

Grace

REVIEW: We are in the middle of a series on grace. We began by looking at the definitions of grace from scripture. We then walked through the different types of grace we see God display from a theological perspective. The first is common grace. These are things like medicine, the rain, the seasons of the year...food! All of these things come from God, but they can be enjoyed by both the believer and the unbeliever. The second was special grace. In a word, that is Jesus. That is the grace God shows us in not only taking our punishment on the cross and dying for our sins to remove them, it is also the great exchange that God gives us His righteousness!

Last week, Mike Marvin gave us an example from the NT of what grace is like. The story that Mike used was great because it does two things: First it shows us God's grace in direct relation to our sin. The woman was caught in adultery, dragged before a crowd of people and the Rabbi Jesus. Shame, guilt, loneliness are all orders of the day. Yet rather than condemning her, Jesus shows her compassion about her sin. He never dismissed it as if it never happened or was unimportant (He said, "Go and sin no more"). Second, Jesus sets us an example of how we should be showing grace to others. We do not dismiss their sin - we acknowledge it, and then we love them, and expect the best from them. We apply grace.

TRAN: Today we are going to look at a passage in the OT for an example of grace, and one that you might find a little surprising. The word grace is never used (in English). And this passage inspired a great hymn that we all know and love.

1 Chronicles 17:1-27

I. Opening caveats

A. For those of you that don't know, this is one of the turning point passages of the OT

1. It does not get a lot of play like the Psalms, which are filled with emotion and we can readily identify with
2. Or even the treasured stories of the OT like Noah, Jonah, crossing the Red Sea

B. Because this is such a huge passage that affects every area of Scripture, we have to do a little more background work to understand the significance

1. Which, when translated from "preacher speak" means, I have to reign myself in to not go outside the focus of the message on grace and turn this one sermon into a month of sermons
2. Which could be easily done because of the importance of this passage

II. This chapter is where we learn of the Davidic Covenant - or the covenant with David

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A. We have gone over covenants in the past some

B. A covenant is a promise on steroids

1. A covenant is not like a contract

a) A contract says, I will do this, and in return you will do that

b) Much like your internet service provider - I will pay you for providing me with access to the internet and promise not to go to sites about Jihad and blowing up government buildings, in return you provide internet access flowing at speeds that are acceptable so I can watch another movie on Netflix

c) That is a contract - here's my responsibilities, here are your responsibilities

2. A covenant is different

a) The person that makes a covenant with someone else comes to the table and says: I will do this for you, and that for you, and this also

(1) That's it

(2) Not caveats, no addendum, no quid pro quo, no strings attached

(3) This is what I promise to do for you

b) And that is why God makes covenants with us

(1) He is capable of saying, "Here is what I promise to do for you"

(2) And He is not thinking how He will back out if we behave in a manner that displeases Him

III. The story of 1 Chronicles 17 is not that difficult to understand, but its significance in salvation history cannot be understated

A. David's desire is to build God a permanent home v.1-2

1. David is looking around at his house and thinks, how can I live here when God's ark is in a tent - a movable, simple, not very special tent

2. This was actually commonplace in the ancient world that a king would want to build a great house for the deity responsible for his success

3. Nathan, the prophet, most famous for being the one to confront David with his dalliance with Bathsheba, tells David to go for it, God is with you

a) In the very next verse it becomes obvious to all that Nathan was responding not by what God said to him, but out of his own reason

b) Which should be a comfort to us all - even a prophet can sometimes respond out of his own human nature, and get ahead of God

