

## **“Abundant Grace” (Romans 5:12–21)(3.7.21)**

Romans 5:12–21 (NIV84)

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— <sup>13</sup>for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

<sup>15</sup>But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! <sup>16</sup>Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. <sup>17</sup>For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive **God’s abundant provision of grace** and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup>Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. <sup>19</sup>For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

<sup>20</sup>The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, **grace increased all the more**, <sup>21</sup>so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also **grace might reign** through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **The word of God for the people of God.**

LET US PRAY.

Title: **“Abundant Grace”**

INTRODUCTION:

Over the last several weeks, we have looked at God’s glory, grace, and truth; God’ restraining grace; God’s compelling grace; God’s guiding grace; and God’s sufficient grace. That is a whole lot of grace. Hence, today’s message is on God’s abundant grace. Even after today, we will not have covered every aspect of God’s grace. So, it should be clear that God’s grace, God’s goodness, is truly the lens through which we can see an accurate image of our loving God.

In high school and college classes, it is common to be given a writing assignment that requires comparing and contrasting two different things. In such an exercise we gain insight into both of them individually; but also, we gain a deepening understanding of their relationship. Sometimes, like with this scripture, there is an interdependence that becomes illumined. In Paul’s analysis, he compares and contrasts human nature with the essence of our God.

BODY:

Over and over again, Paul compares the “one man,” Adam, with the “one man,” Jesus Christ. Depending on the translation, Adam is described as the pattern, type, or figure of the One, of Him, to come. In fact, it was because of Adam, the first of the human race, that Jesus was sent by Father God. While Eve was deceived, Adam knew better. **He chose to follow his inclination instead of his obligation, rebellion instead of obedience.**

All of the human race was affected by the sin of the one man, Adam. But, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Notice that this isn’t a question but an exclamatory statement of fact.

Imagine a chart with two columns. In the left column we have Adam. Sin entered the world. Death entered the world. For all men, because all sinned. Sin reigned. Death reigned. Sin is breaking the commands of God. Judgment followed Adam’s sin. It brought condemnation. From a different

perspective, there is sin that is classified as trespass. The result is the same – death and condemnation. Let's count: sin – 10 times; law – 3 times; trespass – 6 times; death – 5 times; condemnation – twice. In the right column, we have Jesus. The transition to speaking about Jesus starts with “the gift.” This gift completely overrides the trespass. “How much more” is announced three times. Not only that, but the grace of God OVERFLOWS to the many! The gift of Jesus brings righteousness and justification. We are reconciled or made right with our heavenly Father. This is God's ABUNDANT PROVISION OF GRACE. Righteousness reigns in life – it is life offered for ALL men; ALL men and of course ALL women. Every shortcoming of humankind is compensated for in the gift and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Righteousness reigns. Grace reigns. Why? So that all may have eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Our heavenly Holy Father's character cannot countenance sin and trespass. John 3:16–17 (NIV84)  
<sup>16</sup> “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. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

These two columns intersect at the Calvary Cross. Stuart D. Briscoe described it this way: “The very acts and attitudes of sin that nailed Him to the Cross were being dealt with in grace by the subjection of Christ to that cross. The Cross in its horrible illustration of overwhelming sin was in itself a demonstration of **superoverwhelming** grace. Sin at its darkest moment on Calvary was touched by grace at its most golden.”

An Exegetical Summary of Romans sums it up this way: “The climax of the increase of sin was the rejection of Christ at the crucifixion, but it was in the cross that God's grace abounded even more, where sin was submerged, as it were, under a flood of pardon. God's grace is victorious over man's rebellion.

The Old Testament is “the book of the generations of Adam” (Gen. 5:1) and it ends with “a curse” (Mal. 4:6). The New Testament is “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ” (Matt. 1:1) and it ends with “no more curse” (Rev. 22:3).”

If you read my Friday email, you know that today I am using the account of the Widow's Oil from 2 Kings for an illustration of God's abundant grace.

2 Kings 4:1–7 (NIV84) *The Widow's Oil*

**4** The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves.”

<sup>2</sup> Elisha replied to her, “How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?”

“Your servant has nothing there at all,” she said, “except a little oil.”

<sup>3</sup> Elisha said, “Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. <sup>4</sup> Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.”

<sup>5</sup> She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. <sup>6</sup> When all the jars were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another one.”

But he replied, “There is not a jar left.” Then the oil stopped flowing.

<sup>7</sup> She went and told the man of God, and he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.”

What do you have? What do you have? I think this is a crucial question. 1 Corinthians 4:7 (NIV84) For who makes you different from anyone else? **What do you have that you did not receive?** And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? Recognize that what you have came from God. This widow has debt with no means to pay. As was the custom of the culture, her creditors could take her sons into slavery for payment. My friends, every one of us is a debtor. Our sins have earned the wages of death. If not for the grace of God, we could not be redeemed.

Our God can do great things with the little we have. She believed the prophet could help her. Maybe it was the faith of a mustard seed. Maybe it was just desperation. But, she seeks out the man of God and cries out for help. Elisha asks, "What do you have in your house?"

