

Gracious Restoration: the end of grace | Ephesians 1.11-14

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### Intro | the “end” of grace

On our website, in addition to a detailed doctrinal statement, you will find that we distinguish ourselves as a church in four ways: **We are first Christian (WE LOVE JESUS). We are second Evangelical (WE PREACH JESUS). We are third Missional (WE LIVE LIKE JESUS). We are fourth Reformed (JESUS GETS THE CREDIT FOR EVERYTHING).** It is the fourth description that we have been focusing on through this series. Unfortunately, we hesitate to distinguish ourselves this way often because we know labels can be both helpful and harmful. Different labels often possess negative connotations generated from bad experiences or misunderstandings. In an effort to avoid both, I have worked hard to avoid controversy in WORDS OF MEN, in the hopes that we might amplify GRACE OF GOD in the word of God.

This is the final sermon in our series, but it will never be the final word on grace. The title is the **END OF GOD’S GRACE**. By end, I don’t mean to imply that God’s grace ceases, rather, that God’s grace has an ultimate goal it aims to accomplish. Grace Plans. Grace Redeems. Grace Transforms. Grace Reforms. And, finally, Grace will RESTORE. **Even though, by grace, we are rescued by Jesus in the present, salvation in Scripture usually points to a future rescue.** In other words, God’s grace is experienced both NOW and NOT YET. Paul writes in Ephesians 1.3 that Jesus has **“blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”** Peter, in his 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle writes, **“<sup>3</sup>His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence (2Peter 1.3).** There is a sense in which we are blessed now with something we can see and experience, and are yet to be blessed in the future with something we cannot.

The writer of the book of Hebrews calls FAITH the assurance of things HOPED for, and the certainty of things not yet seen (Heb. 11.1). When Paul writes in Ephesians 2.8-9 that, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith” he could have just as easily written, “For by grace you have been saved to a certain hope.”** In his first epistle, Peter writes it this way: **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1.3-4).** **By grace, through faith, we are given living hope and a real inheritance yet to be revealed. HOPE in this future GRACE should define and direct our lives NOW.** I want to spend time examining the source of our hope, the seal of our hope, and the splendor of our hope.

### THE SOURCE OF OUR HOPE (RESURRECTION)

Hope is a powerful emotion. Do you know where the word HOPE appears the most in the Old Testament? The Book of Job. Pastor, writer, and speaker John C. Maxwell vividly describes the power of Hope:

Hope shines brightest when the hour is darkest  
 Hope motivates when discouragement comes  
 Hope energizes when the body is tired  
 Hope sweetens when the bitterness bites  
 Hope sings when all melodies are gone  
 Hope believes when the evidence is limited  
 Hope listens for the answers when no one is talking

Hope climbs over obstacles when no one is helping  
 Hope endures hardship when no one is caring  
 Hope smiles confidently when no one is laughing  
 Hope reaches for answers when no one is asking  
 Hope fights for victory when no one is encouraging  
 Hope dares to give when no one is sharing  
 Hope brings the victory when no one is winning

**In short, hope gives. It gives to us even when we have little or nothing left.** The only kind of hope that can carry us through this broken world, is one that is beyond this world—**one that cannot be taken away.** Most of the world is without REAL HOPE because most of the world is without Christ. We must never forget that, before Christ, we were hopeless. Paul writes in Ephesians 2.11-12 <sup>11</sup> **Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—** <sup>12</sup> **remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.** Apart from Christ, men put their hope in all kinds of things: People, power, health, money, beauty, or position. The truth is, if you live long enough, **all of those things eventually die.**

Peter tells us where the source of real hope is found. In 1Peter 1.3 he says that, by grace, God caused us to be born again **to a living hope THROUGH the resurrection of Jesus.** In verse 12 of Ephesians 1, Paul writes that hope began **with hearing the word of truth and believing the gospel of your salvation.** It is not enough to simply hear or learn about what Jesus said TO US. **We must believe and trust what Jesus did FOR US.** The Bible says that: **if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10.9).** **Belief in the resurrection gives birth to a living hope more powerful than death—one that has the power to change our perceptions, our attitudes, and even our actions SO THAT we might live now.** The Resurrection of Jesus is the proof that 1) Jesus is who He says He is 2) He has done what He said would do. The assurance of my faith, the confidence that I am a Christian, comes from the conviction that Jesus Christ TRULY rose from the dead. As Paul writes in 2Timothy 1.12, from a prison cell where he is preparing to die: **I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.”** My assurance of salvation is in the promise that my living savior cannot lose me. **. Grace is a position we hope from.**

### **V. 13 THE SEAL OF OUR HOPE (HOLY SPIRIT)**

God’s promise to save those who believe in Christ’s resurrection is the basis for our hope. And upon believing, **our hope is sealed by the HOLY SPIRIT.** **In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.** We heard. We believed. We were sealed. In 2Corinthians 1.21-22 Paul writes: <sup>21</sup> **And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us,** <sup>22</sup> **and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.** The seal referred to here is a wax seal which, in ancient times, would have a mark of ownership stamped in it. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit marks as permanently as “REDEEMED BY JESUS”. **Romans 8.17** <sup>16</sup> **The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,** <sup>17</sup> **and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.** That mark means:

