

SERMON NOTES - GraceNotes - Eternity / Hidden Hand

These notes are designed to be read along with the associated audio / video message

1. Intro, Recap & Eternity

God's grace is essential to Christianity, and it is multifaceted.

- Eph 2:8-9 NKJV - "8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast."
- 1 Peter 4:10 NKJV - "10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the **manifold grace** of God." NIV - "*grace in its various forms.*" ESV - "*God's varied grace*" NASB - "*the multifaceted grace of God*"
- Elements of grace - more than one part - Mercy, Justice, Abundance/Empowering. They must all be understood in order to be enjoyed - we can't just pick one part or overemphasise only one. They must also be joined together - they can't be isolated from each other.

This week's element = A bigger plan, **Eternity...** a "Hidden Hand"

It's not only that God has been kind and generous to me in saving me - His grace has also been working in all the circumstances around me to bring me to Him, to cause me to grow in Him, and to keep me close to Him. It seems all things are conspiring for my growth and good.

Let me explain what I mean by eternity - and what the Bible says.

We think that there is THIS life and world, and then Eternity starts after that; like an extremely long piece of string.

The Bible picture is more like a ruler floating in the air.

Judgement day (Rev 20 - when people get assigned to heaven or hell) has everyone there all at once - so it must be at the end of time, right? Yet, there are people in Heaven right now (Eph 3:15), and so we see eternity is actually all around us and timeless.

Eternity is also where God dwells (Is 57:15), and where miracles happen and His will is done (Mat 6:10).

Ecc 3:11 NKJV — "11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end."

2. His Hidden Hand Called and Chose us

2 Timothy 1:9 NKJV - "9 who has **saved** (*sozo*) us and **called** (*kaleō*) us with a holy calling (*klēsis*), not according to our works, but according to His own **purpose** (*prothesis*) and **grace** (*charis*) which was given to us in Christ Jesus **before time began**,"

GRACE WAS GIVEN "BEFORE TIME BEGAN". Key words: "called", "purpose", "grace", "before time began".

called (*kaleō*) - "to call anyone, invite, summon". Who is called? What does it mean to be called? Have I been called? What happens when you are called?

SOME EXTRA NOTES NOT IN THE TALK - has God called and drawn all people? Yes.

called vs chosen

Mat 22:14 NKJV - "14 "For many are called, but few are chosen.""

Tit 2:11-12 NKJV - "11 For the grace of God that brings salvation **has appeared to all men**, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,"

Jhn 6:44 NKJV - "44 "No one can come to Me **unless the Father who sent Me draws him**; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Jhn 12:32 NKJV - "32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, **will draw all peoples to Myself.**"

SOME EXTRA NOTES NOT IN THE TALK

Without God reaching out to us FIRST none of us could find Him or be saved:

Psa 10:4, The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.

Eph 2:3, ...[we] were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Eph 4:18, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.

His own **purpose** (*prothesis*) -

Prothesis / Protithemi - "a setting forth" (used of the "shewbread"), "a purpose" -

Boulema - "Purpose" / "counsel" - "a deliberate intention," (He will make this happen)

Thele / Thelema - will, desire, pleasure - (what He wants to happen but it requires others' choices / willingness)

1Ti 2:4 - "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Mat 18:14 - "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

Jhn 7:17 NKJV - "17 "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority."

Grace (*charis*) - A "Grace Note". "Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace"

"before time began"* (2 Timothy 1:9) = "*pro chronos aionios*" "before/above times eternal" ("from all eternity" NASB.)

The sentence doesn't really make sense because if time had not begun yet, how can we use the word "before"? How can there be something "before" time? It must mean "outside" time...

Eternity.

There is an element of grace that passes between or over the barrier between time and eternity.

3. His Hidden Hand Blesses and works all things for our good & keeps (holds) us

Rom 8:28-39 NKJV - "28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His **purpose**.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also **justified**; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

37 Yet in all these things we are more than **conquerors** through Him who loved us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

4. Our part - allow His Grace to work in us and through us

- Stay / abide in His hand - 2Pe 1:10 NKJV - "10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;"

2Pe 1:5-11 NKJV - "5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness

love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Mat 24:13 NKJV - "13 "But he who endures to the end shall be saved."

- Don't take His Grace "in vain"

2Co 6:1 NKJV - "1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the **grace** of God in vain."

Gal 2:21 NKJV - "21 "I do not set aside the **grace** of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.""

1Co 15:10 NKJV - "10 But by the **grace** of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

1Co 9:26-27 NKJV - "26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

Heb 12:15 NKJV - "15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the **grace** of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;"

4. Final thoughts and questions

- How can I tell if I am called and chosen? Jhn 6:44 NKJV - "44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." Are you drawn to Him? That is God drawing you. Respond.
- Put yourself in his hand by Believing and receiving - Eph 1:11-13 NKJV - "11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,"
- He will hold you - His hand is very strong
John 10:28-29 NKJV ""And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."
Isa 49:16 NKJV - "16 See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me."
Eph 5:30 NKJV - "30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones."
2Ti 2:11-13 NKJV - "11 This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. 12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."
- Humility is Key
Jas 4:6 ESV - "6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.""
- Come boldly
Heb 4:16 NKJV - "16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Small group discussion guidelines

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

1 - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

2 - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

3 - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do PRACTICALLY in response to this teaching?

4 - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

The blessing and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.