

“Our Gracious God!”

Matthew 20:1-16; Ephesians 2:1-10

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- Parable of the “Unfair Boss”—Matthew 20:1-16
 - Matthew 20:1-8-- *“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. Again he went out about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, and did likewise. About the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.’ So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.”*
 - Leviticus 19:13-- *“You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.”*
 - Deuteronomy 24:15-- *“Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you.”*
 - Matthew 20⁹-16-- *“And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received a denarius. And when they had received it, they complained to the landowner, saying, ‘These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.’ But he answered one of them and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last. For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

“Our Gracious God!”

A. What is “Grace”?

1. Scriptural Support of the “God of Grace”
 - Psalm 103:8-- *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in mercy”*
 - Psalm 116:5-6-- *“Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful. The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.”*
 - John 1:14-- *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*
2. Scriptural Definition of Grace
 - 2 Corinthians 8:9-- *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich.”*
 - Hebrews 4:16-- *“come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Grace is...“God giving what we do not deserve”

Grace is... **God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.**

Grace is...“God’s help in our time of need”

3. Scriptural Examples of Grace

- a. Jacob and Esau
 - Genesis 33:11-- *“Please accept the present that was brought to you, for God has been gracious to me and I have all that I need.”*
- b. Ezra
 - Ezra 8:18-- *“Because the gracious hand of God was upon us”*

B. When do we need God's Grace?

1. God's Grace and **Salvation!**

a. Our condition before God's help arrives.

- Ephesians 2:1-3-- *"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others."*

Before God's help, we were...

- 1) Dead spiritually.
- 2) Under Dominion
- 3) Depraved
- 4) Damned

b. God's help arrives in the person of Jesus Christ.

- Ephesians 2:4-9-- *"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*

c. You and I have been saved by God's grace through faith.

- 1) Salvation is solely by God's grace!
- 2) Not by human effort—no "co-pay" plan
 - Titus 3:5-- *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit."*

2. God's Grace and **Suffering.**

- 2 Corinthians 12:7-- *"Lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure."*
- 2 Corinthians 12:8-- *"Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me."*
- 2 Corinthians 12:9-10—*"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproached, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

3. God's Grace and **Service.**

- 1 Corinthians 15:10-- *"By the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*

C. How do we receive God's Grace?

1. We must humble ourselves.

- Proverbs 3:34-- *"Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble."*
- James 4:6-- *"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says, 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble'".*

2. We must ask Him for help.

- Hebrews 4:16-- *"come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in our time of need."*

3. We must accept help from others.

- 1 Peter 4:10-- *"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"*