

Lost & Found Center Teaching Series



THE SEARCH FOR FAITH - GRACE PART 2

Introduction

In our last study I described what I call the way of grace. The whole idea of the way of grace is that God has poured out grace into all of our lives and he desires we seek it, find it and follow after it. Grace in a spiritual sense is more than favor. It has a dimension of power, purpose and timing. The first step in the way of grace is to develop within our spiritual selves an awareness of God's grace. I am certain that the Lord desires us to develop this awareness. He wants us to understand his purpose and power in the moment. How am I certain about this? Because that is exactly how Jesus operated and we all know our destiny is to be like him. We can only develop this awareness through prayer. We just ask him to help us to be aware of his hand, his movement, his power and purpose in the moment. That sums up step one. But there is more.

Grace Requires Faith

Being aware of his grace is the first step, but just awareness is not enough. Grace requires faith. This is a foundational truth that speaks to the core of our understanding of Christianity. Paul in summing up the salvation experience tells the Ephesians this:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— Ephesians 2:8 NIV

Our salvation is a result of two things: grace and faith. The grace is supplied by God. The faith is supplied by us. The transaction is salvation. Make sense? Our job is to just believe it. Our job is to embrace it. Our job is to put our trust in what Jesus has done. Think about your spiritual experience. The work of Jesus had been done for a long time before you came along. What happened to you? Well there was some spiritual event that occurred in which you became aware of his grace. It was more than the detailed knowledge of Jesus. It involved a spiritual awareness of who he is and why you need him. Then you believed and the spiritual transaction was completed. The grace for salvation has been poured out for all men. Who will see? Who will believe? Who will meet the grace of God with faith?

Step one we need an awareness of grace. Step two we need faith.

The Search for Faith

Whenever there is grace, there must be a search for faith. Why? Well we just saw that faith is needed to complete the transaction. We will re-visit the two passages that we looked at last time. Let me say this. When we get a sense that the grace of God is available – the power and purpose of God in the very moment, it is time to search for faith. Is that what Jesus did? Well let's review those passages.

One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. Luke 5:17-19 NIV

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If I could summarize again, Jesus was having a Bible study, and while he was teaching he had an awareness that the power of God was available to heal. Put yourself in this situation. Without this awareness, nothing happens. If we see, we can move. If we are aware of God's grace, we can move into action. Jesus was in a situation where He knew in the moment God wanted to accomplish something (in this case healing). Have you ever felt that way? What did you do in your moment? But in this moment there was no faith in the room. What a sad commentary, because the place was filled with **"..Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem..."** yet there was still no faith. These guys "supposedly" studied the scriptures and still had no faith. Is there a parallel here in our lives? The Bible goes on to say that some industrious men started to lower a paralytic through the roof. Now here's the next verse:

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." Luke 5:20 NIV

Did you get that? Jesus saw their faith. He had an awareness of grace and he found faith - so a spiritual transaction could be made. Jesus, full of grace, is searching for faith. When you have an awareness of God's power, purpose and timing, look for faith.

Let's look at the second passage.

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. John 6:1-6 NIV

Jesus looks up and sees the crowd coming to him. The Word of God tells us, **"He already had in mind what he was going to do."** Jesus was aware that the power of God was available to perform a miracle. What did he do next? He looked for faith. Now he's looking for faith so let's see when he finds it. He asked Philip, **"Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"** Did he find enough faith from Philip?

Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" John 6:7 NIV

Let me translate what Philip said in one word: impossible. That is what he said. There was no faith there in spite of all that Jesus had already done. There was still no faith. We are a lot like Philip many times in our lives. Aren't we? In spite of who Jesus is and all that he has done for us, we can still have trouble trusting him. Let's continue reading and see what we find.

Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" John 6:8-9 NIV

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Now let me translate Andrew in a few words: is it possible? Andrew asked a question. Philip made a statement. Andrew had only a sliver of faith. And a sliver of faith is enough in God's kingdom, because after Andrew spoke Jesus said:

"Have the people sit down." John 6:10

Jesus had an awareness of God's grace and then he found the faith he was looking for.

How Does This Work?

What am I saying here? I am saying that the Lord wants us to be aware of the grace that he has poured out into our lives. This can happen at any moment, just like in the life of Jesus. Once that awareness comes we search for faith. Let me clarify. Sometimes the search for faith is in another person and sometimes the search is within us. When something inside us is triggered and we are aware that the grace of God fills the moment, then our job is to go with it. Our job is to look for someone or something that needs to be done at the moment. This is the point where we need to trust God. Don't just go about your business. Don't just wait for the awareness or that "uncomfortable" feeling to go away. Search for faith until you find it.

Pray something like this:

Lord, prepare me. Work in me so I can be ready and willing. Help me get ready to move when your time is right, when your grace is upon me.

Conclusion

Grace and faith are not only the foundational truths to our Christian lives they are to be the operating truths of how we live. Grace is from God; the faith is from us. The combination is a spiritual transaction. If we are going to be like him, then our desire is to be aware of the grace that God has poured out into our lives. Our response to his grace, wherever we find it, is to search for faith and be ready to move or say something or pray something or do something – just like Jesus.

Remember Jesus, full of grace, is looking for faith. He always is.

And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:7-9 NIV

May he find it in us - now.

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Notes

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