

Series: Grace in Action: Serving through God's Love
Grace in the Old Testament

Heavenly Father,
We come before you with a humble heart.
We confess my sins. We still recognize the pain in my heart
I recognize the pain I have caused, both to myself and to others. I am truly sorry.
Help me to release the bitterness and resentment that we carry in my heart.
Grant me the strength to extend grace and mercy
I pray for healing from the wounds of the past.
Help us learn from my mistakes and to grow into a person who reflects our love and compassion.
Fill us with your peace, and guide us on the path of righteousness.
Thank you for your boundless mercy and your unfailing love.
We trust in your forgiveness and your power to transform my heart.
In Jesus' name, Amen

"But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."-Genesis 6:8

The core of the verse is that "Noah found favor or grace in the eyes of the Lord. This signifies that God bestowed undeserved kindness upon Noah. It wasn't that Noah earned this favor, but rather that God chose to grant it. This favor highlights God's selective mercy. In a world consumed by wickedness, God saw something in Noah that led Him to extend his grace. The verses preceding 6:8 describe the overwhelming corruption of humanity. God's heart is grieved by the extent of human evil, and He decides to bring judgment. It introduces a glimmer of hope, showing that even in the midst of widespread sin, God finds a person who pleases Him. This contrast emphasizes the depth of humanity's sin, and the amazing nature of God's Grace. While the verse emphasizes God's grace, it's also important to note that Noah is described as a righteous man. His character played a role in God's decision. Noah's righteousness was not the cause of God's grace, but that God's grace was shown to a man that was righteous.

We should aim to live lives that reflect moral integrity and obedience to God's principles. We must be willing to stand firm in our beliefs, even when it's unpopular. We should strive to be a positive influence in our communities, reflecting God's love and truth. We must acknowledge our own shortcomings and dependence on God's mercy. We should be willing to extend grace and forgiveness to others, even when they have wronged us. We should be willing to obey God's calling in our lives, even when it's difficult or unconventional. We should be open to being used by God to fulfill His purposes in the world. We can strive to cultivate a spirit of obedience to God's will, even when we don't fully understand it. This involves listening to God's guidance and acting on it, even when it's difficult. We can learn to maintain our faith in the face of societal pressures and challenges. This means staying true to our values and principles, even when they're unpopular. We can strive to live lives of integrity and moral uprightness. This involves making ethical choices and seeking to do what is right in God's eyes. We can learn to persevere through challenges and setbacks. This means staying committed to our goals and not giving up, even when things get tough. We can cultivate a deep trust in God's plan for our lives. This means surrendering our worries and anxieties to God and trusting that He will guide us. It is important to

remember that Noah was not perfect. The bible does record that after the flood, Noah had an episode where he became drunk. This reminds us that even great people of faith are still human.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8). This signifies God's favor toward Noah amidst a corrupt generation. The priests were to pronounce a blessing that included God being gracious (Numbers 6:25). The Old Testament reveals God as a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in love. This inherent nature of God is the foundation of His grace. God often demonstrates mercy and provides ways for people to receive his favor. God's preservation of Noah and his family from the flood. God's covenant with Abraham, despite Abraham's flaws. God's patience and guidance of Moses, despite Moses's shortcomings. God's forgiveness of David's sins. God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt. While the New Testament emphasizes grace through Jesus Christ, the Old Testament lays the groundwork by revealing God's character and His acts of grace throughout history. The concept of grace in the Old Testament is often intertwined with God's covenant faithfulness and His mercy. It is very important to understand that in both the old and new testament, that salvation has always been by grace through faith.

"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth"-Exodus 34:6-7

This emphasizes God's core nature. Merciful and gracious speak to His compassion and undeserved kindness. Slow to anger highlights His patience. Abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness emphasizes His loyal and unchanging love. This reinforces God's willingness to forgive and extend His loving-kindness. This addresses God's justice. It indicates that God does not overlook sin. It provides a foundational understanding of who God is, which is essential for understanding the rest of the Bible. This declaration reinforces God's commitment to his covenant with his people. It acknowledges that sin can have lasting consequences that affect not only the individual but also their descendants.

We should acknowledge our own imperfections and our dependence on God's undeserved kindness. This fosters humility and gratitude. This means being forgiving, compassionate, and patient, even when others make mistakes. We should strive to cultivate patience in our own lives, both with ourselves and with others. This is especially important in a fast-paced and often frustrating world. We can trust that he is working in our lives, even when we don't see immediate results. We should strive to live responsibly and ethically, seeking to do what is right. God's patience reminds us that His timing is perfect. Our actions can have lasting effects on those who come after us. This should encourage us to live in a way that builds a positive legacy. We can trust that He will always be there for us. We are called to reflect God's faithfulness in our own relationships, being loyal, trustworthy, and dependable.

