

# Grace & Peace

by Bill McLeod

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the relationship between grace and peace, and how God's calling is through Christ Jesus, leading to eternal glory.*

**Duration:** 40:25

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 11:23

**Topics:** "Blessing"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by asserting his qualifications as a minister of Christ, highlighting his experiences and hardships in serving the Lord. He shares instances of being persecuted, beaten, and shipwrecked multiple times. The speaker then transitions to sharing a personal story of witnessing to a man who had drifted away from the church. He prays for an opportunity to witness and catch an eight-pound pickerel, and miraculously, both prayers are answered when two rough-looking commercial fishermen offer him an eight-pound pickerel for free. The sermon emphasizes the importance of suffering and the power of prayer in witnessing and experiencing God's provision.

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## Transcript

Well, good morning. I hope you prayed before you came. And I hope you're praying now.

You can pray with your eyes open, did you know that? You can pray when you're driving your car. The Bible says, I will therefore that men pray everywhere, everywhere, without laugh or doubting. So we're to pray everywhere.

You notice when Paul and Peter, they usually begin their epistles, not always, but usually with grace and peace. And you notice it's always in that order, it's not peace and grace. Does it make a difference? Well, of course it does.

If we don't know the grace of God, we'll never know the peace of God. So grace always comes first. And when people try to mix grace and works, they're at a hopeless task.

For one thing, you'll never know whether you've done enough good works or not. The Bible doesn't really say anything about that. And so if you don't know how many good works you have to do to mix with grace to get to heaven, you'll be living an uncertain life all your life.

It's grace alone. And Paul labors that point in Romans 11. And he points out, if it's of works, it's not of grace.

If it's of grace, it's not of works. You can't mix the two. Yet there are some denominations, and one very large denomination, that says you have to mix the two.

You have to have works as well as grace. But that's not it. Grace and peace.

Grace first, I say, and then comes the peace of God. You know in the Old Testament there's a verse, and it says, Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. We don't have peace unless we're righteous.

If you're not right with God and not right with other people, you'll never have peace. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Well, so we're going to start then with grace.

In 1 Peter 5, verse 10. But the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. And then we'll read another verse from Hebrews chapter 13, last chapter.

Verse 20. Now the God of peace. We read about the God of all grace.

Now we're reading about the God of peace. That brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect, and every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

So we'll go back now to begin 1 Peter chapter 5. The God of all grace. Spurgeon once did a treatise called All Grace, and the Moody-Portage Library, they printed that. I read it as a very young Christian.

The God of grace. And he is the God of grace. Grace and peace.

2 Corinthians 8, remember it says, You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. How rich was Christ? Well since he owns the trillions and trillions and trillions and trillions of stars, he owns them all, and everything in the world he owns, we're only leasing things down here, we don't own anything really. Not eternally we don't.

And so how rich, we can't really compute that, we can just guess. We can cover it by saying everything. Okay.

Though he was rich, yet for your sakes, our sakes, he became poor. What he did, he did for us. Not for himself.

He doesn't need to have glory from us. He doesn't need to have us praise him. If only one person in the world was worshiping and praising God, that would please him.

As well as if all the world was doing that. He doesn't really need it. You see the Bible says, our righteousness adds nothing to God.

And our wickedness takes nothing away from God. He doesn't need us. We need him.

I love that song, I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord, no tender voice like thine can peace afford. So, though he was rich, became poor, and then how poor did he become? Well he had to borrow a penny to illustrate a little talk he was giving. You have to ride in a boar boat and ride in a boar donkey.

It says in John's Gospel, the people all went to their own house. You know what the next statement is? Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. He slept under the trees that night.

And so he said, foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head. He didn't own a house, and frequently slept out in the open. So, for our sakes, what he did, he taught, and practiced, and died, and was rose again, rose again.

All that was done for us, not for God. I mean, God didn't need us. And I say again, he doesn't need us.

He welcomes us. He calls us. But he doesn't really need anything from us.

But the God of all greats, who has called us. Every time the Word of God is preached, God is calling. He called through the Old Testament prophets.

He called through John the Baptist. He called through Christ. He called through twelve apostles.

I remember it was a real experience in India, standing at the shrine where the Apostle Thomas was speared to death. He started six churches in southern India, and then they killed him with a spear. And I stood there in front of him, standing beside the grave of Thomas, the Apostle.

