

Grace of Jesus

The Benediction

When I was young, I attended an Anglican church and at the end of the service the congregation, led by the minister would say a benediction from the verse 2Corinthians 13:14...*"may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all forever more."* as the congregation said it they would look at each other. I thought it was quite cool. It was like a final farwell just like in star wars *"may the force be with you."*

For me, being a young Christian, it was like they were saying "may the Gods be with you—all three of them, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Now before you get worried about my theology or start to think we have gone Hindi and worship more than one God, be calm, I know we worship a Tri-une God, one God in three persons. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Too many believers find it a hard truth to comprehend but then again, it is simple, our God has three ways of being God.

God the Father is God over us—creator ruler almighty.

God the Son is God with us—Jesus, Saviour, Redeemer and Lord.

God the Holy Spirit is God in us—the living force of God all over the world at one time, comforting, convicting and counselling.

The Grace of Jesus

I think the grace of Jesus was the first side of God I experienced and discovered. I mean it wasn't like I was a huge sinner, but I knew I was separate from God. I knew I was empty and I knew it was God that was missing in my life. I remember at the age of 16 praying a prayer of forgiveness and acceptance. I think I prayed that prayer about six times just to make sure. I think in that time it dropped from my head to my heart. I knew and felt that I was right with God and forgiven. Nothing could convince me otherwise:

- ◆ Not the condemnation in my heart
- ◆ Not the calamity that happened around me
- ◆ Not church politics
- ◆ Or the persecution I

experienced at work.

Nothing could separate me from God. I knew I was saved by God's grace, Jesus.

Understand God's Grace

I believe we have got to understand grace, so we become established in God.

"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved." Ephesians 2:4-5

God's Grace

It is:

- ◆ His great Love, it is the richness of His mercy,
- ◆ His undue and unmerited favour.
- ◆ His unconditional love
- ◆ His everlasting love

It is the old acronym that says God's riches at Christ's expense:

- ◆ **G**ods
- ◆ **R**iches
- ◆ **A**t
- ◆ **C**hrists
- ◆ **E**xpense

It is this grace that separates us from every other religion as every other religion is based on what we do for God. But, Christianity, is based on what God has done for us!

I will never forget going to visit the local Buddhist temple. While having lunch, with the reverend of the temple I asked: *"What is Buddhism in a nutshell?"* she replied: *"Buddhism is being good."* While she passed me a Buddhist book titled *"Being Good."* I responded with: *"that's a great belief I like that."* and went on eating. Curiosity got the better of her and she asked: *"What is Christianity in a nutshell."* I replied: *"Being good is hard that is why we need Jesus."*

In Ephesians 1:8-9 it says that it is by grace that we have been saved. Becoming a Christian is not:

- ◆ A works program
- ◆ A willpower seminar
- ◆ A social reformation
- ◆ A set of beliefs
- ◆ A Philosophy of thinking

It is Jesus dying on the cross for our sin!

Appreciate God's Grace

It is a work of grace, something we take for granted at times and are pretty cool or casual about or we might think we

weren't that bad so He should forgive us anyway.

In mid Oct 2009 there was a yacht crash at Flinders Island. The boys in this accident were telling the story of how their father was calling out to them and threw them a flashlight. The older boy was thinking, *I hope it works.* it did and the boys were rescued. How much would they treasure that light. I'd put it on the mantle piece as a shrine and turn it on each year.

John Newton, former slave trader, an ungodly man put it so well—his appreciation of God's grace in a song that is still sung today....

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me...how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed...when we've been here 10,000 years bright shining as the sun with no less days to sing God's praise than when we first began."

Isn't that great 10,000 years later, still thanking God for His grace. I remember in the early ninety's preaching in Fiji. I was with a great man of God Poarte. He had known the Lord for 20 years and planted many churches and now was a pastor of a church of approximately two to three thousand people and a movement of 100 churches. He preached two times a day while working a full time job. I asked him: "How do you do it? How do you keep it up?" His reply was quick: "I will never forget what my Jesus has done for me." Wow! I will never forget that.

In Romans 12:1 it says: *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual[@] act of worship."*

Paul the apostle never grew weary of God's grace that is why he preached his testimony right to the end of his life and the main thing he often fought over throughout the epistle was "grace –v– law." as in Philippians 3, Colossians 1 & 2 and Galatians 3 with the classic statement in 1 Timothy 1:15-16: *"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst."*

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By Kevin Wilcock

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But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life."

We need to grow in the Grace of God

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen" 2 Peter 3:18

Grace isn't something we were just saved into it is something we grow in.

We:

- ◆ Are saved by Grace
- ◆ Live by Grace
- ◆ Minister in Grace
- ◆ Walk by Grace
- ◆ Are strengthened by His Grace
- ◆ Get into heaven by Grace

John Newton's song says:

"this grace that brought me safe thus far and grace that will lead me home."

