

AGAPE LESSON 13

A KINGDOM VIRTUE CALLED GRACE

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[John 1v14, 16—17] And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (16) And of His fulness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

We understand the Truth to be a Person, the Word of God, Christ Himself. But what is this commodity called grace? It is mentioned twenty times in the Old Testament, but a hundred and thirty times in the New Testament. This says that we need to make sure that this commodity should never elude us. We need to know precisely how to perceive and access grace. All the epistles by Paul, Peter and John open with a salutation of grace, and some end with the benediction of this grace. So, there is a lot of weight in this word, grace. And this is all the more the reason we need to comprehend the full meaning. For now, grace keeps evolving – we get glimpses of it, here and there.

We need to understand how grace works:

- (1) How to access grace.
- (2) How to increase grace.
- (3) The things or situations that will diminish grace in your life.

Grace (chen from the root chanan in Hebrew) meaning = acceptance, favour, elegance

Grace (charis in Greek) meaning = that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm.

In the apostolic (authentic) circles grace is defined as:

- (1) An endowment to finish a task.
- (2) A substance from another realm.
- (3) The very fabric of God Himself.
- (4) Christ's sufficiency.
- (5) The economy that supports the doings of God.
- (6) Unmerited favour.

We see instant response and total obedience of experience fishermen who abandoned their boats and nets at Jesus' command, **"Follow Me."** We do not see Him begging or persuading them. All He promised them, **"I will make you fishers of men."**

[Mark 3v13—15] And He went up on a mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. (14) Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, (15) and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.

the main reason for selecting the twelve was that they might be with Him, first of all. It was in this witness that He was able to bond and multiply Himself in them. Healing and casting out Note that devils, was just by the way. The Bible records that in eternity past, He was with the Father. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God (John1v1—2). So, when He handpicked the twelve, He wanted to have that same witness with the disciples, that He had with the Father. During the three years that He was with them, He imparted to them grace and truth.

Paul tells us that, “To each one of us, grace was given according to Christ’s gift” (Ephesians 4v7). This is to say, each one of us is a custodian/steward/ dispenser and an administrator of this commodity called grace. He also speaks of the dispensation of grace which was given to Him for the church of Ephesus (Ephesians 3v2). This, means, the grace in you is for the benefit of others. We may as well conclude, here, that grace is packaged in human vessels. John puts it this way, “And of His fulness we have all received grace for grace (John 1v16).

Christ is the very reservoir of this thing called grace. May I rephrase and say that truth is the reservoir of grace. Truth undergirds grace and therefore grace cannot operate outside truth.

[Ephesians 4v8, 11] Therefore He says, “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” (11) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

You will notice that these are functional gifts and not titles. So, the functional gift determines the measure of grace. It means the graces packaged in each person differ – the greater the assignment, the greater the measure of grace. Each one receives some of Christ’s sufficiency, and no one has it all. This is all the more the reason we need each other like never before.

There is something about grace that we can glean in this account. [2Kings 4v8—30]

- (1) What is it that caught the attention of this woman from Shunem concerning Elisha? She persuaded him to eat some food. So, it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food (2Kings 4v8). The Bible does not tell us that she dished for everyone who passed by.
- (2) What made her to perceive that, “this is a holy man of God? “Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God.” (2Kings 4v9).
- (3) What made her feel so strong as to persuade her husband concerning Elisha? “Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table, and a chair, and a lampstand; so, it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there” (v10)
- (4) She feels they need to detain him even, “whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there.” Why did she lay the child on the bed of the man of God? (v10)
- (5) Why would she ignore Gehazi and go straight to catch the man of God by his feet? Gehazi runs to meet her and she responds, “It is well.” (v26)
- (6) Elisha sends Gehazi with his staff ahead of them, but the woman is determined not to leave Elisha behind. (v29—30).

By now, you realize that there is this spiritual, magnetic and weighty pull that makes this woman not to let go of Elisha. I want to conclude, it is grace.

Ruth would not let go of Naomi, her mother-in-law.

[Ruth 1v11, 14—18] But Naomi said, turn back, my daughters: why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? (14) Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. (15) And she said, “Look your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” (16) But Ruth said: “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. (17) Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if

anything but death parts you and me. (18) When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

Here, we see a life and death connection. There is this invisible spiritual pull/ force that glues Ruth to Naomi. This tells us that, when you find your Naomi, you connect for life.

[1Kings 19v19—21] So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, (20) he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you,” And He said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” (21) So, Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen’s equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

(1Kings 19v19—21) – We meet Elijah and Elisha. Elijah simply threw his mantle on Elisha and never said anything. Elisha responds and says, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” He uses the oxen’s equipment to make the fire. He cooks the oxen and parties with those around him.

From there he followed Elijah and served him for twenty years. The party is a declaration that he was burning his bridges and is determined never to look back. This was another life band death connection. When the time came for God to take Elijah – Elisha pursued all the more until he asked and received a double portion of Elijah’s spirit (2Kings 2v1—14).

All the tribes of Israel came to connect and made a covenant with David before the Lord.

Everyone needs to find her Naomi/Elijah/David or whoever and connect for life. Also know this that in that (lifetime) connection, God has packaged everything you need for your journey to your destiny. Through the direction and instruction of Naomi, Ruth ends up getting married to Boaz, and owns the field where she used to glean. Mark you, she is mentioned in Jesus’ genealogy (Matthew 1v5).

