

Audio file

[\(Study 30\) Teaching Service. Journeying with James. James chapter 4 verses 6 Grace upon Grace. Pastor G.S. Marley](#)

00:00:00

Our scripture reading this morning is from the epistle of James in chapter four.

00:00:05

James chapter four and verse one.

00:00:11

Let us hear the word of God.

00:00:14

From whence come wars and fightings among you?

00:00:17

Come they not hence even of your lusts that war in your members?

00:00:21

Ye lust and have not.

00:00:23

Ye kill and desire to have and cannot obtain.

00:00:26

Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

00:00:30

Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

00:00:36

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?

00:00:43

Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

00:00:48

Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy, but he giveth more grace?

00:00:56

Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

00:01:01

Submit yourselves therefore to God.

00:01:04

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

00:01:07

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

00:01:11

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

00:01:18

Be afflicted, and mourn and weep.

00:01:21

Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

00:01:26

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

00:01:31

Speak not evil one of another brethren.

00:01:34

He that speaketh evil of his brother and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law and judgeth the law.

00:01:41

But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

00:01:46

And the Lord will bless his word to our hearts.

00:01:49

Our text this morning is found in verse 6.

00:01:52

James chapter four and verse six, and the title of the message is Grace Upon Grace.

00:01:59

Grace Upon Grace.

00:02:02

Friends in Christ, we are here this morning and many of us have received something from God.

00:02:10

We may not have received something actual, literally, but we have received something from God, His mercy and His favor.

00:02:22

What is grace?

00:02:25

Grace is not actually a thing.

00:02:28

It consists of God's attitude towards us and His kind treatment of us in Christ.

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This morning, with the Lord's help, we're going to learn and discover what grace means, who is God gracious to, and what does God do with the proud, and how does He treat the humble.

00:02:52

Well, last time we looked at worldliness, and that is in the previous section.

00:02:58

We learned first of all about the principle of worldliness it was defined.

00:03:02

Secondly, we learned about the example of worldliness I was described.

00:03:06

And then thirdly, we learned some methods or helps in resisting worldliness.

00:03:12

So our text is verse 6, But he giveth more grace.

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god-given grace what does I think about this over in a few headings God's grace what is it when I said it's not a thing you cannot study it you cannot handle it doesn't matter what kind of

00:03:41

scientific instrument you have it doesn't matter what kind of um technology you have to X-ray the very core of a person you won't find a Grace there so what is it it is God's kindness or favor to us

00:04:03

The first mention of grace is found in Genesis 6 and verse 8.

00:04:07

Do you remember who it is that God first spoke of grace to?

00:04:12

This wasn't the first man God was gracious to, but it is the first text where we find the word grace.

00:04:21

Well, it was the time of a man who built an ark, a huge boat, bit like a canal.

00:04:33

boat, a narrow boat.

00:04:35

And this man was foolish in the eyes of his generation, but he was wise in the eyes of God.

00:04:46

And in Genesis 6 verse 8, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

00:04:54

Noah did.

00:04:56

And throughout history, men, women and children have all found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

00:05:04

In other words, God was gracious to them.

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Perhaps when you think of the word grace, the first thing you think of is the grace of God in salvation.

00:05:16

The grace of God in salvation.

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Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and he was saved physically and literally him and his wife and his sons and his daughters-in-law in an ark.

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They were saved.

00:05:36

They were delivered from the worldwide flood.

00:05:42

And how God has been so gracious to us.

00:05:45

and delivering us not from a great tsunami or a great worldwide flood of water, but a worse flood, a flood that soon to envelop the whole world.

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To have that grace in salvation, Noah would have been a preacher of this grace.

00:06:09

Before he was delivered from the flood, he was delivered from his sin.

00:06:15

He was saved from his sin.

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How do we know that?

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Because God declares it so.

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You read throughout the New Testament, various places where Noah's name is mentioned.

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Our Lord Jesus even speaks of Noah, a real historical figure who lived and who loved the Lord and honored the Lord.

00:06:44

and obeyed the Lord.

