

We Plead With You Not To Receive The Grace Of God In Vain.

Text: 2 Cor 6:1-10

Suggested Hymns:

59, 304, 345, 610, 300

1) That You Receive The Grace Of God Into Your
Hearts

2) That You Profit By The Grace Of God

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 2 Corinthians 6:1-10, ¹ *We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.* ² *For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you."* *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

³ *We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.* ⁴ *But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God:*

in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, ⁵ in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

⁶ by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷ by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, ⁸ by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report;

as deceivers, and yet true; ⁹ as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; ¹⁰ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

We have entered upon the Lenten season in which our thoughts should be occupied with the Passion, with the painful suffering and bitter death of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Christ is the propitiation, the great sacrificial offering, for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

Consider how Jesus suffered and how shamefully He was abused, mocked, spitefully treated, spitted upon, and the pain which He endured both in body and soul that He might redeem us from the curse which rested upon us all because we are sinners, and that He might secure for us the grace of God!

Yet, although Christ suffered and secured salvation for all people, how do most people regard the suffering of their Saviour? They take no notice of it, and they ignore it altogether.

In the Lenten season, when, the world over, Christians are engaged in the solemn contemplation and the Passion, the unbelieving children of this world indulge in the lust of the flesh, and in the lust of the eyes, and in the pride of life more than ever.

Instead of standing under the cross and weeping over their sins which have caused the Saviour's suffering and death, they have wild amusements in the Lenten season, and show thereby how much they care for Christ. For such people the grace of God in Christ has been in vain.

Those who have received the grace of God in Christ, are those Christians who believe in their Saviour, and so do not receive the grace of God in vain! But there are also many Christians who do not mean to deny Christ, but allow themselves to be misled, and conform themselves to this present world, and, by so doing, gradually drift away from their dear Lord, and forfeit and lose the grace which they have received!

The duty therefore devolves upon the pastors of Christian congregations to warn those who are committed to their charge and to point out the dangers to which they are exposed, to exhort, admonish, entreat, and beseech them that they should not receive the grace of God in vain.

This is what Paul does when in our Epistle he says to the Corinthians: *¹ We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.* And this is what every faithful pastor must do.

The theme for today is *“We plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.”* May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Receive The Grace Of God Into Your Hearts

“We plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.” In order not to have the grace of God proclaimed to you in vain, you must, first of all, receive it into your hearts. The context shows what the grace of God is, and wherein it consists.

In the preceding verses¹ Paul tells us ***that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.***

And speaking of himself and all those who are ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, he adds, ²⁰***Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***

So the grace of God is manifested in Christ, in Christ’s great redemptive work, in Christ’s taking upon Himself our sins and being made sin for us, in Christ’s vicarious suffering and death. This is the grace of God, that for Christ’s sake He does not impute to us our trespasses, that for His dear Son’s sake He does not deal with us after our sins nor reward us according to our iniquities, that in Christ Jesus He is reconciled with the whole sinful world.

And is there a time or a season in the year when this grace of God in Christ is presented to you with greater force than in the Lenten season? Does not every line of the Passion history proclaim to you the grace of God? There are so many people who are never made sure of the grace of God, who never arrive at the joyful conviction that God has forgiven them all their sins and that not a single sin is laid to their charge.

And then they come and say that they cannot believe. It is their own fault. Why do they not come to church and hear what God has done for them in Christ, and how He had His dear Son suffer and die for them? If only they would be regular attendants at the house of God and put themselves under the influence of God’s Word and His Holy Spirit, their doubts and fears would soon disappear, and they would become joyful believers.

If the grace of God is not to be proclaimed in vain, you must not only avail yourselves of the opportunity and come to hear. The main thing is that you receive those things which you hear into your hearts.

The Apostle continues, ² *For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

The Apostle quotes from Isaiah, where God speaks to His own dear Son whom the Prophet sees suffering for the sins of the world, and says to Him in the words of Isaiah, *"In an acceptable time I have heard You, And in the day of salvation I have helped You."*²

When God made His dear Son to be sin for us, He poured out upon Him the vials of His wrath and had Him suffer most terribly. No language in the world can describe the greatness of the sufferings which Christ had to endure for the sins of the world. They were greater than all the pains, and agonies, and sufferings of all the children of men put together.

But when our dear Saviour had drained the bitter cup to the dregs, when He had completed His great work, and had done all that had to be done to atone for the sins of all people, God heard Him as He moaned and groaned under the weight of our sins. God helped Him. God exalted Him, and gave Him a name which is above every name. And thus the day of salvation dawned for all sinners on earth.

If God had not exalted His Son after His humiliation, His entire work for us would have been done in vain. His work would not be satisfactory, and we would not be saved.

