

Sermon Notes for August 18, 2013

Sermon Series
On The Grace Of God In Scripture
“Seeing God’s Grace In Creation”
Genesis 1:26-2:14

Introduction

A. Today, We Start A Sermon Series On THE GRACE OF GOD THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE

1. It is my belief that the Bible is a book about God’s grace

- a. This WHOLE BOOK is about God’s grace, **BOTH** in the Old and New Testaments
- b. My definition of grace--Getting something that one has not earned and not worked for, but has received.
- c. **R. B. Warfield** – “Grace is free sovereign favor to the ill-deserving.”
- d. **John Newton**, the author of the song, “Amazing Grace,” was at one time a slave trader when God saved him.

1. Newton wrote his own epitaph, which was put on his tombstone “Once an Infidel and Libertine, A Servant of Slaves in Africa, Was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, Preserved, restored and pardoned, And appointed to preach the faith He had long laboured to destroy.”
2. John Newton was a picture of God’s grace.

2. I agree with Chuck Swindoll, who said; “The Bible is a photo album filled with pictures of God’s grace.

B. In This Sermon Series, We Will Be Looking At God’s GRACE THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE

1. through this sermon series on grace, we will look at grace in:

- a. Creation
- b. The Fall
- c. The Tabernacle
- d. Passover
- e. The New Covenant
- f. The Birth of Jesus
- g. The Ministry of Jesus
- h. The Death of Jesus
- i. The Conversion of Paul
- j. The Ministry of Paul
- k. The Ministry of Jesus
- l. The Resurrection of Jesus
- m. Heaven

2. Today, We Will Look At God’s Grace As SEEN IN CREATION

I. God's POWER IN CREATION

A. The POWER OF GOD

Genesis 2:4 – “This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. **When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens**”

1. Before you understand the grace of God, you must first understand the **power** of God
 - a. for, if **man** “could” produce the heavens and the earth, then he would not have to worship God; he could worship himself
 - b. **HOWEVER**, man did **not** and **could not** create the heavens and must admit that God did
2. let us consider the overwhelming power of God's creation:
 - a. **Francis Chan** video
 - b. the size of creation:
 1. If the **sun were hollow**, one million, three hundred thousand earths could fit inside
 - a. a star named **Antares** could hold **sixty-four million of our suns**
 - b. in the constellation of **Hercules**, there is a star which could contain 100 million **Antares**
 - c. the largest known star, **Epsilon**, could easily swallow up **several million stars** the size of the one in Hercules!
 2. Our **universe is so vast** that it takes a beam of light traveling over **700 million miles per hour over 100,000 years** just to cover the length of our galaxy, called The Milky Way. Our galaxy is **only one of billions** of other galaxies in the known universe.

B. The PRECISION OF GOD

1. not only is God powerful, He is precise as well
 - a. The earth rotates on its axis at a tilt of **23 degrees**, which allows for a greater surface of the earth to be planted and makes possible the four seasons
 - b. The earth rotates at **1000 miles per hour**. If it rotated at only **100 miles per hour**, the days and nights would be **ten times longer**. The summer sun would burn all vegetation and the winter's night would be incredibly cold.
 - c. The earth is moving around the sun at 70,000 miles per hour, while rotating on its axis at 1,000 miles per hour at the equator. It departs from a straight line by just **one-ninth of an inch every eighteen miles**. Mankind would either burn to death if the earth were to depart from that line by **one-eighth of an inch** or would freeze to death if it were to depart by **one-tenth of an inch**.
2. who else but God could produce “such a precise universe?”

