

The grace of God (i) (Quality: very good)

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Date: 22 August 1965

Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the Episod to the Ephesians, chapter 2, and the 19th verse.

Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.

Chapter 2, the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the 19th verse.

In announcing this subject, I have a thought well enough in my heart, and I will put it into words.

And that is, I wish in announcing this subject that it could be the truth concerning every one of you, listening to the announcement of it.

[1 : 21] In that it could be said, now, even this Sabbath morn, as you are gathered together before God in the attitude of worship.

Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.

It is the greatest mercy that you can know as you journey on through life to have a part and a lot among the people of God, and to enter into eternal realities by a gracious experience thereof, and thus out of the abundance of the heart the mouth can speak.

I have thought many times in pondering this epistle to the Ephesians, what wonderful feelings the Apostle Paul must have been the subject of in penning it, as he went back in his mind to how God ordained that he should be found in his journey into Ephesus.

And then, finding there was a wee church in number 12, he sought to encourage them in the things of God, and being constrained by the Spirit of God, he began to labour there, and later on he spent round about three years in that area, and the church of Ephesus was gathered together, and built up, so that he could begin his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints, which are Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus, grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3 : 54] Not to take up the time in the details, you will remember that in the Acts of the Apostles, there is a very vivid account of some of the Apostle Paul's labours at Ephesus, especially the culmination of his labours there, when there was a riot in Ephesus marketplace, and the idolaters were gathered together, and they cried out for two hours long, Great is Diana of the Ephesians, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

And the Apostle Paul would have that picture in his mind, as he was inspired of God, to pen the epistle to the Ephesians, a little while afterward.

And the word of God tells us what great success attended his labours. At that time, many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds.

Many of them also, which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men. And they counted the price of them, and found that fifty thousand pieces of silver, so mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

And it was a little while after that, there was the riot in Ephesus marketplace, when the uproar was raised against Paul.

[5 : 42] But the Lord delivered him, and he went on his way, journeying to preach the gospel elsewhere. And now, think of what his feelings must have been, as he went back in his mind, to the days and years he spent at Ephesus, when he could put down this word, and you, hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

Because, it is very evident, there was quite a number of those who were rioting in the Ephesus marketplace, who later on, were wrought on, by the grace of God.

And when you have that picture, in your mind's eye, what a wonderful background it is, to contemplate the grace of God.

And what the grace of God can do. And now, the apostle Paul, was a wonderful exponent, of the grace of God.

And he had only got to look back, over his own life, and think how, the grace of God, met him, on the Damascus road, and brought him down, before God, with whom he had to do, and wrought that good work, in his heart, and that, ultimately, the purposes of God, were revealed, that he was to be, the apostle, unto the, Gentiles.

[7 : 27] Oh, dear friends, it would do you good, if you could more often, contemplate the grace of God. Many of you, hope you are the subjects of it.

I believe many of you are. I hope I am. But, I have never yet met, anyone, who possesses the grace of God, but what they wanted, more grace, than they already seem to, possess.

And that is just how you feel about it. I am persuaded. You do hope, many of you, you possess the grace of God, but you want more grace.

That you might be able to serve God, more all heartedly, and more in accordance, with what you profess to be.

Because, you and I, ought to be what we profess to be, but therein we fail. And yet, do listen. The grace of God is available, to help you.

[8 : 41] The grace of God. Do, do look at things, from that viewpoint. I read to you, and, it can be fulfilled, at any time, to you, and to me.

Now, unto him, that is able to do, exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask, or think, according to the power, that worketh in us.

Don't you see, where you and I fail, is according to the power, that worketh in us. Lord, increase our faith.

When prayer is a burden, and task, no wonder I little receive. O Lord, make me willing to ask, since thou art so ready to give.

This is the way, to be looking at these things, dear friends. If you want to get your soul, revived, and to be built up, and established, in the things of God, bring ye all the tithes, into the storehouse, and see if I will not open unto you, the windows of heaven, and let you down, such a blessing, that there shall not be, room enough to receive it.