There is a mistake that a lot of people make, like Jonathan who fully perceived the grace in David. He even cut a covenant with him but did not migrate to flow with what God was doing in David. He remained in a sentimental connection with his father, king Saul, and died with him in battle.

Grace is meant to confer an unfair advantage for you. It is a commodity you cannot afford to do without. It supersedes all the strengths you have. It will give you honour and prosperity due kings. Grace has multifaceted dimensions – sufficiency, impartation; its like, something has been given to you and it is noticeable and sustainable. You are moved to the next dimension. This you receive from a grace enriched environment, open-heaven experience – a river flowing from the throne of God. Such environment is found in Mount Zion, where there is crosspollination of graces; where every joint supplies, causing growth of the body (Ephesians 4v16).

Accurate position and posture will expose you to Favour. We all have been given a measure of grace (Ephesians 4v7), but favour is poured by grace upon you when you are accurately positioned and have assumed the right posture. The end-result is glory. Joseph says to his brothers, “So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here” (Genesis 45v13).

- Joseph must have postured himself accurately to find favour in the sight of Potiphar.

[Genesis 39v4—6] So Joseph found favour in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. (5) So it was, from the time

that he made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. (6) Thus, he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate.

- Joseph also found favour in the sight of the prison keeper. We see the amount of confidence and trust of the prison-keeper toward him (Genesis 39v22—23).
- Again, God poured favour upon Joseph and was given the highest position (second to Pharaoh) in Egypt (Genesis 41v38—44).
- God commanded Abraham to go sacrifice his son that he loved. His prompt unquestioning obedience, was the accurate posture. God poured so much favour on him that was going to affect generations.

[Genesis 22v16—18] By Myself I have sworn, and have not withheld your son, your only son – 'Blessing I will bless you, and multiplying, I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and the sand which is on the sea shore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In you the all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.'"

Today, we, the church, are all the recipients of this generational blessing.

- By housing the Ark of the covenant, Obed-Edom received favour from the Lord. The Ark of the covenant remained in his house for three months, and the Lord blessed him and his entire household (2 Samuel 6v10—12).
- Jesus healed ten lepers and only one (a foreigner) came back to thank Him.

[Luke 17v17—19] So, Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? (18) Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? (19) And He said to him, "Arise and go your way. Your faith has made you well.

That word, "well", means, the missing limbs of this foreigner grew back while with the other nine, the leprosy stopped but they remained with missing limbs. So, grace poured favour upon him.

How to access and increase grace:

We need to understand that the man/women that God gives you as your storehouse/covering, God has packaged in him/her everything that you need for your journey to your destiny.

- This begins with **bonding**; unless you are close, you cannot tap into the grace of the set-man. Jesus selected the twelve to be with Him (Mark 3v14). This is how He was able to multiply Himself in them, and to impart to them grace and truth. Elisha pursued and stayed close to receive double the spirit of Elijah (2 Kings 2v9—12). Ruth would not let go of Naomi, her mother-in-law (Ruth 1v16), and she ends up being included in Jesus' registry (Matthew 1v5).
- Honouring grace is imperative. You **honour** God by honouring the grace in the person. The woman who brought an alabaster flask of spikenard, identified the need to anoint Jesus' body for burial. She broke the flask and poured all the contents, leaving nothing in reserve for herself. She was close enough to discern the need. The notable woman of Shunem identified and supplied the needs for Elisha; food and a place to rest. She was blessed with a son who later was raised from the dead (2 Kings 4v8—37).

- The legitimate fathering grace is an example to follow. Paul says, “**Imitate** me as I also imitate Christ.” (1Corinthians11v1)
- **Celebrate the message** he/she carries; never be absent at meetings.
- **Respect and recognize** him/her. (1Thessalonians5v12—13)
- **Obey** him/her (Hebrews 13v17).
- **Share with your grace carrier** (Galatians6v6—8).
- **Pray** for him/her (2Thessalonians3v1).
- **Buy into** his/her vision. Each local house has a destiny. Walking together in **oneness** is imperative (Psalm133).
- **Give support** to the grace carrier – morally, financially and otherwise (1Corinthians9v14)
- **Tithes** (Malachi 3v10) are to be presented to the set-man. He/she is your storehouse, because he is the one who feeds you with doctrine. Also, **first-fruits** are to support the man/woman of God (Exodus23v19).

The things that will cause grace to leak from your life:

- **Sin of bypass** -- the two sons of Eli took the Ark of the Covenant to the battle field without consulting with prophet/priest Samuel (1Samuel 4v4)
- **Sin of trespass** – degrading the grace of the man of God. This will include murmuring (Numbers16 1—3). Gossiping about the set-man (Numbers 12v1—2). Direct public attack (2Samuel 16v5—8)
- **Despising instruction** Gehazi violated Elisha’s instruction (2 Kings 5v15—16, 21—22) and God judged him on the spot and he became a leper.
- **Sin of supersession** = this is to replace authority through illegitimate means (usurping). Adonijah (1Kings 1v5—9). Absalom (2Samuel chapter 15 up to chapter 18). Jezebel (1Kings 21). Korah claimed equality with Moses and Aaron (numbers 16).