

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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450

- 1 Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding!
Ransomed souls, the tidings swell;
'Tis a deep that knows no sounding;
Who its breadth or length can tell?
On its glories,
Let my soul forever dwell.
- 2 What from Christ that soul can sever,
Bound by everlasting bands?
Once in him, in him forever;
Thus the eternal covenant stands.
None shall pluck thee
From the Strength of Israel's hands.
- 3 Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus,
Long ere time its race begun;
To his name eternal praises;
O what wonders love has done!
One with Jesus,
By eternal union one.
- 4 On such love, my soul, still ponder,
Love so great, so rich, so free;
Say, whilst lost in holy wonder,
Why, O Lord, such love to me?
Hallelujah!
Grace shall reign eternally.

John Kent (1766-1843)

Superabounding Grace

"But law was introduced that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace superabounded."

Romans 5:20 (Literal Translation)

Often today you go into a fast-food place, and they ask after you have placed your order, "Do you want to supersize your drink or fries." I know this is a poor illustration for this kind of supersizing has finite limitations, but the point I want to make is that when we say God's grace is supersized it is infinite or without limitations. This means there are no

constraints that are or can be placed upon it. So, this illustration is used as a contrast between the earthly promise to supersize and that of the heavenly certainty of supersizing.

Our glorious text is contrasting abounding sin and superabounding grace. Paul uses two different Greek words to make this inspired expression. *Sin* “abounded” (*pleonazō*) or proliferated, while *grace* “superabounded” (*hyperperisseuō* we get our word hyper from *hyper* and *perisson* denotes absolute abundance) or was boundless or hyper-abounded.

There are two things for us to notice in this text: [1] sin separates us from God, and [2] grace reconciles us to God. With the giving of the law sin was exposed in its seriousness. Sin was against the holy Lawgiver, but the mercy of God provided a superabounding grace. The law was like a great light shining on sin and exposing its corruption to view.

So, we learn from this text that sin separates us from the holy God. The law was introduced that “the offence might abound.” The law cannot halt sin, and neither can the law redeem from sin, but it does reveal sins disobedience and offensiveness to a holy God. The law turns the spotlight on sin. “Sin” biblically has three distinctions: [1] Sin may describe a man’s actions—the act of sinning or the commission of sin; [2] Sin may refer to a man’s nature which was inherited from the first Adam and is a part of his disposition—he has a sin nature; and [3] Sin may refer to the status or standing one has before God—he is a guilty sinner against God. When the word “sin” is used in the Bible it is with God in mind which leads us to say, “God is not like that at all.”

Fallen man sees his own sin as an insignificant or incidental or a small thing or as nothing at all; but Almighty God’s holy law is like a bright light divinely provided to reveal the hideousness and wickedness of thus offending an infinite and eternal God; and it shows the true enormity of the putrefaction of sin. The sinful King David saw sin in its proper light when he appealed to God for mercy and said, “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightiest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest” (Ps. 51:2-4). He acknowledges that God is the only true authority and judge.

We learn from this text that by grace we are reconciled to God. Think of the words of the text, “but where sin abounded, grace superabounded.” Imagine superabounding grace! The origin of superabounding saving grace has its source in the infinite, eternal, and almighty God setting His loving heart on a people He wants to save. This is something only God can do! Grace is God almighty at work by the sacrifice of His own Son in saving a people who justly should be sent to hell. In verse 10 of this chapter, we are told that God’s enemies are reconciled to Him through the death of His Son. Imagine those who were of their father the devil being reconciled to God! Oh, what grace! This grace is not

founded on the ruins of justice; this grace does not show disfavor to the holy law; this grace is provided by the blood of the sacrificial Lamb of God who satisfied divine justice.

Abraham Booth noted this so beautifully, “As *sin* appears, clothed in horrid deformity, and armed with destructive power, inflicting temporal death, and menacing eternal flames; so, *grace* appears on the throne, arrayed in the beauties of holiness, and smiling with divine benevolence; touched with feelings of the tenderest compassion, and armed with all the magnificence of invincible power. Fully determined to exert her authority and gratify her compassion, under the conduct of infinite wisdom; to the everlasting honor of inflexible justice, inviolable veracity, and every divine perfection—by rescuing the condemned offender from the jaws of destruction; by speaking peace to the alarmed consciences of damnable delinquents; by restoring to apostate creatures and vile miscreants a supreme love to God and delight in the ways of holiness; and, finally, by bringing them safe to everlasting honor and joy.” Oh, the glories of the superabounding sovereign infallible grace. Grace is God in action through His Son, by His Spirit perfectly restoring the objects of His grace. This grace of God that reigns majestically in salvation is not only joyous but triumphant.

John Newton, who is more famous for his hymn *Amazing Grace* than for anything else in writing that hymn was expressing God’s amazing grace as he experienced it. He had a vivid realization of being a trophy of divine grace. Just before his death, a fellow minister came in to have breakfast with him. Family prayers followed the meal. Newton was almost blind, and he was unable to read. He sat and listened to his friend as he read 1 Corinthians 15. When verse 10 was read, “*But by the grace of God I am what I am,*” Newton began to say: “I am not what I ought to be. Ah! How imperfect and deficient! I am not what I wish to be. I abhor what is evil, and I would cleave to what is good. I am not what I hope to be. Soon, soon, shall I put off, with mortality, sin and imperfection. Though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say, I am not what I once was, a slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle and acknowledge, *By the grace of God I am what I am.*”