

DEVOTION FOR THE EIGHTH WEEK OF PENTECOST

PSALM 136:1-9; 23-26

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords. His love endures forever.

To Him who alone does great wonders. His love endures forever.

Who by His understanding made the heavens. His love endures forever.

Who spread out the earth upon the waters, His love endures forever.

Who made the great lights, His love endures forever.

The sun to govern the day, His love endures forever.

The moon and the stars to govern the night; His love endures forever.

To the One who remembered us in our low estate. His love endures forever.

And freed us from our enemies. His love endures forever.

And who gives food to every creature. His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Deuteronomy 19:1-21 Justice proportionate to the crime

- 1) Who could and who couldn't find sanctuary in a city of refuge?
- 2) What determined the difference between murder and accidental killing?
- 3) What did Israel have to do to retain possession of the land?

Romans 3:1-31 God give righteousness through faith in Jesus

- 1) What does the law reveal about God?
- 2) What is the purpose of the law according to verse 20?
- 3) What is the righteousness apart from the law in verses 21-22?

“GRACE”

Paul writes, “*We hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*” These verses were a catalyst to the reformation of the church in the 16th century. Martin Luther became a monk, because he was concerned about the salvation of his soul. He asked the essential spiritual question, “*What must I do to be saved?*” Like many of his contemporaries, he believed salvation was based mostly on being good. Certainly a person had to believe in Jesus, but that was only the start. He was taught that to be saved, a person had to keep both God's law and the rules of the church; and even that might not be enough. He had no peace because the law never told him he had done enough good.

When we seek peace with God on the basis of being good, we always face the uncertainty of not knowing if we have been good enough. The law always shows us our sin! Even when we do right, the law shows us what we did wrong. As Paul says in Romans, “*For by works of the law no human being will be accounted righteous in His sight, since through law comes knowledge of sin.*” The law can never give us peace with God. Peace with God comes only through the gift of God's grace in forgiveness for the sake of Jesus Christ.

What is grace? Some people understand grace simply as being given the time and opportunity to do better and make amends. If the bank gives you grace on your mortgage they are not talking about forgiveness, they are talking about a few more days to pay before they foreclose. You still have to pay your debt! We owe God a debt we couldn't pay. Grace is Jesus Christ earning our salvation through the good work of His life, paying the debt of our sin through the sacrifice of His cross and giving forgiveness as gift to all who will receive. Grace is the gift of righteousness that comes “*through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*”

“JUST AS I AM, WITHOUT ONE PLEA” (Public Domain)

Just as I am, without one plea, But that thy blood was shed for me.

And that thou bidd'st me come to thee.

O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

**Just as I am and waiting not, To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

**Just as I am though tossed about, With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

**Just as I am poor, wretched, blind; Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

**Just as I am, thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

**Just as I am, thy love unknown, Has broken ev'ry barrier down;
Now to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

PRAYER

Dearest Lord Jesus, in love you shared in our humanity, lived a sinless life and offered yourself into death on the cross to pay our debt. You rose to bless us with the grace of forgiveness and peace in our relationship with your Father in heaven. Bless us to contemplate your grace in our lives each day. Give us a greater appreciation of your grace that fills our lives and will be fulfilled in life everlasting. In your Name. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen**

THE CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

BENEDICTION

Psalm 32:1

"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

People who live by the law have no sense of grace as God understands and as scripture presents it. They live in fear and uncertainty, as did Martin Luther before he came to know the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Grace from God is not more time to meet our obligations. Grace is Jesus Christ earning our salvation through the good work of his life and paying the debt of our sin through the sacrifice of his cross.

Our text says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."