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Qualities of Grace

By: Pastor Joe Allmon

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

ROMANS 5:20

Grace: More Than Forgiveness

Grace is one of the greatest truths in the Word of God. We often think of grace as God's unmerited favor and merciful kindness toward us—and certainly it is. But grace is more than forgiveness surrounding the believer. Grace is also God's divine influence operating upon and within the believer's heart.

Grace is more than a one-time cleansing of sin in our lives. The Greek word *charis* (pronounced KAR-iss), translated "grace," has been described this way:

"The merciful kindness by which God, exerting His holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ; keeps, strengthens, and increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, and affection; and kindles them to the exercise of Christian virtues."

Grace is merciful kindness, and grace is also holy influence. Grace turns us toward Christ, keeps us, strengthens us, increases our faith and knowledge of Christ, deepens our affection for Him, and produces Christian virtue in our lives.

So when Paul says, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," he is not merely saying there is enough forgiveness to cover all our sin. Thank God there is! He is also showing us that an abundance of God's divine influence and enabling power is available to meet every need created by sin.

As we look through Romans 5 and 6, along with other Scriptures, we begin to see many wonderful qualities of this grace.

1. Grace Abounds

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." — Romans 5:20

Grace does not barely keep up with sin; grace much more abounds. Whatever quantity of grace is needed, God has more. The supply of grace exceeds the demand.

2. Grace Is Greater Than the Need

Your failure is not greater than grace. Your weakness is not greater than grace. Your temptation, past, habit, or struggle is not greater than grace. Your need is never greater than His grace.

3. Grace Teaches

"For the grace of God ... teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts ..." — Titus 2:11–12

Grace begins to affect how we think, what we desire, what we love, and what we no longer want. Grace produces something within us that says, "I want Jesus more than I want that."

4. Grace Is Accessed Through Faith

"We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." — Romans 5:2

The Christian life begins by faith and continues by faith. We never graduate from dependence upon Jesus.

5. Grace Keeps Jesus as the Object of Our Faith

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ..." — Hebrews 12:2

Our faith is not ultimately in ourselves, our performance, or even grace as an abstract thing. Our faith is in Jesus Christ.

6. Grace Keeps Us at the Cross

Jesus declared, "It is finished." — John 19:30

The cross is not merely where our Christian life began. We continue living from Christ's finished work. When we fail—back to Jesus. When tempted—back to Jesus. When victorious—still Jesus.

7. Grace Never Gives Permission to Sin

"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." — Romans 6:1–2

True grace can never become an excuse for sin. How could the divine influence turning us toward Jesus become our excuse for moving away from Him?

8. Grace Gives Resurrection Life

"... like as Christ was raised up from the dead ... even so we also should walk in newness of life." — Romans 6:4

Jesus did not simply die to forgive the old life. He rose so that we could walk in newness of life.

9. Grace Identifies Us With Christ's Death

"Our old man is crucified with him ..." — Romans 6:6

The gospel is not God merely making the old man behave better. Through our union with Christ, we identify with His death and resurrection. Sin no longer owns us.

10. Grace Breaks Sin's Reign

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body ..." — Romans 6:12

Sin may be present, but it does not have to reign. Temptation may knock, anger may rise, fear may come, and the flesh may demand—but none of them is king. Jesus is King.

11. Grace Teaches Us to Reckon by Faith

"Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ ..." — Romans 6:11

God says we died with Christ; faith says, "I believe it." God says we were raised with Christ; faith says, "I believe it." God says sin does not have dominion over us; faith says, "I believe it."

12. Grace Works in Weakness

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." — 2 Corinthians 12:9

Our weakness does not exhaust grace. It becomes the place where we discover the sufficiency of His grace and strength.

13. Grace Works Through Us

"But by the grace of God I am what I am ..." — 1 Corinthians 15:10

Paul labored abundantly, yet he understood the source: "not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Grace worked in Paul and through Paul.

14. Grace Empowers

Stephen was described as being full of grace and power. The grace that saves is also the grace that empowers. Grace is not spiritual passivity; it is God actively operating through His people.

15. Grace Calls Us to Yield

"Yield yourselves unto God ..." — Romans 6:13

Grace influences. The Spirit speaks. The Word teaches. Yet we choose what we yield—our eyes, ears, hands, mouth, mind, body, time, relationships, and abilities.

16. Grace Requires Daily Dependence David once yielded his hands to God, picked up stones, and faced Goliath. Years later, he yielded his eyes in another direction from a rooftop. Yesterday's victory does not eliminate today's need to yield ourselves to God.

17. Grace Moves Our Faith Away From Self The answer to our struggles is not greater faith in ourselves: "I will be stronger. I will try harder." Grace moves our faith back to Jesus: "I cannot do this in my strength, but Your grace is sufficient."

18. Grace Breaks Dominion "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." — Romans 6:14 Not because we have become stronger, perfected ourselves, or been saved long enough—but because we are under grace.

19. Grace Does Not Remove Choice "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are ..." — Romans 6:16 Grace gives freedom, but we still choose what we yield ourselves to. We can yield to anger, bitterness, pride, or selfishness—but we no longer have to.

20. Grace Is Greater Than Long-Standing Bondage Sin can grow roots. One compromise can make another easier. But even if someone has battled something for twenty years, twenty years of bondage is not greater than the grace of God.

21. Grace Produces Better Fruit "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" — Romans 6:21 Sin promises pleasure, freedom, and satisfaction but pays in death. Grace produces something altogether different—life, freedom, and righteousness in Christ.

22. Grace Produces Holiness From the Inside Out "A new heart also will I give you ... And I will put my spirit within you ..." — Ezekiel 36:26–27 God does not merely demand something from us; God puts something within us. Grace produces holiness through the divine influence of God working within the heart.

23. Grace Gives What Sin Can Never Give

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." — Romans 6:23

Sin pays wages. God gives a gift. Eternal life is more than duration—it is knowing Christ, walking with Christ, and experiencing His resurrection life.

24. Grace Has Supply, Access, and Operation

Three words help bring all of this together:

SUPPLY: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." There is more than enough grace.

ACCESS: "We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." We access grace through continued faith and dependence upon Christ.

OPERATION: "Sin shall not have dominion over you ... for ye are ... under grace." Grace is actively exerting God's holy influence within us.

At the center of the supply, access, and operation of grace stands JESUS CHRIST AND HIS FINISHED WORK.

When the need becomes greater—more grace.

When weakness appears—more grace.

When temptation comes—more grace.

When we stumble—back to Jesus. More grace.

When we succeed—still Jesus. More grace.

A Closing Reflection Grace continually turns our attention toward Christ. As our faith rests in Jesus and His finished work, God's divine influence works within our hearts—changing our desires, strengthening our faith, deepening our affection for Christ, producing righteousness, and teaching us to walk in newness of life. We do not have to live under sin's dominion—not because we have become sufficient, but because His grace is sufficient; not because we have become strong, but because His strength is made perfect in weakness; and not because we finished the work, but because Jesus finished the work. Grace is God forgiving what you were. Grace is God creating in you what you are to become. "But by the grace of God I am what I am ..." — 1 Corinthians 15:10

-Joe Allmon