

**Getting the Nod**

**Pre-sermon Video: [Time for Hope](#)**

**Grace has been given to us by God Himself to not only be saved... but to thrive as Christians.**

- “Grace is the favor shown by God to sinners!!”
- Grace enables us to interact with God and become a part of His family!!!
- A theologian by the name of Thomas Oden puts grace this way, “Grace is necessary to know truth; avoid sin; act well; pray fittingly; desire righteousness; and begin to have faith. It is nothing less than the motivating power of the Christian life!!”
- **It is the backdrop of every doctrine we believe! SOMEONE ELSE PROVIDED WHAT WE NEED!**

**Illustration of Someone else’s golf club:** Two long-time golfing buddies got to the course and decided they would play the ball where it lies, no matter what! So, on the 14th hole, one of them ended up on the cart path. As he reached down to pick up his ball, his friend said, "Wait a minute! We agreed that we would play the ball where it lies! Remember? No matter what!"

Throwing up his hands in disgust, the man went to the cart and grabbed a club. As he stood near his ball, he took a few practice swings, each time scraping the club on the pavement and sending out showers of sparks. Finally, he took his shot. The club hit the path again, sparks went flying, but his ball shot straight towards the green, landed and rolled to a stop - two inches from the cup. "Great shot!" his friend exclaimed. "What club did you use?" The man gave him a wry smile, "I used your 7 iron!" That’s called... SOMEONE ELSE PROVIDED WHAT I NEEDED!

**Transition: Grace is a pertinent doctrine that must be understood... here are the five foundational truths of God’s grace...**

**Connecting**

**Five Foundational Truths of God’s Grace:**

NLT / Ephesians 2:8-9 / **8 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.**

NLT / Titus 2:11 / **For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people.**

**G - God’s gift to us.** Grace, simply stated, is the unmerited favor of God. Salvation comes by it.

**R - A Revelation of Redemption.** Nothing has been hidden in God’s grace. The cross. Tomb.

**A - Authentic Acceptance.** Eph. 1:6 tells us His grace has made us accepted in His family.

**C - A Call to Consecration.** Grace is what called us by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Pursuit

**E - An Extending of Our Eternal Life.** Grace motivates us to motivate others toward salvation!

**Transition:** Yes... grace is God leaning toward us. In the Old Hebrew, grace is translated “to bend toward and to stoop over.” Plain and simple... God’s grace is a byproduct of His LOVE! But how does it work in pandemics and trials? What’s does it mean for 2020 and quarantines? Is there hope?

## God’s Story on Grace

**Illustration of Martin Luther and Depression:** The year 1527 was the most trying year of Martin Luther’s life. On April 22 he was preaching in Wittenberg when he became dizzy and fainted. Over the next several months he dealt with debilitating depression and sickness. It had been 10 years since he had published his 95 theses. He had battled long and hard against the church and government, even against other reformers. Now he was broken and beaten. His entire body was in pain and felt completely abandoned by Christ. But through the prayers of the saints, God began to have mercy on me and pulled my soul from the inferno below." Eventually with the help of doctors he regained his strength and health. Just as he was recovering a plague struck Wittenberg. Even though his wife was pregnant, Luther’s house was transformed into a hospital, and he watched many friends die. Then his son became ill and it looked as if he would die. But, in the midst of all this he wrote his most famous hymn "**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.**" From a sermon by Stephen Sheane, God Uses Thorns, 11/10/2009

**Verse #1:** A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;

Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:

For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;

His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,

On earth is not his equal.

**Verse #2:** And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,

We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us;

The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;

His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,

One little word shall fell him.

**If grace strengthens our faith... how do find Overcoming Grace?** That my friend is found in one of Paul’s passages. Look with me at 2 Corinthians 12...

