

"The Abundance of Grace"

John 1:15-18

Introduction: In our study of John, we have looked at the first 14 verses of John 1 and in these verses, John has used his pen to show to the reader that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh. He called Jesus "The Word" because words reveal what is in the heart of a person.

Luke 6:44-45

⁴⁴ For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

*⁴⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: **for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.***

Jesus as "The Word" came to earth to reveal the heart and character of God to a lost and dying world. He came to a world that was running from Him to show us all how deep the love of God is for each and every one of us.

John went on to say that Jesus as God was the Creator of this world and all things were made by Him. He tells us that Jesus is Light, and we know that Light exposes the darkness and that is what Jesus Christ does. His life shows just how sinful and dark our lives are. Then John told us about John the Baptist who came to be a witness of the True Light. John's ministry had been foretold by the prophets Isaiah and Malichi.

Isaiah 40:3-5

³ The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Since John's ministry had been foretold John's readers can then be sure that Jesus was the Messiah. This was the fulfillment of the prophecy. John then told of how Jesus came

into the world, but the world did not know Him. He came unto His own people, the Jews, but they made the choice to reject Him. But there was a remnant who received Him and they were born again because they placed their faith in Jesus Christ. John explained how the New Birth comes only by the power of God. Our responsibility is to believe, and God is the One who gives New Life to the believer. In John 1:14 John tells his readers that he was an eyewitness of the glory of Jesus and John also refers to Jesus as the only begotten of the Father. The word "begotten" means "one of a kind, unique" and we can be sure that Jesus was One of a kind because He was God in the flesh. This now brings us to where we are this evening.

➤ **John's Declaration**

Notice John 1:15

This testimony by John is very important. John told those of his day that the One who came after him was before him. John was born before Jesus, but John tells us here that Jesus had a higher ranking than John. Is this important? Yes, it is!

Luke 7:24-28

²⁴ And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

²⁵ But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

²⁶ But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

²⁷ This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

²⁸ For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Jesus confirmed that John was greater than all the Old Testament prophets. Why was he better than Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and all the others? Because the Old Testament prophets wrote about the coming of the Messiah, but John was able to

introduce Him personally. The Old Testament prophets spoke of Jesus but John was right there with Him.

Let us get back to John 1:15. John the Baptist was the greatest of all the prophets but there was One who ranked far above John and that was Jesus. The greatest of all the prophets testified of this Truth.

Notice John 1:15 again.

John gives the reason why Jesus ranks far above him. He was before John. John was born first but Jesus was before him because Jesus is eternal. Jesus affirmed that He was eternal when He was speaking with the religious leaders.

John 8:56-59

⁵⁶ *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.*

⁵⁷ *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*

⁵⁸ *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

⁵⁹ *Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

When Jesus says, "I am" He is saying that He was God. That is why they took up stones to stone Him.

Exodus 3:13-15

¹³ *And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?*

¹⁴ *And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*

¹⁵ *And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.*

➤ The Grace of God

Notice John 1:16

This is a wonderful verse to remind us of what we have in Jesus. All believers have experienced His fulness. We were all born spiritually dead and spiritually empty. When we were saved it was His fulness that was given to us. That is the fulness of His grace. Therefore, we have all received grace for grace or grace upon grace. The well of grace that is in our Lord is bottomless and inexhaustible.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

It is grace that we stand in which has the idea that we are completely surrounded by God's. It can be seen as an ocean of grace and the waves keep coming upon us each and every day just like the waves of the ocean never stop. Let us notice how the grace washes over us each and every day.

Romans 5:19-21

¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

²⁰ Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

²¹ That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sin guarantees death and in the same way grace guarantees eternal life. It is God's grace that keeps us. It is also God's grace that sustains us on a daily basis. Grace is unmerited favor and that means that we receive that which we do not deserve. Notice the words from the Daily Bread.

"Years ago, Amy Carmichael shared some helpful insights about the phrase, "grace for grace." Drawing from the writings of Bishop Moule (1841-1920), she wrote that the Greek word translated "for" literally means "instead of." He illustrated the meaning by describing

a river. "Stand on its banks," he wrote, "and contemplate the flow of waters. A minute passes, and another. Is it the same stream still? Yes. But is it the same water? No." The old water, he explained, had been displaced by new—"water instead of water."

The same is true of grace. Your life today may carry yesterday's problems, but remember, God's grace is new each morning, exactly what you need to meet each new challenge. It is an inexhaustible and ever-fresh supply."

Notice John 1:17

The Law was given by Moses, and it was wonderful in that it showed Israel how they were to live their lives so that they could be a testimony to all the world.

Exodus 19:5-7

⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

⁷ And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

But the Law could only condemn. It could only show man his true sinful condition and just how far he was from perfection. The Law called for the death of all men.

2 Corinthians 3:6-7

⁶ Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

⁷ But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

The Law put the blessed fruit of eternal life way up on the top branches where no man could reach it. But in contrast Jesus Christ came, and He placed the fruit down where the most vile and lowliest of men can grab on to it. I believe that John wrote this verse in a way that was not as offensive to his Jewish audience. He does not condemn the Law in this verse, He allows it to have the honor it deserves but then he takes his readers into the Ne

Testament to show them that there is something far than the Law and that there is a Man who is far greater than Moses.

Keep in mind that grace and truth were present in the Old Testament, but just not as fully developed as they were in Jesus Christ. And so, in the midst of great spiritual darkness and sin on earth we read that "Noah found GRACE in the eyes of the LORD."

Conclusion:

Notice John 1:18

Here is the Truth that Jesus came to reveal. Jesus came to declare to the world that God loves every single person, and grace is available to all if they will only believe on Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin.

John 3:16-17

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.