But God solemnly acknowledged the great work of His dear Son. He helped and exalted Him, and declared and said to Him, as it were, *'Well done, my dear Son! You have redeemed the whole sinful world, You have perfectly atoned for the sins of all people.'*

Now I ask you, my friends, did God have His dear Son suffer and die for you in vain? Will the Saviour's great work be lost upon you?

No; let me plead with you that you receive the word of reconciliation into your heart. *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation* for you! Now the grace of God is proclaimed to you.

Every time you come to hear the Word of God you are assured by the wounds and sufferings of your Saviour and God tells you in our text *"In an*

acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.”

Who knows how soon the accepted time and the day of salvation may end! Who knows how soon your eyelids may close in death! Do not despise the grace of God in the Saviour Jesus! Receive it into your heart, into a good and honest heart! Do not doubt your salvation.

Receive with awe the grace of your God which so mercifully, without any merit or worthiness on your part, He extends to you, and you will not receive the grace of God in vain.

2. That You Profit By The Grace Of God.

Secondly, let me assure you that you also profit by the grace of God which you have received.

Paul says, ³ *We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.* Paul and his co-workers walked with the utmost care and circumspection that they might not bring shame upon the ministerial office.

And the same thing he asks of the members of the Corinthian congregation. They should give no offence in anything. Let me beseech you, then, my friends, that you profit also by the grace of God which you have received, and keep yourselves from sin, and give offence to no one, neither to your fellow-Christians nor to unbelievers.

Be careful of what you say and what you do. Be careful that you do not shock the faith of your fellow-Christians, and that you do not confirm unbelievers in their unbelief by evil words and deeds. There is cursing and swearing, for instance. What an offence a Christian gives by using profane language! If the grace of God dwells in you, you must profit thereby, and be cleansed from sin always more and more.

And Christians must approve themselves as the ministers of God, as the Apostle says, ⁴ *But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God.* This is another thing in which Christians must profit by the grace of God which they have received. Paul and his co-workers demonstrated themselves as the ministers of God, that is, in their entire life they showed themselves as true

servants of God, and the same thing he asks of the members of the Corinthian congregation.

They should show by leading a truly Christian life that they are the ministers of God, and the Apostle mentions a number of things that they should do, which may be classed under three headings; namely, in suffering, in their daily walk and conversation, and in their dealing with the world.

As to suffering, he says: *in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, ⁵ in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults.* Let me beseech you, then, that you approve yourselves as the ministers of God in suffering, and show thereby that you have profited by the grace of God which you have received, that the grace of God which He bestowed on you has not been in vain.

When sufferings and afflictions come, do not murmur against God as unbelievers do, who are quick to blaspheme, and to deny the very existence of God, and to say: *How can I believe that there is a God when such things are done to me?* Rather, patiently bear your sufferings with Christian fortitude, trusting in your heavenly Father that He will not burden you with more than you are able to bear, and that He will surely relieve you when His time comes. Then you will not have received the grace of God in vain.

As to the Christians' daily walk and conversation, the Apostle says, *in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; ⁶ by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷ by the word of truth, by the power of God.*

Christians must not only work in their daily calling and occupation and make a living like all the rest of the children of men, but besides their earthly calling they also have a heavenly calling. They must set their affection on the things above. Their conversation must be in heaven. They must work out their salvation with fear and trembling. They must support and uphold God's kingdom with their earthly means. They must abound in good works. They must be an example to the world in purity, kindness, and love.

Let me beseech you, then, that you demonstrate yourselves as ministers of God in your daily lives, in your daily walk and conversation, and show thereby that you have profited by the grace of God which you have received, and that the grace of God which He bestowed on you has not been in vain.

See that your homes are truly Christian homes, that the Word of God dwells among you richly with daily prayer and family devotion, and that you and all the members of your family walk in the ways of the Lord and abound in Christian virtues.

Finally, as to the Christians' dealing with the world, the Apostle says: *by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,* ⁸ *by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;* ⁹ *as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed;* ¹⁰ *as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

In their dealings with the world the Christians must expect to be slandered, abused, ill-treated, harassed, and persecuted for Christ's sake. But their consolation should be that the enemies of God can do them no real harm. The armour of righteousness is on their right hand and on their left. The angels of God are with them. What they lose upon earth shall be their gain in heaven.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:11-12, ¹¹ *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake."* ¹² *Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Let me plead with you, then, that you show yourselves as ministers of God in your dealings with the world also, and show thereby that you have profited by the grace of God which you have received, and that the grace of God which He bestowed on you has not been in vain.

Do not give up warring for Christ, in spite of all the opposition which the world sets up against you. Do not be offended at the ill-treatment which you receive on the part of the world because you cling to Christ. Hold out and endure to the end, and you will find that you have not received the grace of God in vain. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:19

² Isaiah 49:8