00:06:47

So this grace in salvation, well, perhaps the best known text is Ephesians 2 verses 8 to 10, and there the Apostle Paul is giving us something very important regarding salvation.

00:07:01

Sadly, we live in a day of confusion when people are not sure of what salvation is really about.

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Paul had no doubts.

00:07:14

Paul was absolutely sure of what salvation meant and who it was for.

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Paul speaks in Ephesians 2.

00:07:26

In the first section, he speaks of the past.

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What were we like before God met us in grace?

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Well, you can read that for yourself.

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The most important word in this section is actually in verse 4.

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And it's a turning point.

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But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love, wherewith He loved us.

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Did you notice that it's God's initiative here?

00:07:59

It's God approaching us, and our description is quite terrible.

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And then Paul sums it up in verses 8 to 10.

00:08:10

He says, For by grace are ye saved through faith.

00:08:16

It is the gift of God.

00:08:22

It's not of yourselves.

00:08:24

It's not of ourselves.

00:08:26

It's not of our religion.

00:08:28

It's not of our church.

00:08:29

It's not even of being a Jew, says the Apostle Paul.

00:08:34

It's of God.

00:08:37

I wonder, do we really grasp the enormity of God's grace?

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Of course we can't physically, we can't humanly, but do we grasp any of it?

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Do we understand how wretched we were in our sin?

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How unearned and undeserved God's grace is to us in the gospel?

00:09:04

Do we realize how God has been gracious to us even though we could not, even if we lived a thousand lifetimes, deserve it?

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I doubt in our generation we really appreciate what it is to have God be gracious to us.

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The astonishing thing is that the Apostle Paul wasn't writing to the intellectual elite of his day.

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He's writing to slaves, those who would have been the lowest of the low in Roman society.

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And yet they grasped something of this grace because they were slaves.

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And we're all slaves naturally to our own desires and wants and intents.

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The Bible calls it sinfulness.

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And therefore, when God speaks of His grace in the Bible, we always need to remember our true state before God.

00:10:17

We're sinners first.

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Of course, that doesn't sit right with the modern thinking, but unless we accept we're sinners, we'll never seek a Savior.

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God can't be gracious to the righteous, the self-righteous.

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God is gracious to the humble, to those who are lowly, or as Isaiah puts it, lowly and contrite of heart.

00:10:52

Grace is unearned and undeserved.

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No one is entitled to it.

00:10:58

If grace is a gift, says one man, no one can demand it.

00:11:02

Therefore, as salvation is by grace, it is a gift of God, then He bestows it, He gives it to whomever He pleases.

00:11:16

This grace flows from God's heart and mind.

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We can understand it something of His riches of goodness.

00:11:26

his forbearance and his long-suffering.

00:11:28

But what does this grace do?

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And it's the second thing, the God's gift of salvation.

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Secondly, what does this gift of salvation or grace do?

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It humbles us.

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It informs us.

00:11:43

It moves us and enlivens us.

00:11:47

It makes us ready for salvation.

00:11:58

Without disgrace, no one will be forgiven.

00:12:02

There's a story told of a king.

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I believe it was one of the Louis of France.

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He faced heavy opposition as he ascended the throne.

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The various nobles of his father's court were ultimately against him.

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And what he did as he ascended the throne is he compiled a list, a list of all the names and advisers that had been against him.

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Those who were his contemporaries urged him to seek revenge, to have them all taken out and executed because they were so worthy of death.

00:12:49

They had not only raised up opposition, but they in some ways had been traitors.

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But what Louis did was he drew a cross beside each name.

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Every single name on that list had a little cross against it.

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His terrified enemies were all brought to a certain place in the palace.

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They were terrified that they were all each one going to be summarily executed.

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One of them plucked up the courage and said, Why have you assembled us here?

00:13:30

We know that you have every right.

00:13:35

And he said, Well, let me show you my book.

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In that book was all the lists of those who had opposed him in his ascendancy to the throne.

00:13:47

and each one had a little cross against it.

00:13:52

He says, I'm not going to execute you, though you deserve it.

00:13:57

I'm going to follow Christ's example and forgive you.