[9 : 57] You must not settle on your lees, and view these things, with a fatalistic eye. But the word of God, is very plain. Let us therefore, come boldly, unto the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace, to help in time of need.

Oh, the grace of God, is wonderful. And remember, angelic minds, cannot explore, that vast, unfathomed sea, tis void of bottom, brim or shore, and lost in deity.

Oh, how happy, the apostle Paul, must have felt, when he was inspired of God, to pen this epistle, to the Ephesians, and thought, of what the grace of God, could do.

And as I pondered, this subject, hoping it might be, the right one, to bring before you, to say a little upon, I had a picture, in my mind, if I can make it, plain to you, I have already, told you, about those, in the Ephesus marketplace, who for two, all hours, cried out, greatest Diana, of the Ephesians, greatest Diana, of the Ephesians.

And now, you read, nowadays, in the daily press, and you may hear about it, if you listen to the news, about tens of thousands, of teenagers, and others older still, who indulge, in what is evidently, a kind of mass hysteria, when they hear, certain types of people, singing certain types, of songs, and it makes, one's heart, sad, to read it, and to contemplate, the picture of it, that humanity, in life's mourning, should have so gone mad, but when you look on this, and it is a reality, and there are tens, of thousands, of young folk, nowadays, who are just, the subject, of that madness, and now, what can do them, any good, there is no remedy, that man, can provide, to bring about, an alteration, in how those young folk, behave, it is just the same, as it was, in the Ephesus marketplace, a kind of mass hysteria, but, what the grace, of God did, in the days, of Paul, when he labored, in the gospel, of Ephesus, the grace of God, can do still, and now, that is a truth, you must not overlook, there is only one remedy, for the ills, of mankind, and that is, the grace of God, you must be born again, and being born again, you will have, a new nature, and in that, new nature, you will be done, with all the tomfoolery, that sends, these young folk mad, for you will have, an aching void, which this world, cannot fill, and you will have, a feeling like this, thou,

[13 : 30] O Christ, at all, I want, yes, to me, Christ is more precious, far, than life, and all its comforts are, and I want you, dear people, young and old, to prayerfully, ponder this subject, of the grace of God, you have heard, thousands of sermons, you have heard, sermons, some of you, from baby days on, until you are, the age that you are, and every sermon, you have listened to, has set forth, the grace of God, and what it can do, and it can do, greater things, than it has even yet done, if it be the will of God, and his word is, I will be inquired, of you, or else of Israel, to do these things, and now, let us look at this subject, as grace is given, and leaving, what the grace of God, had done, for the godly Ephesians, and of a truth, great things, had been done, for many of them, in the church of Christ, therefore it became, for quite a while, one of the outstanding, churches of Christ, in Asia,

I have told you, there are some truths, opened up in the, first chapter, in this epistle, to the Ephesians, that even those of us, who hope God, has sent us to preach, would need, much divine aid, and much enlightenment, of the spirit, to preach from, some of those subjects, because, they are deep, and not only deep, but mysterious, but these, godly Ephesians, although, but very young, in the things of God, had that grace, given to them, that when this epistle, to the Ephesians, was read, in their hearing, they could enter, into it, there you see, what the grace of God, can do, in enlightening the eyes, enlarging the heart, and unstopping deaf ears, and see, how the apostle Paul, seeks to extol, the grace of God, but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were, dead in sins, hath quickened us, together with Christ, by grace, ye are saved, and he goes on, lower down, he emphasizes it, for by grace, are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man, should boast, and now, my first point, is this, do remember, the only remedy, for the ills of mankind, is the grace of God, and now, that means, the only thing, that can, make matters to be right, between your soul, and God, is the grace of God, and you, who possess it, must be ever, more urgent, in asking him, for more grace, and yet more, grace to live, and at the last, grace to die, and there is one, lovely scripture,

