

<p>Grace Offered & Accepted; Set aside? Do my ‘worldly riches’ blind me to Grace?</p>	<p>Grateful for Grace? Do I ‘grow weary’? We follow Christ, by His Grace!</p>
<p>Jesus was teaching one day to a large gathering of people. There were many questions thrown at Him, often questions phrased to steer Jesus’ answer toward a ‘correct’ conclusion. Jesus never gave in to the quick and easy answer.</p> <p>¹³ A self-righteous man in the crowd raised his voice and called out, “Teacher, order my brother to give me a fair share of the family inheritance!” [The man ‘knew what was right and fair’; expecting Jesus to automatically support his claim publicly. BAD ASSUMPTION! The self-righteous man was obviously a man of some position, as he ‘ordered’ Jesus to immediately judge in his favor; a man of ‘position’, money and influence. Jesus was a man of religion, a Teacher.]</p> <p>¹⁴ Jesus replied, “Sir, why do you believe that it is any of My concern to be a mediator or a judge for your concern?” [Jesus was asking “Am I your ‘Yes’ man”?” Jesus went on to answer this self-righteous man with a true story.]</p> <p>¹⁵ Turning to the larger group around the man, Jesus continued speaking, “Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot.” [Grace offered]</p> <p>¹⁶ Then Jesus told them this story:</p> <p>¹⁷ “A specific rich man [not-to-be-named] had a farm as part of his wealth. The farm produced a bumper crop one season. ¹⁸It was more than this rich man could ever have expected!</p> <p>[Grace offered]</p> <p>The rich man thought to himself: ‘What can I do? My barn is not big enough for this fantastic harvest.’ ¹⁹Thinking through this problem, the rich man concluded, ‘I only see one option that allows me to keep this bumper crop all for myself! I will tear down my barn and build more and bigger barns.</p> <p>With the additional larger barns, I can gather in all my grains and goods. When I see the new barns, filled to the roofs, I can congratulate myself on a job well done! My brilliance, strategic thinking and sheer greatness have brought me to this point. I will have more than enough to retire and live extremely well. I have it made!</p>	<p>⁸ The ‘harvest that you reap’ reveals the seed that was planted.</p> <p>If you plant the ‘corrupt seeds’ of selfishness in this natural life, you can expect to experience a harvest of corruption. [Grace rejected]</p> <p>If you plant ‘good seeds’ [such as prayer, Bible study, speaking wise words, giving, loving, and an ongoing reflection of Christ], you will reap the beautiful fruits that grow from the everlasting life of the Spirit. [Grace accepted]</p> <p>⁹ And do not allow yourselves to be weary or disheartened in planting ‘good seeds’, for the season of reaping the wonderful harvest that you have planted is coming!</p> <p>Do not ‘grow weary’ in doing well!</p> <p>[Grace accepted and lived out!]</p> <p>¹⁰ Take advantage of every opportunity to be a blessing to others, especially to our brothers and sisters in the family of faith!” Gal. 6: 8 - 10</p> <p>“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” John 1: 17</p> <p>[Grace offered]</p> <p>“For you have experienced the extravagant grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that although He was infinitely rich, He impoverished Himself for our sake, so that by His poverty, we could become rich beyond measure.” 2 Cor. 8: 9</p> <p>[Grace offered]</p> <p>²⁸ Anyone who disobeyed Moses’ law died without mercy on the simple evidence of two or three witnesses.</p> <p>²⁹ How much more severely do you suppose a person deserves to be judged who has contempt for God’s Son, trampling the Son of God under his feet, and who scorns the blood of the new covenant that made him holy, and who mocks the Spirit who gives him grace? [Grace rejected]</p> <p>³⁰ For we know Him who said;</p> <p>“I have the right to take revenge and pay them back for their evil! And also, “The Lord God will judge his own people!” [Deut 32: 35 – 36]</p> <p>Heb. 10: 28 - 30</p>

<p><i>With the bumper crop in the new barns I will have additional wealth stored up where I can see it and manage it. I can take it easy and live life large!</i></p> <p>[Grace offered & Grace rejected]</p> <p>²⁰ “At that moment, God showed up and said, ‘Fool! Tonight you die. And your current barn that is full of goods—who will get it?’</p> <p>[The eternal cost for rejecting God’s Grace]</p> <p>²¹ Jesus concluded to the listening crowd; “This is what happens when you fill your barn with Selfishness and not with God.”</p> <p><u>Luke 12: 13 - 21</u></p>	<p>Paul urged the Corinthian church, “¹ As workers together with Christ, we also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, and In the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the accepted time; Behold, now is the day of salvation.” [Isa.49:8]</p> <p><u>2 Cor. 6: 1 – 2</u></p> <p>“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have life more abundantly.” John 10: 10</p>
<p>¹⁷ To all the rich Christ-followers of this world, I command you not to be wrapped in thoughts of pride over your prosperity, or to rely on your wealth, for your riches are unreliable and nothing compared to the living God. Trust instead in The One who has lavished upon us all good things, fulfilling our every need.</p> <p>¹⁸ Remind the wealthy to be <i>rich in good works of extravagant generosity, willing to share with others.</i> ¹⁹ This will provide a beautiful foundation for their lives and secure for them a great future, as they lay their hands upon <i>the meaning of true life.</i>” <u>1 Tim 6: 17 – 18</u></p>	<div data-bbox="824 697 1133 1003" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>“I have fought the good fight, I have finished my race and I have kept the faith.”</p> <p><u>2 Tim. 4: 7</u></p> <p>“Knowledge ‘puffs up’; love ‘lifts up’.”</p> <p><u>1 Cor. 8: 1</u></p>

