

# Grace Is The Difference Maker In The New Covenant

by Sandeep Poonen

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*This sermon delves into the profound concept of grace, contrasting it with the Old Covenant's emphasis on loving kindness. It emphasizes the crucial step of being justified before receiving grace, highlighting the transformative power of understanding and embracing righteousness. The sermon stresses the importance of looking forward to the return of Jesus as a mark of true grace, urging believers to prioritize this blessed hope above earthly desires. Ultimately, it calls for a deep reflection on God's righteousness and the humility required to receive His grace.*

**Scripture:** Romans 5:1, Luke 18:14, Titus 2:11, Philippians 3:9, Revelation 22:21

**Topics:** "Grace", "Righteousness"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I wanted to share a couple of thoughts. I don't know if you remember, one of the things that I decided in 2021, one of the subjects that I was going to concentrate on was the subject of grace. And I thank the Lord for giving me that burden for myself because I have come to learn some more things about grace and I've come to appreciate grace in a new way, in a bigger way than I had before.

So I really appreciate God putting that on my heart and I hope that the Lord has many more things to teach me about grace. I want to explain it this way. What is the most important word in the Old Covenant? What is a word that you'll find repeated over and over again in the Old Testament and as it describes to the Old Covenant? If you think about David and the songs that he wrote, what is a word that comes to your mind when you were to think about the Old Covenant? It may not be a word that you're thinking about.

I don't know what you're thinking about, but this is the word that I see all over, spread out the Old Covenant and the Old Testament as well. It's a beautiful word. It's one of the most beautiful words even in

the Jewish religion.

If you ask Jewish scholars, if you ask rabbis, what is a word in the Hebrew language that you meditate on as you think about their Bible? It's the word loving kindness. That's the English word. The Hebrew word is something else, but it's the word loving kindness.

That is the word. It's such an interesting word that they couldn't shorten it. It's not love.

It's not kindness. It's loving kindness. That is a word that you see all over the Old Covenant.

You see David singing much about the old, the loving kindness of God. You know, we've talked a lot about the loving kindness of God. We talk a lot about love and it's more than just love.

It's loving kindness that God has bestowed upon us. But one thing that I'm realizing is we can have the loving kindness of God and we can have the love of God and it can be a thoroughly Old Covenant idea. David sang long and hard about the loving kindness of God.

That's what we also can revel in, the love of God. You know, we've talked long and hard about the love of God. God is a father.

And there's something about God as a father that's greater than what the Old Testament saints ever had. But loving kindness was all over them in the Old Covenant. When we come to the New Covenant, the greatest word in the New Covenant is not loving kindness.

It's the word grace. Grace is what was brought through the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what it says in John chapter 1 verse 17.

Grace was introduced through the Lord Jesus Christ. So when we want to differentiate between what we are and what a faithful man like Daniel was, the difference that what we have that Daniel never had was grace because grace came through Jesus Christ. It says that the law and all of this in the Old Testament came through Moses, but grace comes through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so it helps us to understand and to really embrace grace so that we can understand its power over us as Christians more than the love of God. So I want to explain just a couple of things that the Lord has impressed on my heart to understand the difference between love and grace. The love of God came over people in the Old Covenant, but it could never penetrate into people, into our hearts.

Jesus talks about rivers of living water flowing from our innermost beings. Romans 5 says the hope doesn't disappoint because the love of God has been poured into our hearts. The Old Covenant couldn't have that.

And so grace is what we get as a result of the love of God being poured into our hearts. The love of God when it comes into our hearts gives us grace. But there's another in-between word between loving kindness and the love of God and grace that we have to embrace and realize.

And I feel, I've felt for many years that there's a word in between love and grace that most Christians have not grabbed a hold of, including me, which is why my understanding of grace is so limited and why I don't have the power that grace offers me. There's a word in between love and grace and that word is righteous, justified. That word is what makes love into grace.

And that's what the Old Covenant saints never had. The Old Covenant saints were never justified, so they could never have grace. They could never get grace because they were never justified.

