

Other than being here in worship with you, there is no place I would rather be (when it is warm) than at the **beach** with my family. I love the smell of salt air, the warmth of the sand between my toes....

But most of all I love the sound and steady rhythm of waves breaking in the surf.

You know that rhythm right? When you are standing close enough.... the white foam of a wave that has just broken rolls in and cools off your feet....then that wave rushes back out... only to be replaced by a **fresh** wave (often bigger than the first...going up to your shins... maybe your knees...

No water park can duplicate the real thing..... Wave after Wave of refreshment... bringing life from the sea in and depositing it on the shore.

As soon as one wave **recedes**...another is on its heels...

That is the idea I believe John is trying to convey in the passage we are going to study today....

That in Christ Jesus.... there is an **inexhaustible** supply of grace, that just keeps coming in (**wave** after **wave**) to meet every **NEED** which we face.... 1 at a time...

Some of you have faced trials and challenges even this morning. For others of you, there are things waiting for you at work tomorrow... or at home today.....

God has a message for you as you consider those.....

There's Grace for That...

Whatever you face... both good and evil.... God will keep on bringing the **fullness of grace** in Jesus Christ....into your soul... to meet every need with the power of Himself.

- So that you can benefit from that reality,..... I want to begin by asking you to identify the #1 challenge in your life right now.....?

God promises.....(if you are His child) -> There is Grace for that..... grace upon grace..... flowing into your life....through your connection with the Risen Christ.

Grace to not only make it THROUGH that situation... that difficulty...

but to CONQUER...by bringing **glory** to your King in the midst of it....

By having your faith strengthened THROUGH it.... so that you become **complete**... lacking in nothing.....rather than it just tossing you for a loop...

John showed us in **1:14** last that this was made possible because the everlasting WORD of God... has now become FLESH!

In His life... death, and resurrection – **we see** His glory! glory as the only begotten from the Father.. **FULL of Grace** and truth....

That grace is the gift of God's unmerited **FAVOR**...that brings with it blessings of power and **joy**...

That grace is **available** to all who believe... today... in FULL measure...

There's even GRACE to believe what I am saying is TRUE.....even now....if you ask for it...

(PRAY)

John 1:15-18

"(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.' ") And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

v. 14 makes it clear that **Jesus** Christ of Nazareth...is the One whom John the Apostle identifies as the eternal Word of God now made flesh....

To further bring to life all this theology He has been speaking.... He says...**this** is the guy JTB was talking about out in the wilderness....

That great prophet of God designed to **POINT to** the Messiah of Israel....**John**... **bore witness** about this Jesus...

And the witness was:.... He is the Bridegroom and I am just His groomsman....

He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world....I am unworthy to tie His shoes...

He must **INCREASE**.... but I must **decrease**....

Probably nothing God calls Christians to do that is more dependent upon His grace.... than exalting Jesus to the people you come in contact with....

GOOD NEWS!

There's Grace for that!

1. Magnify Jesus instead of Yourself

In the military, the recognition of rank takes place mostly through **visible** means. Officers have certain symbols on their collars or shoulders... enlisted men on their arms which indicate with precision **who outranks** who.....

But Jesus did not come wearing any such insignia. Instead, he came as a humble servant..... depending on His works and the power of the Word of God to demonstrate Who He is....

It is **our job**, as His followers to bear witness to His Authority.... to Magnify Him instead of ourselves....

At the beginning of JTB ministry, Israel had not heard directly from God in over 400 years. Now, it was clear God has raised up a prophet among them....

John was **center stage**..... It would be normal... it would be natural... for him to try and grab hold of the moment and enjoy the attention....

But instead.... He obediently points to and magnifies His King:

John 1:15

"(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.' ")"

JTB, was Jesus' cousin and was his senior by 6 months. In that culture (unlike our own)AGE automatically established seniority...

In addition, not only had John been ministering among the people for some time...He already had disciples... He was already speaking prophetically to the leaders of society....

to top it off.... John baptized Jesus.....

So the people would naturally see Jesus as the **rookie**.... the apprentice....

John says no! He is the **pre-existent** ONE... He outranks me because He has always BEEN! He is the great **I am**.

Question for you:

- Do people around you know that Jesus **outranks** you?

- Can they tell from the way you serve them..... (that you are a follower of your King)....

- Can they see the authority of Jesus in the way you speak?
- Does His Name flow off of your lips reverently.... and with praise!

Do you make attempts to testify to Who He is among the lost (as JTB was doing in this verse)?

If you fall short in any of those.... (as I often do).... God has a word for you –

There's grace for that!

Grace to repent and believe that Jesus death atoned for your sin.... and that because He has been raised.... you now are counted as righteous in God's sight and can ask Jesus to live His resurrected life through you.....

