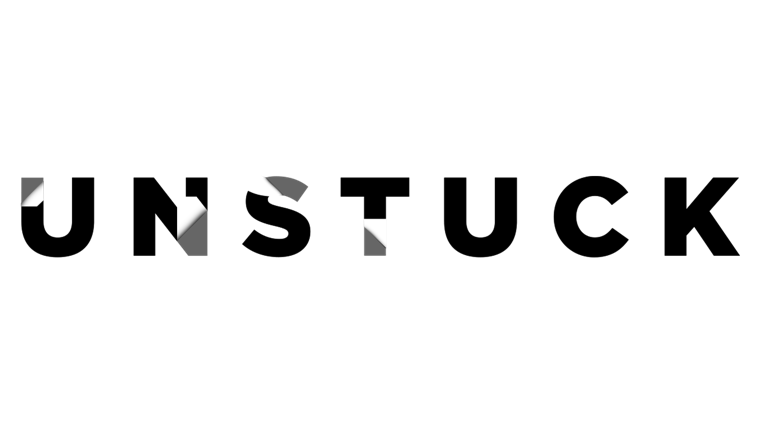
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**Part 3**

**The Next Dimension of Grace**

**Genesis 4:1-26**

Someone said, “Life’s a journey, not a destination,” and the longer you live, the more you realize the truth of that statement. Of course, no one could’ve convinced me of that fact when I was younger, and always asking the predictable Dailey family road trip question, “Dad, are we there yet?” or “Dad, how much longer before we get there?” Which my dad’s answer was inevitably, “We’re about 5 minutes closer from the last time you asked!” Too bad I was too young to really enjoy the journey! Years later I understood how my dad must have felt when my own kids asked the same questions.

As I grew older, I came to the day every teenager has circled in their mental calendar—high school graduation! I remember looking at that day as the end-all-be-all—like it was the grand prize of life. But my parents planted a different seed into my heart and mind. I remember them telling me, “Ben, we’re so proud of you and all you’ve accomplished in high school. Your graduation is one of the biggest days of your life, but you must realize that this is just the beginning, not the end. The reason they call it a ‘commencement’ service is because it’s the start of a brand-new life.” It didn’t take long after graduation for me to realize how true that statement really was. It was only a year later that Kim and I would be married and moving to Texas, interning at the same church that we’d eventually become Lead Pastors at years and years later.

The wonderful journey of life is multi-faceted and expands beyond what you accomplish and do in the natural. It also encompasses your spiritual growth and walk as well. For example, many new believers (much like me, as a kid, on Dailey family road trips), are more focused on the destination than the journey. The minute they received the life of Christ and experienced salvation, it’s like something inside of them said, “Mission accomplished!” They obtained their ultimate spiritual prize. Yes, in Christ, they’ve been given everything they need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). But now, what’s been “worked in” them must be “worked out” of them. Even though salvation is a wonderful gift from God, in actuality, it’s much like graduation—a commencement or a beginning of a brand-new life. Jesus himself called it the abundant “life,” not the abundant “last stop.”

There’s no doubt about it, God’s grace was at work the day you were saved, but that was just the beginning. There’s another function of grace, which goes far beyond salvation. I know, in the church, we love to sing how God’s amazing grace “saved a wretch like me,” but if we stop there, it’s like never living one day after high school graduation. Salvation is much like a spiritual commencement ceremony.

**Not only did God *have* grace to save you, but He also *has* unlimited grace available to live the abundant life.**

The grace I’m talking about goes beyond salvation. It’s the grace you use on a regular basis. It’s grace for the race. It’s grace for life in 2019. In other words, it’s the ability to accomplish what God’s called and gifted you to do, every day and everywhere.

A simple way to understand the differences between grace that saves and grace that empowers is:

* Saving grace carried you, but you carry empowering grace.
* Saving grace was done *in you* while empowering grace is what’s *on you*.
* Saving grace is God’s grace “towards you” while empowering grace is God’s grace “through you.”
* Saving grace led you to salvation while empowering grace has provided everything you need to accomplish all of God’s will and plans for you in this life.
* Saving grace focuses on departure while empowering grace focuses on dominion.

Both saving grace and empowering grace come from the same person—Jesus. It’s important that you get this. You’re saved by grace*and* kept by grace. Jesus is the author *and* the finisher. He who began a good work in you *will* complete it. But empowering grace is the next dimension of grace. Every Christians knows what it means to *begin* with the saving grace of God but not every Christian *continues* in the empowering grace of God.

The problem with many believers today is they never get past the fact that they’ve been saved “from something.” If this is you, thank God you’re saved and on your way to heaven; but let me tell you, there’s so much more to this walk of faith. There’s an important dimension of grace that you must realize!

**Not only has grace saved you “from something,” but just as importantly, God’s also saved you “for something.”**

And what’s that “something” you’re saved for? Your holy, divine, calling that you, and only you, can fulfill in this life!

