Devotion #273

**Were It Not For Grace?**

**John 3:17 (NASB)** *"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”*

One of my favorite singers is Larnelle Harris. He is a christian singer who has the vocal range that would match anyone. One of the songs he made famous was titled, “Were It Not for Grace”, written by David Hamilton and Phill Mchugh. The song is written from the perspective of a person who understands that if God were not a God god grace, our hope in this life and the next would be lost. Listen to the words of the chorus. *“Were it not for grace, I can tell you where I’d be - wandering down some pointless road to nowhere with my salvation up to me. I know how that would go. The battles I would face. Forever running but losing this race, were it not for grace”*

That song speaks the message of Christ’s coming as John clearly states that Jesus came not to condemn but to offer a way to eternal life, to save people from the penalty of sin, which is eternal death. (Romans 6:23) But still, the idea or concept or whatever you want to call it, about grace is truly remarkable. It is remarkable because God didn’t have to be gracious. After all, He is God. He could have been any way He wanted to be, but He chose to be gracious to all who acknowledge their sin and look to Him for forgiveness such as the woman caught in adultery in John 8:1-11. We are told that as Jesus was teaching the people one early morning, the religious leaders almost literally threw a woman at his feet, condemning her of adultery. T leaders said to Jesus that this woman had broken the law of Moses and should be stoned. (Leviticus 20:10) John tells us they were trying to trap Jesus because they didn’t believe who He was. (John 8:6) But Jesus did the unthinkable. He pointed out the sins of the leaders who brought the woman to him by saying to them, *“He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”* (John 8:7) This was a remarkable turn of events because the truth is, Jesus, as Lord of the Law of Moses, was perfectly justified in condemning the woman. It was His Law that He gave to Moses. He had every right to be the first one to throw the first stone. But that’s not what He did. When the leaders realized their error and that they were guilty of sin like anyone else, they ran. And Jesus says to the woman, **John 8:10-11 (NASB)** "*Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.*"

It is important to understand that sin is sin and God will judge sin in His time. We also are called to make judgements over sin. (Matthew 18:15-18) But, we are also to be people of grace, because He is gracious. In fact, God is so gracious we have a Bible full of stories where He could have easily and justifiably condemned all humanity for their sin, but He did not. One day He will judge all people for their sin but for those who acknowledge their sin and turn away from it, He is most gracious. Notice what Jesus also said to the woman, *“Go. From now on sin no more.”* (John 8:11) Jesus was not excusing her sin but offering her a pardon. She was to never take part in that sin again. He was not ignoring or pretending that she had not sinned, but showing her that true repentance brings great grace from God.

Literally, the reason Jesus came was to be our scapegoat who took the blame for us so we could go free. But again, the point is, we are to live life free from sin. Now you and I know it is impossible for us to never sin, because we are stuck in this sinful body. So at times we sin even without knowing. But that is why Jesus came. To cover us completely with mercy and to remove all condemnation from those who truly turn to Him as God. (Romans 8:1) The song speaks well and accurately of what the Word of God shows us. Grace is truly amazing. And if it were not for God’s grace, we would be hopelessly lost and condemned by the righteousness and holiness of God. I hope each day you praise God for His grace.

I hope you never think that God will overlook your sin or that your sin is no big deal. It is a huge deal. Such a huge deal that God sent His Son to keep us from being judged for it. Each day we should live lives of repentance for any sin we may have committed, and be mindful to praise Him for His grace.