Just as a practical exercise..... I would encourage you to consider this when you wake up in the morning....

Immediately.... (as soon as you regain consciousness)....

Before you allow your mind to wander to what you are worried about.... or what you hope to accomplish that day.....

Immediately bow your heart (if possible) your knee before the Lord...and **submit** to His rightful authority over you....

Romans 12:1

" I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

There is grace available to not only begin our day acknowledging Him as **KING**.....in private devotion to Him as Savior....

But increasingly there is grace available to you to keep on Magnifying Jesus.... in your **conversations**.... in your business dealings.... in your decision making.....

In what you consider to be the **top priorities** of your life....

That is what WORSHIP is all about..... at the heart level....

There's Grace for That...

2. Drink from the Fountain

In Jesus becoming a man..... God brought a **FOUNTAIN** to earth. He had been promising to do this since throughout the OT....

Palestine was and is a dry and **THIRSTY** land.... and this imagery perfectly depicts the life giving presence of God among His people...

Zechariah 13:1

"“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.”

Jesus is that **FOUNTAIN**....

Everyone who encountered Jesus on earth... found this Fountain of God to always be **FULL** of grace and truth...

Like a mountain spring..... the **grace** of God overflowed from the Person of Christ through His Life Giving Words and actions....to the children... to the multitudes... and to His disciples...

Those words carried with them **grace** to heal... to convict of sin..... to grant new life.... to raise the dead...

That powerful grace even flowed through the hem of His garment to heal those who touched him...

Then this Life Giver.... **DIED** in our place on the cross..... He voluntarily took our death penalty that we deserve...(because of sin)..... Because the price for our sin was PAID in FULL by Jesus' death..... God raised Jesus from the dead....

So that NOW... by His Spirit coming to dwell in you who believe.... you can **continually receive** the fullness of His grace.....

It is one thing for Jesus to be FULL of grace.... but yet another for Him to **communicate** the fullness of His grace to **us!**

John says.. Here is my testimony: this is the fountain from Whom I drink:

John 1:16

"And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."

Picture Jesus.... as a fountain FULL of life giving grace.....personally **overflowing** that grace out of His Person...and into your life... as you call upon Him...in faith.

- That is what I mean by drinking from the fountain....

This fountain... (full of grace and truth) is **not far off**.... in Jerusalem....

By His Spirit He has come to reside in your soul....

Instead of depending on your own power.... or your own intellect..... to survive the trials of this life.....

He wants you to **LOOK to Him** for grace in each and every area of your life.

When John says... “of his fullness we have all received..”

John is not describing.... some single mystical encounter of FULLNESS that only a special class of Christians can experience.....

If you only needed ONE DOSE of grace to carry you through life..... you would not need a **relationship** with Jesus...

Instead, God has chosen to impart the FULLNESS of grace to you each and every day.... in accordance with the NEEDS of your life at that moment.... as you ask Him for specific help in time of need....

Think again of your needs right now.... I can confidently say to you... because of the overflowing fountain of Who Jesus is....

There’s Grace for that!

Here is a promise Jesus gave to assure you of this fact:

Matthew 25:29a

"For to everyone who has will **more be given**, and he will have an abundance.

Jesus is talking here... about HIMSELF....

Grace upon Grace – the fullness of Jesus.... (his personal **presence**...(you are not alone)...His **power**... His **blessing**... His **joy**!... His hope)....

JC Ryle “There is an **infinite fullness** in Jesus Christ. There is laid up in Him, as in a treasury, a boundless supply of all that any sinner can need, either in time or eternity.”

The tragedy is that while this inexhaustible supply is within us, what we often **prefer** is our OWN strength.....

What we want (if we are honest) is for God to simply **fix** our problems so we can go back to our own life on cruise control.....

So.... for our good..... He will allow and sometimes even BRING trials and tribulations into your life... that are **MASSIVE**.... and yet ... even as you pray....

God never seems to do anything about them..... it seems like He says no to your cries for help.....

This (the Bible tells us) is a means of keeping you dependent (each day) upon His life giving grace.

..... instead of your own **fortitude**...

This is especially true.... when we are tempted towards spiritual pride... like Paul was... God had revealed some truths to Him that no other man had known.... and to keep him from being **self elated**.... God afflicted him with some malady...

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

"Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."** Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. **For when I am weak, then I am strong."**

You know what Paul came out of that learning? Same thing God wants you to learn today....

No matter how overwhelming what you are facing is....

There's grace for that! and that GRACE is **more** than you need.....

My grace is sufficient....you don't NEED whatever else you are trying to use to make yourself happy ...

And I promise to give it to you personally.... in unending supply.... grace upon grace...

