



2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'

START TALKING

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
2. What has God been doing in your world - what can we celebrate?

START THINKING

1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:9. How does acknowledging our weaknesses allow us to understand our need for God's grace better?
2. Consider Steve's analogy of standing under a giant waterfall, with downstream representing past grace and upstream representing future grace. How does this imagery provide comfort and assurance to you for the future? How might this perspective change the way you approach challenges and uncertainties in life?

START SHARING

1. Thinking about your own experiences, can you recall a time when you felt truly touched by God's grace? How did that experience impact your understanding of grace?
2. On Sunday, Steve said that grace cannot be earned; it can only be received. The analogy of grace being like an upward escalator versus a treadmill illustrates this. How can you apply this imagery to your daily life? What practical steps can you take to align yourself with the "upward escalator" of God's grace?

START PRAYING

Pray for one another's needs.

START DOING

This week, set aside some time to listen to the hymn, Amazing Grace. Meditate on the words and allow God to minister to you through the song.

NOTES FOR LEADERS

This Sunday, we launched our annual "Love in a Gift Pack" initiative. Encourage your group to get involved with sponsoring a gift pack for a child this Christmas. The cost of a gift pack is R100.



This Sunday, in the first part of our series, What's So Amazing About Grace, Steve shared the story of John Newton, who wrote the hymn Amazing Grace.

- The hymn was first recorded in 1926
- 32000 recordings exist
- One of the most famous songs in all of history – estimated that it is performed 10 million times every year. (27 397 times every day on average, almost 20 times every minute of the day.)
- It has been played at various big historical events, including
- It was sung after Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream' speech.
- It was sung across Germany when the Berlin Wall came down in 1989.
- It was sung when Nelson Mandela was released from prison and performed on his 70th birthday by a famous performer.
- In the aftermath of the Sept 9/11 attacks, it was sung all across the US.

Q: How does one go from being a sinner without restraint to the poet of one of the most famous Christian hymns?

A: Amazing GRACE!

How do we define the concept of Grace? It could be the name of a girl down the road, a prayer you say before a meal, or a favour given by some company as in the 'grace' period.

Definition: GRACE = God's Riches At Christ's Expense

GRACE = Divine power of heaven extended towards me.

Grace enables us to be what we could not otherwise be.
 Grace enables us to do what we could not otherwise do.
 Grace enables us to see what we could not otherwise see.

It is intangible, but just because we can't see it doesn't mean it is not there. E.g. Gravity - just because you can't see it, doesn't mean it's not one of the most powerful things to exist.
 Grace refers to God's undeserved kindness to us.

Paul (one of the writers of the New Testament) understood this. Every single one of his 13 letters starts with 'Grace to you', and all of them finish with 'Grace to you'. Think about that. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write letters to all of these churches, and before he says anything else to them: "*Grace & peace*" - *may His divine power be extended towards you...*
 And then, at the end: *Grace to you - may His divine power help you to do everything I have written about!*

In Ephesians 2:8, Paul tells us: *It is by grace that you have been saved [rescued]...*

If we had to re-write Ephesians 2:8 using our definition of grace, it would read: *It is by the divine power of heaven extended to you that you have been saved [rescued]...*

1. Grace is only amazing when I realise that I am a Wretch

Three words to notice in the first verse of the hymn, Amazing Grace: wretch, lost, blind.

"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see."

A wretch is someone in a poor, pitiful or sorry state - we are rich wretches, poor wretches, strong, weak, good, bad.... But there can't be a 'sweet sound' without wretches like us. We can't be 'found' if we haven't realised that we're 'lost', and we can't 'see' until we realise that we are 'blind'. Outside of Christ, we are wretched, lost and blind.

2. God's grace cannot be earned, only received

Most of everything we do in life is transaction-based - linked to earning rewards. God's grace is not like that. It can't be earned; it can only be received. The result of trying to earn God's grace is 'treadmill living'.

In Matthew 3:17, we read what God says over Jesus after His baptism - before he'd done a single day of ministry: *This is My Son Whom I love, with Him I am well pleased.* He loves His Son

because He's His Son - a radical, counter-cultural kind of love.

God's grace is like an upward escalator vs. a treadmill.

3. God's grace is more than enough

God's answer to Paul in response to the difficulty that Paul was experiencing is seen in 2 Corinthians 12:9: *But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'*

'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
 And grace will lead me home."

One of the best analogies of grace is a picture of being under a giant waterfall:

- Downstream is the flow of grace from yesterday
- Upstream is all of the future grace that we will need
- Today is the roar of the waterfall of His "more than enough" grace to carry us and help us and guide us.

His grace is more than enough for every single day for the rest of our lives.