

## **GRACE: IT'S AN AMAZING THING**

By Elder Dave Rockwell

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**OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE:**

**ISAIAH S 26: 9-11**

**NEW TESTAMENT SCRPTURE:**

**EPHESIANS 2: 4-10**

**WELCOME:**

**GOOD MORNING! I AM DAVE ROCKWELL AND WELCOME TO THE ON LINE SERVICE FROM YOUR FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. REMEMBER, "WHAT AN AWESOME GOD WE SERVE, DON'T WE?"**

**PLEASE PRAY WITH ME: GRACIOUS AND LOVING GOD, LET MY WORDS BE ONLY YOUR WORDS, LET MY THOUGHTS BE ONLY YOUR THOUGHTS. WE KNOW THE MEDITATIONS OF OUR HEARTS ARE NOTHING WITHOUT YOU AS YOU ARE OUR ROCK ON WHICH WE STAND AND OUR REDEMPTION AND SALVATION ONLY COME THROUGH YOUR UNFAILING AND EVERLASTING GRACE. AMEN!**

**GRACE: A FACINATING WORD TO ME. ALTHOUGH IT APPEARS 50 TIMES IN THE BIBLE, 7 IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND 43 IN THE NEW, WHAT REALLY IS GRACE? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU AND TO ME.? HOW DOES IT REALLY AFFECT US AND WHAT DO WE DO WITH IT? IS IT SIMPLY A WORD THAT CONNOTES ELEGANCE, OR A REFINEMENT OF A MOVEMENT; AN ELEGANT PERSON WHO GLIDES ACROSS THE FLOOR WITH SEEMINGLY EFFORTLESS EASE; COULD VERY WELL BE, HOWEVER NOT TODAY!**

**THE NEXT VERSE IS VERY FAMILIAR AS GOD TOLD US THROUGH JOHN 2: 17-18 THAT "HE DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD BUT TO SAVE THE WORLD THROUGH HIM. WHOEVER BELIEVES IN CHRIST IS NOT CONDEMNED, BUT WHOEVER DOES NOT BELIEVE STANDS CONDEMNED ALREADY BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF GOD'S ONE AND ONLY SON JESUS THE CHRIST."**

**GRACE IS A TOTALLY UNDESERVED, TOTALLY UNEARNED ACT THAT IS FREELY GIVEN BY GOD TO A BELIEVER IN JESUS THE CHRIST AS THEIR LORD AND SAVIOR. THIS CAN NOT BE EARNED OR WORKED FOR BECAUSE IT IS A FREE GIFT FROM GOD. WHEN WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED FOR US, YOU AND I PERSONALLY, AND FORGAVE ALL OF OUR SINS, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, WE THEN ARE JUSTIFIED. GOD THEN WORKS IN OUR LIVES TO SANCTIFY US, WHICH IS THE JOURNEY WE ARE NOW ON; THIS IS TRULY AN AMAZING PART OF GRACE. IT IS THROUGH FAITH, FAITH IN GOD, HIS SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT WE ACCEPT THIS FREE GIFT OF GRACE, AND IT BECOMES A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE.**

**AT THAT POINT, WHEN YOU HAVE ACCEPTED JESUS AS YOUR PERSONAL LORD AND SAVIOR, YOU ARE GUARANTEED ENTRY INTO HEAVEN AND EVERLASTING LIFE WITH THE LORD. YOUR PASSPORT HAS BEEN STAMPED! BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH WE ARE SAVED!**

**NOW, CONSIDER THIS: WE ALL ARE A SLAVE TO SOMETHING OR SOMEONE. WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE A SLAVE EITHER TO SIN AND THEREFORE THE WORLD OR TO THE LORD; IT IS TOTALLY OUR CHOICE. SHOULD WE CHOOSE TO BE GOVERNED BY SIN AND THEREFORE THE WORLD, THEN THE END RESULT IS ETERNAL DEATH THROUGH SEPARATION FROM GOD. WE ALL WILL LIVE ETERNALLY SOMEWHERE, BUT IT IS OUR CHOICE AS TO WHERE. WHEN WE CHOOSE TO BE GOVERNED BY CHRIST AND HIM ALONE, WE THEN WILL LIVE ETERNALLY WITH HIM IN HEAVEN. HEAR AGAIN THE MESSAGE FROM EPHESIANS CHAPTER 2, VERSES 8-10: "FOR IT IS BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THIS IS NOT FROM OURSELVES, IT IS A GIFT FROM GOD; NOT BY WORKS SO NO MAN CAN BOAST. WE ARE GOD'S HANDIWORK, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS TO DO GOOD WORKS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED IN ADVANCE FOR US TO DO."**

**WHEN YOU HAVE ACCEPTED JESUS AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR, YOU NOW HAVE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT YOU ARE CALLED TO DO. YOU NOW ARE DOING YOUR WORK FOR THE LORD. THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW JESUS AS THEIR LORD AND SAVIOR WILL STILL DO GOOD WORKS; THE DIFFERENCE IS THEY DO NOT KNOW THE SAVING GRACE OF GOD AS THEY GO ABOUT DOING THEIR WORK.**

**AN EXAMPLE OF GRACE AND FAITH I FOUND IN A BOOK BY B. N. RUNDELL TITLES 'START DANCER'. THIS TAKES PLACE ON THE ARAPAHO RESERVATION IN WYOMING. LISTEN NOW TO THIS PERSPECTIVE:**