00:14:03

Now I wonder, does that somehow sit with us this morning?

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Do we understand that God is against sinners?

00:14:14

God's holiness is repulsed by our sin.

00:14:19

Naturally speaking, we do not deserve mercy.

00:14:23

God's wrath is upon us as the Savior in John chapter 3.

00:14:27

A famous text in John chapter 3 is verse 16, but we forget the context.

00:14:32

God's wrath abideth upon us.

00:14:37

And yet God is gracious.

00:14:42

And beside each name that is in the Lamb's Book of Life this morning, you could imagine a little cross, and each one has been forgiven.

00:14:54

Each one of those whom God has been gracious to are now His forever.

00:15:01

We were once rebels, now

00:15:05

we're in relationship to God.

00:15:06

Once our relationship to God was as enemies, as James says earlier in this text, but now we are His children.

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There's a third thing I want you to think about.

00:15:22

Not only is God's grace in salvation, God's grace in forgiveness, but God is the fountain of all grace.

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And it flows from

00:15:37

God's throne, and it flows in every direction.

00:15:42

I'm using picture language here, I know, but some people like pictures in words, word pictures rather than descriptions and formulae.

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And God's grace, like a fountain, pours out abundantly.

00:16:01

You all have heard of the old miser who saved everything and gave nothing.

00:16:08

Nobody ever received any kindness from this miser.

00:16:13

God is not like that.

00:16:16

God is not miserly with His grace.

00:16:20

God isn't stinting in His grace.

00:16:25

God doesn't measure out His grace to this one and to that one and says, Well, they deserve more grace than this one.

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No, no, no, no.

00:16:33

God's grace is super abundant.

00:16:36

It's a bit like a great river.

00:16:39

And in flood, a great river can be a terrifying place to be, especially a great river, one of the great rivers of the world.

00:16:48

But at some stage, this water will begin to subside.

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Ah, but God's grace is not like that.

00:16:58

God's grace never subsides.

00:17:02

The flood of God's grace coming from the throat of God's grace

00:17:06

will never abate.

00:17:08

There's drought in the United Kingdom, but there's no drought with God's grace.

00:17:14

God pours out His grace.

00:17:16

And how can He do such a thing?

00:17:18

It's only in the gospel.

00:17:21

It's a gospel of grace.

00:17:24

And how can God be merciful and kind and forgiving to sinners?

00:17:29

It's only in the cross.

00:17:31

Without the cross, God can't be gracious.

00:17:35

Without the gospel of God's mercy in Christ, grace wouldn't mean anything.

00:17:43

Dear old John Bunyan wrote that hymn, Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound had saved a wretch like me.

00:17:49

Can you say that this morning, dear friend?

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Before we move on, can you say that honestly, openly?

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You might be a young person here, you might be an older person here, you might be a religious person, but can you really say,

00:18:04

God's grace is so amazing.

00:18:08

John Bunyan knew what it was to be a slave, not only to his sin, but to be a physical slave.

00:18:14

He was captured by a princess, I use that in inverted commas, and her husband, common-law husband.

00:18:24

And they kept him as a wild animal for a few months until he was rescued.

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So when John Bunyan is writing about amazing grace, he knows what it means.

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Have you experienced that grace?

00:18:38

Well, there's one other thing I want us to think about, and this perhaps is more pertinent to the Christian.

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I've got a few things here I want to share with us.

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Yes, this grace is marvelous, this grace is wonderful.

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It's the grace of God in salvation, it's the grace of God in forgiveness, it's the grace of God as a fountain, but

00:19:02

Let's think about this from God's perspective now.

00:19:07

He gave us more grace than we deserve.

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Dear child of God, notice the text.

00:19:18

It doesn't say God gave grace.

00:19:22

He giveth more grace.

00:19:28

That literally means he gives and he gives and he gives and he gives.

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There's a little song that comes to mind.

00:19:36

He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

00:19:43

He giveth more grace than we deserve, dear friends.

00:19:47

He shows kindness and favor to us even as His people.

