

The word of His grace

Grace is a common term in the Christian vernacular. Most believers would have little difficulty testifying to the grace of God, having known the joy of salvation through faith. We know that it was by grace that we were saved, and not on account of our works. This is a marvellous truth, but it is only the beginning of what it means to receive grace for life. God wants His grace to abound to each one of us so that we will have sufficiency in everything, and an abundance for the good works of our sonship. Here is a key! While grace was certainly first expressed to us as God's merciful favour, it has been made available for our sonship.

In recent years, the Spirit has been increasing our understanding of the new birth and the pathway of sonship. Accordingly, we should not be surprised to find that there is more for us to understand and take hold of concerning the grace of God. This is cause for great thanksgiving! As the apostle Paul explained, grace which is spreading to more and more people, causes the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. How do we receive grace? Put simply, *grace comes in the word of God*. In his final comments to the elders of the Ephesian church, Paul commended them 'to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified'. There are a couple of things to note here. Firstly, we understand from this statement that *grace is spoken to us*. The second point to note is that this word of grace is giving us an inheritance. We are to be heirs of the grace of life. This is what it means to be a son of God.

References:

Eph 2:8-9 2Co 9:8
2Co 4:15 1Pe 3:7
Act 20:24, 32

Further Study

Heb 13

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 31

The favour of God

The Greek word for 'grace' in the New Testament is '*charis*'. It is the *favour* of God toward us, particularly in relation to His redemptive mercy. Before we commenced on the pathway of salvation, we were dead in trespasses and sins, and ignorant of God. We had no capacity to accept or understand the things of the Spirit of God. We were slaves to sin because of the fear of death, and subject to this slavery all of our lives. Our situation was *hopeless!* Not only could we not hear or receive the things of God, we were condemned on account of our sin.

Jesus was the Word made flesh, and *He was full of grace and truth*. When the word of the cross is first proclaimed by a messenger, grace and truth are coming near. The grace that is in the word, enables a person to hear the word. It is the *prevenient* attribute of grace that breaks through our stupor so that we can hear and receive the word. Obviously, the grace of God that is in the word is not irresistible. There are many people who hear the gospel, but will not *receive the truth*.

As we hear the word and receive it, *faith is given* to us. To summarise, hearing has come by the word of grace, and faith has come because we have heard and received the word. At the same time, the Holy Spirit is convicting us of sin, righteousness and judgement. Having received faith for good works, we begin to walk in the conviction of the Spirit. Like the prodigal son, we have come to our senses, recognising that we have sinned against God and that we have a place in the house of the Father.

References:

Eph 2:1
1Co 2:14
Joh 1:14
Joh 16:8

Rom 5:8-9
Heb 2:15
Rom 10:17
Luk 15:17

Further Study

1Pe 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 1

Grace in the Father's house

When we receive the word and believe it, we are justified by faith, and certainly not on account of our sinful works. This is what it means to receive righteousness as a free gift, for to be righteous is to be a son of God. The Father receives us and proclaims that we are indeed His sons. However, we are not born again at this point! We have merely been introduced by faith into grace. To have been introduced by faith into grace is to have been brought into the house of the Father. We know this because Paul said that this is where 'we exult in hope of the glory of God'. The mark of a person who has come into the Father's house is that they are delighting in the hope of being a son. It is the expression of a person who recognises that sonship is the goal of salvation. And yet, at this point, it is still *a hope*.

We are not brought into the grace of the Father's house so that we can be who we want to be and live how we want to live, even where our motivations are to do great works for Jesus. This is what it means to continue in sin, presuming on the favour of God. The apostle Paul declared, 'What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be!' We receive grace to join a process in which we cease from sin. For this reason, Peter wrote, 'He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God'.

References:

Rom 5:1-2 Rom 6:1-2
1Pe 4:1-2 Joh 14:2
Luk 2:49 Eph 2:8-9

Further Study

Joh 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 2

Grace to participate

We received our introduction, by faith, into the grace of the Father's house *while we were still sinners*. However, Jesus was clear that a slave of sin does not remain in the house of the Father forever. We must be set free from the slavery and bondage of sin so that we are free to live for the will of God. Grace is providing us with the capacity to join the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ *as members of His body*. We will not remain in the Father's house if we are unwilling to join the body of Christ.