And God called through Thomas. And even today, there's a church called the Mark Thoma Church, which comes from Thomas the Apostle. And they have about 40,000 people in various churches in southern India.

He called us. And God has, as you know, many different ways of calling us. Sometimes he slows us down and stops us.

So we have to listen. I heard somebody saying the other day, how much they learn when they're flat on their back in the hospital. They couldn't get away, they had to listen to whatever God was saying.

And God calling yet, we say in one of our songs, does God still call yet? He calls all through life, actually. It says in Zechariah chapter 7, about Israel. They heard the prophets, but they didn't listen.

And so God said, that I called, and they wouldn't listen. So when they call to me, I won't listen either. And that's what happened.

And then he started them, it says in the same context in Zechariah 7, with a whirlwind among all the nations of the world. And they can pray all they want, God doesn't listen, unless it's a prayer of repentance and they're seeking Messiah. Otherwise their prayers are wasted.

Because when God called, they didn't listen. That happens, of course, to us today. It means the principle involved, if God calls and I don't listen, why should he listen when I call? It's a principle, I say.

He's called us under what? He's called us under his eternal glory. You know, it says elsewhere, that I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. It's been said, and I think truthfully, that five minutes in heaven, in the glory of God, you

won't even be thinking about all the problems you have down here.

I don't think it'll take five minutes to establish that fact. Not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. He has called us to his eternal glory, and in Romans chapter 3 it says, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

He's talking about heaven. We've come short from heaven by our sin. And we have to repent.

Paul said he preached two things, repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. You can't have one without the other. You can try and put faith in Christ, it won't work if you haven't repented.

But always precede. You know, when Christ began his public ministry, as recorded in Mark chapter 1, he said, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel. Repentance first, faith secondly.

And it's always that way. When they said to Peter, men and brethren, what shall I do? I'm talking to twelve. In the day of Pentecost.

The first word he gave them was, repent. I don't know in the Catholic Bible, I don't know, but a modern, there may be a modern Catholic version that's different, but an old way version, repentance is not repentance, it's do penance. Do penance.

It's a world away from the truth that's there. Alright, he's called us to his eternal glory. No matter what kind of experience you're going to have here on earth, on holidays or whatever.

It always comes to an end, right? How long does it last? An hour, two hours, six hours, a day, whatever. But it comes to an end, always. It has to.

That's the way life is. But here, his glory is eternal. There's a great verse in Isaiah 65 that says, he's talking about the coming kingdom of God, and he says, the former will not be remembered or come into mind.

But if you look at it carefully in the context, he's talking about the former troubles. All the troubles we went through, you will not even be able to recall them in the kingdom of God. You'll never be able to remember any of those things.

They'll be gone because, you see, it's eternal glory. And he's called us to this by his grace. It says, by Christ Jesus.

There's no other way. You can join any church you want to join. The biggest church in America.

There are some churches in America where the Sunday morning crowd is 30,000 people. Now, you can join a church like that. Is it going to help you? It won't get you any closer to heaven.

Because that has nothing to do with it. I often think, often think, of the thief on the cross. You know, at the beginning, both thieves were hurling implications at Christ.

Why didn't you save us and get us off this? And they both did that. But after a while, as the one thief watched Christ and heard what he said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. He repented, this priest, this crook did.

And he turned to Christ. How many good works did he have? He didn't have any. He was a crook, a thief.

And suffering, as he said, you reward for our deeds. We're getting what we deserve to get, he said to the other thief. What did he have to give? What could he offer to God? Well, really nothing.

And his prayer was simply, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. There was both repentance and faith in that sentence of his. And Christ said, today, you'll be with me in paradise.

And so from hanging on a cross to eternal glory, paradise of God was what happened to the thief, who never had a single solitary good work to offer God, and couldn't offer any good works after he got saved. I mean, he went directly that day to glory. He wasn't even baptized.

Can you fancy that? Somebody being in heaven that wasn't baptized? Of course I can feature that. Paul said, listen, Paul said, Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Now, he was not decrying baptism, he was just saying that baptism is not part of the gospel.

It follows the gospel. It's something we should do, yes. John the Baptist said, he has sent me to baptize.