C. The PURPOSE OF GOD

1. now, once we have been “blown away” by such amazing figures about God’s creation; we have to ask ourselves; **WHY** did God create the heavens and the earth?
 - a. was He bored?
 - b. did He just not have enough to do?
 - c. did He want to simply express His great power and glory?
2. we must understand that **GOD DID NOT NEED TO DO ANYTHING TO BRING HIMSELF GLORY**
 - a. **Arthur W. Pink** – “God was under no constraint, no obligation, no necessity to create. That He chose to do so was purely a sovereign act on His part, caused by nothing outside Himself, **determined by nothing but His own mere good pleasure.**”
 - b. Let us look at **Psalm 8:1-9** to see **why** God made the heavens and the earth.
 1. God’s glory **is** revealed by His creation
Psalm 8:1 – “**O Lord, our Lord, how majestic your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.**”
 2. however, PLEASE LOOK AT:
Psalm 8:3-8
 - a. **Vs. 4-5** – “**What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.**”
 1. The Psalmist is asking about man: who is this man, who cannot create?
 2. please notice who the Psalmist says that man is:
 - a. God made man to be “a little lower than the heavenly beings”
 - b. in actuality, the Hebrew word for heavenly being is the word **Elohim**; the Hebrew word for God
 - c. the Psalmist is saying that man is the next in line in authority after God!
 - b. **Vs. 6-7** – “**You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet; all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field.**”
 1. to show that man was the “second in command,” God made man to be in charge of all creation
 2. **WHAT DID MAN EVER DO TO EARN SUCH A POSITION “UNDER GOD?”**
 - a. there was nothing that man “could have done” to merit such a position by God

1. man had “just” been created by God
2. what could this “newly created man” have done to merit such a position?

b. IT WAS NOTHING BUT GRACE THAT CAUSED GOD TO GIVE MAN SUCH A POSITION IN CREATION

- c. it is not too much to say that God created this world and this universe **FOR MAN!**

Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie –“Everything in the created order of the earth is under our command. We are nearer to God than the heavens, **and the earth was created for us.**”

1. so, not only is mankind to worship and praise God for His amazing creation of this world and the universe
2. and, not only is mankind to take care of the world that God created. . .
3. this world was created by God “FOR MAN”
 - a. I am always amazed at what man has created
 1. the Vatican in Rome
 2. Versaille outside of Paris
 3. The Eiffle Tower
 - b. but, often, I fail to look around me at the splendor of God’s hand in creation
 1. the Alps
 2. the Great Smoky Mountains
 - 3 the beaches of California
 4. the Grand Canyon
 5. the billions of stars in the heavens

3. SO, WHAT DOES GOD’S CREATION “SAY,” TO US, HIS CREATED BEINGS

- a. all of creation screams **GRACE; GRACE; GRACE!**
- b. **THIS WORLD WAS CREATED FOR US, IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT WE DID NOTHING TO DESERVE IT**
- c. 17th century English poet and theologian, **Thomas Traherne**, said it well: “You will never enjoy the world correctly, until the sea itself flows in your veins; until you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars; **and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world.**”
- d. **BELIEVER, LOOK AROUND YOU:**
 1. the almighty, powerful creation God created this world, for us to enjoy
 2. when you see:
 - a. a sunset
 - b. a flock of geese
 - c. a beautiful, endless beach
 - d. **THANK HIM FOR HIS GRACE!**

II. God's PURPOSE IN CREATION

A. God Created Man PHYSICALLY

Genesis 2:7a – “The Lord God formed the man **from the dust of the ground.**”

1. Man was created from the dust that God made
2. **Dr. Mayo** of the Mayo Clinic had a humorous way describing the ingredients needed to make a human being. He said you would need enough potassium for one shot of a toy pistol, enough fat for seven bars of soap, enough iron for one large nail, enough sulphur to delouse a dog, enough lime to whitewash a chicken coup, enough magnesia for one dose of medicine and enough phosphorous for a few boxes of matches! The total purchase would not fill more than a couple of grocery bags.
3. **WHAT POSSIBLY COULD MAN BE PROUD OF? GOD MADE HIM OUT OF DUST!**
 - a. if that does not speak of grace, I don't know what does!
 - b. what possible pride could a “ball of mud” have?

