



The Grace Encounter

It is the moment right before we shut our eyes to go to sleep that many hear the still, small voice – “Why is your heart filled with so much unrest?” You begin to think about the burdens that are pressing down your shoulders, experience an overwhelmed and guilty conscience, and feel fears that seem to be conquering you more than you can conquer. For the majority of believers in Christ, this is the breaking point.

“But how can this be?” – You might ask in your heart.

“I go to church regularly to hear the Word; I sacrificially perform good works to please God; I try to maintain a holy life to honor God; yet I feel like my relationship with God seems to be slipping off my fingers.”

I still hear a cry for a Savior in our churches filled with sincere believers in Christ.

I recall once asking the same question as you. I've had a zeal for God since my early adolescence so going to church 2 times a week, praying 1 hour a day, serving at my church, and being self-conscious of my sins to try to become more “Christ-like” was my religious life in the past. My effort was great to know the Lord, to receive blessing from Him, and to grow spiritually; I was spiritually disciplined from the outside, but in the inside, I still felt like an empty sinner trying to persevere to catch up to a God who kept moving away from me.

It wasn't until the day that I was on my way to Bible College in Kissimmee, Florida that I had an encounter with God's Grace in August of 2005. While driving, the Lord spoke to me and said, “Joyner, do you know all you've ever done for Me has profited you nothing. Stop trying to become right with Me because I've always been pleased with you not because of you.” It was then that the Lord revealed the Grace of Jesus Christ to me. I had a revelation knowledge experience, and I knew God loved me unconditionally and saw me righteous independent of my performance. Seven years prior to this experience, I had received the Lord in my heart and received His salvation, yet I had never seen Grace until then. The veil that had prevented me from seeing Grace finally came off, and my life changed from that point on.

2 Corinthians 3:15-16, NIV

Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

The Bible says that until this day a veil remains on the people. Notice, the context is talking about people who seek relationship with God based on Moses (A.K.A. the Law), which includes many believers in Christ today. This definitely described me. No matter how much I tried to please God, one way or another, I always felt burdened, disqualified, and fearful of a “God” who at any given moment would leave me, quit blessing me, or be angry with me. The religious system belittled the true heart of God from my life.

Such was a woman whom was also experienced something similar by the religious system of her day but experienced a similar Grace encounter:

John 8:3-4

Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. They said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.”

There she was, standing in the midst, being condemned by everyone who laid eyes on her except One. I believe the condemnation that was already in her heart had finally come true in her surroundings. Her fear became reality, and she hit rock bottom, but then she encountered Grace, and **everything changed for her**. It is imperative that you know that the Law disqualified her to receive grace but Jesus qualified her even when caught in the very act of adultery.

A great man of God says it like this:

- Grace means undeserved kindness. It is the gift of God to man the moment he sees he is unworthy of God's favor. – **D.L. Moody**

You see, Grace qualifies even the most undeserving person while the Law disqualifies the most deserving person in man's eyes.

John 8:10-11

As Jesus raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “**Neither do I condemn you**; go and sin no more.”

Notice, Jesus showed her a grace so impacting that it revolutionized the way she lived her life from that moment on. Unfortunately, this **radical grace** is not being spoken out in most of our churches today. Instead we're telling people, “Go and sin no more, then we will not condemn you; go and be faithful first, then you will receive blessing; go and please God first, then He won't be angry with you.” It is a message that is totally reversed. Notice, it is when this woman received no condemnation first that she was able to go and sin no more.

John 20:1

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

It was the third day since Christ's crucifixion and none of Jesus' followers were found except one. There she was, the same woman who had committed adultery standing in front of the tomb where they had laid the only person who showed her such a revolutionizing grace. This time, there was no stone standing in between her and her Lord - her veil was taken away and she was actually the first witness of Christ in His resurrected form, the first to see the beauty of our Lord.

The Lord wants to reveal Himself to you in an eye-opening way. Ask the Lord to take away the veil from your heart. May it be said of you for also seeing the beauty of Jesus...His Grace. Amen.

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