Oh, so John was sent to baptize. He was told that it was a baptism of repentance, so he called it that. So, call to his eternal glory, by Christ Jesus.

If Jesus doesn't do it, it doesn't get done. And you can have an emotional experience, and some people and I have very powerful emotional experiences, that Christ is not even in the experience. And so, it doesn't really mean anything.

As people have told me occasionally, whenever I think of Christ dying on the cross, I can't help but cry. Then you discover they're not even born again. And somehow they feel their tears are going to bring them a little closer to God.

You see, repentance really is a total change of mind. Turning around, facing God, whereas before my back was to God, and I was walking away. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

That's repentance, you see. Isaiah 55. So it's by Christ Jesus.

You know, sometimes people like to brag how they were saved in one of Billy Graham's meetings, or some other well-known person, as if that's going to add a little bit of awe. Some people say, you know, I was baptized in the River Jordan. Really? Were you baptized in oil? What were you baptized in that makes it any different? I mean, if I'm baptized, Indian people, sometimes they baptize inside a canoe.

They fill a canoe with water and baptize them in the canoe. That's every bit as good as being baptized in the River Jordan, you know. But there are people who go to that expense, and trouble of being baptized in the Jordan River, somehow feeling it got them a little closer to God.

No, no. It doesn't get you any closer to God. And I wouldn't advise that.

I wouldn't want to waste my money. But I wouldn't want to be baptized in the Jordan River. I don't need that anyway.

By Christ Jesus. It's what he has done. In my church, here in Saskatoon, there was a man.

We had taken in a bunch of people, and to join the church, you had to give your testimony at the prayer meeting. Then they would be dismissed, and the prayer people, we vote as to whether we want to hear about their testimony. We'd set them aside, and we'd let them know we'd like you to think about it a little further.

And so that worked quite well. This particular fellow, he worked at a radio station, and had a good job. And I think he had a high opinion of himself, but he wanted to join.

And so I explained to him, he had to give his testimony before the prayer meeting. Well, Wednesday night he couldn't be there. And so he said, what we want you to do is, when you get up there, take a few minutes, no preaching or anything, no telling long stories, just simply tell us how you found Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

He walks up to the platform, he goes like, this is all he said. The big boy upstairs and me were just like that. And he headed for his seat.

And you know what happened? He ran around. He was so angry, he left the church and we never saw him again. You can't and we shouldn't talk about the big boy upstairs when you stop to think of who God is.

Remember, he counted all the stars, he counted all, yes he did, that's what it says, and I say it. And then he named them all. But there are trillions times trillions times trillions times trillions and more trillions of stars.

To even count the stars in the Milky Way constellation of which we're a part would be an impossible task for any human being. But he did that. And it's recorded in the Bible to help us understand how awesome and how great and powerful this God is.

By the word of the Lord he called a host of them by the breath of his mouth. He spoke and it was done. He commanded and they stood fast.

He fills the heavens and the earth we're told. Do we believe it? How great is your God? And to be born again it has to be done by God, his Spirit. As we see in the text here the God of all grace eternal glory by Christ Jesus by Christ Jesus.

We are converted by Christ. Have you really received him personally? Has there been a time in your life when you turned away from your sin and asked God to forgive you and then invited Christ to enter your life and become your personal Savior your God. There has to be otherwise baptized or not you'll never make it to the glory land.

Now it says here continuing the same text in 1 Peter 5 10 it says call to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus after that. After that what? After that you have suffered a while. Why does it say that? We'll just go on.

After that you have suffered a while make you perfect and then settle you. We may suffer economically. I know when we first went preaching and the church paid us thirty dollars a month we sometimes suffered economically.

I mean if some people hadn't dropped off a bag of turnips or potatoes and some guy hadn't come by with three hams one day we might have starved. But you know if you go back to death serving God you'll be an object of wonder in heaven because you'll be the only one. And that's true because he's pledged to look

after our needs.

And I remember reading about a fellow he was in Hong Kong and trapped there by the Japanese in jail. Food was extremely scarce. They used to come in each day with a wheelbarrow loaded with moldy bread from the latrine and they had to fish the bread out of this latrine.