B. God Created Man PHENOMENALLY.

1. look at **how** God made man
 - a. **A mere piece of skin** the size of a postage stamp requires **3 million cells**; a yard of blood vessels; four yards of nerves; one hundred sweat glands; fifteen oil glands and twenty-five nerve endings.
 - b. **DNA**
 1. the total length of the DNA strand in one cell is **six feet**. If all the DNA strands in the body were bunched up, they could fit into a box the size of an **ice cube**. But if unwound and joined together, the string could stretch from the earth to the sun and back more than **400 times**.
 2. if the coded DNA instructions of a single human cell were put into **English**, they would fill a **1000 volume encyclopedia**
 - c. **the human eye**
 1. The most amazing component of the eye is its “film” or retina. This light sensitive layer, which lines the back of the eye ball, **is thinner than a sheet of Saran-Wrap** and is vastly more sensitive to a wider range of light than any man-made film. The best man-made film can handle a range of **1,000-to-one**. By comparison, the human retina can handle a dynamic range of light of **10 billion-to-one** and can sense as little as a single photon of light in the dark!
 2. **To simulate 10 milliseconds of the complete processing of even a single nerve cell from the retina** would require the solution of about 500 simultaneous non-linear differential equations one hundred times and would take at least several minutes of processing time on a Cray supercomputer. Keeping in mind that there are 10 million or more such cells interacting with each other in complex ways it would take a minimum of a **hundred years of Cray time to simulate what takes place in your eye many times every second.**
2. God gave these physical gifts and abilities to us

3. so, every time that you:
 - a. see something, think of God's grace
 - b. walk on two feet, think of God's grace
 - c. eat and digest your food; think of God's grace

C. God Created Man SPIRITUALLY

Genesis 2:7 – “The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul.**”

1. UNLIKE the plant and animal kingdom, God gave man a soul
2. you see, God made man to be “**Trinitarian,**” just like Him
 - a. body
 - b. **soul**
 - c. spirit
3. man's soul allows man to know God in a personal way
 - a. God gave created man a spiritual ability to know Him, personally!
 - b. to be filled with his Spirit so that we could talk to God
 - c. so that we would not be like the animal kingdom, with no concept of God
 - d. **John Phillips** - “What **animal** can transmit accumulated achievements from one generation to another? What **animal** experiences a true sense of guilt when it does wrong or has a developed consciousness of judgment to come? What **animal** shows any desire to worship? What **animal** has hope of immortality beyond the grave?”
4. so, believer, the next time that you are:
 - a. walking with God in the fullness of His Spirit, think of His grace
 - b. being at peace with God, despite of all of life's struggles, think of God's grace
 - c. seeking His wisdom and following His direction, think of God's grace
5. God did not make you to be a lost animal, a plant or a tree – by His grace, He made you to know Him

III. God's POSITION FOR CREATION

A. The POSITION OF MAN

Genesis 1:26 – “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them **rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.**”

1. Do you REALIZE what verse 26 says of man?
 - a. it says that when God created the earth, God gave to man the responsibility of being the **Vice-Regent** over all of creation
 1. **God called man to the spectacular, glorious task of taking care of this planet!**
 - a. to “rule”
 - b. have dominion
 - c. to subjugate
 2. **DO YOU SENSE THE NOBILITY IN THAT!**
 - a. instead of evolving and being the result of some cosmic accident

- b. God has given us the overwhelming responsibility and privilege of being the rulers of this planet!
- c. **Dr. R.C. Sproul** – “Man in the twentieth century has been **busily engaged in a quest for dignity**. It is a very earnest quest. The civil rights movement developed the cry, ‘We are human beings; we are creatures of dignity; we want to be treated as beings of dignity.’ So also have others. **But the existentialist tells us that our roots are in nothingness**, that our future is in nothingness, and he asks, **“Think, man, if your origins are in nothing and your destiny is in nothing, how can you possibly have any dignity now?”**”
- b. we are to be rulers, on this planet!
 - 1. we no longer have to wonder what we are “supposed to do” on this earth – God has made it clear – **WE ARE TO RULE!**
 - 2. **John Phillips** – “Every scientific and technological advance, every feat of engineering, every new scrap of knowledge about the nature and function of the universe is an **outworking of that dominion**. Despite the impairment of man’s potential by The Fall, man has nevertheless been a mover of mountains, a builder of dams, a digger of mines, a conqueror of the planet. **Man has subdued the earth.**”
 - 3. look at **how** we rule:
 - a. we want to rule our lawns
 - b. we want to rule our children
 - c. we want to rule our jobs
 - d. we want to rule our countries

B. The POSTERITY Of Man.

Genesis 1:28 - God blessed them and said to them, **"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."**

- 1. Not only are **we** to rule the earth and subdue it,
- 2. we are to bring forth our children, who too, will learn to subdue the earth in their own lives, in their own way.
 - a. I am watching that in my own children’s lives
 - b. and, the beginning of that in the lives of my grandchildren
 - 1. D - teacher
 - 2. T - engineer

IV. God’s PROVISION THROUGH CREATION

A. God WOULD PROVIDE FOR THE MAN THAT HE CREATED

GENESIS 2:8-9a – “Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden: and there He put the man He had formed. And the Lord God made **all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye** and good for food.”