And it wasn't that God was withholding grace from them, but they couldn't get the power of grace in their lives because they were never justified or considered righteous. What does it mean to be considered righteous? That means that you've got to stand before God as if you've never sinned and you've totally obeyed. Otherwise you're kicked out of heaven.

You deserve to be in hell. If I were to live the next 50 years of my life not sinning even once, I'd still go to hell if it wasn't for righteous justification and what Christ did. Let me repeat what I said.

Dear brothers and sisters, young man, young woman, if you were to have victory over sin and never sin for the next 80 years, some of you are 10, 12, 14, 15. If you were to live the next 85 years and not sin even once, you would still go to hell if it wasn't for God's justification which says you can be called righteous. That's what was missing for Daniel and Samuel.

And so all the love of God could only pour over them and wash over them and clean them on the outside but never could get into them because their vessels on the inside were not worthy or clean enough to hold the love of God. That is what justification is. Let me show you a verse about grace that most people don't know.

I didn't know for many years. If you told me to do a bible study on grace, I would not have gone to this verse. Romans chapter 5 verse 1 and 2. Romans is a wonderful progression of the Christian life and it starts with all of us being sinners.

Paul takes two or three chapters to say we're all sinners and then he says we are sinners. Romans 3 verse 23, all falling short of the glory of God. But then he says you don't get grace now.

No, first Paul says you have to become justified first. You have to be righteous. And see Romans chapter 5 verse 1, therefore having been justified by faith, verse 5, we have our introduction by faith into grace.

You can't get to grace without first being righteous. So let me explain that to you in my personal life and the practical life. The reason we don't have power, young man, young woman, older man, older woman, doesn't matter who it is, all of us, do we not have power in some area in our life? It is because we don't have grace.

Why is it that we don't have grace when the love of God has been poured over us? There's a very important step in between love of God and grace, which is the power we get to overcome sin. And the in-between step is being justified. And here's what it means, that you have to have an encounter with God where you see that God looks at you as if you've always obeyed.

That's massive, that's massive, especially after you've sinned. That is why we sin, we never receive grace after we sin, because we never have an encounter with God where we are justified. We believe in the truth, we can explain it to other people, but after we fall into sin, we're flattened, we're on our face because of our sin.

What needs to happen before we can get grace which is the power to overcome sin? You need something else. You need God to pick you up, stand you before him in Christ and say, you're totally righteous. Now that'll blow me away if he did that.

Me, horrible sinner that I am, if I really thought I was a sinner because I blew it and I fell on my face and God picked me up and put a robe of righteousness on me and said, I'm going to throw a feast over you, that'll humble me. How can it not? Otherwise, we've got to counterfeit grace. Otherwise, we've got a cheap grace that is why we never find the power of grace.

And I find that we often skip too quickly from, I'm a sinner, so now I need grace. I say, Lord, please help me again, I need grace. But I miss the missing in-between step of being justified.

And that is why we keep emphasizing what the love of God and the prodigal son does to us, which means he brings us into the home and has a feast and dresses us with the robe of righteousness, gives us a ring, which is a symbol of his power to us. He puts sandals on our feet, which is a symbol of us being able to speak the good news to other people. He dresses us from head to toe and throws a feast over us and then says, now do what I tell you to do.

And so quickly, we want to go from we're sinners, we need grace. And we think humility is just saying I'm a horrible sinner. It's not just that.

Let me show you this verse in Luke chapter 18. One of the classic pictures of one of the classic pictures of humility is in Luke chapter 18. The story of the Pharisee and the publican, the Pharisee and the tax collector.

It's a classic story of pride and humility. You've got the Pharisee who's praying to himself saying, Lord, I thank you that I'm not like these other people and this other sinner. And then you've got the tax collector, verse 13, who can't even lift up his eyes, who's saying, beating his breast and saying, God, be merciful to me, the sinner.

And I have that template as that is the picture of humility. But that is not the end of humility, because here's the promise for all people who are humble. Have you embraced true humility, the humility of the tax collector? You have to go to verse 14.

