

Only By Grace

What is the Grace of God?

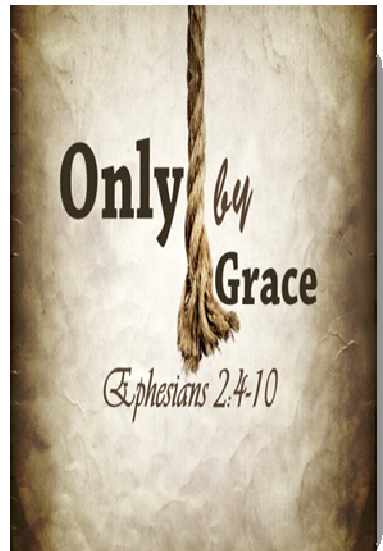
As I walked into the Sanctuary for worship on one of the Sundays, the song, "Only by Grace" was ringing melodiously as the worship leader led the congregation into a state of joyous singing to the Lord. My mind threw a boomerang back into a state of realization that I was just playing this song before Teck Chai and I left home for Service. My heart was beating fast as thoughts of reconciling the coincidence of such a situation was beyond comprehension. I was just thinking too much. Was I? Really what was the message for me?

Let us meditate as we go through the lyrics and take reference to a few verses. Let us appreciate the worship songs that we sing every Sunday. It is beyond the music as it focuses on God as we sing unto the Lord.

Only by grace can we enter
Only by grace can we stand
Not by our human endeavour
But by the blood of the Lamb

Into Your presence You call us
You call us to come
Into Your presence You draw us
And now by Your grace we come
Now by Your grace we come

Lord, if You marked our transgressions
Who would stand
Thanks to Your grace we are
cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb
Lord, if You marked our transgressions
Who would stand
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cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb

What is the Grace of God that can only be made possible by the blood of the Lamb? Is it related to the death of Jesus on the Cross and His resurrection? Yes, it is and it has to be through Jesus Christ as He is the lamb.

This is a gift from God that we should not take for granted. It is a gift that we should treasure and not forget how great is our God and what He has done for us.

"... But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:4-10)

The Grace of God is a divine favour that God gives us even though we do not deserve it. In the New Testament, it is derived from the Greek word called, "CHARIS". Jesus Christ died for our sins even though we did not ask for it to happen, neither do we deserve to have Him die for our sins. Our salvation is made possible because of this love of God.

"...This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:22-24)



"...God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

How blessed are we! As we grow to be more like Him and get to know Him better, we need to take the cour-

age to share this Love of God with many others around us.

It can be a reminder to those who already knew Jesus Christ. For those who have heard about Him, but have no clue on the importance of Jesus Christ in their lives, this is a message for them too.

It is also this message for those who had known Jesus, left and gone away failing to understand how this grace is of value to us. The depth and meaning of His love for us, was never known fully as it is by grace that we have been saved.

I remembered the several occasions when I dodged events of sharing the gospel with strangers because I was not only shy, but also conscious about how the people would react if I talked to them about Jesus. The thoughts of sharing the Gospel succumbed to the fear of rejection and embarrassment and worst, if people witnessed that fear in me.

In sharing with others, I realised that I was not alone. It was perfectly normal to have felt this way. It took me several years to garner the courage to share about Jesus Christ and even talk about me being a Christian. Don't stop praying for courage and ask God to keep fear in the back seat. It will creep up again and again.

Through social media, I am trying to share invitations of NJCC events with friends who are Christians and to others who are not. I surprised myself when I invited a massage therapist to the NJCC. The second time when I met her, she has been visiting our Mandarin congregation with her son. Praying that she and her son will be able to find a place of worship soon! Do pray for them. JCC has been reaching out to the community through events and let us continue to pray for many more to come to know Christ Jesus. Let us also remember to pray for ourselves, leaning on His strength and wisdom to reach out to people.

Indeed, it is not by our strength and human endeavour to do God's work. God calls us to come to Him and in our appreciation of His grace, we come to Him. It is the cleansing of our sins through the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross that made it possible!

As we can enter into His Presence, it is by grace that we can stand tall to do His works. Only by Grace that all these are possible.

Joyce Tan

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." (Ephesians 1:7)