**"A COWBOY PREACHER HOLDING WORSHIP SERVICE IN AN ARENA, AND WHILE HORSEBACK, HE, BY KNEE CUES TO HIS HORSE, HAD HIM SIDE PASSING IN FRONT OF THE STANDS, BACK AND FORTH, BACK AND FORTH. THE PREACHER TOLD THE COWBOYS AND COWGIRLS, 'BACK IN MY YOUTHFULL DAYS OF FOOLISHNESS, I FANCIED MYSELF A BULL RIDER. NOW IN A RODEO DOWN IN COLORADO, I HAPPENED TO DRAW A PRETTY RANK BULL BY THE NAME OF ORANGE CRUSH. NOW, THAT BULL WAS KNOWN NOT ONLY FOR BUCKIN' OFF ALL THE COWBOYS, BUT GOIN' AFTER THEM AFTER THEY WERE DOWN AND TRYING TO POUND THEM INTO THE GROUND, HENCE HIS NAME. WELL, TRUE TO FORM, WHEN I HAD MY GO, HE BUCKED ME OFF ABOUT 2 SECONDS BEFORE THE 8 SECOND WHISTLE, AND IT SURE SEEMED I WAS FLYIN' THROUGH THE AIR FOR THOSE 2 SECONDS. NOW, WHEN I LANDED, I WAS UNABLE TO MOVE, SAW STARS, AND I ALSO SAW THAT CRAZY BULL COMIN' AT ME WITH BLOOD IN HIS EYES. JUST BEFORE HE GOT ME, A FIGURE FLASHED BY ME IN FRONT OF THAT CRAZY BULL. THEY USED TO CALL THEM RODEO CLOWNS BUT NOW THEY HAVE THE WELL DESERVED TITLE OF BULL FIGHTER. WELL, THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT THAT FUNNY ATTIRED FELLA DID. AS HE WENT BY THAT OL' BULL, HE SLAPPED HIM IN THE FACE AND THAT TOOK HIS ATTENTION OFF ME AND AWAY THEY WENT. THAT FELLA DODGED BEHIND HIS BARREL OUT THERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ARENA AND SURE KEPT THAT BULLS ATTENTION. TWO OTHER COWBOYS GRABBED ME AND CARRIED ME OUT OF THERE. NOW YOU SEE, FOLKS, THAT IS WHAT I MEAN BY GRACE. I SURE DIDN'T DESERVE TO GET SAVED FROM THAT BULL, BUT GOD SAVED ME ANYWAY. WHAT I DID DESERVE FOR MY FOOLISHNESS WAS TO GET STOMPED INTO HELL ITSELF, BUT I DIDN'T. NOW THAT IS WHAT JESUS DOES FOR US BY HIS GRACE. HE RESCUES US WHEN WE DON'T DESERVE IT AND SAVES US FROM AN ETERNITY IN HELL. SO, YOU ASK, HOW DO WE GET THAT GRACE? WELL, THE REST OF THE VERSE SAYS IT IS BY FAITH. AND FAITH IS JUST TAKIN' GOD AT HIS WORD, BELIEVIN' IN HIM. IT SAYS, 'FOR BY GRACE YOU ARE SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND NOT OF OURSELVES, IT IS A GIFT FROM GOD, NOT OF WORKS SO NO MAN CAN BOAST.' SO FRIENDS, IF YOU WANT TO BE SAVED FROM THAT ETERNAL HELL AND YOU WANT TO**

**EXPERIENCE GOD'S GRACE, JUST TAKE GOD AT HIS WORD, BELIEVE IN HIM AND ASK HIM TO SAVE YOU THROUGH HIS SON JESUS THE CHRIST.'**

**IN CLOSING, LET ME SHARE A STORY THAT YOU MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE HEARD:**

**IN THE LATE 1700s AND EARLY 1800s, A SHIPS CAPTAIN WAS TRANSPORTING SLAVES FROM AFRICA TO THE UNITED STATES. THEY RAN INTO A VERY BAD STORM, WAVES CRASHING OVER THE SHIP, TAKING IN WATER AND HE WAS AFRAID FOR HIS VERY LIFE. HE SANK TO HIS KNEES, ASKED GOD FOR DELIVERENCE, WHICH GOD DID AND AT THAT POINT GOD CHANGED HIS LIFE. THIS MAN QUIT TRANSPORTING SLAVES AND GAVE HIS LIFE TO CHRIST AND BECAME AN OEDAINED MINISTER IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. HE WENT ON TO COMPOSE MANY HYMNS, HOWEVER JOGN NEWTON'S MOST WELL KNOWN IS AMAZING GRACE.**

**LORD, LET US ALL RECOGNIZE AND REPENT OF OUR SINS, ASKING YOU FOR THE SAVING SALVATION AND GRACE WHICH YOU SO FREELY GIVE TO THISE WHO BELIEVE IN YOU AND YOUR SON. LET US GO FORTH THIS DAY AND SPREAD YOUR GOOD NEWS TO ALL SO THEY MAY ALSO KNOW THIS GOOD NEWS AS WELL. THIS AND ALL THINGS WE PRAY IN THE NAME OF YOUR BLESSED SON AND OUR REDEEMER JESUS THE CHRIST. AMEN.**