I like to look at, which I will read to you, for the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared, to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that, blessed hope, and the glorious appearing, of the great God, and our Savior, Jesus Christ, and now, I want to look at this subject, from just one or two, viewpoints, of it, now, therefore, ye, are no more, strangers, and foreigners, but fellow citizens, with the saints, and of, the household, of God, you can see, I hope you can, what great things, the grace of God, had done, for these, godly Ephesians, but the thing, that matters, most of all, is, what has the grace, of God, done for you, and now, is it the truth, that as yet, the grace of God, has done nothing, for some of you, there is a word, that, gives me, a great deal, of searching of heart, in this chapter, and it is the state, of the great majority, in the world, at large, and in our own, village life, having no hope, and without God, in the world, does that describe, any of you, are you here, in the attitude, of worship, and before God, therein, and yet, the truth, about you, is, having no hope, and without God, in the world, and now, do you let, your conscience, tell you, if that is the truth, listen, and if it is the truth, are you content, it shall, remain, to be the truth, about you, and you, should go on, living your life, having no hope, and without God, in the world, have you got, your mind, made up, to live such a life, and be after the flesh, the things of the flesh, and live as worldlings do, alas, if you live such a life, and at the end of it, what will the end be, oh, you will go down, into eternal misery, and all preachers, ever sent of God, to preach, put together, seeking, to tell you, what that means, they could not begin, to tell you, beyond, just taking out, two or three buckets full, out of the ocean depths, of what that calamity is, as long as God, should God remain, so long, shall last, hell's lingering pain, so long, the joys of heaven, shall be, oh, long delights, long misery, oh, that you might have it, in your heart, to get in touch, with God, and that he might, grant you his grace, if it be his will,

Moses said, concerning the children, of Israel, as he addressed, the whole multitude, oh, that they were wise, oh, that they understood this, oh, that they would consider, their latter end, and that is just, how preachers feel, especially pastors, about the people, of their charge, and how glad, a pastor is, when he can feel, as the Union Chapel, pastor does, that quite a few, of the people, have found grace, in the sight, of the God, of all grace, others, but there, is a solemn feeling, that others, as yet, have not found it, and are not, seeking to find it, oh, that God, in his mercy, would appear, let thy work, appear unto thy servants, and thy glory, unto their children, now, therefore, ye are, no more, strangers, and foreigners, the apostle Paul, uses quite a, variety, of illustrations, to set forth, the truth of God, very solemn, it is, to be a stranger, to the things of God, you might, think it over, as to whereabouts, you are, in regard, to the subject, from which, the preacher, is attempting, to preach, oh, if still, a total stranger, to Christ's, precious name, and blood, thou art on the brink, of danger, canst thou face, a holy God, think and tremble, death, is now, upon the road, death, comes very suddenly, sometimes, to those, who are in life's mourning, and when we learn of it, when the news, is brought to us, our immediate reaction, is, oh, how can all, that is mortal, of them, be laid in the grave, is there hope, did they give any evidence, of possessing grace, and if not, what a calamity, it is, to contemplate, to live and die, without God, and without hope, you are no more strangers, and now, where this is the case, what a wonderful mercy, it is, no more strangers, and foreigners, you see, the illustration, is quite simple, a foreigner, is one, who comes among us, and he, is not born, of our nationality, and, he cannot speak, our language, or if he attempts, to learn it, his accent, makes it very plain, that he was not born, among us, and thus, to speak, the language, easily, and this word, according to, what godly scholars, tell us, means, to be, as one, a foreigner, in a land, where he has to give, an account of himself, and report, and where he has papers,