00:19:52

And we need it every day, and we need it every hour, and we need it every moment.

00:19:58

But there's a second thing I want you to think about.

00:19:59

He giveth more grace than we desire.

00:20:03

It is God who is super abundant in His graciousness towards us.

00:20:08

We don't desire as much grace as we ought.

00:20:12

We could never ask him for enough, but we'll never see how much we really need.

00:20:23

There's a third thing I want us to think about.

00:20:25

He giveth more grace than we could ever use.

00:20:29

Now here's something.

00:20:32

God is willing to be more gracious to us than we could ever use in this life.

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Can you think about that for a moment?

00:20:44

And as we proceed in the Christian life, our prayers change, don't they?

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We'll see this next week, but let me show you one or two things here.

00:20:55

As we proceed, as we go on in the Christian life, more grace is necessary.

00:21:03

As we advance in life, we have new callings and new duties to perform

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We have new trials and suffering to bear.

00:21:14

We encounter new temptations and struggles.

00:21:18

More grace is necessary.

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Another thing, more grace is desired.

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That's where our prayer life comes into its own.

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It's often when we're going through trial and difficulty that we seek God's grace more.

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And lastly, and I'm sure you can admit this, maybe you'll share it later,

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Maybe this is the testimony of someone here this morning.

00:21:44

More grace is provided.

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Some of our dear friends are not here this morning.

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They're failing.

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They're failing in health, but the grace of God has not failed them.

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And the grace of God will not fail us if we're in Christ.

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So that's the first thing.

00:22:08

God's given Grace secondly God resists the proud look at the text wherefore he saith God resisteth the proud this is a lot more brief but I just want to think about it for a moment dear friends once upon a time all of us were proud you might not like to hear that but it's true the text that's behind this phrase James is

00:22:35

most likely considering Proverbs 3 verse 34 and this is what Solomon wrote surely he scorneth the scorners but he giveth Grace unto the lowly what a thing it is to be lowly that's not a natural disposition by the way that's not how we naturally want to be seen we don't want to be seen as lowly we don't want to be seen as humble

00:23:05

That's not part of the teaching of the day we live in.

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That's not the modern man mindset.

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That's not how we're taught in education.

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We're told to assert ourselves, put ourselves forward.

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Sadly, that can even enter into the Christian life.

00:23:23

We put ourselves forward.

00:23:25

But what does God say?

00:23:27

Surely He scorneth the scorers, but give us grace.

00:23:32

unto the lowly.

00:23:32

So who's the scorer?

00:23:33

Who's the proud?

00:23:36

Well, you could read many Psalms, but perhaps the Psalm that comes to mind is the Psalm that speaks of the foolish man.

00:23:48

This is a sad Psalm.

00:23:51

It's a true Psalm, but it's sad.

00:23:54

It's in Psalm 14, The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.'

00:24:02

They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

00:24:06

The Lord looketh down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God.

00:24:15

The Apostle Paul picks this very Psalm up and he weaves it into his epistle in Romans chapter 3.

00:24:24

They're proud people.

00:24:27

They don't need God.

00:24:30

They don't need salvation.

00:24:34

They don't need forgiveness.

00:24:38

They'll do it their way.

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And it'll either be their way or the highway.

00:24:45

But dear friends, pride cometh before a fall.

00:24:51

And too many people today think that they can ignore God's existence

00:24:58

Reject God's grace.

00:25:00

Live as they please without any consequences.

00:25:03

It's not like that.

00:25:08

I'd rather the other psalm, which is the shortest psalm in this altar.

00:25:16

And if you've never learned a psalm, perhaps you could start here.

00:25:19

It's not the shortest, but it's one of the shortest.

00:25:26

It's a lovely little psalm.

00:25:30

Just want to get the words correct.

00:25:37

Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes, my mind, my eyes lofty.

00:25:47

Neither do exercise myself in great matters or in things too high for me.

00:25:53

You see the difference?

00:25:55

Psalms 14 shows us the proud heart.

00:25:58

But Psalm 131 shows us that humble heart.