- 1. If God created man to live on this earth, God would **have to** provide for man’s physical needs of food and water

- a. God would provide trees to look at
 1. there are some 20,000 types of trees all over the world
 2. these trees cover some 9.6 million acres; some 29% of the earth's total land area
- b. these trees would be "pleasing to the eye"
 1. Angel Oak in Charleston, South Carolina
 2. autumn maple in Portland, Oregon
 3. Jacaranda in South Africa
 4. 750 year old sequoia in California
 5. Fall foliage in New England
2. these trees that provide food:
 - a. apple
 - b. almond
 - c. apricot
 - d. avocado
 - e. cashew
 - f. cherry
 - g. citrus (orange, lemon, lime, etc.)
 - h. coconut
 - i. fig
 - j. guava
 - k. grapefruit
 - l. mango
 - m. mulberry
 - n. olive
 - o. pea
 - p. peach
 - q. pomegranate
 - r. walnut

B. God Would PROVIDE "GOOD FOOD" FOR THE MAN HE CREATED

GENESIS 2:8-9a – "Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden: and there He put the man He had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and **good for food.**"

1. Please notice that God provided "**good food**" for the man that He created
 - a. why didn't God simply provide food that would keep man alive? (Like some kind of porridge; or even manna?)
 - b. why did God "create" foods that tasted good and varied in taste?
 - c. not only did the Lord God give man various foods with a variety of tastes; God also gave man a tongue and mouth that would be able to fully experience those various tastes.

thinkquest.com - "**Have you ever thought about why foods taste differently?** It's really quite amazing. Your tongue and the roof of your mouth are covered with thousands of tiny taste buds. When you eat something, the saliva in your mouth help break down your food. This causes the receptor cells located

in your taste buds to send messages through sensory nerves to your brain. **Your brain then tells you what flavor you are tasting.**”

- d. notice some of the **spices** that God gave us to enjoy:
 1. bay leaf
 2. clove
 3. cinnamon
 4. coriander
 5. mint
 6. nutmeg
 7. oregano
 8. parsley
 9. rosemary
 10. sage
 11. spearmint
 12. thyme
 13. turmeric
 14. tarragon
2. I am humored by some of competition food shows on T.V.
 - a. Iron Chef
 - b. The Next Food Network Star
 - c. when you hear the judges:
 1. “Oh, I can taste some basil or tarragon.”
 2. “He should have used more salt.”
3. there are **two reasons** that one should thank the Lord for their food
 - a. **one**, to thank Him that He has provided that food that helps you to survive
 - b. **two**, that the food that He gave you is delicious and varied
 - a. chicken
 - b. steak
 - c. lemonade
 - d. sweet, tea with mint\
 - e. fish
 - f. salt
 - g. pepper
 - h. hamburgers
 - i. salads with celery, cheese, croutons, and balsamic dressing
4. **WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM GOD’S PROVISION OF ALL OF THESE VARIED AND DELICIOUS FOOD?**
 - a. **GRACE, GRACE, GRACE!**
 - b. not only did God create man
 - c. not only did God provide food for man
 - d. but, God created varieties of great tasting food that can be fully experienced by the tongues that are in our mouths!