Paul challenged the Galatians. That having begun with putting faith in the work of Calvary (grace) they were now trying to perfect themselves by human effort and the law. (Galatians 3:1-5).

The law never changed anyone but God's love, His kindness, His goodness, His grace will draw you into repentance and change you from glory to glory.

Grace will strengthen and empower us!

"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 2:1

Be strong in the grace—not the law. Understand it, accept it, walk in it, live in it. It will do you good. Grace is not just a favour but a force that:

- ◆ Works in you
- ◆ Supports you
- ◆ Strengthens you
- ◆ Empowers you
- ◆ Enlarges you
- ◆ Releases you

John Newton's song was so true...*"Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved."*

"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Hebrews 4:14-16

Our Jesus rules us from a throne of grace and administers to us his grace and mercy in our times of need.

We are called to administer grace

We are not called to administer judgment or self righteousness but grace! The truth is until we get a

hold of the grace of Jesus we will be forever:

- ◆ Judging
- ◆ Looking for specks in others
- ◆ Throwing rocks
- ◆ Holding onto unforgiveness
- ◆ Condemning ourselves

It is said of Stephen that he was a man full of God's grace. Acts 6:8. When we are full of this God substance, this liquid love, it will overflow onto others. It was really Stephens graceful death that pierced the heart of Saul Acts 7:54-60 and drew him to the saviour. So understand and appreciate, grow and be strong and minister in the grace of Jesus.

Love

Kevin



Follow Kevin on TWITTER

<http://twitter.com/KevinWilcock>

Web: www.lifechurch.org.au

KEV'S TRAVEL

10th - 13th Jan Hobart

23rd - 24th Jan Shellharbour

28th Feb - 1st Mar Gosford

11th - 12th March Melbourne

HOME FRONT

Both Faith and Rachel have now finished school. Faith completed her HSC and Rachel has finished year 10.

Faith is currently working at Hogs Breath café at Honeysuckle and loves socializing with all her customers and gives great friendly service. She is thinking of uni in about 1 year from now in completing a creative writing course.

Rachel is looking for a hairdressing apprenticeship and has completed a couple of TAFE courses to help her in this area. She is also picking up part time work at a local salon.

Tracey is still working for the Salvation Army Employment Plus in Maitland at the moment but hopes to be transferred back to Newcastle in the New Year. I am trying to convince Tracey to take out an extension on our loans to visit Europe for five weeks. Tracey still loves being at home with the girls developing them as they step out in their careers which she does an amazing job of.

Myself, as my vineyard is growing so well and the wine that I have produced is tasting fantastic, I will be starting a vigneron course at Kurri Kurri Tafe in February on Monday nights which I am looking forward to. I plan to work a little more with companies in the Human Resource area, traveling to other churches and building into them in a relational way and continuing to build into Life Church in Newcastle. I will be working more intentionally with people who have a desire to be in ministry in whatever realm, developing and training them on a personal level and seeing more people released into their God given potential.





GlobeReach some of the works we support overseas

FIJI – Peter Schultz

Several weeks ago I was sitting have a catch-up and coffee with one of my recently released prisoners when I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was another ex-prisoner, Amosi, a man who we had previously counselled and helped. He had just happened to see me as he walked past the coffee shop. “Can I see you for a minute” he asked and so I stepped outside. “Brother Peter here is some money for your ministry, to help some of the guys.” and twenty dollars was put into my hand. I paused and looked at the crumbled note; it felt like a million dollars. I reached out and embraced him and we parted.

What an incalculable victory when such men can come to a place where they can see beyond their own needs and begin to give into the lives of others.

On a number of fronts I feel that we are gaining ground—this was the visible evidence of one.

Another came in the form of a text message only this morning from an ex-prisoner in whom we invested significantly and with a good result. He heard on the grapevine that I was in bed unwell and so this is how the txt msg appeared on my phone.

“U can’t be sick that, your’re the tough guy. My brother I b ready 2 support u in al the prison n 2 b part of yr missionary in prison...”

There is a cycle emerging. Praise God for such a day.

Dr Jeffrey Rutter Visits.

We hosted Dr Jeffrey Rutter, BA, MTS, PSYD, MAPS, from the Wesley Institute School of Counseling, for three days. We went into the prisons, met with prisoners and ex-prisoners and the heads of the Fiji Prison Service. It was the beginning of our professional dialogue and was tremendous to get some external assessment on our work. We look forward to development of this relationship.



Dr Rutter, myself, Jill, Lima Tupou enjoying lunch after Church.