that he must carry, designating, that he is a foreigner, therefore, not entitled, to the rights, which are given, to all of us, who are English born, because, we are born, in the land, that we live in, and you find, there are people, supposed to be religious, who are foreigners, like that, they get together, somewhat of a, outline, of the gospel, and the things of God, but if they do speak, about it, they do not speak, and out of the abundance, of the heart, the mouth is speaking, and you are aware, of it, which is not just, the language of Canaan, as it should be spoken, when, God, enables the poor sinner, to tell out, the dealings of God, with, his soul, a stranger, you see, such and one, go through the village street, and you know, he or she, is a stranger, because they do not live here, their home is not amongst us, in our village life, you might wonder, who they are, where they come from, but the designation, is that they are strangers, and sometimes, there are those, found among us, in our worship, who are strangers, like that, and they, may go through, the routine, of the worship, but they do not, understand it, some things, about it, may seem to them, very surprising, and mysterious, they cannot sing, the songs of Zion, with understanding, and when, one draws near to God, in the public prayer, they wonder, that the preacher, in his prayer, should confess, to the wickedness, that he feels, bottled up, in his own breast, and they wonder, that he should be, where he is, and think, perhaps he is living, a wicked life, because, they are strangers, foreigners, they cannot enter, into it, in the, experience, of it, and when the gospel, is preached, they may listen, but they cannot, sort it out, in their minds, and they may hear it, some things in it, may be interesting, but they do not, know what it is, to hear, the word of God, to purpose, and profit, and go on their way, help with a little help, there are these people, about in the religious world, who were found, in the attitude, of worship, yet they are strangers, and foreigners, what are we to do, about them, we must make them welcome, if ever they should, come amongst us, and beg, the God of all grace, that they might be, no more strangers, and foreigners, but that, the spirit of God, will move, as he alone can do, when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he shall convince, the world, of sin, of judgment, of righteousness, to come, and do you, you remember this, if ever you get in touch, with any that seem to you, to be strangers, and foreigners, go back, in the dealings, of God with you, and remember, when you, were likewise, though found, under the gospel, from baby days on, you lived, quite a few years, and you were a stranger, you were a foreigner, as regards,

[29 : 04] the things of God, you could not, speak the language, when it was spoken, you could not, understand it, and now you must, never, never lose sight, of that truth, who maketh thee, to differ from another, and what is thou, that thou, dost not receive, and you must, ever look, with a pitying eye, on the world, at large, who still, are, strangers, and foreigners, regarding, the things of God, who still, want to live, just as they were born, and be after the flesh, the things of the flesh, you must never, stand aside, and look, askance at them, but you must, pity them, and you must, pray for them, do remember that, great God, thy kingdom, come with reverence, we would pray, may the eternal, three in one, his sovereign, scepter sway, the Savior, taught his disciples, in that beautiful prayer, thy kingdom, come, thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven, now the great thing is, if you and I, can look back, over, life's journey, and search out, some evidence, when we began, to be no more strangers, but we began, to enter into, the things of God, with a felt sense, of, their, their, reality, and we desired, to know it, in our own souls, experience,

Murray McKean, has got a beautiful, poem, I once, was a stranger, to grace, and to God, I knew not, my danger, I felt not, my load, though friends, spoke in rapture, of Christ, on the tree, Jehovah, was nothing, to me, is it nothing, to you, all ye, that pass by, said Jeremiah, in his day, is it nothing, to you, you see, dear friends, religion, to be that, which God, is the author of, must be, everything, to us, it can never, take the second, place, in your life, in your life, some people, are religious, at times, but, if you, have got, this religion, which alone, would do, to live by, and die by, it will be, the main, spring, of your life, it will be, everything, to you, and what you, will want, as you journey on, is to realize, its power, feel, its reality, and that God, would confirm you, more and more, that he is, the author of it, and that it is, well with you, living, and dying, and, can you remember, when you began, first of all, to feel like that, when your ear, was a tent, to hear, what God, the Lord, would say to you, when your eyes, were open, and you, and you could begin, to see somewhat, of the things of God, as to their importance, when you began, to feel,

Jesus, is the one thing, needful, I without him, perish must, gracious spirit, make me heedful, help me in his name, to trust, and with pleasure, in him, as, my portion, boast, it is a wonderful, mercy, to have some evidence, now therefore, hear no more, strangers, and, foreigners, when that miracle, was wrought, and the eyes, of the blind, shall be opened, it may be, with some of you, dear young people, you do hope, they are, but as yet, you can see, a little, of the things, of God, and their beauty, and blessedness, words, but you long, to see things, more clearly, there are, words, in the word, of God, written on purpose, for such characters, as you, one in Isaiah, you, the eyes, of them, that see, shall not, be dim, and to read it, just like that, seems quite a, strange, reading,