In the Father's house, we begin to partake of the elements of the New Covenant. These elements are the body and blood of the Lord Jesus, and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads us to the garden of Gethsemane. Grace enables a person to hear the word that calls them to join the fellowship of Christ's offering and circumcision, so that they can receive a new heart and new life. We see that grace is granting to us the capacity to be a son by another life. However, grace, in and of itself, is not the new birth.

The evidence that we have proceeded to the new birth is that we exult in our tribulations because the hope of our sonship is not being disappointed. It is being attained! Paul wrote, 'And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, *because* the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us'. We have moved from exulting in sonship, to being a son who is exulting in the realisation of the hope, through participation in the offering and circumcision of Christ.

References:

Joh 8:35-36 Rom 5:3-5
Php 3:10 1Pe 4:13-14
Joh 6:53-54 1Jn 5:11-12

Further Study

Col 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 3

Receiving the Holy Spirit

We lay hold of the hope of our sonship because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit *'who was given to us'*. It is important to recognise the way Paul used the 'past tense' in this statement. The Holy Spirit *was given to us* in the context of grace; that is, before we were born again. Jesus said to the disciples, 'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever, that is the *Spirit of truth'*. The Holy Spirit is given to us in the Father's house with the elements of the communion. If we continue to eat and drink of the communion elements but will not proceed to join the offering and circumcision of the Son, we will find ourselves eating and drinking in an unworthy manner, and insulting the Spirit of grace. This is because we will be seeking to take hold of blessing and grace for our own ends, rather than for participation in the offering and circumcision of Christ.

Faith has come and given us access to grace and the Holy Spirit. As mentioned earlier, it is grace that is leading to the Holy Spirit. We note that grace enables us to cease walking 'after the flesh', and to connect to the Holy Spirit and walk after the Spirit. When we are walking after the Spirit, we are *free from law*. We are not under law because we are under grace. Being under grace is not latitude to live however we like. That would be sin. The Spirit is leading us into the truth of our name and works; the *knowledge of the truth*. This is the freedom we have to be a son of God, because the Son has made us free.

References:

Rom 5:5
Heb 10:29
1Co 10:16-17

Further Study

Joh 14:16, 26
Act 19
Joh 15:26

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 4

From law into grace

The apostle Paul proclaimed that no one is justified by the works of the law. The law only works wrath because of sin. Paul was highlighting the weakness of the flesh to fulfil the law and be found righteous, and the resultant judgement upon all flesh because of unrighteousness. Consequently, no one is justified before God on account of their work. A man is only justified by the works of faith. Clearly, faith must be received for righteousness to be given as a free gift. God's own righteousness has been manifest in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the demonstration of who and what we should be as a son of God. He manifested love and obedience through faith by the power of Eternal Spirit and became, by God's design, the means of atoning for sin by His sacrificial death.

Jesus came to reveal and deliver the New Covenant. Now that the New Covenant has replaced the old, imputed righteousness delivers us from the law, through grace. This is the righteousness that was credited to us, on account of the faith we received by hearing the word. Grace is a New Covenant reality! As we continue by grace to join the offering of the cross, imputed righteousness becomes the *substance* of our sonship life and works in Christ. From a new heart, motivated by the love of God, we believe and are righteous. Now grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ.

If we seek to be justified by law, we have been *severed from Christ and have fallen from grace*. Grace provides righteousness, capacity and power, in place of the law and the weakness of our flesh to fulfil the law. The free gift is the 'gift of righteousness' and 'eternal life in Christ Jesus'. Joining Christ's circumcision and obedience makes us righteous. In summary, grace reigned over sin and death, through righteousness, to eternal life in Christ.

References:

Rom 3:20, 24
Rom 5:17, 20-21
Gal 5:4
Rom 6:23

Further Study

Jas 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 7

Living by grace

The word of righteousness connects us to our name and works. The free gift of righteousness is our name and works found in the obedience of Christ. This gift operates by the grace of Jesus Christ, abounding in blessing to many. This results in justified living. We are not the source of righteousness, but receive the word of righteousness in Christ. The abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness together, cause us to reign in life by living righteously. Paul called himself the least of all the apostles, but testified, 'By the grace of God *I am what I am*, and His grace toward me did not prove vain. I laboured more than all of them, yet not I, but *the grace of God with me*.'