NKJV / 2 Corinthians 7-10 / **And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

## The Victorious Attitude of Sufficient Grace: (How we as Christians should respond now...)

### 1. God is in control.

- “My grace is sufficient for you...” “Sufficient” means “to be content”. God’s grace will bring you contentment in your difficulty!!
- Psalm 99:1 says that... “The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble.”
- Psalm 47:8 says, “God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne.”
- **These two verses remind us that God is supreme.** He is in control. Although this pandemic is totally unprecedented, God knew it would happen. He knows why this is happening. And he also knows exactly how long this is going to continue.
- **The very fact that God knows, and He is in control is a message of hope for us.**
- While all news and social media are flooded with depressing and discouraging messaging, **we have a reason to hope.**
- **Nothing occurs beyond the reach of God’s power.** This is the period in time when we need to remind ourselves continually that God’s power is all sufficient for us, however overwhelming the situation may be.
- **Illustration of My Out of Control Moment in Michigan:** Accused of drug possession after being saved. God was in control of it all and I even had the chance to witness to the squadron commander.

### 2. He provides strength in our weaknesses.

- “... for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” “Lacking that which makes us strong.” Maybe better understood as, **“In times when I am not enough, and fear and anxiety overtake me... His strength will be perfectly what I need.”**
- **Jesus told us He would be with us at times like this...** NLT / John 16:33 **I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” Notice “take Heart” which implies** that we have to act on our fear and anxiety! We must reach out to Him for the heart of peace! (Belief)
- **Illustration of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Executed Atheist:** Dietrich Bonhoeffer was in his darkened prison cell and heard thru the cement wall a weeping prisoner in the adjacent cell. Speaking through the wall, Bonhoeffer identifies himself as a pastor, assures the man that he is not alone, and asks if he would like to pray. The muffled reply comes back, **“I don't believe in God.”** A German guard looks in and tells Bonhoeffer that it won't do any good. **He's going to be shot any day now.”** **Undaunted, Bonhoeffer leans against the stark cell wall and calls out to the prisoner, “If you can hear me, put your hands on the wall as if we were touching. Mine are here too.” He didn't touch the wall.** As the guard looks on through a peep hole, **Bonhoeffer prays, “Lord, it's dark in me; in you is day. I am alone, but you will stay. I am afraid; you never cease. I am at war; in you is peace.”** Slowly we see a pair of hands reach up and touch the wall opposite of where Bonhoeffer's hands are. The next morning a single rifle shot shatters the morning calm. **The same German guard, now more somber and less cynical, appears at Bonhoeffer's cell.** “I thought you might like to know. The boy from the next cell—died at peace. It surprised all of us.

### 3. He is a very present help in times of trouble.

- NKJV / Psalm 46.1 / **God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.**

- **Israel was always in trouble with neighboring nations.** But while the other nations boasted of their horses and chariots, their mighty warriors, their inaccessible gates, their weapons or equipment, **Israel relied on God.** They were safe just because God was their refuge and strength.
- **The verse says, He is a very present help in trouble. I want to highlight the word ‘Present’**
- **Not that He never helped in the past. Not that He will never help in the future. But He is my help and our for the present.**
- **When things are unfavorable and threatening around us, it is important that we focus our attention on God.** He is our help for this moment!
- **“Help”** implies **someone who walks along with us and assists us!!!**

**Transition:**

## Our Response

**What’s our response to all this uncertainty?**

- Let’s claim victory in advance.
- Let’s take time to agree together that God is in control of it all and share it with others.
- Let’s confess our weaknesses and trust his help and strength will meet us where we are.
- Let’s take this opportunity to intercede not just for our nation, but for the world at large.

**Transition:** Let’s close this series on grace with a very important quote...

## Drawing the Net

**Quote by R.C. Sproul:**

“Perhaps the most difficult task for we believers is to rely on God’s grace and God’s grace alone for our salvation. It is difficult for our pride to rest on grace. Grace is for other people—for beggars. We don’t want to live by a heavenly welfare system. We want to earn our own way and atone for our own sins. We like to think that we will go to heaven because we deserve to be there.”

NLT / Ephesians 2:8-9 / **8 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.**