



## Peters Green News Sheet Issue No: 53

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### Grace

‘Only by Grace can we enter: only by grace can we stand:  
not by our human endeavour: but by the Blood of the Lamb.’

Way back in 1969, whilst at College, I was in the launderette with two friends getting our washing done. We were perusing some Christian books we had obtained at our Christian Union Book Week. A chap who was also using the machines noticed and asked us what we were looking at. We explained. He then asked us what we thought was the most important word in The Bible. I forget what we said but he stated and then explained that he thought it is ‘**Grace**’.

What is Grace? I don’t mean the prayer we pray before meals! At the end of a service, we often say, ‘The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.....’

As the chap we never saw again said, ‘Grace is the most important concept in the Bible, Christianity, and the world. It is most clearly expressed in the promises of God revealed in Scripture and embodied in Jesus Christ.’

But what is it?

As Christians we live every day by the Grace of God. We receive forgiveness according to the riches of God’s Grace, and Grace drives our sanctification. Paul tells us, ‘the Grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives’ (Titus 2:11). Spiritual growth doesn’t happen overnight; we ‘grow in the Grace and Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’ (2 Peter 2:18). Grace transforms our desires, motivations, and behaviour.

Whilst we all desperately need it, Grace is not about us. Grace is fundamentally a word about God: his un-coerced initiative and pervasive, extravagant demonstrations of care and favour. The writer Michael Horton put it this way, ‘In Grace, God gives nothing less than Himself. Grace, then, is not a third thing or substance mediating between God and sinners, but is Jesus Christ in redeeming action’.

The one thing that hits me about Grace is simply that we do not deserve it! I struggled through my teenage years to understand why Christ had died for us. Why did He do that – He certainly did not need to! God put it clearly in front of me in a Baptismal Service – He helped / made me realise that by Grace He died for me, just me. Then I realised He did the same for everyone else as well. God is totally inclusive. No one gets left out unless, of course, they want to be. Sadly some people do. Yet God still

tries to convince them however often people turn their backs on Him.

Grace is – ‘mercy, not merit.’ Grace is the opposite of karma, which is all about getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don’t deserve, and **not** getting what you do deserve. Christianity teaches that what we deserve is death with no hope of resurrection. Paul says, ‘For the wages of sin is death, **but** the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Romans 6:23).

So Grace is in fact a gift from God. When we believe in Jesus and accept Him as our Saviour then the penalty for sin is removed. It is as though the hangman takes the noose from around our necks and says, ‘You are forgiven. Off you go and sin no more.’ Of course, being human, stopping sinning is beyond us. That is why we continually need God’s Grace.

When I started attending Ceylon Baptist Church in Luton, now part of Central Baptist Church, I was completely taken by this Hymn:

I know not why God’s wondrous grace  
To me He hath made known,  
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love  
Redeemed me for His own.

*Refrain:*

But “I know Whom I have believed,  
And am persuaded that He is able  
To keep that which I’ve committed  
Unto Him against that day.”

I know not how this saving faith  
To me He did impart,  
Nor how believing in His Word  
Wrought peace within my heart.

I know not how the Spirit moves,  
Convincing men of sin,  
Revealing Jesus through the Word,  
Creating faith in Him.

I know not what of good or ill  
May be reserved for me,  
Of weary ways or golden days,  
Before His face I see.

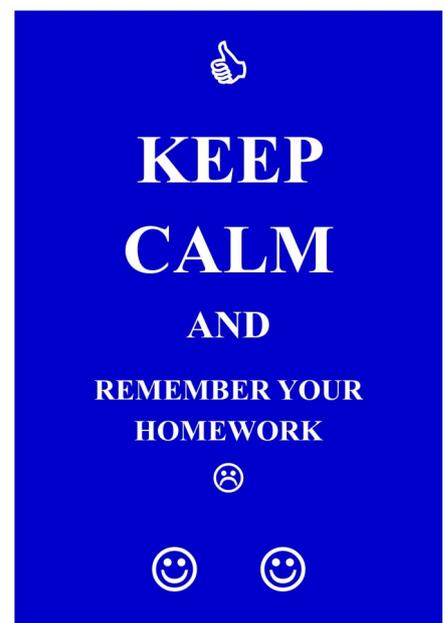
I know not when my Lord may come,  
At night or noonday fair,  
Nor if I walk the vale with Him,  
Or meet Him in the air.

*(D W Whittle 1883)*

‘**May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and evermore, Amen’ (based on 2 Cor 13:14).

Best wishes

Roger



**Happy Birthday**



**Perry Green  
Chapel  
at Peters Green  
Sends  
Birthday  
Wishes  
To  
Hazel Littleworth**