She is poor, very poor. "Nothing, except a little oil." The one thing she has is a **little** oil. What do we have that God can multiply? What can we offer up that God can use in our lives? Is there some way that God's abundant provision of grace can take our little oil to bless us, our children, and our neighbors?

The oil of God's grace did not run out. The only limitation was the number of vessels available to be filled. This abundance of grace theme is prevalent in scripture. Remember the feeding of the five thousand by Jesus. The disciples said, "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish." When all had eaten and been satisfied, the leftovers exceeded that with which they had started.

My wife, Carol, made these little jars and wrote on them, "What do you have?" I am going to put one in each of these containers that you brought. You can have one even if you didn't bring a container. Let your heart be the receptacle of God's grace. I want you to bring it home and post it some place in your kitchen. Think of what you have that God can use to bless you and purpose for the kingdom of God.

Every believer has spiritual gifts. They will be multiplied as they are poured out.

Here is a morning devotion from Charles Spurgeon for August 28: My soul, how much you need this [oil], for your lamp will not long continue to burn without it. Your wick will smoke and become an offence if light be gone, and gone it will be if oil be absent. You have no oil well springing up in your human nature, and therefore you must go to them that sell and buy for yourself, or like the foolish virgins, you will have to cry, "My lamp is gone out."

Even the consecrated lamps could not give light without oil; though they shone in the tabernacle they needed to be fed, though no rough winds blew upon them they required to be trimmed, and your need is equally as great. Under the most happy circumstances you cannot give light for another hour unless fresh oil of grace be given to you.

It was not every oil that might be used in the Lord's service; neither the petroleum which exudes so plentifully from the earth, nor the produce of fishes, nor that extracted from nuts would be accepted; one oil only was selected, and that the best olive oil.

Pretended grace from natural goodness, fancied grace from priestly hands, or imaginary grace from outward ceremonies will never serve the true saint of God; he knows that the Lord would not be pleased with rivers of such oil. He goes to the olive-press of Gethsemane, and draws his supplies from him who was crushed therein. The oil of gospel grace is pure and free from lees and dregs, and hence the light which is fed thereon is clear and bright.

Our churches are the Savior's golden candelabra, and if they are to be lights in this dark world, they must have much holy oil. Let us pray for ourselves, our ministers, and our churches, that they may never lack oil for the light. Truth, holiness, joy, knowledge, love, these are all beams of the sacred light, but we cannot give them forth unless in private we receive oil from God the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION:

And another devotion by Charles Spurgeon, from the morning of March 15<sup>th</sup>: "*Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*" —2 Timothy 2:1

Christ has grace without measure in himself, but he has not retained it for himself. As the reservoir empties itself into the pipes, so has Christ emptied out his grace for his people. "Of his fullness we have all received, and grace for grace." He seems only to have, in order to dispense to us. He stands like the fountain, always flowing, but only running in order to supply the empty pitchers and the thirsty lips which draw near unto it. Like a tree, he bears sweet fruit, not to hang on boughs, but to be gathered by those who need.

Grace, whether its work be to pardon, to cleanse, to preserve, to strengthen, to enlighten, to quicken, or to restore, is ever to be had from him freely and without price; nor is there one form of the work of grace which he has not bestowed upon his people. As the blood of the body, though flowing from the

heart, belongs equally to every member, so the influences of grace are the inheritance of every saint united to the Lamb; and herein there is a sweet communion between Christ and his Church, inasmuch as they both receive the same grace.

Christ is the head upon which the oil is first poured; but the same oil runs to the very skirts of the garments, so that the meanest saint has an unction of the same costly moisture as that which fell upon the head. This is true communion when the sap of grace flows from the stem to the branch, and when it is perceived that the stem itself is sustained by the very nourishment which feeds the branch. As we day by day receive grace from Jesus, and more constantly recognize it as coming from him, we shall behold him in communion with us, and enjoy the felicity of communion with him. Let us make daily use of our riches, and ever repair to him as to our own Lord in covenant, taking from him the supply of all we need with as much boldness as men take money from their own purse.

From the Wesley Hymnbook:

1           Thee, Father, Son, and Spirit, we  
Our kind Preserver praise,  
While in Thy threefold gifts we see  
And taste Thy threefold grace.  
Thou feed'st the needy sons of men,  
Thou dost our strength renew,  
With corn, and wine, and oil sustain  
Our fainting spirits too.

2           Father, in Thee we taste the bread  
That cheers the church above,  
And drink, from sin and sorrow freed,  
The wine of Jesu's love.  
The oil of joy, the spirit of grace,  
To us Himself imparts,  
The oil that brightens every face,  
And gladdens all our hearts.

3           With awful thanks we now receive  
Our emblematic food,  
On Father, Son, and Spirit live,  
And daily feast on God:  
We to Thy glory drink and eat,  
Till all from earth remove,  
The endless praises to repeat  
Of all-sustaining Love.  
Amen and amen. Let us pray.