I say that, with great reverence, but then, it is, to encourage, poor sinners, like you, to hope, in God, that he will, show you, more, of who he is, as the sinner's friend, than you, have yet seen, the eyes, of them, that see, shall not, be dim, always, to their part, and lot, in the salvation, of God, it may be, at the present time, you lament, some small, glimmering light, I have, yet too dark, to see my way, Jesus, presence, till I crave, when, oh, when, will it be day, and now, the word of God, says, wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen, thine heart, wait, I say, on the Lord, and there is, a great word, in Habakkuk, to encourage you, the vision is, for an appointed time, though it tarry, wait for it, for in the end, it shall speak, and not lie, it will surely come, it will not tarry,

God, as a day, in your life, when, you shall see, Jesus, and see in him, all your salvation, and all your desire, and meanwhile, the word of the Lord, to you, is this, then, shall we know, if, if, if, we follow on, to know the Lord, is going forth, is prepared, as the morning, think of that lovely, illustration, is going forth, is prepared, as the morning, then, you do not question, but what, the morning will come, and you can see, the, second, when the sun, will rise, and these things, are for you, to ponder in your heart, and take courage, regarding the dealings, of God, a time he has set, to heal up thy woes, a season most fit, his love to disclose, until he is ready, to accomplish his will, be patient, and steady, and wait on him still, and while you wait, on him still, you have got this evidence, now, therefore, here no more strangers, and foreigners, you were found, amongst those people, asking the way to Zion, with their faces, ditherward, you were numbered, with that, great host, worldwide, of whom, it can be said, behold, he prayeth, behold, she prayeth, and what encouragement, there is to pray, you know, dear friends, we all ought, to be ashamed, of ourselves, pastor, and people alike, when you think, what encouragement, there is in God, and what exceeding, great, and precious promises, he has recorded, in the word, of his grace, to embolden us, to pray, and yet, you and I, take just little, advantage of it,

[37 : 42] I say, preacher, and people alike, must all plead guilty here, and say with Ezra, oh my God, I am ashamed, I blush, to lift up my face, unto thee, oh, the word of God, is full, of sweet invitations, issued by the sinner's friend, yes, come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, I will give you rest, and Jesus said, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink, and what else did Jesus say, him that cometh unto me, I will never, no never, no never, cast out, Lord, teach us to pray, approach my soul, the mercy seat, where Jesus answers prayer, and humbly lie at his dear feet, for none can perish there,

I have told you so many times, you really should remember it, of the beautiful simplicity, of the gospel, and think of this word, whosoever, shall call, on the name of the Lord, shall be, delivered, you may say, I hope I approve that, quite a few times, yes, and that is a mercy to prize, dear friend, and I would like to remind you also, that, there was never a time, when trouble like a gloomy cloud, gathered thick, and thundered loud, but what you could prove it, and find that word, a never failing word, the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them, that trust in him, you see dear friends, there is a tendency, with many people, who were taught of God, to be, more subjective, in their soul's experience, than they are objective,

