

**Reading:** Romans 5:12-21

**Theme:** Multifaceted Grace.

Our Queen has been reigning for over 67 years, the longest reign of any British monarch. Yet at one time she was not in line to be Queen! The abdication of her uncle meant she was in line of succession to the throne. Her royal ancestry makes interesting reading - all the twists and turns in it! It is quite a history. Many reviews of her reign have been made, also speculations as to what lies ahead for the Royal family and the nation when her reign ends.

Having said that, let's go back to Romans 5! Last time we saw in v20-21:

**1. The Dark Tyranny** - sin reigned in death and we linked this to the trespass increasing when the law was added alongside the moral law written upon people's hearts and minds. Then we saw: **2. The Incredible Grace** - that where sin increased, grace hyper-increased, hyper-abounded, hyper-excelled and hyper-exceeded. Today we'll look at the 3<sup>rd</sup> area I mentioned last week:

### **3. The Glorious Reality.**

All that Paul wrote of in this chapter comes to this wonderful, exciting pinnacle and conclusion here in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of v21. This is the glorious reality for all who are justified by faith, for all who are in Christ. We are now and always will be under the reign of grace. I've 6 things for us to briefly see:

#### **A. The Dynasty of Grace.**

Historians, archaeologists usually classify reigns of a particular series of monarchs as dynasties- noting when they started and ended. So, when did the reign of grace commence, when will it end? The reign, the dynasty of grace began in the purposes of God before the foundation of the world. This great God in eternity before time, before anything was created, determined on the reign of grace. He knew what would occur and yet in His love, He purposed to save a people to Himself. He foreknew, He predetermined and predestined

a people for Himself; those who would not be destroyed by sin and death.

God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit entered into the Council of Salvation, the Covenant of Redemption - prompted, moved by Their love and grace. It was then, when the reign of grace began - as God would deal with those ones in grace. Grace reigned from that moment on. This is certainly not saying such ones were saved and justified then, for that had to occur in their life, had to be declared in heaven; but the dynasty of grace had begun.

Isn't that amazing to think about - the love and grace of God to the likes of you and me was in place before time began. Yet grace will reign eternally - God will never stop dealing with us in grace - in our life's history, or in eternity. In heaven we will adore the God of love and grace even more than we possibly can here on earth. Now see:

### **B. The Throne of Grace.**

When William the Conqueror (*or William as he was first known*) came to England, he had to fight and conquer the English Saxons before his throne could be established - usually established by violence through granting his followers favours of lands and possessions they helped subdue. Yet the throne, the reign of our God and His grace is established "*through righteousness*". This immediately puts an end to any notions or ideas that God can wink at sin, can overlook or ignore sin. God has never been soft on sin. God's grace does not mean He is weak and flabby about sin, its deserving or its consequences. God is eternally just and holy and He is righteous in His dealings with all of creation especially with moral creatures such as mankind.

God's grace is righteous grace. Never imagine grace and Law are opposites or are opposed to each other. All God's grace comes to us on the basis of righteousness and the satisfaction of His holy righteousness by the Saviour. The Lord Jesus in His life, as we have

seen, fulfilled the Law, was born under the Law, kept the Law, had an active righteousness in His life and a passive righteousness as He submitted willingly to the cross for us. In our salvation the Law was satisfied, vindicated and honoured. Justice was satisfied, so that God is just and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus (3:26).

We are never to separate grace and righteousness. God can only extend grace to us because His throne is established in righteousness. In Hebrews 4:16 we are told we go to the throne of grace - to God's throne in heaven and we do so, not to receive justice, but receive **mercy and grace** to help us in time of need. Such things can only be extended to us because the righteous demands of God's Law have now been met and satisfied by and in the reign of grace. God's throne is ever righteous and there is a throne of righteous grace in our salvation and God reigns from it always and for ever. Grace complies with God's righteousness and does not contradict it. We also see:

### **C. The Triumph of Grace.**

For thousands of years it seemed as if that the tyrannical reign of sin in death was all that could be known by humanity. Everyone had died - except Enoch and Elijah. God's highest point of Creation had been captured and brought under the dominion and reign of sin. Thankfully as we read Bible history, we begin to see that God was dealing with people, dealing with them in grace and that grace was affecting their lives. Even as Adam fell, we have the first telling of the gospel - the seed of the woman crushing the serpent's head - grace is present there at the Fall. We see God calling a man to Himself - Abraham, God entering into a covenant with him and it is not of works, but it is of grace to Abraham and then to his descendants - Isaac, then out of Isaac's two sons, it was Jacob, the younger one who was chosen and from Jacob's descendants we see God's grace shown to the most unlikely ones and how God uses them as God establishes His reign of grace in individual lives.

