

Grace to You

Have you noticed how we greet each other? “Hi, how are you?” “What’s up?” “How is the world treating you?” And, if we are good friends, we may say, “Good to see you!” and give a hug.

It makes me wonder how God would greet us. I don’t know for sure, but I like to think he would greet us like he did in many of St. Paul’s letters: “Grace to you, and peace.” (1 Corinthians 1:3, NASB)

“Grace to you.” One definition of grace is “God’s unmerited favor in the face of deserved wrath.” “Unmerited” means we can’t earn God’s favor. “Favor” is kindness as in “Would you do me a favor?” Ephesians 2:8-9 speaks of this grace: “For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”

It is by God’s kindness we have been delivered from God’s wrath. It is by God’s favor we have been forgiven. It is by God’s grace we are God’s children. God’s grace that saved us is by means of our faith in Jesus Christ. It is God who showed us grace in saving us, and it is God who continues to give his unmerited favor to us. Other people may or may not be gracious, kind and understanding. God is gracious. Our circumstances may be difficult. We may have financial worries. We may have health issues. We have three foes that definitely are not gracious: the world, the flesh and the devil.

So, in the midst of people who may not be gracious or in the midst of difficult circumstances, we have a God who is on our side. He gives us the grace to face relationship challenges and other problems in our lives. Psalm 46:1 speaks of a God who is there in the midst of trying times: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” We are inclined to think that if God is with me, I have no trouble, and if I am having trouble, God is not with me. The truth is we have a gracious God who is “a very present help in trouble.” He is right there when we struggle through losses. He says to us “Grace to you.” The problems don’t disappear, but we have a God who gives us grace to face life as we reach out to him.

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase,
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.

His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men,
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

~Annie Johnson Flint~



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