

Evening Worship October 28, 2018

“Irresistible Grace”

Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 2:8-10

I. *Woody and Wowed by Grace –*

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. (Jeremiah 31:3 NKJ)

What is being expressed here, is both a love for Jeremiah, and a love for God's rebellious people Israel. This love is described in wonderful ways:

1. *It is a love demonstrated, a love that shows itself, expresses itself, an old love –*

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying:

Speaking to Israel, and to Jeremiah their prophet God had spoke to them long before this time, of His choice of them –

"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷ "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; (Deuteronomy 7:6-7 NKJ)

This is electing grace, long before Israel was born as a nation, and before Jeremiah was chosen to be a prophet, the LORD God chose them, set His love on them with His divine love and purposes –

- A. *He would have them be "holy" which in this context meant they would be His, His and only His!*
- B. *It is amazing He speaks such to and through Jeremiah, because at this particular time they were as far from being loyal to Him as it would seem they could possibly be –*

They were worshipping false gods, goddesses, the Queen of Heaven –

"The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. (Jeremiah 7:18 NKJ)

Then all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense to other gods, with all the women who stood by, a great multitude, and all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying: ¹⁶ "As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you! ¹⁷ "But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For *then* we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble. ¹⁸ "But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine." ¹⁹ *The women also said, "And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make cakes for her, to worship her, and pour out drink offerings to her without our husbands' permission?"* (Jeremiah 44:15-19 NKJ)

- C. *These men and their wives rejected God, God would judge them: Jerusalem would be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, men would be killed, women left in extreme poverty, children would be carried away captive; Jeremiah the prophet would be thrown into a pit ...*

Yet at this time, this terrible time, the providential mercies of God kept Jeremiah alive, and allowed Israel's children, for instance Daniel, to thrive, even in the midst of their enemies, think of the amazing way Jeremiah Himself describes such a time –

I *am* the man *who* has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. ² He has led me and made *me* walk *In* darkness and not *in* light. ³ Surely He has turned His hand against me Time and time again throughout the day. ⁴ He has aged my flesh and my skin, And broken my bones. ⁵ He has besieged me And surrounded *me* with bitterness and woe. ⁶ He has set me in dark places Like the dead of long ago. ⁷ He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out; He has made my chain heavy. ⁸ Even when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer. ⁹ He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked. ¹⁰ He *has been* to me a bear lying in wait, *Like* a lion in ambush. ¹¹ He has turned aside my ways and torn me in pieces; He has made me desolate. ¹² He has bent His bow And set me up as a target for the arrow. ¹³ He has caused the arrows of His quiver To pierce my loins. ¹⁴ I have become the ridicule of all my people-- Their taunting song all the day. ¹⁵ He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drink wormwood. ¹⁶ He has also broken my teeth with gravel, And covered me with ashes. ¹⁷ You have moved my soul far from

peace; I have forgotten prosperity. ¹⁸ And I said, "My strength and my hope Have perished from the LORD." ¹⁹ Remember my affliction and roaming, The wormwood and the gall. ²⁰ My soul still remembers And sinks within me. ²¹ This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. ²² *Through* the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ *They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.* ²⁴ "The LORD *is* my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" ²⁵ The LORD *is* good to those who wait for Him, To the soul *who* seeks Him. ²⁶ *It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the LORD.* (Lamentations 3:1-26 NKJ)

"God whispers in our pleasures, but shouts in our pains!" C.S. Lewis

II. Conquered by Grace –

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

χάρις charis {khar'-e-ce}

Meaning: 1) grace 1a) that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech 2) good will, loving-kindness, favour 2a) of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues 3) what is due to grace 3a) the spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace 3b) the token or proof of grace, benefit 3b1) a gift of grace 3b2) benefit, bounty 4) thanks, (for benefits, services, favors), recompense, reward

The word for grace in Greek charis was the word the Romans used to describe their kindness to their conquered enemies. The Romans might defeat a nation in war, and yet its people would have opportunity to become Roman citizens.

The apostle Paul was such a conquered enemy Acts 9:1-22

This is the grace sang about in Amazing Grace, Wonderful Grace of Jesus ...

What does this grace do?

1. *It loves us and saves us, despite our sins, even our fighting against it –*

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8 NKJ)

For by grace you have been saved through faith... Ephesians 2:8 A

2. *It creates "faith" in us, a gift of God, something not of ourselves - **and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,** ⁹ (Ephesians 2:8 B NKJ)*

By the New Birth, we are made New Creatures, we have a new Vision, New sight of God's Kingdom – John 3:1-7

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJ) Like kissed frogs –

3. *Not of works, meaning our works, we cannot boast of it – ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJ)*

III. Carried by Grace –

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10 NKJ)

Workmanship - ποιημα poiema {poy'-ay-mah} God's Word of Art, a work of His craftsmanship

1. *The people of God have a 'Made by God' quality to their lives!*
2. *The grace of God carries them irresistibly to a life of "good works" which were prepared by God!*

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, (Philippians 2:12-15 NKJ)

IV. Shining with grace ... Philippians 2:15↑

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