Yet we do not have to go back thousands of years to see the triumph of grace in the lives of people. We only have only to take a moment to look around us and we will see here in the church those in whom grace has triumphed and therefore reigns. How is it that many of us here are now believers, trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour? It is not because of the eloquence, charm, ability or intelligence of any preacher; or because we “decided” or because we had a religious bent. It is all of God’s saving grace.

The Bible portrays us - as we have seen - all in Adam, all guilty of his sin and our own sins; with desires for sin and wills captive to the devil (*whether we realised such or not!*) We were dead in trespasses and sins; we were blind to God and the reality of God; we were without God and without hope in this world and even our righteousnesses were as disgustingly filthy rags in God’s sight - let alone what our sins are like in His sight! That **was true** of us, no matter how nice, moral, rich, educated, sophisticated or religious we were.

Yet here we are - many of us are believers, Christians. What has happened to us? Grace triumphed! Where sin abounded, grace hyper-abounded. It is all of God’s grace - foreknowledge, predestination, calling, effectual calling and regeneration (*given new life*), we have been justified and adopted, we are going through sanctification in our lives and we are guaranteed glorification.

We are part of, an ongoing part of the triumph of grace. In our loft I have trophies, medals, certificates for sports and a few studies. Realise we are trophies of God’s grace, showing grace has triumphed in us. Do you know the triumph of grace in your life? If you do not, then you may be under the reign of sin, but you can know the reign of grace by asking the Lord Jesus to save you. Go to Him for saving grace. Yet if we do know the triumph and reign of grace, then rejoice in thanking Him and live for Him as His righteous grace demands

and surely deserves. We are not faced with a cold, demanding harsh God, but He deals so gently and wonderfully with us. Now we see:

#### **D. The Splendid Generosity of Grace.**

I have said before that my best sermons have been preached in my dreams! Yet often as I'm preparing sermons, I find myself thinking about headings and chewing over how to present the message and I sometimes wake up at night with some headings or a structure and I have even been known to write them down or try to log them in my memory - the latter happened with this message. The original heading for this was the generosity of grace, but on working on it, a word kept coming to my mind "*munificence*" and looking it up in a dictionary I found it meant "*splendidly generous*" and that describes grace from its first last. This heading should really be "*The Munificence of Grace*", for it would have kept the pattern of the headings, but it is not a word I would usually use as it sounds too posh for me and I stumble saying it!

Grace showed itself splendidly generous when we were dead in trespasses and sin, as it did so, it showed its power in our salvation through the Holy Spirit. Romans 11:5 says "*remnant chosen by grace*" (NIV); "*according to the election of grace*" (AV). God in His grace elected us, sought us, kept on working in our lives by the Holy Spirit. Who was it that convicted us of our sin, showed us the need of a Saviour? It was the person of God the Holy Spirit and was all of grace. God's grace in action opened our eyes to see the truth of God as applied to our lives - Ephesians 2:8 "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God*". It was not that we believed enough to earn our salvation or merited it by our faith, for even our faith is a gift of grace; our being made alive in Christ - new life, regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit and is all of grace too. So far there is nothing of self, it is all of the splendid generosity of grace "*Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan! Oh, the grace that brought it down to man*".

Yet grace does not stop there with our salvation, for grace continues to be splendidly generous even as we go on in the Christian life - there is the restraining power of grace - which is in place before as well as after our conversion. It is the grace that holds us back from unrestrained sin which would snare our souls and damage our Christian walk, witness and joy. This restraining grace goes on working alongside sanctifying grace. In our lives as believers there is a guerrilla warfare going on by the agents of the reign of sin, yet sanctifying grace is the flushing out and subduing that indwelling resistance movement to our God of grace and His ways. We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling - it is not a passive, but an active deliberate involvement, for we know it is God who works in us to will and act according to His good purpose (Philippians 2:12-13).

