

The first Sunday after Easter, now what? How did the day of resurrection influence the activities last week? Have relationships been richer, worries less stressful and worldly responsibilities less demanding? If we have not noticed changes in our daily life, is it possible that we do not expect to?

I know there are a lot of questions to ponder. So many can be explored and, quite simply, should be thoroughly examined if we expect our life to be enriched by this act of love. Resurrection, Jesus coming out of the tomb alive and claiming the victory of eternity! Because Jesus rose, God showers down grace on all mankind, saved and unsaved alike. Jesus's blood brings all creation in line with the will of God. Do we live in this victory?

Today I would like us to explore the gift of grace. Since the beginning of time as we know it, grace has been employed. In the garden where Adam and Eve lived, paths were walked with God and conversations were had. To talk with God face to face and to see His smile as He watched man and creation! He graces us today in the place we live and the people we come to know. Each moment in our lives He foreknew; each choice and decision, action and motive, reveals our heart. The consequences of all of these inspire God to mold us into a vessel He can fill with His goodness.

This goodness is grace. Some of the actions of grace are: to love as God loves, to share His compassion, to be kind and generous and to help others grow in faith. We have faith in our salvation, but without grace, there would be no salvation, just lost souls. When we are filled with grace, an awareness comes to life. To love as Jesus loves.

John 13

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."

The following words from an article found in By Faith reveal treasures found in the Lord's Prayer:

Grace is undeserved favor. And the Lord's Prayer is all about beggars coming to God with open hands and asking for grace. It begins by calling God "Our Father." We don't deserve that, but by grace we have been adopted into His family. We ask for His kingdom to come.

We don't deserve that either. He could destroy this corrupt world, and all of us sinners in it, and be justified in doing so. We beg for "daily bread" we don't deserve, and for forgiveness we can't earn, and for deliverance from temptation we can't overcome, from a devil we can't defeat on our own. This prayer is, from beginning to end, a frantic cry for undeserved favor.

But what happens when we receive grace from our Father, but don't return it—to our family, friends, and neighbors? Again, the fourth petition in Matthew 6:12: *"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."* Jesus connects grace received from God to grace given to others. He even warns us in verse 15 that if we don't forgive the sins of others, our heavenly Father won't forgive our sins.

Matthew 6:9-15

⁹ *"This, then, is how you should pray:*

*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,*

¹⁰ *Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,*

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ *Give us today our daily bread.*

¹² *And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'*

¹⁴ *For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, Your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, Your Father will not forgive your sins.*

Praying this prayer reveals God's grace given to us and how we are to give that same to others. In doing this, we honor God. Easter reminds us who we are to our Heavenly Father. Loved, we are to love others the same.

I would like to challenge us as congregation to live the Easter story every day, in our relationship with God and His Son by the power of the Spirit. Pray for a change of heart with expectation of seeing God's grace in all situations every day.

He is risen! A battle cry to a hungry world searching for truth.

Archie

Call to action: What promises about grace are given in 2 Corinthians 9:8 and Hebrews 4:16? How can these promises change how you live your life?