



Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

Isaiah 60:1

Message Notes

ARISE is a an intentional call to action for Point of Grace to be transformed as individuals and as a church body, to literally “become light” and “shine” for God’s glory in key areas of personal and church life. Part One of ARISE will call Point of Grace to surrender to God’s transforming work in the area of financial giving.

The Transformation Recipe:

I SURRENDER myself and my agenda to God! **I RECEIVE** Him and His agenda for me!
Then I **ACT** accordingly in sacrificial obedience!

Transformation happens as:

*Surrender becomes my “a _____” to life, Receiving becomes my “m _____” in life and
Obedience becomes my “w _____” of life!*

Romans 12 ¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Galatians 2 ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

John 15 ⁵"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Beware of Sabotage!

Satan casts d _____ on God’s faithfulness and r _____ and the hope of real c _____!

Proverbs 3 ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil..... ⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

We are at war on the inside. Jesus calls us to s _____ - our culture and nature calls us to c _____!

“Is striking a deal, pulling a con or making a profit off God really beneath us!”

Malachi 1 "When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD. ¹⁴ "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations. ^{3:} ⁸ "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

Matthew 6 ²⁴"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

It's a Matter of T _____ ! We get to E _____ a faith- _____ future!

A Personal and Small Group Experience

Grace Giving

WHAT IS GRACE?

What is grace? Ask any theologian or serious Bible student that question and we will likely get a two-word answer: "unmerited favor." That is a good definition, but let's explore it further. Grace has no list, no requirements, no demands, no judgments, and no condemnation. Grace softens the harsh demands of the law and offers us hope to continue. Grace becomes our guide in responding to God and to others.

Dr. Donald Barnhouse describes grace this way: "Grace stoops to where we are and lifts us to where God is. Love that reaches up is adoration. Love that reaches out is compassion. Love that stoops is grace."

THE SUPREME EXAMPLE

The only way we can heed these warning signs is to realize what God says about grace. Threaded through these messages on financial stewardship to the Corinthian church are beautiful examples of grace. The best example is illustrated in 2 Corinthians 8:9: *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."*

Jesus Christ is our supreme example of what grace means. He was the ultimate grace giver. He gave His holy and pure life as a sacrifice unto God the Father in order to pay the penalty for our sin. Because of His grace gift we have been granted the richness of His kingdom with the promise that we will spend eternity with Him in heaven. That is amazing grace!

PRINCIPLES OF GRACE GIVING - 2 CORINTHIANS 9

Please read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. We can see grace woven throughout these verses. In fact, this passage contains five principles that will assist us in our grace giving.

- **Sow bountifully (vs. 6)**

The Lord does not initiate "chain letters." Jesus is not saying that if we give \$10 today, we will receive \$20 in the mail tomorrow. Greater than that, the dividend God pays is joy and peace within because we obey Him. Whatever He gives in return, He gives bountifully. The law of bounty described here in the text says that God will multiply what we give to Him. God affords a wonderful law for those who give bountifully; we can never redeem this law until we first experience bountiful sowing.

Q. Share a time in your life when you gave generously (it doesn't have to be financially related), and received a greater reward as a result.

- **Give cheerfully (vs. 7)**

"To purpose in our hearts" means that our giving is not impulsive. Our giving is to be what we carefully think through and pray about. Giving is an inward resolve, not a casual decision. Once we agree on an amount with God, the gift is given cheerfully, not reluctantly. Giving in this fashion is not responding impulsively or from outside pressures. Our great joy comes from grateful giving.

Q. What are some differences between a reluctant giver and a cheerful giver?

- **Provide liberally (vs. 8-11)**

Grace is always greater than the gift. Think of the picture of a small child sitting with a box in his lap. The child lives in war torn Bosnia. The box he is holding is a box from a church member provided through Samaritan's Purse. His eyes are filled with wonder and joy as he explores the contents of the box. Both the giver and the receiver are utterly thankful to

God for His abounding grace. We have all been on both sides of giving, as the giver and the receiver. Just think how God blesses each person in this equation. Joy abounds when we receive, but so much more when we give.

Q. List some of the ways has God made His grace abound to you.

Note in verse 11 - we'll be made rich in every way, so that we can be generous on every occasion. God blesses us with gifts, talents and money, so that we can be generous every chance we get. He gives to us with the intent that we give selflessly and graciously to others.

