

I Love You, You Are Precious

*You are Precious in God's Eyes
A unique gift for the Body of Christ*

I. God's Gracious Love

God's love for us is *gracious*:

- unconditional
- cannot be earned (unmerited)
- abundant, overflowing

God's Gracious Love – *Lavished on us*:

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us.

(Eph 3, 7-8A)



Grace:

OT: *Hesed (Loving Kindness, exercised as mercy and compassion)*

- the primary descriptor of God's love for us.

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
(Ps 103, 8)

NT: Charis (Grace/Favour)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

(Eph 1, 3)

Grace...

- ... is unconditional, abundant, lavish, overflowing
- ... is unmerited, gratuitous (can't be earned)
- ... can only be received, responded-to
- ... God initiates, we respond; God continues, we respond...(image: a dance, God leads)
- ... all about *relationship*: God's call, our response

Moments of Grace: Abundant, Lavished, Overflowing

Can you recall a time when you received an unexpected gift of great love in your life?

What do you think this experience might say about God's gracious love for you?

II: Grace – I love you moments

Grace says: *You are precious, I love you*

- no matter how much or little you feel you deserve to be loved

- no matter what you've done, or what's been done to you

You are precious and loved before all else

A time when someone showed me unexpected kindness...

The gift that person brought to me was...

What this person's kindness tells me about God's love for me...

A time when showing kindness to someone became a gift for me...

The gift that experience gave me was...

What this experience can teach me about how God brings forth my gifts...

III: Your life is a gift

Grace says: *You are a gift of inestimable value*

- to the human family
- to the body of Christ

Check as many as you feel apply to you, add others not mentioned

- Emotional Intelligence
- Leadership
- Fearless defending others (especially children & family)
- Understanding what needs to be done
- My heart is a welcome place for others in pain
- Hospitality
- My presence makes the house a home
- Fortitude: patience with obstacles, staying the course in difficult times
- I love to pray and love leading others to pray
- I'm a good organizer and planner for activities
- Interceding in prayer for others
- Able to be present to others in deep suffering
- Love for God's word
- Readiness to step out in faith and act
- I value beauty and bring it to my surroundings
- Readiness to go without for others who need my presence
- I can listen non judgementally, and people feel at ease unburdening themselves with me
- I can see and encourage potential in others
- I love to bring things to life with music
- Joy
- Peacemaking and reconciliation
- I can communicate complex ideas in a simple, straightforward way
- I can tell when someone's telling the truth or lying
- Readiness to share what I have with others
- Resist accumulating excess "stuff"
- Hardworking and disciplined
- Strong advocate for justice
- Helping others grow in faith
- Will take no part in gossip
- I love Jesus and am not afraid to tell anyone about Him
- I can praise God, even in the midst of suffering

- I trust God
- I can see past a student's test scores and understand their deeper needs
- God has given me the ability to forgive those who hurt me
- Resilient and sustained by God's grace
- Inner peace
- I am not easily manipulated
- I believe, even when others won't or can't
- I appreciate and help bring order to my classroom, family, home...
- I work hard
- Justice and fairness are important to me
- Willing to stand in the truth – it doesn't matter what people think
- I'm a person of my word, and keep my promises
- I often have a clear sense of what needs to be done in a situation
- Willing to take matters to prayer for God's answer
- Willing to walk by faith in uncertain times
- I walk in hope and joy. God has never let me down.
- Hope
-
-
-

Your thoughts and reactions:

Can you name some experiences in your life have taught you about your gifts?

What gifts does God see when looking at *you* through *grace-coloured glasses*?

Can you name someone in your class or school who you'd like to re-consider with *grace-coloured glasses*?

Seeing Life Through Grace-Coloured Glasses

Where has life taken me unexpectedly and called forth new/hidden qualities, talents, responsibilities that are now part of me?

Places, Circumstances:

Gifts I've Received:

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What have these experiences taught me ...about myself? ...about God's grace working in my life?

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IV. OPTIONAL: Unique and Beautiful Flowers in God's Garden

- "I understood that every flower created by him is beautiful, that the brilliance of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not lessen the perfume of the violet or the sweet simplicity of the daisy. I understood that if all the lowly flowers wished to be roses, nature would no longer be enamelled with lovely hues. and so it is in the world of souls, our lord's living garden."
- "If every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness."
(Thérèse of Lisieux)

Can you describe the kind of plant that you are in God's garden?

- what colour are your blooms/leaves?

- how tall are you?

- are you a sun/shade/mixed light plant?

- which plants/flowers are you nearest to?

- what is the gift that <i>you</i> bring to this garden?

- other observations you have about your place in God's garden...

IV: Scripture Quotes for Further Reflection

Feel free to highlight or underline words or phrases that speak to you about God's love for you, and your precious place in the body of Christ.

Eph 1, 3-8A

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us.

Eph2, 19-22

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰ built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²² in whom you also are built together spiritually^[f] into a dwelling place for God.

Eph 4, 4-7

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. ⁷ But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Eph 4, 11-13

¹¹ The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

1Pet 2,4-5

⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones, let yourselves be built^[a] into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1Cor 12, 18-21

¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

(Mt 14, 27)

"Courage, it is I. Do not be afraid.

Mt 10, 29-30

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹ So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Mt 11, 28

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Mt 9, 36

³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Mt 15, 32

Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.”

1Jn4, 10-11

In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Ps 103

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.

² Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—

³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

⁵ who satisfies you with good as long as you live
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

⁸ The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.

¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us.

¹³ As a father has compassion for his children,
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.

- 14 For he knows how we were made;
he remembers that we are dust.
- 17 But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting
on those who fear him,
and his righteousness to children’s children,
18 to those who keep his covenant
and remember to do his commandments.
- 19 The LORD has established his throne in the heavens,
and his kingdom rules over all.
- 20 Bless the LORD, O you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
obedient to his spoken word.
- 21 Bless the LORD, all his hosts,
his ministers that do his will.
- 22 Bless the LORD, all his works,
in all places of his dominion.
Bless the LORD, O my soul.

Heb 4, 14-16

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Jn 15, 16

You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

Scripture verses, lines, words that stood out for you:

V. Closing Prayer

Blessed Trinity,
Thank You for the grace
You lavish on us in Christ;
For grace-filled moments to remind us
That we are precious in Your eyes;
For the gifts You have poured out on us
And continue to call forth
In the joys and struggles of our lives.

Thank You for the unique roles
You have prepared for us
In the body of Christ;
For surrounding us
With gifted brothers and sisters
To lead and challenge us in love,
To share our journey
To fullness of life in You.

Help us each day
To embrace our place in Your marvellous plan –
With You as our Strength, our Comfort, our Joy.

All praise, and honour, and glory
To You, Father
Who chose us in Christ
Before the foundation of the world
To be all that You call us to be,
In the power of the Holy Spirit:
Salt for the earth
And light for the world
For love of Christ and His Gospel.
We make this prayer
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen