

Grace

Cooking Breakfast

Who Needs Breakfast?

What does grace look like in our lives? We talk about God's grace. We are grateful beyond measure for God's grace that replaces justice with mercy and judgment with unconditional love for us. As it says in Acts 20:24, our lives *are worth nothing if we do not do the work assigned to us by Jesus to tell others the Good News of the grace of God*. And here the grace of God refers to his forgiveness of our sins and shame, the undeserved love and adoption into God's family.

I have never fully understood grace, but it helped when God sent us to live in a country with a powerful King, whose word was law. When we arrived in Nepal, it was illegal to convert to Christianity or to convert others. The Hindu King was worshipped as a god. Christians, who worship only the one true God, were perceived as a threat to the King's power. The punishment for conversion was six to seven years in prison, including, in some cases, torture as well.

A Christian pastor we met, Pastor Hari, had served time in prison for sharing the Good News. He then received a pardon from the King and was freed from prison. From the point of view of the law, this pardon by the King was totally undeserved. There was no rational reason for such a pardon. Knowing this pastor's story helped me understand what God's "amazing grace," an undeserved pardon, could look like on a human scale.

But in Philippians 1:7, Paul says, *"you are all partners with me in grace"* (HCSB) or *"all of you share in God's grace with me."*

So, what does it mean to partner in grace? Grace is not just the wonderful gift of God **for** me, but something God calls all of us to extend to others.

And how do we do that? Jesus gives us His example to follow. Post-resurrection, the disciples, unsure of their next move, go back to what they know, and go fishing. Jesus appears on the shore and calls to them. What does Jesus do with these weak-faithed disciples who, despite promises to give their lives for him, all abandoned him and denied knowing him in his time of greatest need? Does he lecture or punish or ask them about their failures? No, he cooks breakfast for those who most certainly do not deserve it.

So, who in your life needs you to make breakfast for them? Who needs an undeserved kindness to glimpse the grace of God through you?

And, about the pastor who was pardoned by the King? Pastor Hari was granted a brief audience with the King to thank the King for his grace. If it had been me, I would have been really careful how I showed respect and thanked him, fearful of being thrown back into prison. But when Pastor Hari came before the King, he presented the King with a Bible. Like Paul, Pastor Hari knew *"my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus-the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful Grace of God."*

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- Tell about a time when you were unable or failed to extend grace to someone who hurt you or someone you love.
- Who is there in your life today that needs your act of grace, however undeserved?
- What distinguishes an act of grace from a random act of kindness?



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