Contact details for Peter & Jill

Email: admin_fj@operationfoundation.org.fj

Email: peter.d.schultz@gmail.com

Fiji Fun

We had a new department store open in Suva yesterday. Tapoo City, a magnificent six story building dedicated to consumerism. I took the boys in for a look at the grand opening. Tappoo City had hired a Santa for the occasion and he was going around spreading Christmas Cheer and lollies.

We met Santa on the 2nd level as we all passed through the new shop-lifting security alarms. We got through but unfortunately the sirens flashed and buzzed when Santa went through and the alert security people pounced. Santa began protesting and quickly began losing his Christmas cheer. We moved away as Santa was being placed up against a wall uttering words that no child should hear Santa speak.

It would seem that Santa may have been filling his stocking early with gifts from the 3rd floor. The next challenge will be what my approach to counselling Santa in Prison will be!

Finally

I’ve enjoyed this verse the past week.

“Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not think you are superior.”
Romans 12:6

INDONESIA – Colin & Kim Crago

It’s Happening!!

For a long time we have been praying to see God move—at last it is happening!

Our assembly has grown to 183 (includes 49 children), much better than the 8 we started with. We are now seeing healings and salvations regularly. There have been so many healings. We are now seeing people coming because they have heard that people get healed here—and this without publicity. In the past we have talked to ministers who have had success with evangelizing Muslims and asked them how it happened. Invariably they said “*get them healed!*” We now have unsaved Muslims in our meetings, there because of either the healings that are happening or because of our “Sembako” program (i.e. feeding the poor).

With over 130 adults it would mean, in Australia that a church could afford to hire

a minister to conduct the business of the Church. With the predominance of poor people in a church here in Indonesia, it would need more like 450 people.

We are also beginning to gain a reputation for worship. The GBIS Pentecostal Church at Gillingan, Solo, wants us to come and teach them “how to do it”. How they found out about us we don’t know, we hope they are not disappointed. Next weekend we are due to go to Palankarya, Central Kalimantan (Borneo) for Evangelistic meetings.

We must be careful not to be seen as being successful or we will have a big reaction from the Muslims and lose our new visa’s before we get them. At the same time we are constantly praying to see God move strongly and see His will accomplished. We have already had our Palur Outreach closed down because of pressure from the Muslim elements who threatened the landlord.

It has moved to another area that is less intimidating, although, when a sign was put up on the meeting venue the Muslims soon forced its removal.



Dr Colin & Kim Crago

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Shellharbour - Kim & Maggie Iredale

CHANGE uncomfortable at times but usually necessary and as someone who resists change more often than not, I find myself and the Church here in Shellharbour going through a major time of change and direction.

We all want to see good healthy fruit and growth in Churches, so does Jesus our head and we his body, so we here are all accepting and looking forward to what He has in store for us in 2010.

We as a Church have been through change in the past since Kev and the team first planted the 3rd Church of 1 Church in 3 locations back in July 1999.

We have had 3 ministers including Kev for a time who have all served us well and now look to our 4th.

We have been in 4 locations spread right across the Shellharbour district and we look to move into our 5th a place early 2010 where the ministries within our Church can operate from 7 days a week.

We also look forward to increasing our mission support with Donna and Paul Harb, Eugene and Angie Martinez are heading to Argentina in April, and we are looking to send a couple to Vanuatu later this year (plenty of volunteers for this one) alive".

I will leave you with a quote from John and Jenny, Ywam missionaries (the last 2 years in Afghanistan) visiting our Church Over Christmas "if your not under attack your not."

We thank all of you within and connected to Ozreach for your prayers recently and look forward to catching up with you all at the next conference.

God bless you all, yours in Christ
Kim and Maggie Iredale
SCCC Shellharbour
Email: kimiredale@gmail.com

Huon Valley - Malcom & Antonia Weir

Hi Kev, Tracey & Family

Thanks Kev, for coming to our great little church in the Huon Valley. You really ministered to us all. A special thank you for Tracey looking after us when we were at the Innovate Conference. Here is the art work from our newest member (Loren) you met her last time you were here she is the local tattooist and artist. He whole family has come to Christ and are all starting to come to church. You can get a tatt next time you are down!!!

All the best for Christmas and hope to catch up in the New Year.

Malcolm & Antonia Weir.
Email: mweirhuon@gmail.com



A DAY IN THE LIFE @ 24HR EXPRESS

Will be on the 19th to 20th February 2010.

Playing at Soapbox will be Bodacious Cowboys a 14 piece band that pay tribute to Steely Dan. From lunch time Friday to lunchtime Saturday.

Book early only 6 seats available.

- Soapbox (Jazz Venue)
- Soul Café (Soup Kitchen)
- Alcoholics Anonymous

- Spend personal time with Kevin talking about missional church

Personal
It's Missional
It's Emergent
It's Incarnational
It's 24 Hr Express

Cost for Soapbox
\$45.00
Cost for 24 hr Express
\$35.00