00:26:04

The reason David was humbled is because of God's grace.

00:26:09

Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother.

00:26:13

My soul is even as a weaned child.

00:26:17

David, he's a man here, he's a

00:26:21

No doubt he's in authority, perhaps even he's the king of Israel, and yet he sees himself as a little child in God's dominion, in God's kingdom.

00:26:36

So, God resists the proud.

00:26:43

The proud resist God.

00:26:47

But alas, alas, God resists the proud.

00:26:51

I've quoted this, but now I give you the text.

00:26:52

Proverbs 16 verse 18, Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

00:27:00

Perhaps the clearest example I can give you of an illustration is one day there was this man.

00:27:08

He was talking to me.

00:27:10

He was telling me I was doing a particular DIY job wrong, and he thought he knew better.

00:27:16

And before he knew it, he had made more of a disaster of the job than I had.

00:27:21

Pride cometh goeth before a fall, destruction.

00:27:27

God resists the proud.

00:27:30

One day, dear friends, proud people will be humbled and humble people will be exalted.

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One day, although at the moment in the West, the church is despised and

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marginalized by much of the authorities, and it's seen as an also ran.

00:27:57

Because we're the humble people of God, one day God will raise us up.

00:28:03

He resists the proud.

00:28:04

He rejects the proud.

00:28:08

You can't be proud and be a Christian.

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There's only one thing the Apostle Paul would ever boast of, and it wasn't himself.

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And it wasn't even his salvation.

00:28:21

Although he spoke about it often, there's one thing he boasted about more than anything.

00:28:27

God forbid that I should boast, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.

00:28:38

Paul's boast was in the cross.

00:28:41

His pride was in the cross.

00:28:45

His joy was in the cross of Jesus Christ.

00:28:51

You see, the proud person rejects the cross of Jesus Christ.

00:28:55

No, no, no, we'll find salvation another way.

00:28:58

We'll borrow from Tom, **** and Harry, or whatever religion it is, and we'll put them all together, and we'll make our own type of religion, and we'll get to God our own way.

00:29:09

God says, no, no.

00:29:14

You cannot go that way.

00:29:17

Some of us tried it and failed.

00:29:20

Thankfully, we failed.

00:29:21

Well, there's one other thing I want us to think about this morning.

00:29:26

First of all, god-given grace.

00:29:28

Secondly, God resists the proud.

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But in contrast, how does he treat the humble?

00:29:34

If he resists the proud, if he rejects the proud, if he sticks a big obstruction in the way of the proud, how does he treat the humble?

00:29:43

Well, he tells us.

00:29:45

He giveth grace unto the humble.

00:29:51

You could think of this as raising up the humble, lowering the proud and raising up the humble.

00:30:00

We're in the dust.

00:30:03

We're on our knees.

00:30:05

We're praying to God and God raises us up.

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What happened?

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God started to move our hearts, and our hearts were moved, and we were drawn to the Lord, and we called on the Lord.

00:30:19

Even in salvation we sought the Lord for forgiveness of sin, and the Lord raised us up.

00:30:29

In Proverbs 18 verse 12, Solomon writes this, Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility.

00:30:37

There was a famous king, and

00:30:40

Old Testament times.

00:30:43

He did not humble himself, so God brought him into exile.

00:30:48

2 Chronicles 33:23 But in exile, this same king sought the Lord.

00:30:54

He humbled himself before God, and God delivered him from eternal damnation.

00:31:00

Yes, he was in exile.

00:31:02

That king was Manasseh.

00:31:05

Hezekiah is another example in 2 Chronicles 32 verse 26.

00:31:10

He humbled himself before the Lord.

00:31:14

Yes, he had been foolish, showing the Babylonians around, but before that he was a humble man.

00:31:25

Just because you make mistakes doesn't mean you're totally lost.

00:31:30

It's only when you're left in your sin will you be lost forever.

00:31:36

Isaiah had a vision of Christ.

00:31:40

And you might say, how do you know it's Christ?

00:31:41

It could be just God.

