**Finding Grace**

**Understanding Grace**

**Spreading Grace**

Romans 15:14 - And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

Hebrews 4:14-15 - Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin.

Hebrews 4:16 - Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

3 truths to convince us that God can, and God wants to, use common people like ourselves in the accomplishment of His plan with others

I. Spreading Grace is a Matter of Dependence

2 Corinthians 3:18 - But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:11 - Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 - For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.

A. God purposely uses earthen vessels

2 Corinthians 4:7 - But we have this treasure in earthen vessels…

is ostrakinos – “baked clay, common pots; cheap, breakable, easily replaceable and virtually valueless…”

B. God purposely allows His earthen vessels to suffer

v. 8a – afflicted in every way - thlibo – under pressure

v. 8b – perplexed – aporeo – at a loss

v. 9a - persecuted – dioko – to pursue or hunt

v. 9b – struck down – kataballo – to strike down with a weapon and throw down in a wrestling match

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 - For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead…

v. 10 – always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus

C. This often becomes the platform for God’s power to be displayed

2 Corinthians 4:7 - But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves…

2 Corinthians 3:5 - Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves…

2 Corinthians 3:5 - Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God…

2 Corinthians 4:7 - But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves…

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

II. Spreading Grace is a Matter of Focus

A. What will put me in the best position to minister to others?

2 Corinthians 4:14-15 - knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. For all things *are* for your sakes...

B. What is the best occasion for God’s grace to spread?

2 Corinthians 4:15 - For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people…

C. What will give others cause to give thanks to God and glorify Him?

2 Corinthians 4:15 - For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

III. Spreading Grace is a Matter of Perspective

A. Our hearts can be renewed even while our bodies are decaying.

2 Corinthians 4:16 - Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

B. Our suffering seems light in comparison to the eternal weight of glory

2 Corinthians 4:17 - For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison…

C. There are unseen, eternal issues at stake here and we don’t want to miss the opportunity for God’s grace to be spread through us.

2 Corinthians 4:18 - …while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.