I will make that plain, to be subjective, means this, pour not on thyself, too long, lest it sink thee lower, look to Jesus, that is objective, kind and strong, mercy, join with power, there is help, to be had, there is hope, in God, and what do you sing sometimes, why should the children, of a king, go mourn in all their days, great comforter, descend, and bring, some token of thy grace, now therefore, hear no more strangers, and foreigners, sinners, and now when a sinner, is wrought on, by the spirit of God, he begins to come, into this, blessed experience, and he is no more, a stranger, to the world, in which he is living, and moving, hitherto, he has been in the world, and of it, and now, what the world, really is, is unfolded, before his newly opened eyes, and he sees, that the world, is a wilderness, wherein, no provision, can be found, for a poor sinner, needy, never dying soul, and he is now, no more, a stranger, to the, great truth, that he does possess, a never dying soul, and he wants to know, what is going to become, of it, and his great concern, is, to have a part, and lot, in the salvation, of God, as he has lived, his life hitherto, he can no longer, live that life, on the same basis, hitherto, he has lived his life, and all his concerns, have been this side, of the grave, he has just lived, for LSD, and bread and cheese, to be in the world, and of it, as I said, but now, he is no more, a stranger, to a great truth, which has, broken in, upon his spirit, life, is real, life, is earnest, and the grave, is not its goal, dust thou art, to dust return, honest, was not, spoken of the soul, and now, he is no more, a stranger, to the fact, that he is born, for an eternal destiny, either heaven, or hell, and he wants, to know, how stands, the case, my soul, with thee, for heaven, are thy credentials, clear, and as yet, he may have, no clear credentials, he is only, just, just, begun, in the things, of God, he is just, realizing, how sad, his state, by nature, is, and beginning, to learn, his utter, helplessness, in things, divine, sin, but, those things, known, and felt, will bring him, to be no more, a stranger, to how the dear publican felt, and glad he will be, to stand alongside him, feeling as, he did,

God, be merciful to me, a sinner, and that will be, reality, in his soul's, experience, to thee, I come, a sinner, great, and well, thou knowest, all my state, yet, full forgiveness, is with thee, oh, God, be merciful to me, he will be, no more, a stranger, not only, to the word of God, which he will look through, and search out, and find, many petitions, which have welled up, in the breasts, of the godly, and recorded, in the sacred pages, oh, how suitable, they will be, to how he now feels, being no more, a stranger, a foreigner, in the things of God, oh, he will say, with the psalmist, remember me, oh Lord, with the favour, that thou bearest, unto thy people, oh, visit me, with thy salvation, oh, he will say, say unto my soul,

I am, thy, salvation, how glad, he will be, to sometimes, pray, leave not, my soul, destitute, make not, my soul, bear, margin reading, and he will, understand the psalmist, when he lights, upon, one sound, where David, speaks like this, and he, tells out, what his soul's, experience, was, the pains, of hell, got hold upon me, I found, trouble, and sorrow, then, cried I, oh Lord, I beseech thee, deliver, my soul, and you, will be, no more, a stranger, to what the psalmist, felt at that time, and as God, dealt with the psalmist, so he will deal with you, and he will show you, his, salvation, much might be said, along that line of thought, now therefore, you are no more strangers, strangers, and, foreigners, you will be, no more a stranger, to the throne of grace, you will, want to make a right use of it, the only relief of mind, you will get, is in your approaches, to it, but you will find, that, it will not be just, putting words together, that will bring that relief, it will not be just, saying a prayer, no, you will want, the Lord, to teach you to pray, that out of the abundance, of the heart, the mouth might speak, and that you might feel, like Asaph did, it is good for me, to draw near, to God, and, you will be, no more a stranger, to what it is, to pray, when you get help, and when you do not, when your attempts, to pray, are just words, proper words, put together, telling the truth, it may be, describing how you feel, but you do not, get relief, it is just words, words, but there are times, when your spirit is meek, and, your heart, is softened, and you can, be like the woman, in the gospel, falling down, at Jesus' feet, she told him, all the truth, and when you are helped, to do that, you will be, no more a stranger, stranger, or foreigner, to the good, that you can obtain, in drawing near, to God, much might be said, under that heading, but I must come, to the amen, now therefore, you are no more, strangers, and foreigners, but fellow citizens, with the saints, and of the household, of God,

[49 : 00] I preached, an entirely different, type of sermon, this morning, to what I had, in my heart, to do, but, I must leave that, between, God, and you, and ask you, to ponder it, in your heart, and that you might, be deeper down, concerned, to be found, a fellow citizen, one with the people, of God, with whom it is well, living, and dying, and that you might, be more, and more concerned, to be sure, you do want, something to be sure, in eternity, is light, dear friends, wherefore, the rather brethren, give diligence, to make your calling, and your election, sure, and you must press on, as grace is given, this prayer, and this ambition, mine, living, and dying, to be thine,

Amen.