

The Whole Church #24 – Grace #1

AT Snacks- July 7, 2024

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Monday:

God doesn't lead us to be independent. He leads us to be dependent. So we ought to have a dependence day somewhere to remind one another that we're not independent but we're subjected to and should lean into the Father.

For the last five years, we've been talking real intensively about the awakening that's taking place. That's how you will know that you're a part of that, is in your thoughts. You start to think more about the Lord, the things of God and you and you start to be drawn that way.. Lean into that as much as you can.

The Kingdom is coming, with or without you. It's happening now. You have to look with spiritual eyes to see it. But if you're not careful, all you will see is the negative stuff that you see on the news, which can get you really discouraged.

The most important thing I could say is this, learn to relate to God as Father. From God's standpoint, it's always been about the relationship that He wants to have with us.

If a person doesn't embrace the truth, engage personally and relationally with the Father, and then walk it out the rest of their life, they haven't gained anything. If you aren't doing those kinds of things, you're just not very smart.

The wise person believes what the book says and listens to the words that God is speaking to his spirit.

If you don't make this a priority, you can get so busy in your life that you put that on the back burner. You'll hear God a little bit here and there, but for the people who make that a priority, they hear God a lot.

If you're faithful in a little, God will bless you with more. That's just how it works. But if you're not faithful in a little, even what you have will be dissipated, and it'll be taken away from you. So do a little bit with what you have.

We need to be talking about and making ourselves students of the Kingdom of God. It's so profound, but so simple that even a child can begin to understand it.

All these little things that you see, that might be God, if you honor God in that, He will open more possibilities, more opportunities for you to see things like that, and even greater things than that.

Jesus said, "*You search the scriptures for in them, you think you have eternal life, but you're not willing to come to me*". That you might really have life. "Zoe", the highest form of life.

The people that God has chosen for you to be in relationship with also help form you and shape you. Like iron sharpening iron. So, the enemy will do all he can to divide your relationships.

God will open doors of ministry for you and it's not about how good you are. It's about you being available and allowing God to do what He does through you.

We are living now in what the apostles started in the first century, and all that God was doing through the apostles then shouldn't have tapered off or dwindled down to nothing. In fact, it should have escalated, don't you think?

"He who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also, and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father". You have to embrace this. It's talking about you. It's about your willingness and your availability and your desire to be who God wants you to be.

God is dealing with us and doing some things in our heart so He can trust us with a greater measure of the signs and wonders that we're talking about. He's emptying us out. If you are getting tested to a really, really deep, deep degree, congratulations, because it's God getting you in a place where you can be trusted with the supernatural power of God.

Please read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. This will put you right in the drivers seat for the rest of this word.

Heads up, because you're going to be challenged by this message of grace.

The critics of grace wouldn't acknowledge this, but down deep, they believe that God is not as good as we say He is.

When you begin to see the grace of God, you're going to get to a point where you think, this seems too good to be true. When you get to that point, you're starting to understand the depth of grace.

If you want to make people mad, preach the law. If you want to make them furious, preach grace. We'll get criticized for this message as we teach it along the way over these next few weeks.

The criticism that's out there, it doesn't come from the world. It comes from other Christians. In the book of Acts, it wasn't the people that were getting born again, it was the religious people. It's always the religious people who don't have a relationship with God.

If your religion and your religious traditions keep you from being who you're supposed to be and keeps God from doing what He wants to do, it's not just a bad thing, it's the most evil thing there is.

The spirit of religion is strong in legalism; "You have to this, you have to do that". And there's always a mixture of law and grace and what I say, "*Anyone that's preaching a mixture of law and grace, isn't preaching grace at all*". So heads up! Watch out for mixture.

A fair definition of grace; The unmerited or unearned favor of God.

"Who's blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ". Before the foundation of the world, God chose you, that you should be holy, and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons.

You're not just accepted by God, you're valued and highly favored by Him. I don't know if you ever thought about it in these terms or not.

When you begin to see and understand grace, it has to be experienced to even start to understand it. Because if you've experienced it, you can't find the words for it.

Some words used to help describe grace: kindness, favor, beauty, graciousness, pleasant, loving, goodwill, gratitude, bestowing pleasure, delight, friendly disposition and magnificence.

Grace doesn't mean that its okay to kill, to commit adultery or have other gods before Him. It doesn't mean that at all. It means you're not under the legalistic requirement of that because now the law keeper, the Holy Spirit, who now lives in you is the keeper of the law.

You are not under a set of rules and you need to come out from underneath the rules of oriented religion, or you're never going to be free from dead religion.

Paul used the word grace 89 times in his letters to the churches, so if you want to learn a lot of stuff about grace, read the letter to the Romans.

No man ever kept the law but Jesus. Paul said in every letter, you're no longer under the law, you're now under grace. He started and ended every letter with grace.

Everything that we talk about around here and everything we do is seasoned with grace.

It's easy for me to say that I know a lot about grace, mainly because I have experienced a lot of it.

I don't have the vocabulary to adequately define grace and its effect and positive repercussions in my life. The incredible, profound but extremely simple and treasure that we call grace.

For those who've never actually experienced grace personally, it's an easy word to define. But for those of us who've received a lot of it, we're still looking for the words that can adequately explain it to someone else.

In 2 Corinthians 12: 7-10, Paul is describing what has happened to him. Please review this.

So we've talked about pride a lot around here. You're only at risk if you're after God and the things of God. If you're not, there's not much to be prideful over, but the people who are at greatest risk of pride are the people that God is using.

Spiritual pride is like bad breath, everybody knows you have it, but you. If you've been around someone with spiritual pride, it has a stench to it. It stinks, it's ugly, it's prideful and they don't know it.

I believe that God has given us some revelation on this thing that we talk about called the awakening/ I think He believes that our house will do something with it.

Because Paul had been and was being a good steward of the grace of God, He made Paul able to have greater revelations and greater visions, and you can have the very same thing. It's contingent upon you, being a good steward with what God does with you and what God shows you.

If you are having one of those third heaven encounters with God, or just any encounter with God, and God begins to give you some revelation, you start to see things and start to hear things. Pretty soon you can begin to move in a little pride.

Pride never comes in the front door. It always slips in the side door. You are doing pretty good.

You are doing better than everybody else. You start comparing yourself and how much better you're doing. Heads up, that's where pride start sneaking in.

If people give you your authority, people can take it away. But if God gives you your authority, nobody can take it away. However much authority you can handle is how much authority you will walk in.

God is dealing with the hearts of mankind. Every person on the planet, whether it looks like it or not, God is after their heart. People are waiting to be born again. People are waiting for somebody to tell them about something that works. People are waiting for someone to tell them about Jesus and how you come into the Kingdom of God. So pay attention and follow the lead of the spirit.

Paul went through this intense test for 14 years so he could carry the message of grace in its purest form. God was that serious about it.

Which is the greater manifestation of the grace and power of God? A person who gets healed on the spot, or one who doesn't get healed on the spot, but leans into grace, and is kept and sustained, just Paul was during his life.

Having to do with healings, one of two things can happen. One is God's either going to fix it, or two, by grace you go through it and endure it till He fixes it or till He doesn't. Either way, the grace of God is sufficient. It's not just enough, it's enough and abundant.

So if you seem to be stuck in a situation, it might not be as evil as you think it is. If you're still in this situation, there's something that God is doing in you that He can't do at other times.

You don't always have to feel like you're at the top of your game. In fact, you can be at the very bottom of your game of where you think you are, and God will still use you, because the power of God is made perfect and manifest in your weakness.

"I take pleasure in infirmities, for when I'm weak, then I'm strong.

Are you in a place where you don't feel like you're at your very *best*? "*When I get past this situation, I'll do better or be better. I'll be more geared. I will be feeling better*". That's probably not necessarily the truth.

God told me personally last fall and said, "*Andy, you took up your cross, and you didn't quit*". So keep doing that. Take up your cross whatever it is that you feel weak in. Take up your cross.