

GRACE IN THE TIME OF NEED



Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Earlier this week I looked at the calendar and found myself surprised that we're already rolling our way through the month of May. Much of March and all of April seem like a blur. Almost all of our normal family routines have been disrupted. I'm sure you understand what I'm mean and can relate to the strange and unsettling feelings associated with so many areas of life being put on pause. Perhaps you also know what I mean when I say that being at home so often has messed up my sense of time.

This week I've been thinking about some of the things the Bible has to say about time. In doing so, I have realized that even when life seems normal our perspective on time can be flawed.

2 Peter 3:8 shows that God's perspective on time is much different than ours.

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Many passages of scripture state that God is in complete control of the timing of nations rising and falling. He was sovereign over the timing of the birth, ministry, betrayal, arrest, crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus. While no one knows the hour, a time has also been appointed for his return. God set the time for all of the events of redemptive history.

Galatians 4:4

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law

Romans 5:6

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

1 Timothy 6:14-15

¹⁴ to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords

This all makes me think of the lyrics of a very well-known Chris Tomlin song.

***Age to age He stands
And time is in His hands
Beginning and the end
The Godhead Three in One
Father Spirit Son
The Lion and the Lamb
The Lion and the Lamb

How great is our God...***

Our time is in His hands.

James 4:15

¹⁴ yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

1 Peter 5:6

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you

Thinking about His sovereignty and control of time, consider again the end of passage we began with from Hebrews.

¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16

While all of us may have different needs, my guess is that we would all agree this is a time of need. I want to encourage you that we instructed to confidently pray in such times, expecting that we will receive grace.

That leads to a second word that I would like to focus on for a moment. We have considered God's control of time. Let's now consider the grace that He provides.

When I think of the word grace my mind automatically goes to a familiar phrase, undeserved favor. It is not wrong for my mind, or yours, to go there. That is how grace is described in many passages of the Bible.

Romans 3:24

²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

Romans 11:5-6

⁵ So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace

There are many other verses that describe grace in the same way. That's why we quickly think of grace as underserved favor.

We also might quickly associate grace with the word forgive. Certainly, grace is at work in forgiveness. We should always be amazed at God's grace at work in forgiving our sins.

Perhaps we think of someone with a gentle and hospitable disposition as gracious. When we think of grace we think of that person and see them as an example of grace in action.

It is correct to think of grace in all of those ways. However, there is another facet of God's grace that should not be overlooked, especially in times like this. God's grace is poured out upon us as unmerited favor, the forgiveness of sins and a loving welcome into His family through Christ. In addition, God's grace is poured out upon us as strength that is needed to live with power, joy and peace no matter what we are facing. God's grace empowers us to live differently.

2 Corinthians 9:8

⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work

2 Corinthians 12:9

⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Tonight, I end with this encouragement. This is a time to confidently draw near to the throne of grace. You will find forgiveness there. You will find grace to forgive others there. You will find undeserved favor. As you draw near, you will also find that He graciously supplies us with strength to face the day.

¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

You are loved

Tony