Church, I really believe one of the main reasons many of us aren’t living the abundant life is because we only know grace in one dimension. We must grow up into Christ, in all things (Ephesians 4:15). There’s more to this thing than just being born again. We’ve been saved “from something” and “for something.” God’s “brought us out” to “bring us in.” We’ve been “PURCHASED” and “PURPOSED.” There was a divine intention that brought about our redemption. We’re moving from…

* The Outer Court to the Holy Place to the Holy of Holies.
* Little Children to Young Men to Fathers.
* Passover to Pentecost to Tabernacles.
* 30-fold to 60-fold to 100-fold.
* Body to Soul to Spirit.

When believers only know what they’ve been saved “from” and not what they’ve been saved “for,” they live on a spiritual rollercoaster all the way to heaven. For example, if someone’s been saved from a life of drugs and sexual immorality, quite possibly those weaknesses will always be a struggle, if they only have the knowledge of what grace saved them from. While they might wholeheartedly embrace the grace, which carried them to salvation, it’s only a fraction of what God’s made available in Christ.

**Saving grace delivers you from something, but empowering grace delivers you for something: your purpose, call, and God-given kingdom assignment here on this earth.**

What you came out from is gone and was done away with at the cross. You’re redeemed from the past. Old things have passed away and all things are new. You’re holy and righteous. However, if you’re constantly using your past mistakes, sins, and failures to run from the purposes of God, then your past is more prevalent to you than your present and your future. Maybe you’ve said things like, “I’ve been divorced. God can never use me,” or “Since I’ve spent time in jail, I can only be used by God on a limited basis,” or “I’ve struggled with a bad habit for so long. God’s given up on me.” These are just a bunch of lies from the pit of hell, and the awesome truth of the gospel is:

**While God’s saving grace removed your past, His empowering grace gives you the ability to pick up and move forward to what He has in store for you … and it’s good!**

You’re redeemed from the curse of the Law along with all of its fear and intimidations. That was the act of saving grace. Now, any Law, attitude, or crooked thought which tries to drag you back and make you feel less than what God believes and says about you is eradicated by empowering grace. Why? Because living under empowering grace gives you the boldness to stand up and declare, **“I’m absolutely authorized and equipped to accomplish everything I was saved for!”**

If you only stop at saving grace and refuse to move into empowering grace, then you’ve missed the whole heart of the gospel. It isn’t just death. It’s also resurrection. It isn’t just “dead to sin.” It’s also “alive to God in unbroken union with Him, in Christ.” Who knows! What you thought was going to kill you might be the very thing that qualifies you for the next thing God has for you to do! Who’s to say that those vices and addictions you dealt with weren’t divine set ups for you to bring life to those who are going through those same situations right now?

GOD NEVER WASTES A HURT! Whatever hurt, wound, or disappointment you’ve had in life, it can either lead to bitterness or “better-ness.” You have a choice! You can choose to become self-absorbed where your hurt consumes you, or you can choose to become grace-absorbed where your hurt empowers you.

Change your focus and stop always running from sin and begin to run headlong into all God has in store for you … because it’s good. When you do, watch out! It won’t be long before you start to realize that you’re empowered by God to live the abundant life and do something spectacular for His Kingdom!

Here’s a major mindset shift: **The true testimony of grace isn’t what God delivered you from, but what God’s delivered you for!**

As a pastor, I’ve watched many people—good, churchgoing, God-loving people—get saved and spend the rest of their lives sitting on the bench. For the next 15, 25, even 40 years, they occupy space on this earth, die, and go to heaven, but never do one thing God’s graced them to do—whether that be in the five-fold ministry, education, medicine, drama and art, business and finance, the legal world, and many others. Why? Because they never learn to live past saving grace into empowering grace. It’s true for any believer: **If you never live in the next dimension of grace, you’ll never accomplish everything God’s assigned you to do.**  The good news is you can move to the next level of grace and live your life like God’s designed and complete every task He’s set in place for you. But you can only accomplish this in one way—through God’s empowering grace!

Because I’m so passionate about the importance of teaching and expounding on the gospel of God’s grace, I want to close this series and give you some practical points which I believe will benefit and encourage you in your grace journey. In doing so, I want to use a story ~~I briefly touched on a few weeks ago~~ found in Genesis 4. Even though you may recognize the passage, it might have a few extra nuggets to help you navigate through your walk of grace.

~~Do you remember?~~ Genesis 4 is the story of the first sons born to Adam and Eve, named Cain and Abel. Now, when many people hear of these two men, the first thing that comes to their mind is murder, and sadly, this story does record the first act of violence in the Bible. Even sadder is this act was taken out—one brother against another. However, more than just a story of envy and hatred, this passage teaches some powerful, key principles of walking in all God’s graced you to do. Let’s take a look at three practical and helpful ways to keep you living in the next dimension of God’s grace—His empowering grace.

1. **Embrace the process.**

**Genesis 4:1-3 “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, ‘I have gottena man with the help of the Lord.’ And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the process of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground.”**

1. **Process develops character.**
2. **Process removes mess.**
3. **Process means press.**
4. **Trust and obedience positions you under the flow of blessing.**

**Genesis 4:4-5 “Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had respected Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no respect. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.”**

1. **Never give up.**

**Genesis 4:25 “And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, ‘God has appointedfor me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.’”**

**Genesis 4:26 “To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord.”**