared from modern society. Fortunately, God has more than enough grace for all of us, regardless of the mistake or transgression. Please do not misunderstand me. Grace does not negate the consequences of our actions or mistakes, but it does give us the ability to continue to move forward without the anchor of sin holding us back. Let's take a look at the need for grace.

You may have heard of the common witnessing tool referred to as *The Roman Road*. This is a path through the book of Romans which teaches us the plan and path of forgiveness, salvation, and grace from God for all mankind. We will be using that and overlaying a life in today's society in today's encouraging message, *The Need For Grace*.

The first verse in the Roman Road is Romans 3:23, which says:

(23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The first thing we need to realize, understand, and accept is none of us is perfect. We all make mistakes. We all fall to temptation sometimes. We all are susceptible to losing our focus from time to time. Again, none of us are perfect. Some of us have a real difficulty acknowledging that in our selves. That puts a roadblock between us and God. It also puts a roadblock between us and the rest of society.

Until we can acknowledge the fact that we are not perfect, and none of us are perfect, we cannot move forward. We live in a world of criticism, disgust, and bitterness. These things will wear on you like the salt in the ocean wears on a rock. Have you ever picked up a stone that has been in the ocean for years and years? It is so smooth, much smoother than most stones you will find along a garden path or the roadside. That's because the water and salt moving back and forth over it slowly wear it down.

Our lives in front of God and in society are no different. Being critical, disgusted at others, and bitter will wear you down more and more. The only way to escape that is to acknowledge that you are not perfect, and no one else is either. Stop expecting yourself to be, and others.

Now that we know and acknowledge that none of us, including ourselves, is perfect, we can look at the next verse. Let's read Romans 6:23.

(23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Here the Apostle Paul tells us that our imperfections and mistakes bring us death. In other words, because of our imperfections, we deserve death, which is eternity apart from God. In God's perspective, because we are sinners we deserve death. Sin separates us from God. Any sin. Yes, sins like covetousness, murder, theft, assault, and more separate us from God. Also, the seemingly little things like the subtle misdirections or deceptions to gain favor with someone. The little white lie you tell the police officer to get yourself out of a ticket is still sinning and it separates you from God. The half-truth



you tell your boss or your teacher or parent so you don't get into as much trouble still separates you from God.

Here's the thing, these things also separate you from society a bit, too. The whole truth about something may bring some unpleasant consequences, but it is far better to face those than being separated from God eternally and being ostracized by society for life.

Let's recap for a second. We know we are not perfect and all mistakes and we know that imperfection separates us from God eternally. Do not despair. There is good news, and here it is found in Romans 5:8.

(8) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The good news that caused great joy the angels shared with the shepherds on the night Jesus was born is this right here. While we were still sinners Christ died for us. He didn't wait for everyone to know and acknowledge him. He didn't wait for us all to turn our lives around and become perfect. While we had no idea why he came, and in some cases, who he was, he died for us. This all because God loves us so much.

John 3:16-17 says:

(16) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

God does not want to condemn us to death and an eternity apart from him. He wants us reconciled back to him. That is the message and purpose of Christ here on earth. We must realize that and believe it in our hearts.

We also must take on the same perspective as God in Christ when we see others in society. They are not perfect. They make mistakes and some of those mistakes are big ones and we are victims of them. It might not even be a mistake, but a malicious attack, literally or figuratively. None the less, we must view them as God views us. We must love them as God loves us. We must forgive them as God forgives us.

Romans 10:9-10 says:

(9) If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (10) For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

In order to receive this forgiveness afforded to us by God, we must declare that Jesus is our Lord and believe God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved and receive the grace God has set aside for you. There is one thing we must do to receive God's forgiveness and salvation. We must acknowledge Jesus as our Lord, that is to give over our own desires, dreams, plans, and life for that matter, to God for his purposes, even when they don't make sense to us at the time. We also must acknowledge his power, supernatural power, that can help us navigate this life and transport our soul to him for eternity.



The same holds true for society. We must acknowledge that not only we make mistakes, but everyone else does too. Sometimes it is on purpose for maliciousness, or for personal gain. None the less, we all make poor choices or sin against one another. We must love each other as God loves us and we must forgive each other as God forgives. Again, this does not mean that consequences are necessarily avoided, but forgiveness is granted; grace is shown.

Romans 10:13 says:

(13) for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Did you catch that? Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Everyone. Not just some, not just one people group, nation, skin color, or economic class. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. God does not show favoritism of one person over another. God's grace is sufficient and afforded to each and every one of us.

We must have the same attitude and view of our fellow man. We must show grace to each other. We must grant grace and forgiveness, freely, just as God does for us. People will wrong you. People will cause you trouble. We are to show them grace and forgiveness. This will change our society. This will turn our society around and put it back on course toward God as a whole, but only if we turn our own lives around and put them on the path back to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Remember, we are to be Christ-like. To be Christlike means we are to forgive and not hold a record of wrongs. We are not to condemn others, just as God sent Jesus to save the world, not condemn the world.

God shows us grace and forgiveness and saves us through the death and resurrection of his own son, Jesus. We must show grace, of which God has an endless supply to give you, to others and forgive them their trespasses so they can forgive others and God can forgive us.

The *Roman Road* leads us down a path explaining our personal sin and the need for grace and how we accept God's plan for our salvation and reconciliation to him. It is also an example of how we are to interact with others in this world and show the same grace and forgiveness to them, thereby changing society for the better and wiping away bitterness and the unquenchable desire for justice, and revenge.