In reference to Christ, the apostle John proclaimed that 'of His fullness we have all received, and *grace for grace*'. The grace to which we were first introduced, was to grant us the capacity to come into Christ and to continue to receive grace for life. *Grace is not a position*. When the word is received, *grace gives us capacity to be the sons of God* every day, and to continue on the pathway of sonship right into the age to come. The apostle Paul declared that we are receiving an inheritance among those who are *sanctified*. These are the ones who are living according to their foreknown name in the body of Christ. The implication is that we have no inheritance apart from the body of Christ, and that grace for us to *live* as the sons of God is only available in His body. A person is unable to continue in grace if they will not receive the proceeding word of God, and if they will not be joined to the body of Christ.

References:

1Co 15:10 Joh 1:16
Act 13:43 Rom 5:15
2Co 1:12

Further Study

2Co 12

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 8

The obedience of faith

When Paul was delivering his farewell address to the Ephesian elders and leaders in Miletus, he was speaking to those who were already on the pathway of sonship. These ones had received the new heart and the seed of divine nature, and yet he commended them to God and to the word of His grace. We might have expected that they had already been established in the grace of God. However, we need to continue receiving the word, and the grace in the word, in order to receive our inheritance among those who are sanctified. This is what it means to live in ‘the obedience of faith’.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul testified that through Christ ‘we have received grace and apostleship *for obedience to the faith* among all nations for His name’. Grace had been given to Paul according to his name and the work of his apostleship, *for the obedience of faith*. He had received capacity to be the son who God had named him to be. Paul’s confession was that, having joined the offering and circumcision of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ lived in him and he lived by the faith of the Son of God. He did not live by his own faith, or do his own works, which would have *nullified, or set aside, the grace of God*. As Paul continued in the obedience of faith, it ensured that he did not receive the grace of God in vain. He could testify, ‘By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain’. In this same way, Paul wanted all the churches to be firmly established in the grace of God and rejoiced that the gospel was producing an ‘obedience of faith’ in every place.

References:

Act 20:32 Rom 1:5
Gal 2:20-21 1Co 15:10
Rom 6:17
Rom 16:24-26

Further Study

Rom 15

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 9

Commended to the grace

The word of grace broke in on Paul's life when Jesus Christ first spoke to him about his name and work. Paul immediately gave himself to the declaration of the truth. However, it was more than ten years later that Paul was commended to the grace of God for the work of his apostleship to the Gentiles. At that time, as they 'were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them". Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.' Although Paul had received a revelation regarding his name and works, he did not presume to go beyond the grace that was available for the obedience of faith in each season of life. Rather, he received grace for the work in the fellowship of the body of Christ. And according to this grace, he was able to establish and strengthen the Gentile churches.

Many commentators believe that it was fourteen years after his conversion that Paul travelled with Barnabas and Titus to Jerusalem, to *submit* the gospel which he had been preaching among the Gentiles, to the leaders there. James, Peter and John were able to see that Paul had been entrusted with the gospel to the Gentiles. This was the work that had been given to Paul, and they *recognised* the grace that had been given to him for this work. In Jerusalem, Paul was *submitting* his gospel and work to a fellowship. In this fellowship, the grace in Paul was *recognisable*. Grace was seen because the work he was doing was according to his name. There was no need to justify himself or promote himself. Rather, as he submitted himself, the reality of his name and work was confirmed.

References:

Act 9:15-16 Act 14:26
Act 13:2-3 1Co 9:1
1Pe 5:12

Further Study

Gal 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 10

Stewards of the manifold grace

The apostle Paul was not a special case! Paul commended *every believer* to the word of grace, just as he had been commended. He said to the Ephesian elders, 'I commend you to God and to the word of His grace'. We too are able to stand in the grace that God is giving to us according to our name and work. Moreover, this grace will be evident to others as we submit ourselves one to another in the fellowship of the body of Christ. Peter exhorted us this way, 'As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God'. We receive this grace in the word that is preached and in the fellowship of the body of Christ.

