

## GRACE HAPPENS

TEXT: JOHN 1: 12 - 17

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### I. WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GRACE?

- A. I need grace; we all need grace; but I don't understand grace, do you?
- B. And the moment I think I've got grace figured out, it slips through my fingers like water.
- C. Here's an interesting fact about grace, God's Word chronicles the history of grace, it illustrates grace, and teaches grace. However, the Bible does not give us a definition of grace.

Question: Is a definition needed for grace?

- D. Obviously not or God would have given us one. Why?

Is it possible that grace is better experienced than defined? Is it possible that grace hides from my intellect because it is more at home in my heart than my head?

**Conclusion:** Whether we understand grace or not, "Grace Happens." Grace exists because the God of all grace exists.

*And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ . . . will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.* 1 Peter 5:10-11 NIV

### II. GRACE HAPPENS

*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

Romans 5:6 NIV

- A. Let's accept the fact that "grace happens."

- \* When couldn't help myself . . . "Grace Happened!"

- \* When I had no boots straps to pull myself up by . . . "Grace Happened!"

- \* When determination broke . . . "Grace Happened!"

- \* When I had no desire left . . . "Grace Happened!"

- \* When my soul was bankrupt . . . "Grace Happened!"

- B. Grace is a person, not a commodity.

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.* John 1:14 NIV

C. Because grace is a person and not a commodity grace, therefore comes by relationship, not reason.

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**Example:** My salvation experience, not able to get up.

\* Grace made no demand on me (**it still doesn't**);

\* Grace met me where I was (**it still does**);

\* Grace drew me into the Fathers arms ( **& it still happens**);

D. Grace runs toward weakness, it embraces frailty, grace welcomes what others disdain!

Peter said it best because he knew grace: *"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*  
1 Peter 5:5 NIV

### III. GRACE HAPPENS IN JESUS

*We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*  
John 1:14a NIV

A. Grace motivated everything Jesus did. He was soaked in grace:

\* Grace prompted Jesus to stop a funeral procession and raise a **grieving widows's son from the dead.**

\* Grace moved Jesus to ask a thieving rat hiding in a tree to have lunch with him . . . **that changed Zaccheus' life.**

\* And grace stirred Jesus to say to a **shamed women . . . "Go and sin no more."**

**Note: This what I call soft grace.** This is the grace I enjoy most. Soft grace heals my wounds. soft grace wades into the sewer of my soul and cleans me up. Soft grace removes my shame, elements my guilt and covers my nakedness. **Soft grace I like.**

B. But grace has another side.

\* Grace storms into the temple and clears it of the money changers;

\* Grace let the Rich Young Ruler walk away;

\* Grace let Judas hang himself.

\* Grace called the religious leaders hypocrites and vipers to their face;

\* Grace asked the women of five failed marriages to produce her husband.

**Note: This is tough grace.** And we need both. Left on it's own, soft grace is like blowing your nose on one ply toilet paper, it disintegrates in your hands. And tough grace left on it's own is like blowing your nose on sand paper, it hurts.

C. But soft and tough grace, blended as they were in Jesus, are tender enough to cradle and abused child, yet muscular enough to resist a Pharisaical spirit.

**On several occasions I have experienced Tough Grace:**

**Example:** Brother Chuck & worship leading;

**Example:** My unpleasant encounter with Tom Cox.

**IV. GRACE HAPPENS IN ME**

**Example:** There are time in a service that everyone is engaged in worship, hands lifted, music is beautiful, the congregation sounds like choir, and people lay prostrate on the floor, others kneeling in prayer, but yet I don't connect.

A. There are times grace hides it's face like the sun hides when it slips behind a dark cloud.

When grace vanishes my soul feels cold, my heart fills with depression, I feel abandoned. Why does it seem as though grace hides?

B. Grace hides not to punish me, but to refocus my heart.

The absence of grace draws my attention away from "the good" in order to focus me on the "excellent;" to turn my attention away from the lesser god of self, to the only true God.

C. There are times that exiting praise, energized preaching, and great fellowship no longer moves or fascinates me.

Stripped of externals, my soul cries for help.

Slowly, sometimes painfully, my soul becomes refocused. At first, He is dim and His voice is faint. But He is there. Now I see my Father. Now I hear my Shepherds voice.

D. Thankfully, Grace Has Happened in me.

When grace seems to vanish, don't panic. REST!

Grace will reappear and flood your soul with grace upon grace.

*From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

John 1:16-17 NIV