

GRACE

Luke 15: 22-24

"But the father said to his servants 'Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and bring here the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found.'"

One of the most wonderful chapters in the Bible is the fifth of Romans in which free grace is set forth as the vital factor in justification by faith. It concluded thus: where sin abounded grace did much more abound that as sin reigned unto death, one so might grace reign, through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Many commentaries have been written on this passage but none is so clear as the furnished by Christ Himself in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

To define grace we can say nothing better than that grace - unmerited favor - mercy - undeserved favor.

The source of grace is the very heart of God. Its highest manifestation was seen when God gave His Son to die for the world.

"While looking through my tears one day I saw Mt Calvary, beneath the cross there flowed a stream of grace enough for me."

Grace is a free gift. Paul wrote 14 epistles and every one of them is closed with a prayer for grace. He calls it the "free gift of God."

② It is not a thing to be wanted and we have the cross not to it. We work because we are saved in order to be saved. Salvation is the gift of our money used in charity does not buy salvation but salvation is accepted and can be accepted by blind or cripple, or poor person. But when we accept Christ then we must work.

The person in the church that does not want to work has not the sign of a Christian resting upon him.

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Look now at the Prodigal as an illustration of grace - free grace.

There you see him in rags a very sorry figure and behold how God has absconded. It has wrought its interest. It has robbed him to any right to his father's favor.

Look at him a little later seated in his father's house so highly favored as any. And behold how God has absconded.

He was clothed in respectability. The robe was a garment for birth days and festivals. Perhaps it was the

Christ. You are to be congratulated in that you are a member of the church known as the Methodist church. So far as numbers are concerned, it is the largest Protestant church in the world, if statistics are correct. Large numbers, however, do not spell anything unless they are active.

Because of our system of appointing preachers all of our churches always have a pastor. Under these favorable conditions, if we do not accomplish extra ordinary things we are not living up to our great privilege.

As your humble servant I hope that each of you will always be loyal to your denomination. But with this desire I sincerely trust that you may hold a very broad, liberal and charitable attitude toward all other churches in our midst. Each church in this little city has its peculiar place in God's plan for promoting His blessed kingdom. None of us can say that we are the only church and all others wrong, for we are fighting for the same cause. With this attitude of mind and heart in all our churches we will do much to bring the Kingdom in, in New Albany.

Now if you rejoice that you are a Christian and glad that you are a Methodist, be at church Sunday at the eleven o'clock hour. At that time we are to have a BIG RALLY SERVICE. Read your county paper this week. All Methodists please come by families. Bring the children and have them baptised. Children that are older, have them join the church. The pastor will give an illustrated lecture especially suited for children but given in a manner at the of all ages may get a lesson for their own souls.

This is no scheme to raise money but to get us all to put a new emphasis on our church.