

## Communion Meditation 9/12/10    **Increase of Grace**

**Answer 36 of the WSC: The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification are assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, and perseverance to the end.**

The fourth benefit is **increase of grace**. And the grace of God is clearly seen in our justification, our adoption, and our sanctification.

Rom 3 .24 says we have been "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Eph 2.8, 9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift (grace) of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Rom 5. 1 says we have been justified by faith, and in verse 2 tells us that through faith in Jesus we have access "into this grace in which we stand".

So we experienced God's grace at our conversion, because His grace abounds over our sin, and then His grace drew us into His family, where we experience His grace more and more.

2 Peter 3.18 tells us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" and 2 Tim 2.1 commands us, as sons and daughters, to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

So this grace should be increasing as we come nearer to Jesus, because all grace comes from Him, and is because of Him - it is in Him. As we are filled with His Spirit, His grace will increase in us.

And as I mentioned last week, God has given us what some call the means of grace to develop and grow in grace. They are usually summarized in three means:

First of all, and primarily, that we are becoming people of the Word. His word is our life!

Secondly, that we obey His will in rightly keeping the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

And thirdly in our prayer lives, our communion with the Lord.

As we exercise our faith, and use these means of grace, we will increase in grace, until He comes again or we go to be with Him. And in heaven we will also continue to grow in grace. Eph 2.6, 7 says, God "raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward in Christ Jesus."

We see again that this amazing grace is all in Christ Jesus - at our regeneration, now as we grow in grace, and it will continue in the ages to come.

I'd like to say as a husband and a father, and I believe most of the husbands and fathers here would agree, that I am not sufficient of myself to fulfill all I am called to do as a husband and father (2 Cor 3.5) but that my sufficiency is from God. As the Lord said to Paul (2 Cor 12.10), "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And God's increasing grace is helping me be a better husband and father.

His grace also helps Rodney, Phil, and I. We pray and ask God to give us grace because we feel like Solomon, who, when he was asked by God "What shall I give you?", Solomon said "Give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours." 1 Ki 3.9 And we can see God giving us increasing grace to lead. No one can or should shepherd His great people without the grace of God.

And this week will be very busy getting everything finished for the PHF. This is my first time in having a part in planning and organizing (beyond doing the now famous John Paul Jones play!), and I realize now how much Phil and Kathy and Mike Elliott worked to make it happen. But it is all by His grace!

Last year after PHF I shared 1 Cor 15.10, "By the grace of God I am what I am and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." So he labored hard, by grace, and the grace of God was increasing in Him, but it was not him, but the grace of God with Him. So the PHF and the impact of it on people and the kingdom, is all by His grace!

All glory to the God of grace!

You all have heard many times that God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. So we should come humbly to the throne of grace in prayer to receive mercy and grace, we should let His completely sufficient grace reveal His strength in our weakness, and we should train ourselves in godliness using the means of grace.

Father, may Your increasing grace in us bring You all glory, because You alone are worthy of it. You've lavished your grace on us, and it is all in Jesus Christ. Help us to grow in grace as we exercise the means of grace You have given, such as this meal. May this church be full of people whose purpose is to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. In the name of Jesus, through whom we have received grace upon grace. Amen