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Dear Heavenly Father,

We gather before You today with hearts full of gratitude and reverence. We thank You for the privilege of coming together as a community of believers to worship and learn more about Your boundless love and grace. Open our hearts and minds as we delve into Your Word, seeking to understand the profound truth of Your grace that saves us. May Your Holy Spirit guide us, teach us, and fill us with a deeper awareness of Your presence. Bless this time we spend together, and let Your grace abound in our lives.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Today, we gather to explore one of the most profound and foundational truths of our faith: the grace of God. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, writes in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

Grace is the unmerited favour of God. It is His loving kindness and mercy extended to us, not because of anything we have done, but simply because of His great love for us. Grace is not something we can earn or achieve through our efforts. It is a gift, freely given by God.

To fully appreciate the concept of grace, we must first understand its depth and significance. Grace is the cornerstone of our Christian faith, the very essence of our relationship with God. In the Old Testament, we see glimpses of God's grace through His covenant with Israel, His patience with their disobedience, and His provision for their needs. Yet, it is in the New Testament that the fullness of God's grace is revealed through Jesus Christ.

To fully appreciate the magnitude of God's grace, we must first understand our need for it. The Bible tells us in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Sin separates us from God and makes us deserving of His judgment. But in His infinite love, God chose to bridge the gap between us and Him through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ.

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Our human condition is one of brokenness and separation from God. Sin is not just the wrong things we do; it is a condition of the heart that affects every aspect of our being. We are born into sin, and it distorts our relationship with God, with others, and with ourselves. Without God's intervention, we are lost, unable to save ourselves or to restore the broken relationship with our Creator.

Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate demonstration of God's grace. He took upon Himself the punishment that we deserved, offering us forgiveness and reconciliation with God. As Paul writes in Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

This act of grace is not something we can earn through good deeds or righteous living. It is a gift that must be received by faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 emphasizes this: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

Imagine for a moment the vastness of this gift. Picture a courtroom where you stand guilty of a crime. The evidence is overwhelming, and the verdict is clear. The judge, who is just and righteous, must pronounce the sentence. But then, the judge steps down from the bench, takes off his robe, and offers to take your place. This is what God has done for us through Jesus. He has taken our place, borne our punishment, and offered us His righteousness in exchange for our sin.

Once we have received God's grace, it transforms our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin, but we become children of God, empowered to live in a way that honors Him. Grace not only saves us but also sustains us in our daily walk with Christ. It is by grace that we grow in our faith, overcome challenges, and become more like Jesus.

Paul encourages us in Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age."

Living in grace means recognizing that our relationship with God is not based on our performance but on His love and mercy. It means understanding that our identity is not defined by our past mistakes or our present struggles but by who we are in Christ. It means allowing God's grace to shape our thoughts, our attitudes, and our actions.

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As recipients of God's grace, we are called to extend that same grace to others. Just as we have been forgiven, we are to forgive. Just as we have been loved, we are to love. Our lives should reflect the grace we have received, shining as a light in a world that desperately needs to see the love of Christ.

In Matthew 18:21-35, Jesus tells the parable of the unmerciful servant. A king forgives his servant a massive debt, but that same servant refuses to forgive a fellow servant a small debt. The king's response is one of anger and disappointment. This parable illustrates the expectation that those who have received grace should extend grace. It challenges us to forgive as we have been forgiven, to love as we have been loved, and to show mercy as we have received mercy.

Grace is not just an individual experience; it is also a communal one. As the body of Christ, we are called to create communities of grace where people can experience the love and acceptance of God. This means being patient with one another, bearing each other's burdens, and encouraging one another in our walk with Christ.

The early church provides a powerful example of a community living in grace. In Acts 2:42-47, we see believers devoted to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. They shared their possessions, met each other's needs, and praised God together. Their unity and love for one another were a testimony to the grace of God at work in their midst.

As we come to the close of this message, I want to extend an invitation to anyone who has not yet experienced the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Today is the day of salvation. God's grace is available to you right now, and it is a gift that can transform your life.

If you feel a tug on your heart, that is the Holy Spirit inviting you to receive this incredible gift. You do not need to have all the answers or be perfect. Come as you are, and let God's grace do the work in you.



**23/06/24**

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Dear Lord,

We thank You for Your amazing grace. We acknowledge that it is not by our works, but by Your mercy that we are saved. We confess our sins and acknowledge our need for You. We ask for Your forgiveness and invite Jesus to be the Lord and Savior of our lives. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and empower us to live lives that reflect Your grace. Guide us to grow in our faith and to live in a way that honors You. We give You all the glory and praise.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer today, please come forward or speak with one of our leaders after the service. We want to support you and walk alongside you in this new journey of faith.