Those who are stewarding the grace given to them, will not seek to promote themselves or strive for recognition. They are committed to serving through offering, having received the love of God into their new hearts by the Holy Spirit. They recognise that grace has been given for the sake of others, and that the gift makes room for them in the body. Grace is given to us so that we can serve others. The grace is not general, but rather 'manifold', or in various forms. The specific and varied nature of grace for serving in the body of Christ was affirmed by Paul, who declared, 'Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness'.

References:

Act 20:32 1Pe 4:10
Pro 18:16 Rom 12:6-8
1Co 3:10 1Co 15:10

Further Study

Eph 3

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 11

Grace for every good work

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul triumphantly announced, 'God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed'. Grace abounds to us so that we are able to stand in our sonship in *every circumstance of life*. The good deeds for which we receive an abundance are not just charitable acts. These are the good works that are written in the Lamb's book of life for us to do. On account of the grace of God, we can have proud confidence in every circumstance of life. And our confidence is this: 'that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world'. We are receiving an abundance of grace to be a son in the day-to-day contexts of life, and for service of one another in the body.

The word of His grace is able to *build us up*. Paul said that 'according to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it ... Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident ... If any man's work *which he has built on it remains*, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will *be saved*, yet so as through fire.' Paul laid a foundation according to the grace that had been given to him. We build on that foundation by doing the works of our sonship, according to the grace that is given to us in the word of present truth.

References:

2Co 9:8 2Co 1:12-14
Act 20:32 2Co 12:9
1Co 15:10
1Co 3:10, 12, 14-15

Further Study

1Ti 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 14

An imperishable inheritance

When we are doing the works of our sonship, according to the word of God, we are building with gold, silver and precious stones. The wise man said, 'Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances', or 'at the right time'. The elements of gold, silver and precious stones speak to us of that which endures and is refined by fire. The apostle Peter highlighted this reality when he declared that we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus, so that we might obtain *an inheritance* which is *imperishable*. The various trials that we endure, prove the faith that we have received and live by. This faith, like gold, is tested by fire and will be found to result in praise and glory and honour. Grace is enabling sonship to be revealed and established in the fire; it is not alleviating the fire or sustaining that which is not born of God.

To build with wood, hay and stubble is to build according to any word or principle other than the word of God. This can be a word sourced in our own perceptions of what is good for us and for others, and it can be a word derived from the philosophies and practice of this world. There is no grace for sonship in these words, yet they can establish the cultures and cultural practices of individuals, families, and even church communities. The fiery trial reveals the reality of our building; that is, the trial can both devastate the cultures and practices that have been established and, in so doing, can reveal the absence of sonship faith and grace for life. There are many examples that we could note here, including relational difficulties in our marriages, the compliance and rebellion of children, and the reliance on vocational advancement for security.

References:

Pro 25:11 1Pe 1:3-7
1Co 3:12 Jud 1:22-23
Col 2:8 Rom 1:21-22

Further Study

1Pe 4

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 15

A knowledge of the truth

In times of trial and suffering, we are often motivated to cry out to God for grace. However, grace is not available to sustain that which has not already been established in our lives by the word. Neither do we receive grace in trial to compensate for the absence of faith that the trial reveals. In fact, it is because of the grace of God that the fallen cultures and practices of our lives are being brought to nothing, so that we might be saved. When the wood, hay and stubble of our self-centred and worldly cultures are consumed, we need to humble ourselves and recognise that we have fallen short of the grace of God. If we resist the word of grace, bitterness in ourselves and toward others will be our portion. This is why Paul said, 'See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled'. If we humble ourselves, we will receive grace for restoration.

Paul wrote to Timothy that God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. This is the truth concerning our name and work as a son of God. For this reason, the Holy Spirit leads us to the garden of Gethsemane to join Jesus Christ on the new and living way. In this way, He is leading us into all truth. On this pathway, we are being washed and regenerated by the waters of sanctification. And we are encouraging one another to love and good works. This is the importance of the communion gathering. It is the context in which the 'truth is spoken in love' as the provision of grace and life for every member of the body of Christ.

References:

1Co 3:15
Col 4:6
1Ti 2:4

Heb 12:15-16
Eph 4:15
Joh 16:13

Further Study

2Co 4

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 16

Hearts strengthened by grace

It is essential that we are those who humble ourselves and receive the proceeding word of God. The writer to the Hebrews exhorted us, 'Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited'. Our food is the elements of the New Covenant. We are to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we do this, our new hearts are strengthened by grace. We can avail ourselves of grace as we receive the word at the table of the Lord, and as two or three are gathered in His name. In the context of this fellowship, grace is spreading to more and more people.

