



Grace Greater Than Our Sin



"Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured -
there where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

"Sin and despair, like the seawaves cold,
threaten the soul with infinite loss;
grace that is greater - yes, grace untold -
points to the Refuge, the mighty Cross.

"Dark is the stain that we cannot hide,
what can avail to wash it away?
Look! there is flowing a crimson tide -
whiter than snow you may be today.

"Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see His face,
will you this moment His grace receive?"

"Grace, grace, God's grace,
grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
grace, grace, God's grace,
grace that is greater than all our sin."

"If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope." - Psalm 130:3-5

" 'Come now, and let us reason together', says the Lord. 'Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool'." - Isaiah 1:18

Grace may be thought of as a New Testament word, but the concept runs throughout the Old Testament as well. For example, all the way back in Genesis 6:8, we read, " But Noah found grace (favor) in the eyes of the Lord."

From the time that Adam and Eve sinned in the garden to the days of Noah, the human race had become increasingly evil in their rebellion against their Creator. Yet God's grace and favor came upon Noah as he built the ark in careful obedience to His

instructions. Once all of the living creatures were safely housed in the ark, along with Noah and his family, God shut the door behind him (Genesis 7:16).

In the early chapters of Exodus, we read how God called Moses to deliver the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt. Then in chapter 20, we find Moses on top of Mount Sinai, receiving the stone tablets with the Law written by God's own hand - what we call the "Ten Commandments." Moses came to represent the Law put forth in detail in the books of the Old Testament, and explained more fully in the New Testament.

In the Gospels we see that Jesus was the only One who could fulfill the Law on our behalf, and that God's grace was shown to us through His Son, as we read in John 1:14 and 17:

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth ... For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ."

"Grace Greater Than Our Sins" was written in 1910 by a woman named Julia Harriette Johnston. Julia was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister in Peoria, Illinois, where she served faithfully as a teacher and Sunday School superintendent. Her lyrics give us a clear contrast between our natural sinful state and the work of grace the Spirit performs in those who are "born again" and made new by faith in Christ.

Grace is often defined as "unmerited favor." The first line of today's hymn describes God's grace as "marvelous, infinite, matchless ... freely bestowed on all who believe." This grace exceeds the heavy burden of all our sin and guilt, and it's poured out upon us by our loving Savior who is always ready to forgive and restore us into fellowship with Him when we ask.

The second verse speaks of sin and despair, in contrast to God's great grace that points us to the Refuge of the Cross. Then in verse 3, Julia refers to the offer for cleansing that the Lord makes to those who would repent and turn back to Him. The only thing that could wash away their sin - or ours - is the "flowing tide" of Jesus' blood, shed for us on the cross, and which leaves us "whiter than snow."

So let us rejoice today in the undeserved grace of God toward us and remember that this same grace is available to us every day to meet the many needs of our hearts, even as it delivers us from the cold waves of doubt and fear that threaten to undo us. And when Satan tempts us to despair, may we be encouraged by the words of Paul in Romans 5:20: "But where sin increased, grace increased all the more!"