IV. God's PERSEVERANCE THROUGH CREATION

A. God Provided Man With WATER TO SURVIVE

1. a man's body is made up of 60-65% water; a woman's body is made up of 50-60% water
2. the Mayo Clinic recommends that each of us drink 8 glasses of water a day or 1.9 liters
3. while the Lord provided wonderful foods and spices for us to enjoy, if He did not provide water for us to drink;
 - a. most of us would not survive 10 days
 - b. so, food **AND** water are necessary for man to survive

B. God Provided WATER IN THE GARDEN

Genesis 2:10-14 –“A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the **first is the Pishon**: it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the **second river is the Gihon**; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the **third river is the Tigris**, it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the **fourth river is the Euphrates.**”

1. the **provision** of water (four rivers)
 - a. The name of the first is the **Pishon**; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.)
 - b. The name of the second river is the **Gihon**; it winds through the entire land of Cush.
 - c. The name of the third river is the **Tigris**; it runs along the east side of Asshur.
 - d. And the fourth river is the **Euphrates.**”
2. the **perfector** of water
 - a. from the text, it appears that the Lord provided a **perfect ecosystem to water the earth** – and it was **not** by rain
 - b. **instead, it was by streams which produced a constant mist that watered the earth**
 - c. some commentators believe that God created surrounded by a **“canopy of water;”** thus the “canopy theory”
 1. keeping the earth at a continuous, even temperature, perfect for the growth of plants!
 2. no harmful UV rays would be coming from the sun
 3. while I know that many doubt the concept of a canopy over the entire planet: it does possibly help explain two things in Scripture:
 - a. **In Genesis 5:27**, it says that a man named Methuselah lived to be 969 years old
 1. Did this canopy possibly protect man from dangerous UV rays and allow him to live a longer life?

2. How else do you explain how long Methuselah lived
- b. also, in Genesis, we see the account of the great flood and how it happened:
 1. could the world be flooded with just rain falling for 40 days?
 2. look at **Genesis 7:11-12** – “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, **and the floodgates of the heavens were opened**. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.”
 - a. these verses suggest that the “floodgates of the heaven’s were opened
 - b. the Hebrew is in the Niphal
 1. to be opened
 2. to let loose
 3. **to be thrown open**
 - c. not only did God bring rain for 40 days, water apparently came from **inside** the earth and **above** the earth;
 - d. could the water from above been the collapsing of the upper canopy?
 3. what is most interesting is that Abraham is mentioned in Genesis 12, after the great flood, and he lived to “only” 175 years old.
3. God provided the perfect environment to take care of all of the needs of the man that He created
 - a. **why** did God go to such great lengths to take care of all of man’s needs?
 - b. what other reason could it be: **other than His grace?**

Conclusion:

1. DO YOU REALIZE HOW GRACIOUS OUR GOD IS?

- a. God revealed **HIS POWER** by creating this world
- b. But, God created man to have a **NOBLE PURPOSE**
- c. God also, **PROVIDED** for man
 1. with wonderful good, varied food
 2. and plenty of water
- e. **WHY WOULD GOD DO THIS FOR MAN?**
 1. **BECAUSE GOD WANTED TO “GRACE US”**
 - a. one illustration of such love and grace is seen when two people get married, most couples want to give their combined love to another so they have a child to express that love
 - b. our God is so full of love and grace that He wanted to shower His unbelievable, gracious love upon His children

2. **explorefaith.org** – “When we speak of God’s grace, we mean all the good gifts we enjoy freely in life. There are so many. We could spend a lifetime celebrating them: blackberries, buttercups, moonlight, and salamanders. A more summary approach would be to affirm that life itself is a fundamental gift, with all of its delights. For us, the gift of life includes the wondrous gift of being human, finding ourselves plopped down in the midst of the larger gift of creation.. **That is the bedrock of grace**—creation, life, being a human being. As humans, we have been given a unique place in the created order. **The creation account in Genesis is a way of celebrating this original grace.**
2. Most, if not all of us, take God’s grace for granted
- a. Sadly, we are unimpressed with this amazing universe that is beyond our comprehension that God has made for us to enjoy.
 - b. We don’t really appreciate how God made us to know Him and experience Him.
 - c. When we eat our food and drink our water, we think very little about the grace of God who gave these wonderful gifts to us.
 - d. believers:
 1. open your eyes and see the beauty of God’s awesome power
 2. experience and savor the tastes of God’s grace to you in food
 3. **and don’t let a day go by that you do not praise Him for His manifold grace to you through creation.**
3. **“How Great Thou Art”**
 O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
 Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made,
 I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
 Thy power through-out the universe displayed.
- Then sings my soul,
 My Savior God to Thee:
 How Great thou art,
 How Great thou art.