The impact of grace on our hearts is significant in the Scriptures. Jesus taught that 'the kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.' In this parable, we see the elements of a new heart, the seed of the divine nature, and the action of collecting a harvest. Significantly, Jesus stated that we do not know how the seed grows. This is the quotient of grace. We need our hearts strengthened by grace in order to bring forth the good fruit of sonship.

References:

Heb 13:9
2Ti 2:1
Hag 2:4

Mar 4:26-29
2Pe 3:18
2Ti 1:7

Further Study

Jos 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 17

Grace and fellowship

If we are those who are living by the faith of the Son of God, then the word of faith is in our hearts and in our mouths. As we speak this word to one another, grace is ministered. The evidence of grace spreading to more and more people is the giving of thanks that abounds to the glory of God. Thanks is abounding because grace is enabling the progressive attainment of sonship, which is revealing the glory of God. Concerning this reality, Paul said, ‘*Therefore* we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day’. We do not lose heart because our hearts are being strengthened by grace and our inner man is being renewed.

We can minister grace to one another by encouraging each other to the works of sonship in all the different circumstances of life. This is what it means for our *speech to always be with grace*, ‘as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person’. When we get together and are discussing family life, our offering, businesses, and other issues of life, we should give attention to the content and motivation of our conversation. Are we ‘breaking’ and ‘feeding on’ the word of the New Covenant that is strengthening us and others for sonship, or are we promoting other words of advice that are focused on escaping the constraints of the circumcising hand of the Father on our lives? Fellowship is not a Christian-hybrid peer-group consensus on different matters of life. Fellowship is the context in which the life of God is multiplied. We are able to encourage one another to the truth. Grace and truth are in Christ; they are not found in consensus.

References:

Rom 10:8 2Co 4:15-16
Col 4:6 Gal 2:20
Psa 40:9-10 Pro 25:11-12

Further Study

Mal 3

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 18

Grace for family life

The word defines the works of our sonship in all of its dimensions, including, as an individual, as a head, as a helper, as a wife, as a husband, as a mother, as a father, as a child, and so on. Grace is inherent in the word and mandate of our sonship, and is to abound in our lives and in our families. This is why Peter said that a husband must honour his wife as a *fellow heir of the grace of life*.

Our houses are to be full of grace! As a mother and a father are standing in godly order, grace for life abounds in the house and flows to every member. Concerning the man who fears the Lord and walks in His ways, the psalmist wrote, 'Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, your children like olive plants around your table'. Grace abounds to our children and they are able to be the sons and daughters God made them to be, in our houses. They are able to touch their eternal inheritance in our houses, even before they have met the Lord alone, because grace is reigning in the houses.

However, there will be no grace in our houses if we are not willing to establish them according to the word of His grace. It is significant to note that a man's prayers will be hindered if he is not standing in his mandate, and if he is not honouring the mandate of his wife in the house. He is unable to find help in time of need. The answers to various issues in our houses are provided week to week in the ministry of the Spirit at the communion table. There is abundant grace available for husbands and wives to continue building their houses on the good foundation.

References:

1Pe 3:7
Act 18:8
Deu 6:6-7

Psa 128:3
1Co 11:3
Psa 78:4-6

Further Study

Act 16

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 21

His grace is sufficient

Under the pressure of trials and tribulations, it is understandable that people look to God for His grace to sustain them. Often these ones are drawing encouragement from the call to 'draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need'. They may also be taking their example from Paul, who recounted the words of the Lord, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' It is certainly true that we can receive the grace of God and that His grace is sufficient for every circumstance. However, in order to avail ourselves of His grace, we need to understand why God gives grace and how it is received. We know that grace comes to us in the word of God. It is the capacity from God which is given to us to fulfil the works of our sonship.

Paul wrote, 'Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me – to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness".' Initially, Paul was not asking God for grace in the midst of the sufferings caused by the thorn in his flesh. He was asking for the thorn to be removed! God's response was that His grace was sufficient for him. Paul had *already* received grace for the works of his sonship. God was not giving him more grace to counter the thorn! The grace that Paul had received in the word of his name, was sufficient for him to fulfil his work and mandate in every circumstance.