(1) If a prophet can make that mistake

(2) Perhaps we should not be so hard on ourselves

B. Nathan's vision from God tells us what God's desire is v.3-14

1. David was not supposed to be the one to build God a house

a) The reason for David being prohibited is not given here

(1) Turn to 1 Chro. 22:8

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- (2)David had shed too much blood as a warrior
 - b)God did not qualify why that would exclude David, but it did
 - 2. Then God lists some other reasons He is not interested in a house
 - a) He never had a permanent home
 - b)He never commanded anyone to build Him a house
 - (1)Which we get an idea of the humility of God Himself
 - (2)He is not like other deities that demand praise and homage by how great and grand His house is
 - 3. Then God reminds David where he came from and how he got to where he was
 - a) God took him from the pasture and appointed him ruler
 - b)God has been with Him everywhere, disposing of David's enemies
 - c) The phrase "I will provide" in verse 9, the context suggests and the Hebrew permits a past tense translation rather than a future one
 - (1)So better would be "I have provided..."
 - 4. Then God starts with His word play in verses 10-11
 - a)I will build you a house
 - (1)The king was not allowed to build God a house (a structure of cedar), but the King of kings will build a house for David (a dynasty of descendants)
 - b)This is a bit of a duel statement from God
 - (1)Solomon is obviously the one that builds God an earthly dwelling
 - (2)Yet the forever nature of the throne points squarely at Christ Himself
 - (a)No other son of David was capable of instituting a kingdom forever
 - (b)Only Jesus Christ could establish the dynasty of David forever
 - c) But more than that, this son of David would be greater than David Himself
 - (1)In part because He establishes the throne forever
 - (2)In part because this son of David is the Son of God
 - (a)God says that He will never remove His steadfast love (hesed) (the one way, unending love of God) from Him
 - (b)How could He? The One He is referring to is Jesus, a member of the trinity - God Himself
 - (3)Also, this son of David will be over God's house and kingdom - the same house that God said He would build for David
- C.After Nathan reports all of this to David, we hear David's response in v. 15-27

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1. David's initial response, "Who am I Lord, and what is my family that you have brought me this far?"
 - a) In other words, "Yes, Lord, I am a little shepherd boy. I am the youngest and smallest of my family. I came from nothing, and you have brought me this far. You have been with me as mine enemies have chased me. You removed my enemies for me. You have brought me to the highest position in the land, the throne, for me to rule Your people."
 - (1) Did you see all those words packed in that short sentence?
 - b) David continues
2. "As if this were not enough, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant."
 - a) In other words, "God, you have given me so much already! The throne. My family! My great name in the land! My life!!! And now you are going to talk about the future of my kingdom and make the promises that you are making. I am awestruck!!!"
3. However, what I find most interesting about David's prayer begins in verse 20
 - a) After feeling the full weight of what God has done for him, David turns from the sheer state of awe that he was in to praising God
 - (1) And that is what that should do to us
 - (2) When we see, and feel the weight of what God has done for us we should be moved to worship!
 - b) David declares, "There is no one like YOU!"
 - (1) Is anyone else hearing David Crowder in their ears?
 - (a) I have been working with the teens, adding verses to the song slides to show where some of these songs originate from
 - (b) This would be one of those verses - No One Like You by David Crowder
 - (2) There is no God but YOU!
 - (a) God is so awesome because He set out to redeem Israel for Himself
 - (b) They are His forever
4. Then David asks for God to confirm what He has said by making the promises come about and establishing his house forever
 - a) But the reason David asks this is HUGE - do NOT miss this!
 - b) Verse 24 - so that YOUR NAME will be great forever
 - (1) It is not about David
 - (2) It is not even about His line being on the throne
 - (3) It is about God's glory and God's renown!

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5. David finishes this prayer saying that God has blessed David's house, so it will be blessed forever
 - a) Again, David's unquestioning faith in God
 - b) When God blesses, it is a blessing for all time
 - c) His word secures our hope for the future blessing of God

IV. Now I am sure at this point there are some of you out there that are itching to raise your hand and ask, "Pastor Keith, what does this have to do with grace? Yes, we heard you mention that one word for grace, hesed, but the rest of the chapter says nothing of grace."

A. This whole chapter is about the covenant with David - establishing the line of David through Jesus, yet not once was the word covenant used

1. It was used after this to describe this event
2. 2 Samuel 23:5 and Psalm 89:3, 34

B. So while this chapter only uses the word once and it is in reference to God loving His Son, the whole chapter is filled with grace

1. Remember I told you at the beginning of this study that if you wring out the Scriptures grace would come dripping out of every pore
2. That is true of this passage as well

C. Where do we see grace?

1. Verse 6 - God could have been the kind of God like the other nations served that was demanding and forced the people to build great things for Him
 - a) He could have subjected them just because of His ego
 - b) Yet God never made those demands - that is grace - because by all means God deserves our best, our worship
 - (1) I laugh at people because they say that God is an egotist, and demands worship
 - (2) Yet the other cultures around Israel had very demanding gods
 - (a) Take Egypt for example
 - (3) Here God says, "Did I every demand a temple?"
2. Verse 7 - I took you from the pasture to make you king
 - a) Grace
 - b) Undeserved, never did anything to warrant God's favor
3. Verse 8 - I was with you wherever you went, I cut off your enemies
 - a) Grace
 - b) God's favor on David even though David did nothing to deserve it
4. Verses 9-10 - God made a place for Israel, and others will not oppress them as they once did
 - a) God chose Israel not because they were the greatest nation
 - b) They were not a nation when God chose them, they were a man