And one day this fellow in his celly was looking out the window and he saw a fellow sitting with his back to the fence. And he saw as he watched that a guy came from the other side and was slipped him a couple of bananas. And he said oh he said if I could only taste a banana.

And he prayed and said Lord I know you're the God of the universe and that's an impossible thing but Lord could I have some bananas? He woke up in the morning and there's a big bunch of bananas on the floor. He didn't really know how he got there but it happened. He's the God of the impossible.

Don't ever feel that God can't do certain things. The only thing God can't do is he can't fail. And some of you heard maybe not all of you this time we were fishing north of Gimli on one of those cement docks you know.

You can drive under the car truck. And I was fishing there but no one is getting there's four maybe I don't know ten people on the dock fishing. I'm fishing getting nothing and I pray the prayer.

Lord I said I'd like to have an eight pound pickerel and I'd like to be able to witness to somebody about you. That was my prayer. Shortly after a truck drove up in the dock and he stopped quite close to us.

I looked there was two young guys in there they both looked kind of rough. I thought later on they were commercial fishermen they were on the dock waiting for the boss to come in the boat. They just sat there I wonder what they're doing here.

They're not fishing they're just sitting in there and he pulled down the tailgate of the truck and he pulled out an eight pound pickerel and he offered to a fellow standing there he said no he didn't want it. So he offered it to me. I said how much do you want? He said it's free it doesn't cost anything.

It was a beautiful beautiful fish I tell you. So I got witnessing to him. Remember that was the other half of the prayer.

Turned out as a kid he went to Sunday school all his days and then he drifted away from the church working day and night and so on. But I had a chance to witness. So I got both my prayers answered.

You know if I told that story in some company they wouldn't believe it. Do you believe it? You better because of that. After that you have suffered a while.

So you may suffer economically you may suffer emotionally and sometimes when you're caught up in things that we can't really control and it's hard to handle. But no matter what we're going to see as we look at the other text in 1 Peter chapter 5 pardon me in Hebrews chapter 13 that there's a reason for all of this. Emotionally, spiritually sometimes we get confused we don't really know whether we should go this way that way do this do that, go up or go down we don't really know.

And we get counseling and yet that doesn't always answer the problem either. Although we appreciate people that show an interest in us in our times of trial. And so he says after that after that you have suffered a while.

And I'm sure most of us know the catalog of Paul's suffering just in case some of you don't I'm going to turn there and read and listen carefully and then see how it applies to you. It's in 2 Corinthians and it's chapter 11 now let's see here listen to it Paul I speak as concerning reproach as though we had been weak copy it, whensoever any is bold I speak foolishly I am bold also Are they Hebrews? So am I Are they Israelites? So am I Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I Are they ministers of Christ?

I speak as a fool I am law and labor is more abundant in stripes above measure in prisons more frequent in deaths often of the Jews 5 times I received 40 stripes, they won 3 times I was beaten with rods 3 times I was no once I was stoned 3 times I suffered shipwreck a night and a day I have been in the deep in perils of waters in perils of robbers in perils by my own countrymen in perils by the heathen in perils in the city in perils in the wilderness in perils in the sea in perils among false brethren in weariness and painfulness in watchings often in hunger and thirst in fastings often in cold and nakedness beside those things that are outside that which comes on me daily of all the churches how does your sufferings line up with that?

I mean you see Paul when Ananias came to him in the day of his conversion God said to Ananias I will show him how great things he must suffer for my sake if we suffer for his sake thank God, that's part of the story you know after that you suffered a while we don't like that but there he is when I went to get see I was a surgeon just before my operation on my left shoulder he looked at both shoulders and then he said which one do you want me to operate on? well you know what that meant the other was as bad one was as bad as the other and so I said well try the left one so he did the left one praising the Lord and someday maybe it will get done and someday it will get done when Jesus blows the trumpet it will all happen then so the God of all grace who has called us under his eternal glory

by Christ Jesus after that you suffered a while make you perfect establish strengthen settle you to him be glory and dominion amen now we'll turn over to Hebrews chapter 13 remember grace and peace we thought about grace now we've come to peace now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work to do as well working in you that which is well pleasing to him be glory forever and ever amen he speaks about that great shepherd of the sheep he's called the good shepherd that gives his life to the sheep he's called the great shepherd that was raised from the dead he's called the chief shepherd when the chief shepherd shall appear will appear with him and for