3 Solomon made an agreement with the king of Egypt by marrying his daughter and bringing her to Jerusalem. At this time Solomon was still building his palace and the **Temple of the LORD**, as well as a wall around Jerusalem. ² The Temple for the worship of **the LORD** had not yet been finished, so people were still sacrificing at altars in many places of worship. ³ Solomon showed he loved **the LORD** by *following the commands his father David had given him*, except many other places of worship were still used to offer sacrifices and to burn incense. **[Grace offered and accepted]**

⁴ King Solomon went to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice, because it was the most important place of worship. He offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ While he was at Gibeon, **the LORD** appeared to him in a dream during the night. **God** said, **“Ask for whatever you want Me to give you.”**

⁶ Solomon answered, **“You were very kind to Your servant, my father David. He obeyed You, and he was honest and lived right [following David’s repentance from ‘The Bathsheeba Incident’]. You showed great kindness to him when You allowed me, his son, to be king after him. ⁷ LORD my God, now You have made me, Your servant, king in my father’s place. But I am like a little child; I don’t know how to do what must be done. ⁸ I, Your servant, am here among Your chosen People, and there are too many of them to count. ⁹ I ask that You give me a heart that understands, so I can rule the people in the right way and will know the difference between right and wrong. Otherwise, it is impossible to rule this great People of Yours.”**

¹⁰ **The Lord** was pleased that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ So **God said** to him, **“You did not ask for a long life, or riches for yourself, or the death of your enemies. Since you asked for wisdom to make the right decisions, ¹² I will do what you asked. I will give you wisdom and understanding that is greater than**

FOUNDATIONS : “We all have sinned ... Grace abounds!” Study 8 “For there is really no difference between us, ²³for we all have sinned and are in need of the **glory of God.**” Rom. 3: 23

anyone has had in the past or will have in the future. ¹³I will also give you what you did not ask for: riches and honor. During your life no other king will be as great as you. ¹⁴If you follow Me, obey My laws and commands, as your father David did, I will also give you a long life.” [Grace offered & accepted]
1 Kings 3: 1 – 14

*King Solomon grew in wisdom and worldly ways. He arranged ‘marriages’ with the daughters of multiple foreign powers for reasons of influence, peace and trade. **Solomon ‘grew weary’.** He ‘caved in’ to worshipping the little-gods of his foreign wives as he tried every worldly, sensual vice that came to his sight. [Grace offered, accepted and rejected]*

His personal wealth and the wealth of Israel were the ‘talk of the known world’. He ultimately heavily taxed the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel to pay for his wars of conquest and his forty years of lavish lifestyle <970 – 930 BCE>.

Solomon died and his son, Rehoboam, took the throne. These ten northern tribes quickly rebelled and declared themselves a separate Nation [“Israel”] as Rehoboam further increased taxes. This new Nation in the north (1 Kings ch.12-13) was led by Jeroboam, an advisor to Solomon. Rehoboam was left with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. “Israel” and “Judah” were never again ‘friends’. David’s Kingdom was wrecked, forever, as Solomon’s lifestyle had passed on to his son, Rehoboam.

*[There are unintended consequences, often generational, for ‘worldly riches’ blinding us to **God’s grace**]*

“I, Solomon, the King of Israel, said to myself,

*Let’s go for it—experiment with pleasure, have a good time! But there was nothing to it, nothing but smoke and mirrors. Looking back, what do I now think of the fun-filled life? **Insane! Inane!***

My verdict on the pursuit of happiness? Who needs it? With the help of a bottle of wine and all the wisdom I could muster, I tried my best to penetrate the absurdity of life. I wanted to get a handle on anything useful we mortals might do during the years we spend on this earth. [Grace rejected]

I did great things: built houses, planted vineyards, designed gardens and parks and planted a variety of fruit trees in them, made pools of water to irrigate the groves of trees, bought slaves (male and female) who had children to give to me even more slaves. [Grace rejected; perpetual bondage!]

Then I acquired large herds and flocks, larger than any King before me in Jerusalem. I piled up silver and gold, loot from kings and kingdoms. I hired a chorus of full-time singers to entertain me with song and—most exquisite of all pleasures— unending beautiful women for my personal use. Oh, how I prospered! I left all my predecessors [my father David and Saul before him] in Jerusalem far behind, left them behind in the dust. What’s more, I kept a clear head through it all. Everything I wanted I took—I never said no to myself. I gave in to every impulse, held back nothing. “I sucked the marrow of pleasure out of every task—my reward to myself for a hard day’s work!” [total rejection of Grace for ‘worldly riches’]

Eccl. 2: 1 – 11

“Then I said in my heart, “This also is vanity.” ¹⁶For there is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever. All that now is will be forgotten in the days to come.

And how does a wise man die? As the fool!

*¹⁷Therefore I hated life because the work [and the play and the self-gratification] that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity [**Insane! Inane!**] and grasping for the wind. Eventually, everything comes to an end.”*

Eccl. 2: 16 – 17

*[Solomon’s reflections and regrets were **too little** and **too late** for Rehoboam and for the Kingdom of Israel that had been given to him in **Trust, by God,** to lead into **God’s future.**]*