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."-Psalm 103:8-12

This emphasizes that God's fundamental nature is one of compassion and love. This means that God's discipline is not permanent, and he does not hold grudges. This highlights the concept of grace, where God does not give us the punishment we truly deserve. This emphasizes that God's love and mercy are beyond human comprehension. It's an image of total forgiveness. This portion of Psalm 103 offers reassurance that God is a loving and forgiving God. It shows that God's capacity to forgive is beyond human understanding. It provides comfort to those who feel burdened by their sins.

When someone wrongs us, remembering God's forgiveness can help us release bitterness and offer forgiveness. We all make mistakes. This passage reminds us that God's mercy is vast, allowing us to forgive ourselves and move forward. We don't have to be trapped by past regrets. We can find solace in his unwavering love, regardless of our circumstances. It reinforces that God's love is not based on our performance, but on his grace. We can strive to be more patient with others and understand that everyone makes mistakes. We can actively seek opportunities to show mercy and compassion to those in need, reflecting God's character in our actions. We can live with hope, knowing that our sins are truly forgiven. Knowing that God's forgiveness is complete, allows us to move forward in our lives without the weight of past mistakes holding us back.

"And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him."-Isaiah 30:18

This emphasizes God's patience. He doesn't rush to judgment or punishment. Instead, He waits, giving people time to turn to Him. It's an active waiting and driven by God's desire to show grace. He longs to be merciful. God's acts of mercy are not signs of weakness, but demonstrations of his power and glory. This highlights that God's mercy is a deliberate and powerful act. This is a crucial balance. God's mercy does not negate his justice. He is righteous and he holds people accountable. This reminds us that God's grace is offered within the context of his just character. This is a promise of blessing for those who patiently trust in God's timing.

Forgiving someone doesn't mean you're saying what they did was okay. It doesn't erase the pain or the consequences of their actions. I forgive my family for how they treat me today and in the past for letting me struggle. That's why the program director at Star of Hope Mission told me in his office that I want to rely on myself to prosper and rely less on family. I said to myself that I can do that by letting God guide. That's why people in Baltimore and other places in the midwest told me that I need to stop moving around from city to city and let God work in me daily. People told me that God cannot do that when I continue to move around after every 4-6 months. People told me that I need to settle myself. I will settle myself in Baltimore because New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Alabama, Iowa, Ohio and Kentucky. The places are good places to do business, but not good places to live personally. There are very few family members in Chicago that are supportive of me and what I do as a man of God and Bishop, such as my family members on my biological father's side of the family. If I want to get support from my mother and stepfather side of the family, they give me a negative attitude and are very unsupportive on some basis when I am living in a struggle on some basis and need extra money. I call my mother and stepfather side of the family neglectful, selfish, emotionally unavailable, dysfunctional, toxic, enabling, financially abusive and emotional abandonment.

1. Do not like my sister and I was not raised equally in the household as children that get my good attention and advice. The pain in my heart still hurts because of my family members' actions, although I forgive them. I feel this is what homeless people go through when they cannot go to family members for help while they are struggling living on the streets and at homeless shelters in this nation. The First Lady Jennifer understood and comforted me when I first told her this years ago.
2. Made me struggle to pursue my higher education after I transferred to DePaul University after pursuing my Associate degree from Kennedy King College. DePaul University is an expensive private higher education and needed a cosignor to get a student loan to pay the rest of my tuition after financial aid paid half each quarter. I had to continue to do what I need to do on my own to pay and pursue my higher education. Mother and stepfather invested their resources and applied for financial aid for my sister to attend a higher education institution in Northwest Indiana that she flunked out of and lost her financial aid and my stepfather had to pay all that money back as a cosigner for those student loans that I called a lack of investment. I have a better resume and portfolio than my sister with higher education, experience and accomplishments. My sister never had a set career, her experience and background is all over the place, she is very sinful and all about idolatry, and lives in Dallas. People told me to continue to pray for my family members, but prayer for my family members on my mother and stepfather side of the family will not do any good because they 100% remain sinful and all about idolatry conformed to the world. I forgive them, but it still hurts in my heart that they let me struggle back to them and today on my own on some basis and give me attitude when I need support. The First Lady Jennifer understood and comforted me when I first told her this years ago.