Grow in Grace and Knowledge, #7

2 Peter 3:14-18

Introduction:

1. God offers gifts (grace).
   1. Repentance is a gift.

When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life” (Acts 11:18).

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4).

* 1. When people accept God’s gifts (grow in grace), others can see grace.

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.  Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.  When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord (Acts 11:21-23).

1. When we are willing to submit to God, accept His gifts, we can grow in grace.
   1. When we are willing to be humble. 1 Peter 5:5-11
   2. Even when we have sinned repeatedly. James 4:1-10
2. GROWING IN GRACE IS SPEAKING WITH BOLDNESS WHEN WITHOUT GRACE I HAVE REASON TO FEEL GUILTY. Acts 2:14-39
   1. Listen to Peter’s boldness.
   2. What if they ask, “What about you?  You don’t have such a good record yourself.”
   3. Paul tells about how he worked with the memory of sin and knowledge of salvation.

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.  And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 1:12-14).

* 1. I don’t forgive myself–I accept God’s forgiveness–grow in grace and knowledge.
     1. He promises to cleanse every sin.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

* + 1. Do I believe that and will I accept the gift?

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

* 1. Then I have boldness.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.  Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:15,16).

1. GROWING IN GRACE IS GIVING WHAT I DO HAVE WITHOUT USING WHAT I DON’T HAVE AS AN EXCUSE. Acts 3:1-8
   1. People often don’t know how to ask for what they need.  Acts 3:1-3
   2. Peter had something much better than alms.  Acts 3:4-8
   3. What can we give people that is bigger than what they are requesting?
   4. What is in your hand?
      1. Moses.  Exodus 4:1-5
      2. David.  1 Samuel 17:31-51
      3. Widow.  Mark 12:41-44
2. GROWING IN GRACE IS BEING WILLING TO SUFFER FOR WHAT I HAVE DONE–THEN DO IT AGAIN WHEN JESUS COMMANDS ME.
   1. Peter and John were committed to do what Jesus told them.

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.  But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.  For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:18-20).

Saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name?  And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!”  But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:28, 29).

* 1. Notice their attitude toward persecution.

And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.  So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.  And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ (Acts 5:40-42).

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.  Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us  (Romans 5:3-5).

Conclusion:

1. God makes many gifts available.
2. Those who grow in grace and knowledge are the ones who accept the gifts God offers.
3. Jesus invites.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.  Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.  For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

1. Will you accept the gift?