- **Respond joyfully (vs. 12-14)**

Those receiving our gifts will glorify God. They will know God wanted to meet their needs, yet they never expected their needs would be met so completely. The surprising gift of grace is God's answer to our obedient prayers. Joyful grace resides not in wallets or incomes but in our hearts.

Q. According to these verses, what are some of the eternal results of giving?

- **Be thankful for the indescribable gift (vs. 15)**

God realizes our condition and welcomes us home. Although sin leaves a high water mark on the world, the grace of God completely floods the world. God's indescribable gift is Jesus Christ our Lord. It is only through Christ Jesus and the grace of God that we can give and be examples of God's grace.

Q. What is the best birthday gift you've ever received? How does that gift compare to the gift of grace from Jesus Christ?

WORDS OF WARNING

- We are sometimes tempted to turn grace giving into law. Nothing can kill a heart and soul walking with God like legalism.
- We can fail to hear the call to obedient living because of financial circumstances.
- We can end up focusing on stewardship rather than Christ.
- We may feel virtuous because we have been obedient in the past. Obedience only places us before God; there is no obedience that gains 'brownie points' with God.
- We may isolate or elevate one part of stewardship over another even to the exclusion or neglect of the other needs.
- We may think that God can't possibly provide in our particular situation.

AN EXAMPLE OF AMAZING GRACE

His Christian mother died when he was only seven. He was turned over to unbelieving relatives who scoffed at scriptures she had taught him. He could stand it only so many years, and when he was able to make it on his own, he fled from their home. He lived in the streets of the city. It was there that he picked up the language and the life style of the streets. He lied about his age and joined the Navy. While there, he realized that even though he was an apprentice seaman and loved the sea, he wouldn't be disciplined. He deserted and ran as far as he could to the continent of Africa.

He wrote in his diary "... that I might sin my fill." He had the reputation of being able to curse for two hours without repeating himself. Completely distant from God and hateful in attitude. He fell in with a Portuguese slave trader and there he resigned to live under force. He was treated like an animal and for months he would eat off the ground. The angry and starving man escaped and made his way to the western shores of Africa. He built a fire on the shore that was seen by a passing ship's captain. The captain thought it was a person who wanted to sell ivory, so he sent a small boat for him. The captain was disappointed but allowed him to stay on the ship when he learned he was a skilled navigator. He became the first mate.

While the captain was ashore one day, the man broke out the ship's rum, allowing the entire crew to become inebriated. The captain was so angry that he struck the man and pushed him overboard. He would have drowned except another drunken sailor speared him with a

bate hook and pulled him back into the ship. The rescue put a scar in his side large enough to place his fist. He was then thrown into the hole of the ship to man the pumps or die. Off the coast of Scotland, the ship struck a storm and nearly sank. The man who was manning the pumps, covered in his own vomit, cried out to God.

This desperate man was John Newton. He has since been called the second founder of the Church of England. He became a chaplain of Parliament who preached before the King. This old African, vile, blasphemer was the saint who wrote, "Amazing Grace- how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see."

God really does want all of us. When He gets all of us, we will be excited to give to Him. There will be no worries; we can rely on God's provision. The place of our security is with the Father who extended to us abundant grace. We can't earn our way to grace. We can't even work our way to it.

All we can do is reach up and grab the hook and let Him pull us in. It will mark us for life. The scar in the side of Christ becomes the scar we can place our fist in, and acknowledge that we had a part in putting it there.

PRAYER

Close this series with a meaningful time of prayer. Ask God to fill your hearts with His grace so you joyfully serve Him and gladly give to advance His kingdom. Thank Him for all the wonderful gifts of grace He has given. You may discuss around the group:

- What God has spoken to you in this series with regards to "SURRENDER".....
- What God has revealed to you about "RECEIVING"...
- How God is calling you to ACT in sacrificial obedience in all areas of life including "grace giving"!

Support one another by praying for one another and the unique situations which have been shared!

Scripture and Meditation Guide for March 14-20

This week I would like to encourage you to use the 21 –Days of Prayer guide for you daily encounters with God. These have been available on Sundays as well as through the Point of Grace office.

In addition I included the scriptures below. These are some of my favorite verses which reveal God's dream for me with regards to my heart towards money and giving. It's a challenging dream but a good dream.

Matthew 6 ¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.... ²⁴"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Proverbs 3 ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. ⁸ This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. ⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

1 Timothy 6 ⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹ People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Corinthians 8 ¹ And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ² Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. ⁵ And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

⁷ But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us^[a]—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. ⁸ I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.