

WHY AMAZING GRACE STILL AMAZES ME – PART ONE

This is your Friend and Minister, Dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

I am delighted to come to you, friends. Today I want to speak on ***Why Amazing Grace still amazes me.***

Why Amazing grace still amazes me

And we take our text from Titus 2, reading at verse 11.

Titus 2:11-15

¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

¹⁵ Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

PRAYER:

Father, we've come, as we have often done, to search the scriptures. We pray, Spirit of God, that You would lead us, direct us, give us insight, give us understanding; and may our faith be built as a result of this Word...in Jesus Name. Amen!

Why amazing grace still amazes me

One of the most common theological terms in the history of Christianity is grace. Just as familiarity breeds contempt, I fear grace has suffered a similar fate. In

some quarters, it has been misunderstood, misused and abused. Yet grace is at the center of all of God's dealings or relationships with man. It was there before creation; it was there at creation; it was there when man failed – it has been there since the Fall till now when it is more pronounced than ever. Grace is part and parcel of who God is.

What is grace?

There are many and varied definitions of grace. Grace has been defined as:

- i. God's unconditional acceptance of a person as he or she is – apart from self-effort.
- ii. God's unmerited favor bestowed on man.
- iii. Grace has been defined by the acronym: g r a c e – God's riches at Christ's expense. God's riches at Christ's expense. G, God; r, riches; a, at; c, Christ; e, expense – grace.

This limits grace to the New Testament. But we have observed that God's creation of the world and all in it was a gracious act, what we now call *original* or *common grace* as against His special grace. A unique aspect of this original grace that many overlook is man's freedom to choose, which many have misused. Personally, I see grace as God's provisions without man's participation or contributions: God's provisions without man's participation or contribution – because man has nothing to contribute.

Let me conclude the definition of grace with the meaning of the word in the original Greek New Testament. The word is *charis*, from which we get the English word charisma, charismatic. Of the many shades of meaning of *charis*, two in particular caught my attention:

- a. It says, it is free favour specially manifested by God toward man, in the gospel's scheme.
- b. The second one is that grace or *charis* is to sacrifice a person to the demands of his enemies.

This is what God did in Jesus Christ.

This brings us to our text and the question, why is grace so amazing?

Why amazing grace still amazes me.

That takes us to Titus 2 from verse 11 to 15. There are seven amazing facts about grace that I find in that text. The first one is that this amazing grace is divine grace, because it says: *for the grace of God – for the grace of God*. Divine grace speaks of the source of grace; and no wonder it is amazing, for everything that originates from God is amazing. Any grace or gracious act you find in man comes from God. And only those who have a personal relationship with Him can manifest His grace. And this is what makes such a person or persons winsome or attractive. This amazing grace is divine.

Number two: why amazing grace still amazes me is because it is a saving grace; for the grace of God that brings salvation is a saving grace. And this speaks of the strength or the power of grace. The grace of God has brought or delivered salvation to men and women held captive by sin. In Ephesians 2:8-9, we read:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. Saved from what? Saved from accident? Saved from sickness? Saved from sin – saved from the condemnation of sin – saved from the penalty of sin – saved from the power of sin!

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,* ⁹ *not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Because the grace is divine, it comes from God, not from man. The power of divine grace is attested to by no less than murderous Saul of Tarsus later known as Apostle Paul, who described himself as the chief of sinners, in 1 Timothy 1:15. He goes on to testify of the saving power of divine grace when he says, in 1 Corinthians 15:9-10

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

[The Apostle Paul says] ⁹ *For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.* ¹⁰ *But by the grace of God [divine grace] I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me.*

That's the power of divine grace. You find in that verse 10, grace is mentioned three times.

Another testifier is John Newton, born in London in 1725, of a puritan Christian mother and a stern ship commander father. Newton lived an atheistic debauched life – immoral life. He was enlisted in the slave trade at the age of twenty, transporting captured slaves from Africa to Charleston North Carolina, in the United States. After surviving a fearful storm at sea, he gave his life to Jesus Christ, and became an Anglican clergy man, in 1764. His autobiographical testimony that has come to us in the form of a hymn, speaks of the saving power of the grace of God. This popular autobiographical testimony is performed about ten million times every year as the record show:

*Amazing grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.*

[The power of divine grace]

*I once was lost, but now I am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.*

The infinite sins against an infinite God cannot be paid for by man who is not only finite but is also the offender. It would take the gracious act of God to pay for the infinite sins. That is what Jesus did on the cross. All you need to do, friend, is to receive this grace and to say thank You. And this is truth. Salvation is by grace through faith, not by works, not by church membership, not by any good thing that you have done.

Let me quickly go to the third point, why this amazing grace still amazes me. It is not only that it is divine grace, it is not only that it is a saving grace, it is also an inclusive or universal grace; for the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It is a universal grace. Whereas the divine grace speaks of the source of grace, and the saving grace speaks of the strength of the power of grace, the inclusive or the universal grace speaks of the sphere of grace. It has appeared to all men. The grace of God is for everybody, irrespective of race, economic status or gender. This is expressed differently in John 3:16:

For God so loved the world: inclusive – universal; for He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever (He becomes restricted now to the individual persons, you) whosoever believes should not perish but have eternal life. The word, the grace of God has appeared, the word ‘appear’ is in the passive voice, which means, that there is an agent, and that is God, causing the appearing of the grace. It is a word that also means to display, to be manifested, to reveal, to shine. And that is the word that we have in the English, borrowed from the Greek epiphany. Nobody will have any excuse for failing to avail himself or herself of the grace of God, because it has appeared, it has been revealed to all men. Don’t depend on your good works, friend, such as: church membership, philanthropy, relative morality – don’t rely on these things for salvation. It is by grace – the grace of God who knows fully well that you are bankrupt, and cannot offer anything to your salvation. Receive the grace of God freely.

Let us pray

PRAYER:

Father, we thank You for this moment when we have heard about Your grace. How I pray, Lord, that You would minister this grace to the hearts of all who have heard me and those who have already experienced Your grace, that Your grace will be amplified in their lives – to the glory and praise of Your Name...in Jesus Name we pray. Amen