

## **In to the Grace of Christ**

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### Preface

This article “In to the Grace of Christ has been written with the sole aim of readers getting into abundant life. The language and thoughts used are nothing but the points gathered for years on reading the great works of great men. In 2 Corinthians (13:13), all the Saints send their greetings “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all”. Based on this greeting, this chapter has been written. This article will be surely of immense help to the readers to get into the life of abundance provided they read it with prayer along with the Holy Spirit who helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express in accordance with God’s will.

Our Lord says “ I have come that you may have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10). St Paul says, “We prepare God’s people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13). There is no other way to know the fullness of Christ except through the cross of Christ. So St. Paul says that Grace has been granted to everyman on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him but also to suffer for him (Phil: 1:29). It is not through affluence but through afflictions one can enter into the deeper reality of the fullness of Christ. Land of Canaan does not speak of heaven, but it signifies Christ and the fullness in him. God’s purpose of redeeming us through his son Jesus is to bring us into the fullness of Jesus Christ. The daily blessings that we enjoy does not necessarily mean that God is well pleased with us (1 Cor: 10:4-5).

The blood of Christ is sufficient for us. But it becomes efficient only when we apply it. Jesus said, “He that hearth my word and believeth on him that sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life (Jn: 5:24). Eternal life is a life that brings us into the nature of God and Jesus says in John 17 that eternal life is to know God, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Christ was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Is: 53:5-6). The Judgment was not averted but was diverted on him. Christ

died not only as our substitute on the cross but also as our representative. So whatever has happened to him has happened to us all. Christ died not only on our behalf but also in our place. The only part man has to play in this provision is to believe God's method of reconciliation and accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Thus we are saved by grace and not by works. This believing in Jesus resulted in a new birth to man's spirit and provided entry into the Kingdom of God. If we believe that Christ died for us we are redeemed and if we don't believe then we have to suffer for our sins.

Jesus not only taught that God offered us the free gift of forgiveness but also lived in a manner consistent with his preaching. He invites every sinner to return to God not by brow-beating them into submission but by associating with them by showing solidarity with them even to the extent of dining and drinking with them. As we have so far served sin faithfully we must right now serve Christ faithfully. Like Moses we must choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy pleasures of sin for a season.

The steps involving redemption and separation takes place simultaneously in a believer's life. Jesus is not only our Saviour but also our Lord. The Lord and Saviour cannot be separated. The scandal of the so-called nominal Christians has made Jesus the laughing stock of the pagan world. Jesus has never lowered his standard or compromised his conditions to make his call more easily acceptable. The demands of Christ are stupendous because of the abundant provision that he has put within us. This abundant provision is Christ in us the hope of Glory. God does not reap where he has not sown. Much is given and much is expected. God has given us his son as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. He has given us his word in the form of promises and precepts. He has sent the Holy Spirit to live in us. He has given us the fellowship of his people. He has given us the teachers and preachers to guide and lead us. What more can God do for us? Nothing more. Why then is this barrenness? It is because of the pride, rebellion, self-sufficiency, self-righteousness and disobedience.

We have many enemies Satan, the world and the flesh but the greatest enemy of all is not outside but within. It is the corrupted and unsubdued self that goes on the wrong path. Self-manifests in so many ways. It is prepared to pray, evangelize give tithe, preach and teach. But one thing self will not do but can do with the help of the spirit is that it will not die. Unless we die to our self, the fullness of Christ cannot be experienced. We must be willing to die to our self-seeking, self-righteousness, self-strength, self-pity and self-glory. There is

no other way to fruitfulness except through death to self. Very often we presume that if we love righteousness and hate iniquity we cannot be joyful.

The Passover represents redemption from sin through the blood of Christ. Deliverance through the red sea however represents separation from the world and identifying with Christ. The crossing of Jordan represents death to self and taking up the cross daily and following Christ. Redemption by the blood of Christ, separation from the world and denying self that is dying to self and sin and taking up the cross are the three vital steps to take to know the fullness of Christ. So daily conversion, separation from the temporal constant death to sin and self and living in love with God and others should continue until we say like St Paul that it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. The above is possible only when we work in perfect cooperation with the Holy Spirit our chief partner in our journey to everlasting life.

In certain areas of our life we are self-sufficient and prone to think that we can do without Christ and his spirit. Instead of looking to him, we begin to look to our corrupted self and depend upon our knowledge and wisdom. Instead of judging ourselves very often we try to justify our actions and words. The Lord is more concerned about who we are than what we do for him. As we are so we would be. The Lord wants us to be filled with his spirit because only those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

God's spirit the love between the Father and Son Jesus pours that love into our hearts and draws us into the beginning of a deep and intimate union with the Father and son Jesus. When the Holy Spirit comes to indwell us the spiritual warfare begins, the warfare of the spirit against the flesh. The fruit of the spirit helps us to grow in Christ personally whereas the gifts of the spirit help us to help others to find faith and grow in Christ.

The fullness of God can only be experienced collectively not individually. God sent his son Jesus in to the world so that through that only son he may have many more sons. The son fulfilled the Father's will in that body and offered it as a perfect sacrifice for the sin of whole mankind. Now the son continues to fulfil the Father's will on this earth and for this he needs a body. The son gets a body, which is the church, and the Holy Spirit gets a dwelling place. It is this spirit which makes the unity and man is called only to keep up the unity, which is organic, not organizational. To keep up the unity we need four things (1) we should walk with all humility (2) we must remove pride, which is a complete anti-God state of mind, and it leads to every other vice (3) we should walk in all

meekness (4) we must have long suffering and (5) we should forbear one another in love (Eph: 4:2-6).

The spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's Children. Now if we are children of God, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory (Rom 8:16-17). Through Adam's sin of disobedience all men are alienated from God. All good works of man could not bridge the gap that sin had crated. So God sent his only begotten son Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins and reconciled man to Himself. Thus we are saved by grace and not by works. Grace is the panacea that purifies the soul from all impurities.

Grace is the power to endure but more than that it is a power to redeem. Through grace we reconcile, converse and relate with God. Isaiah says, "Surely, the arm of the Lord is not too short to save nor his ear is too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God. Your sins have hidden His face from you" (Is: 59:1-3). What is sin? Sin is rejection of God's sowing plan for us and it is choice of self against God. Sin is an obstacle that blocks the automatic response to the redeeming love of God. So let us die to self and sin and live in love with God and others. St. John says "From the fullness of Christ's grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the love was given through Moses but grace and truth come only through Jesus Christ" (Jn1: 16-17). Jesus says, "Blessed is the man who does not lose faith in me". So let us all put our faith in Jesus and his grace and be filled with his spirit so that we may be freed from sin and death. Let God's grace which is Christ, decorate our Soul.

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