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- c) They did nothing to deserve God favor
- 5. Verses 10-14 - God will build a house for David that will last forever
 - a) What did David do to deserve God's kindness?
 - b) What did David do to deserve an everlasting kingdom and have a descendant sit on the throne forever?
 - c) Nothing
 - d) Grace - favor from God that was not earned
- 6. Then you get David's recognition of God's grace in that beautiful prayer
 - a) Who am I Lord that you brought me this far?
 - b) The sad thing is that nowadays there are too many of us that would never make that statement to God
 - (1) We expect God to say how high when we say jump
 - (2) When we ask for something God better do it, or we will doubt his existence
 - (3) If somehow our life turns into a mess we blame God rather than the sinful, fallen world we live in, or harder still, blaming ourselves
 - c) Who am I that you have brought me this far!
- V. In the 1700's there was a man that lived a rough, wretched lifestyle
 - A. He was forced into the navy at a young age
 - 1. He hated it so badly that he deserted
 - 2. He was eventually tracked down, caught, flogged and put back in the navy
 - 3. He escaped again
 - B. This time he fled to life on completely different kind of ship - an Atlantic slave ship
 - 1. Now these guys were all rough and tumble guys
 - 2. But the captains of some of these slave ships reportedly said of this guy that "He was the most vile man they ever met"
 - a) He would make up words just to embarrass and harass you
 - C. In around 1748 there was a violent storm that kicked up
 - 1. In the very place that he had been standing another man got swept overboard
 - 2. So the man tied himself to the boat
 - 3. For the next 11 hours they fought the storm as he was tied to the boat
 - 4. He was sure he was going to die
 - 5. When he did not, this sparked something in him spiritually
 - D. He remained in the slave trade for 6 more years
 - 1. During which time he took to reading the Bible and studying theology
 - 2. All the time being drawn ever further out of the lifestyle that he had known until eventually he traded the slave ship in and became an ordained minister in the church of England

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- E. It was his study of, and reflection on the passage we have just looked at that gave rise to one of the most famous songs Christianity has ever known
- F. It was the words of David, “Who am I oh Lord, that you have brought me this far” that rang out in his heart
1. You see, he looked back on his life and realized that all of his rough lifestyle
 - a) All of his vile behavior
 - b) All of his running was really running from God
 2. He looked back on the days that he had been on the slave ships
 - a) He realized how he had devalued human life
 - b) How he was to blame for so many Africans, people, men, women, children to be sold into slavery
 - (1) Ripped from their homes
 - (2) From all they knew, and brutally mistreated, beaten or killed
 - c) He took stock of his life and how God had reached out to him with that initial storm
 3. He like David he thought, “who am I oh Lord, who am I, that you have brought me this far”
- G. Some of you may have guessed who the hymn writer is and what the song is that he wrote
1. His name was John Newton
 2. His song: “Amazing Grace”
 - a) The original song title was “Faith’s Review and Expectation”
 - b) I must admit I am glad they did not stick with that title
- H. Consider John Newton’s life, and hear the words that he wrote in direct reflection on 1 Chronicles 17
1. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me
 2. I once was lost but now I’m found, was blind but now I see
 - a) ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved
 - b) How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed
 3. Through many dangers toils and snares I have already come
 4. ‘Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home
 - a) The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures
 - b) He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures
 5. Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease
 6. I shall possess within the veil, a life of joy and peace
 - a) The earth shall soon dissolve like snow the sun forbear to shine
 - b) But God who called me here below, will be forever mine
 7. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me
 8. I once was lost but now I’m found, was blind but now I see

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- VI. What an amazing way to restate such a beautiful Scripture passage
- A. What an amazing way to state a testimony
 - B. What an amazing way to find yourself in the pages of Scripture
 - 1. "Who am I oh Lord, that You have brought me this far"
 - C. Allow me to encourage you in what we have seen displayed here by John Newton
 - 1. Learn how to meditate deeply on the Scriptures
 - a) We may never write a song that defines Christianity for 300 years
 - b) But we certainly can find ourselves in the pages of Scripture - but we have to take the time to do so
 - 2. Take the time today to re-read 1 Chronicles 17
 - a) Think through how God has brought you this far
 - b) Think specifically about what God has done for you, how He has worked on your behalf, even when you did not realize
 - 3. If you are really motivated, pick up a copy of a biography of John Newton's life
 - D. We are about to enter our time for communion
 - 1. My prayer is that this passage and the story of John Newton that God has woven into it some 2400 years after David prayed this has enhanced what this time is about
 - 2. We did not deserve Christ dying on the cross
 - a) David never got to know what his descendant did that established the throne forever
 - b) We do, and none of us, not David or us deserve it

CLOSE THE SERVICE:

Sing Amazing Grace

File out quietly

People are free to sit and linger if they like