We need grace to continue its work in us and grace continues to be splendidly generous as we are helped and kept by the Holy Spirit. We were once kept in check by the devil and his forces, now we have the enabling and supporting presence and power of God the Holy Spirit in our lives. If that is not splendidly generous, then I've no idea what is! He, the Holy Spirit, brings grace upon grace, grace in place of grace, He gives more grace when the burdens are greater, He causes us to realise that God's grace is sufficient for us - in temptations, in trials, weaknesses, failures and so we are kept and enabled to persevere to the end - that is all of grace, persevering grace.

We cannot fall away from God's grace; it is, as Augustus Toplady wrote "*My name from the palms of His hands, Eternity will not erase, Impressed on His heart it remains, In marks of indelible grace*" (indelible = cannot be blotted out or removed). That is briefly something of the munificence, the splendid generosity of grace, but moving on quickly we see:

## **E. The Majesty of Grace.**

Grace reigns through righteousness to bring eternal life. Paul is not only saying it saves us, gives us eternal life here on earth. Yes, that is true, as we are saved by grace in our lives, but it includes the prospect of glory. Grace will reign so as to bring us to all the majesty of heaven, with all the wonders, promises and expectations that holds. We have seen on TV the Queen in the gold coach, all the pomp, all the ceremony; perhaps seen some of the garden parties in the Palace Gardens. They are all very impressive. I know people who've been to the Palace and to garden parties, but they have come back home and get on with their lives and do not live at the Palace with the Queen.

Grace declares *"You deserve hell, but you have heaven as your home - for ever!"* Within the majesty of grace, we have included all the hope of the resurrection, of the resurrection body, of being forever in God's presence, seeing the Saviour, being like Him and also of Him rejoicing and singing with joy over us!

The reign of grace which has now begun in our lives, is a foretaste and also a guarantee of all that majesty, which is ahead for us. It should be a great comfort, a great encouragement for us and cause us to have a certainty and assurance. We should desire and long to be there, but also to live now as those that have such a hope, have tasted a little bit of heaven began here on earth. Yet then, as now, grace will draw our attention, not to itself, but to:

### **F. The King of Grace.**

I've said before that Paul is a man obsessed with the Lord Jesus. Even here he cannot leave it as *"to bring eternal life"*, but adds *"through Jesus Christ our Lord"*. Paul knew that grace could not reign, could not be effective apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the most important, He is the centre of grace, the route and channel of grace, the fullest extent of grace. There is no grace outside of Him. He is God's love and grace in action. All said of grace is personified in the Lord Jesus. All grace is and brings, comes to us in and through

the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why we as believers or unbelievers, need to focus on Jesus, to learn of and from Him in His Word. We are to keep Him first and central in our lives. The Holy Spirit will bring our attention to and glorify Jesus, all He is and has accomplished.

Paul wrote of the grace of our Lord Jesus in 2 Corinthians 8:9 *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”* Here is the measure of God’s grace to us as we see Jesus triumphing over sin, death, Satan, hell and He does so in His life, death, resurrection and ascension. Now we can view Him triumphant in heaven, sat at the right hand of the Father’s glory, we can go to Him on His throne of grace, we see Him reigning and working in grace now; we know He is going to return in glory, triumphant in majesty and create a new heaven and new earth; of Him being the Judge of all nations; of Him being adored and worshipped by His people as they stand there spotless, perfect and glorified and we will see it is all of grace We can sing now, even if we do not have a thousand tongues, of the triumph of His grace; sing of the charming sound and the truth of grace.

Grace began before time, is the foundation of the work of salvation and it is the capstone of salvation. We should praise the God of all grace for all He has done, is doing and will do - as the best experience of grace is yet to come. We have that certainty and assurance as His people. We should be a grateful thankful people. What a Saviour we have and it’s all through God’s grace!