John 1:17

"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Grace is probably not the first word that comes to your mind when I say **10 Commandments**....

When you hear the Holy Law of God....pronounced alongside your life.... it does not exactly FEEL like drinking from a fountain of living water.....

That is because the Law...is **unvarnished** TRUTH about who God is...

It is the **RAW standard** of holiness.....which He expects of anyone associated with Him.

The Law comes in convicting of sin....showing you that you are a **transgressor**.....and that you stand condemned in need of a Savior.....

Whereas.... that does not **FEEL** kind..... it is actually is the first step of God in bringing you the good news of the gospel....

Some of you know... when we share the gospel with people... we believe that you first need to show them who they are in God's sight through the Law.....

How they **fall short** (like we do) of His standard....

People in whom God is at work..... often say things like “**now** I feel bad.... or now I feel guilty....”

That... we hope... is sorrow that will lead you to repentance.....

If it does.... then the Law and the Prophets actually ARE the first wave of grace in delivering you from yourself.....

For instance..... some of you here today..... **refuse** to follow Jesus as Lord.... because you like it better when **YOU** are in control of your life....

So God lovingly warns you:

A day of Divine Judgment is coming.... when God is going to **abase** everyone who refuses to magnify His Son.....

Who exalts themselves instead of HIM...

Isaiah 2:17

"And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day."

There's grace right now..... to **crucify** that sinister pride.... that feels good for the moment... but will end up bringing you low.....

And to humbly choose to magnify Jesus as your King....

There's grace available.... all you have to do is **ask**....

The Law then..... In a sense... it was and is... the first wave of grace....coming in to show the world why we need Jesus....

Now,... like a wave at the seashore... the Law has been **fulfilled** and replaced by the coming of grace and truth in Jesus Christ!

Moses was a minister of condemnation..... showing us our sin.....

Jesus is the personal means of us knowing and receiving the full picture of **Who** God is....

For the whole truth about your sin..... was not really known until the Son of God had to be crucified for it....

The whole truth about God's justice....could not be seen until the earth shook...and the sky became dark.... when the Son of God drank the cup of God's wrath in our place....

The whole truth of God's love was not seen before He demonstrated it in exchanging His Son's life for ours....

The whole truth of who God is..... is seen most clearly in a resurrected Savior... who then becomes the head of a new born people of God!

Here in v. 17... is the first time John has actually Named this Word who became flesh..... He is **Jesus** the Christ!

Through Him there is grace to KNOW God!

There's Grace for That..

3. Understanding God

From time to time we conduct an evangelistic course through our church called **Introducing God**....

I remember one time...By mistake, my wife was asking a church member if they were going to "**Understanding God**" and they said... well, if you are teaching a course on that... I won't miss it!

Whereas we often can not UNDERSTAND why and how God works... (b/c His ways are above ours)

God **has** provided the Way for us to not only be introduced to Him....but to get to Know Him **personally**.... as a Father...through His only Son.... to whom we have been joined.

In the life, death, resurrection of Jesus Christ... God has **EXPLAINED** to us exactly Who He is...

Therefore.... in relationship with Christ... You can begin to **UNDERSTAND** and LOVE Who He is (in increasing measure)

John 1:18

"No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

In the OT.... Abraham was called a **friend** of God. Moses was described as having related to God face to face..... but (as I said last week)... The brilliant glory of His face, the holiness of His Person.... is **too much** for mortal man to bear.

No man can see God and live....

Yet, in Jesus... God exhibits to us (in the form of man) all that can be known about Himself through faith.

Jesus has no peer.... He is the only begotten God. - Strong language for God becoming flesh...

He alone knows God....because He alone has been **intimately united** with Him from all eternity.... He alone is of one essence with the Father ... and even now is exalted to His right hand....(just as He was before the incarnation)

Proverbs 8:30-31

"then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man."

In Jesus, as a human being... we see the perfect **IMAGE** of God... which He first created man to be.... He is the EXACT imprint of His nature. (Heb. 1:2)

In Jesus, we see what humanity was intended to be.....

In Jesus' life... we see perfectly, every single one of His attributes... lived out perfectly among sinners...

Hebrews 1:1-3

" Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed

the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. **He is the radiance of the glory of God** and the **exact imprint of his nature**, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"

Jesus.. has made known to us the Father.....He is His FULL revelation...

He is now **imparting grace** for you to keep on growing in your knowledge of Him.

These first 18 verses of John's gospel.... have been the **Prologue** to the book....

For the next 21 chapters.... John is going to let the life of Jesus **TEACH us** who the Father is.

And all along the way... He will be imparting grace....for us to **become** like Him.

Good News....

There's grace for that!