servicing God in his glory he's talking really in that context to Christian workers to pastor a great shepherd a chief shepherd our shepherd in my church in Saskatoon over the platform there was a big panel and it said the Lord is my shepherd big letters like this you know the Lord is my shepherd one day in the office I heard somebody come into the church and went out to see who it was and there was a stranger standing there and he walked to the auditorium and he read this out loud the Lord is my shepherd no he really isn't you know what? it says the Lord is my shepherd that's true that's what that says can you say that? and we had quite a talk he never quite got it I can't say I led him to Christ but I did try the Lord is not my shepherd because I know the 23rd Psalm there are thousands of

people who know the 23rd Psalm off by heart who will never see heaven that's the problem the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep never forget we are sheep all we like sheep we've gone astray we've turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the Hebrew language says exactly and God has made the iniquities of us all to rest on him that's it all your sins were put on him he suffered for your sins you know have you ever stopped to think of this how in the world can Christ answer 6 million people praying at the same time he likely has that problem every

now and then because there are millions of believers in the world and they may all be praying at the same time all around the world how in the world can God do anything

about that have you ever stopped to think it through you know God's intellect is without measure it helps me to understand how great this God is that he can do a thing like that it's no problem to God so because he can be personal to every person in the world and still be the God of the universe Paul said Christ loved me and gave himself for me I struggled with that one time I came across a verse in Isaiah 53 it says that in his death he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich ok but I noticed some marginal reading says that the Hebrew said in his death it's in the plural not in the singular so I thought why is it in the plural and praying and thinking about that I came up with the thought you don't have to accept this as being something from God I saw when Christ died on the

cross he didn't die for a blob of sinners he didn't say see maybe 3 million people down the corridor of time that are going to repent and get saved he didn't die for a blob of sinners he died for us personally and because of his immense being I hate to use the word intellect but maybe it will help us to understand he was able on the cross to carry your sins personally and carry your sins personally that's why he speaks about his death that's why Paul could say Christ loved me and gave himself for me and you can say the same if you are a Christian believer he died for you in a very personal sense and way make any sense you can say hallelujah if you want it's almost time to quit the God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep through the blood

that's his blood of the everlasting covenant we have an eternal covenant with God that will never be broken it's ours, his, forever and one thing God can never do is forget his people so when he died he was thinking of you thinking of me he's still thinking of us and planning for us he said I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also and where I go you know and the way you know Thomas said well we don't know where you're going and how can we know the way no man comes unto the Father but by me so he's trying to make us perfect the word perfect in the Bible usually means mature fully grown not sinless seeking to be sinless but we can never reach that in this life and so mature

make you perfect in every good work to do his will working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever Amen by the way the book of Hebrews as you know is the only book in the Bible that starts with the word God and how does it end well we just read it through Jesus Christ verse 21 oh there's several verses after that but there's sort of an appendage that he's added so whatever he does he does and has done through Christ everything is in Christ all the fullness of God in Christ and God accomplished his eternal purposes in sending his son one of the things we need to do is thank God for the trials we go through the sufferings we go through at times and I remember reading with Spurgeon one time he said he was suffering terribly and

he had to ask all the people to leave the room and when they were gone he prayed and said dear God if I was you and you were me I wouldn't let you suffer this way and he said I mean you the suffering just disappeared it was gone but he suffered terribly until the day he died age 56 from gout and respiratory problems great preacher though he was his sermons have been translated to 12 languages scattered around the world and they say now there are 400 million of his sermons scattered around the world greatly used of God but a very humble person and he suffered and if we're going to be used of God we have to prepare for sufferings of different kinds as we know about Paul don't forget 2 Corinthians chapter 11 when you feel your trials are too great let's just pray father thank you for these

reflections from your perfect word we do our best but our best is not perfect ever but someday father we'll be where you are and as we've thought about eternal glory the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared and father we just want to thank you for helping us understand what things really are often father we start comparing ourselves with others and wonder why they don't go through the kind of trials we go through that's not our business we're to praise God no matter what happens no matter what happens thank you lord for blessing us the songs we sang the fellowship together the word of God and to you all I say grace and peace from the lord Jesus Christ amen I'm I'm

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