00:31:44

Well, John tells us in John chapter 8 who it was that Isaiah saw, but we're just going to turn for a moment to that text in Isaiah chapter 6.

00:31:56

And Isaiah was so humbled by the vision of Christ that he cries out

00:32:05

In verse five, O is me, for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

00:32:20

Isaiah was humbled.

00:32:24

There's, of course, others who were humbled in the New Testament times.

00:32:30

Some of those who were

00:32:33

opposing the Lord, we're humbled by the Lord.

00:32:39

Let me share two things.

00:32:42

God raises the humble in heart.

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That's the first thing we need to remember.

00:32:51

The Christian faith is about the heart, the inner person, the part of us that no one sees.

00:32:59

Our hearts are the very core of our being, the operating room.

00:33:04

The headquarters of each personality.

00:33:09

And the humble in heart are those whom God raises up.

00:33:13

There's a fake humility.

00:33:17

I remember a few years ago a religious man saying to me, I can't help myself.

00:33:25

I'm proud of my humility.

00:33:29

It's true.

00:33:31

Some people are proud of their humility.

00:33:34

But it's not real humility.

00:33:37

Whereas God raises the humble, the lowly, those who don't feel much in themselves, those who look away from self to God for salvation and grace and help and strength and guidance, God will not resist, but God will raise up.

00:34:01

Have we got humble hearts?

00:34:06

There's another thing I want us to think about.

00:34:08

He raises the humble and he tells us, James tells us how?

00:34:13

By his grace.

00:34:17

Grace upon grace.

00:34:20

He giveth grace unto the humble.

00:34:25

Each one of us here this morning, as God's people, if we're truly the Lord's, we have been humbled.

00:34:34

We saw our sinfulness in our eyes and the light of God's holiness.

00:34:40

We saw our true state, our lost state.

00:34:45

We sought the Lord not once, not twice, but many times.

00:34:49

If you're speaking the Lord this morning and the Lord hasn't yet met with your soul, then please, my friend, do not give up.

00:34:58

It may be because there's still a little bit of pride there.

00:35:01

and I don't say that as some kind of formula I say that from my own experience God sometimes has to put his finger and I don't mean that literally on something in our lives that's kept us proud we're proud of something but you see God raises the humble by his grace he comes to us and you might think well sometimes

00:35:28

I don't know whether God is going to be gracious to me.

00:35:31

Well, you just humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and He will raise you up.

00:35:38

The old writers speak much of this.

00:35:41

A humble heart is raised by God's gracious hand.

00:35:49

Remember whatever experience we're going through, whatever trial we might be enduring, the Lord is still with us.

00:35:57

And even if we're humbled, we're not forgotten.

00:36:04

He raised the humble by his grace.

00:36:08

And finally, he will raise the humble to be with him forever.

00:36:15

One day, we will, as people, be raised to be with Christ.

00:36:24

Soon for some of us here, maybe later for others,

00:36:27

But those who are in Christ who are saved by his grace, grace upon grace, grace upon grace, grace upon grace, that will be our testimony, will be raised to be with Christ forever.

00:36:42

So friends, the grace of God is wonderful.

00:36:47

We cannot touch it, we cannot buy it, we cannot earn it, we cannot deserve it.

00:36:52

But God is gracious to precious souls.

00:36:55

And we read it this morning in our Psalm.

00:36:59

How far has God's grace reached?

00:37:03

In Psalm 103, For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

00:37:10

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

00:37:21

Are we one of those?

00:37:23

You can say this morning, God has blessed me with his grace.

00:37:30

Our gracious God and loving Father, O we thank thee for this grace upon grace.

00:37:37

O Lord, our lives have been blessed abundantly.

00:37:41

Some of us, O Lord, know a little of this, and others have experienced Thy grace throughout many years on this earth.

00:37:49

But Lord, there may be some there this morning who are tentatively seeking Thee, secretly seeking Thee, silently seeking Thee, calling on the Lord to be gracious to them.

00:38:02

O Lord, visit souls this morning in this place.

00:38:05

bless us and keep us this week watch over and uphold us in all we do and say for thee for Jesus sake amen