The Holy Spirit marks us as IN Christ’s **POSSESSION** | **We have an owner.** **1Corinthians 6.20** **“...You are not your own,** <sup>20</sup> **for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**

The Holy Spirit marks us as IN Christ’s **PROTECTION** | **We have a guardian.** **Romans 8.39** <sup>37</sup> **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.** <sup>38</sup> **For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,** <sup>39</sup> **nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

The Holy Spirit marks us as IN Christ's **PROVISION** | **We have a helper**—shaping our lives into image of the one whose seal we carry. **Galatians 5.22** <sup>22</sup> **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

**Grace is more than a position; it is a spiritual power to persevere.** This is why Paul can say in Ephesians 4.1: **therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.** First, we are established in Christ, then we are anointed with the Spirit of Christ, in order to mature to look like Christ. **And having given us His living Spirit, God has guaranteed His people will persevere.** The Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. The Holy Spirit convicts us in our sin. The Holy Spirit speaks for us in our prayers. The Holy Spirit comforts us in our failures. The Holy Spirit teaches us in our ignorance. The Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out. As the Holy Spirit transforms us, we experience a foretaste of the completion of our redemption. Our hope **Grace is a power we hope in.**

#### **V. 14 THE SPLENDOR OF OUR HOPE (GLORIFICATION)**

**But even as we grow, we know we are weak.** Even if we grow in patience, we get angry. Even if we have more moments of joy, we still experience despair. Even if we find victory over sin, in time, we fall again.

**In one sense we have obtained an inheritance, but it is not the fullness of the inheritance.** The Holy Spirit in our life is the **guarantee (DOWNPAYMENT) of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.** **Grace is a position we hope FROM, Grace a power we hope IN, and Grace is also a promise we hope FOR.** There is a future inheritance that is: **imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,** <sup>5</sup> **who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1.4-5).**

The “salvation” read to be revealed is what is called our glorification. **Glorification is the final removal of all sin from creation.** With as much healing as we can experience in Christ, there are still some things that only Jesus can overcome—miseries that will only be eradicated when heaven comes. As Zack Eswine writes in “Sensing Jesus”: **the presence of inconsolable things reminds us that healing is not the same as heaven.** Miracles are real and powerful, but they do not remove inconsolable things. Those whose leprosy Jesus healed coughed again or skinned their elbows. Those who were blind but no able to see could still get a speck of burning sand stuck in their eye. The formerly lame could still fall and break their left. Lazarus raised from the death only to find his resurrected life filled with death threats. Moreover, the raised friend of Jesus would die again someday, along with this company of the healed. **Bodily healing in this world is not heaven.** Right now, the human mind and body is weak, weary, and sick because of the fall. Because of Christ, our BODIES, not just our souls, will be raised to glory to never experience suffering, sickness, or death.

**Our now must be governed by our then.** We hope in Christ making all things new—all means all. God's plan to glorify us (see Romans 8) is not only a spiritual restoration, it is a material one. The picture that the book of Revelation gives of heaven is not of us going up to it, but it coming down to us. **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.** <sup>2</sup> **And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, COMING DOWN out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.** <sup>3</sup> **And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.** <sup>4</sup> **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”**

**Revelation 21.2-4.** Our hope is not like the hope of the world—a desire for some future thing which we are *uncertain* of attaining. Our hope is founded on the Resurrection. And, as the Bible teaches, if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his (Romans 6.6) 1 John 3.2-3: <sup>2</sup> *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.* <sup>3</sup> *And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

**At our final restoration, all of creation, things visible and invisible, will be fully ruled by God's spirit. We will be fully satisfied in God will be fully glorified in that satisfaction.** OUR NOW can be governed by our THEN because we have an inheritance that is guarded by God himself, one that cannot be taken away. And it is not a hope completely unfamiliar. We can hope for minds that think rightly, bodies that function flawlessly, hearts that feel accurately, relationships that function wonderfully, even work that fills us with joy! We can look forward to our lives completely restored to the humanness God designed us with imperishable, without corruption, and powerful.

*"Gandalf! I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was dead myself. Is everything sad going to come untrue? What's happened to the world?" A great Shadow has departed," said Gandalf, and then he laughed and the sound was like music, or like water in a parched land; and as he listened the thought came to Sam that he had not heard laughter, the pure sound of merriment, for days upon days without count." Samwise Gamgee (JRR TOLKIEN, RETURN OF THE KING)*

## **CONCLUSION | RESTORATION ROAD**

**And while our now must be governed by our then, we must not ignore our now.** There is a future glorification promised, and a present glorification we can participate in. The reason our church is called RESTORATION ROAD is because we believe that, until THAT DAY, it is our mission to bring more glory to God in our lives, in our homes, and in our city. **Our name reminds us of our true identity. Our name reminds us of our true mission of grace. Our name reminds us of our true home.**

When we live out who we are in Christ, will reflect God's glory more and we will see the world around us begin to experience a restoration of its own. **It's not our job to restore hearts. It's our job to show the world what restored hearts look like.** We show them something better by how we think. We show them something better by how we live. We show them something better by how we serve. We show them something better but how we love. We show them something better but how we give. We show them something better but how we suffer. **We show them what it looks like to live as a people who have a real hope.**