

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

February 2, 2021

God’s Gift

“For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you. Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace. In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me.”

Psalm 86:5-7

When I was in high school/college, if you asked me about “grace,” I would have said something like, “isn’t she a sophomore...?” or I may even have said, “Slick, Grace Slick... Jefferson Airplane.”

I’m sure it’s my fault, but I don’t remember hearing the word “grace” very much in my youth even though I was in church buildings a lot. We attended many gospel meetings, debates, classes and, of course, Lord’s Day assemblies. We also participated in many of what we used to call “cottage classes.” I’m sure the short answer, “unmerited favor,” was uttered a few times but I don’t remember any extended discussions on grace. There is no way I could have defined it intelligently.

Our young people here are different. In our Bible class on Sunday afternoon, I asked for someone to give me the short definition of “grace.” This wasn’t a thought question; I wanted a definition of the word “grace” as used in the Bible. I expected “unmerited favor” and that would have been fine. I was expecting to flesh that out for the kids. It got quiet for a minute or so and then one young lady tentatively raised her hand and said, “*a gift from God that you don’t deserve?*” Scott Gardner, Ben Woodside and Christie were in the class; I looked at them and said, “Oh my, these kids are so far ahead of where we were at their age” and they all agreed. I dismissed the class on that note and said “we’ll talk more about this” (I’m not mentioning who answered the question because I think it would embarrass her — but if you ask me, I’ll tell you).

These kids are bright. Some of them are ready and willing to speak up and others are like I was at that age (I never thought that my speaking up would improve on silence so I kept quiet). We talked about doubt and confidence. I often ask the kids, “if Jesus came *right now* do they feel you would go to heaven?” Most raise their hands; some do not (just like adults; some adults think it’s presumptuous to give a firm “yes” to that question, and I understand). I asked the kids if they think preachers and elders ever have doubts and almost all of them thought they probably do, and they shared some insightful reasons on why. I guess it’s safe to say that all of us are looking for that safe space that lies somewhere between overconfidence and depressing doubt.

After class, a couple of us speculated on why we didn’t hear many sermons on grace in the past. Maybe it’s because it’s hard to talk about grace without leaving the impression that grace automatically cancels your sins without any action on your part. Some think it’s like autopay: when the debt comes due, the payment is automatically applied to the account. There’s actually some truth in there, but it needs to be explained properly or it only minimizes sin. Paul addresses that in Romans 6:1, 15.

We’ll have more to say about grace — “a gift from God that we do not deserve” — in the future. In the meantime, read and reflect on these lyrics from Lauren Daigle’s “*You Say*,” a beautiful song that expresses God’s “gift” especially for those sensitive souls who struggle with doubt.

“You Say”

Lauren Daigle

I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I’m not enough
Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up
Am I more than just the sum of every high and every low?
Remind me once again just who I am because I need to know
You say I am loved when I can’t feel a thing

[Chorus]

You say I am strong when I think I am weak
And You say I am held when I am falling short
And when I don’t belong,
You say I am Yours
And I believe, I believe
What You say of me
I believe

The only thing that matters now is everything You think of me
In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity
Taking all I have and now I’m laying it at your feet
You have every failure God, You have every victory

What You say of me
I believe.