I tell you, this man went home justified. Verse 14, the rest of the verse, because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted. He who throws a ball up, the ball will come down.

That's the law of gravity. What is the law of humility? He who humbles himself will be exalted to sit on God's lap. So what do we say about a humility because of our falling into sin that doesn't result in justification, doesn't result in us being exalted back onto the father's lap? It's a false humility.

It's a humility that goes beyond what God wanted us to have a humility about. All of our humility was supposed to get us back to being exalted back onto the father's lap. And if I've missed that step, that's the reason why I'm missing grace.

And I found that that was something I want to speak, especially to the young people here, because you teenagers, 20 somethings, it's an incredibly important missing step that I missed for many years. I didn't take the time to recognize God saying, before you can receive grace, recognize that I call you righteous. Not I call you forgiven.

Not I call you son. I call you a son who's totally obeyed. Hard to imagine, hard to grasp, only possible if God looks at Christ instead of me.

That is where gratitude comes from. That is where enduring humility comes from to receive the grace. It is not the humility that I'm a sinner.

Dear brothers and sisters, young people, listen to me. Jesus had grace and he never sinned. So our humility must exceed just a humility because we've sinned.

We must reach for the grace of Jesus Christ who never sinned. What is the grace that Jesus received who never sinned? What is the humility of Jesus who never sinned? We who are sinners, we fall on our faces, we sin. So we become humble.

That's not yet the humility of Jesus Christ. The humility of Jesus Christ is that God looks at us just as he looked at Jesus. And Jesus is flattened by that.

I'm a man, who am I that you should pay attention to me? Jesus had that prayer too. That's our mate. And it's that lifting up to sit on God's lap after we have fallen that is the source of our humility, of the Christ-like humility that says, God now I can receive grace.

It is the power of God's love that really goes into our hearts, not just poured over us. And so dear brothers and sisters, let's not reach too quickly for grace after we've sinned. Let us repent.

Let us then hear the Lord's voice telling you, I call you righteous before we reach for grace. And that doesn't have to happen right away. We may need to dwell in that.

We may need to dwell in that and meditate in the righteousness of God through faith. That Paul longed for after years of being a Christian. Philippians chapter 3. I consider it all rubbish so that I may be found in him having a righteousness that is by faith.

I have been crucified with Christ. The life I now live is by faith in the Son of God. Is that righteousness that comes by faith? That's what he longed for.

He said, once I have that, I have got grace. Grace is easily accessible to me because I'm blown away by the righteousness of God. That is something that we need to look forward to.

One other thing about grace. Here's another passage that most of us don't think about when we think about grace. Titus chapter 2. One more thing, dear brothers and sisters, about grace.

Again, a thing that I don't think I had thought much about. If you had asked me a year ago, without reading your Bible, without opening up your Bible, without doing a Bible study on grace, describe grace, explain grace, I would not have talked about what I shared the first point, which is righteousness of God. We need to grab a hold of that.

That is how we're able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the devil. But here's another thing that I didn't realize. Titus chapter 2, verse 11 through 14 and 15.

This is the grace of God. It says very clearly this is the grace of God that has been given to us. Bringing salvation to all men.

This is the grace of God. Multiple things. Bringing salvation to all men.

Instructing us to deny ungodliness. I knew about that and worldly desires. Here's also part of grace.

To live sensibly, righteous and godly in the present age. A lot of things to study about that too. You can do that.

But here's what I wanted to underline. Verse 13. This is what I didn't understand grace was.

Everyone who's living under grace has verse 13. Also, not only denying worldliness, not only living sensibly and godly, but the third thing, verse 13. Looking for the and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

I recently left, switched my jobs. I'm working for a different company now. And you know, in my last couple of weeks of being at my old company, I was looking forward to my next company.

It was great to just delete all your emails that I've been piling up and say, okay, I'm going to start afresh. Blank, fresh new inbox. All of those old things.

It doesn't really matter. Two weeks from now, looking forward to a new job. Here's what Titus tells me to do.

You're just like any other earthly person that that's what you're looking forward to. Your children graduating, your children giving their hearts to the Lord, you know, bonus, this happening, that happening. All of these things are deeply secondary for the Christian.

The Christian is looking for the appearing of Jesus Christ. That's a mark of having grace in my life. That I hate everything of this earth.

Loved ones, possessions, my selfish desires. I'm hating it. And I'm looking forward though.

I'm not a man without hope. I'm not a person without desires. I have strong desires for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So I must keep getting excited about only one thing. Jesus is coming back soon. Not because I got sick.

Not because I heard somebody was dying. Not because somebody died and I can't wait to see them. No, no, no, no, no, no.

Way beyond that. Because he's my hero. He's the one who died for me.

That's a mark of grace. I can't wait to be done with this world. For me to live is Christ, to die is gain.

I understand these passages now because this was a man who was under grace. And I find that so many of my dreams, 99% of my dreams are earthly still. And the Lord showed me, I don't know how much grace you have, because you don't have much of a blessed hope.

You say it, you talk about it, you sing about it on Sundays, but look at your life. Look at your daily lives. You're dreaming and you are looking forward to the blessed hope.

This is what the grace does to you. It helps you deny ungodliness. It helps you to live sensibly and it makes you have a living hope.

Why? Because look at what he did for you in verse 14. He gave himself for you. Verse 15, these things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority.

Let no one disregard you. Paul was very sober when he was talking about this. This is part of grace that we start letting go of our past failures and start looking forward to Jesus coming back.

We start disregarding all the way the world looks at us and calls us a failure or whatever it is, or a success. Say, Lord, my only blessed hope is that you're coming back. You know what's the last verse in the Bible? Children, you know what the last verse in the Bible is? Last verse in the Bible, Revelation 22-21.

What is it? The love of the Lord Jesus be with you. The loving-kindness of the Lord Jesus be with you. The grace of the Lord Jesus.

Not the love of God, not the love of God, but the grace. It's more than loving-kindness to your brothers that come over and sisters that come over us. It's the grace of God that the love comes into us because of the righteousness of God and gives us power.

Grace is power. Grace means we're the richest people on the earth. We get that grace because it's a response to being humbled by God saying you're righteous.

We have to dwell in that. We have to meditate on what it means for God to say you're righteous, just like God called Jesus righteous. We must dwell on what it means for a totally holy God who doesn't stand even a dot of sin and ask yourself, what business am I doing standing before this God who doesn't tolerate the single speck of sin? 1 John 1.5, God is light and in whom there's no spot of darkness in him.

What am I doing standing in God's presence? I must dwell on that thought before I say, well, before God asks me, what do you want? Let me ask myself, what am I doing in God's presence, the holy almighty God without a speck of sin? What happened? How did that happen? Justified, righteous. Dwell on that. Meditate on that.

Meditate on that. Study the messages that we've talked about, the justification of God. Think hard about it.

That's your entrance into grace, dear brothers and sisters. That's God's word. It's your entrance into grace.

You want to overcome sin? You need grace. You want to be entered into the life of grace? You need to grab ahold of justification by faith. The grace, not just the love of God, the grace.

Pursue it. Pursue it. And it's not the grace of Yahweh, old covenant God.

It's the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ who died and gave himself up for us so that we may be his precious possession. That is our life. May the Lord anoint what I've said.

Ignore the human parts. Erase it from your memory, but highlight and anoint what was of him so that it may bear fruit in our lives. It's beyond all the emotional pleas or passion or whatever it is they may have.

My voice, that's meaningless. I get excited sometimes, but one drop of the Holy Spirit is what we need. You know that.

We know that. So, if I've spoken with a loud voice, ignore that. Give it all away for just one drop of the Holy Spirit to anoint something from God's word, even if it is nothing I've said, from God's word that can bring eternal life, that can change us from being insecure people who have self-pity, not true humility, to have humility that exalts us back into his presence and lets us live before him with confidence and let us walk, let us come before the throne of great God with boldness.

This is a holy boldness that we need. It's not a casual, flippant boldness. It's a holy boldness, but we need that to access grace.

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