References:

Heb 4:16 2Co 12:7-9
Gal 2:9 Isa 40:29-31
Php 4:13 Col 1:28-29

Further Study

Jer 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 22

Grace in time of need

What did the writer to the Hebrews mean when he said that we were to find grace to help in time of need? We read, 'Therefore, since we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, *let us hold fast our confession*. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore *let us draw near with confidence* to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and *find grace to help in time of need*.' At first glance, it seems that we are to cry out to God for grace when we are in distress. However, there is much more that we are to understand about grace from these passages. We are first encouraged to hold fast to our confession. This is the confession *of our hope* that we might become the sons of God. Because we have the hope of sonship, we draw near with confidence to the throne of grace. We have confidence to enter the holy place and come to the throne of grace, because a new and living way has been opened.

Where is the throne of grace? The throne of grace is the mercy seat. Christ is our Mercy Seat, and the blood was sprinkled on our Mercy Seat when He began to sweat great clots of blood in the garden of Gethsemane. From this point, He was ministering as the great High Priest and authoring a pathway of sonship. Grace is available for us, in Him, as we join His offering and circumcision. It is helping us to continue in our sonship under the circumcising hand of the Father, so that we are not tempted to revert to the flesh and insult the Spirit of grace.

References:

Heb 4:14-16 2Ch 6:41
Rom 3:25 Luk 22:44
Heb 3:1
Exo 25:21-22

Further Study

Heb 10

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 23

Grace in the trial

Paul summarised his testimony by recognising that the thorn in his flesh had been *given to him to keep him from exalting himself*. It was for his sanctification. The tribulations associated with the thorn in his flesh, were helping him maintain his *sanctification*, and ensuring that he did not fall short of the grace of God by being lifted up in fleshly pride. Paul was able to be content in weakness because the power of Christ was dwelling in him. The precious value of faith was being established and revealed in Paul.

Grace is evident in the expression of a name and the demonstration of works, particularly under pressure. This is because under the pressure of trial and tribulation, the weakness of the flesh is being revealed. However, a person who has received the word of grace is still able to do the works of sonship, by the power of the Spirit. The excellence or glory of sonship is of God and not of the flesh. Grace is enabling a person to continue in the obedience of sonship in every circumstance. The help we receive at the throne of grace is help to maintain or express sonship.

The reality is that we are unable to be the sons of God in any circumstance without the Spirit. Our time of need is not just the demanding seasons of life; it is every season of life! In establishing this point, Paul refers to the treasure that is in earthen vessels 'so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves'. This directs our attention, again, to building by the word of grace on the foundation laid by Paul. Like Paul, we can rejoice in our infirmities and weaknesses because the power of Christ is upon us.

References:

Heb 12:14-15 2Co 4:7
2Co 12:7-10 Eph 3:16
Heb 11:34 Col 1:11

Further Study

2Co 11

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 24

Fellowship in His sufferings

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul said, 'I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions'. This is a most remarkable statement. What is lacking in the sufferings of Christ? What does Paul mean when he says that? We know that Jesus Christ suffered 'once for all' when He offered Himself on the cross. He bore the sin and suffering of the whole world in His body. The prophetic Scriptures bear this out. There is nothing lacking in the personal sufferings of Christ. There is no grief or suffering that a person can experience, that Christ has not already vicariously suffered in His physical body. His sufferings were a full and complete work.

When Paul spoke of what is 'lacking' in Christ's afflictions, he meant that Christ's sufferings are not yet complete in us. He was referring to our participation in His sufferings in the many-membered body of Christ. We participate in the sufferings of Christ for our sake and for the sake of others. The glorious truth is that, once we have been joined to the offering of Christ by baptism into His name, our sufferings are no longer our own. We are now participating in His sufferings, according to the will of God, and they are working for us an eternal weight of glory. And more than this, we receive the very same grace that Christ Himself received to endure these sufferings when He tasted death for every man. We are now participating in His sufferings, according to the will of God and by the power of God. This is the grace of our Lord Jesus!

References:

Col 1:24 2Co 4:17
 1Pe 3:17 2Ti 1:8
 1Pe 4:1, 19 Heb 2:9
 Isa 53:4-5

Further Study

2Co 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 25