

MAY MESSAGE: MONTH OF

# GREAT GRACE



FOR LAUREN



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***And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Acts 4.33.***

***Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated . Rom. 9.13.***

**W**e experienced divine visitations last month with many doors and gates thrown open by the power of the Almighty God. May, the fifth month, is our month of Great Grace.

Grace is unmerited favor--a gift of God not based on our works (Eph. 2. 8-9). However, how we respond to God's grace matters a lot. Grace can diminish with sin or disobedience but it increases and grows with appreciation and positive reciprocity.

Sin undermines God's grace (Rom 6.1) and those who belittle God's grace fall into His displeasure. This was how Lucifer fell from grace together with a third of heaven's angels. Similarly, Noah found God's grace in a generation steeped in violence and wickedness. He was sent to preach righteousness to the people of his time so that they can enter the ark God commissioned him to build but they refused (Gen.6. 5-8, Jude 6).

Appreciation and Reciprocity explain why the twin sons of Isaac had different destinies. God declared that he hated one and loved the other. (Mal. 1.2; Rom. 9.13). The 'elder' while a youth sold his birthright for one meal because he did not appreciate the value of what God had given him--the double portion right of the first born. On the other, his twin brother valued this right and had desired to obtain it. Anyone who does not appreciate would never be able to reciprocate honor, not even from God. By contrast those who appreciate what they have increase in grace as they positively appreciate the giver of initial grace by their actions. Hence, we are all enjoined this month not to receive God's grace in vain and to grow in grace ( 2 Cor. 6.1, Titus 2.11, 2 Pet 3.18).

The early church walked both in GREAT POWER AND GREAT GRACE. This example of the early church deserves our further study for reflection and adoption this month.

First, they had SPIRITUAL LEADERS whose spiritual ears and eyes had been opened by Lord after incubation by His Spirit in continuous worship--praise and blessing of the Lord for 10 days (Lk. 24.52-53). With the Holy Ghost baptism and signs and wonders happening as the Lord promised the once hiding, cowardly disciples boldly responded to threats of their religious leaders that they cannot but speak and teach in the only name

that saves (Acts 2-3; 4. 12, 19-20). Their courage was infectious. Second, it was a PRAYING CHURCH. The content of their prayer was also instructive: greater boldness to speak God's words; signs and wonders Acts 4. 29-30. Not any of the "things which God already promised He would give us" Mt. 6:33.

Thirdly, EVERYONE OF THEM KNEW AND USED THEIR GIFTS (Acts 8:5-8; 13.1-2; Eph. 4.7; 1 Cor. 12.7). It was a church that walked and worked with power! Fourthly, it was a UNITED CHURCH. Their souls and heart were closely knit together. Acts 2.1, 4.32. Nothing is impossible when any group and especially God's people when we relate to each other in unity. (Gen. 11. 6, Mt. 18.19, Acts 12. 1-11).

Fifthly, It was a SHARING CHURCH. There was no lack among this growing church. Everybody gave generously not just from recurrent incomes but sold their assets to ensure that no lack existed among them. (Acts. 4.34). Their love for God made them to love each other sincerely across all social boundaries. The world is waiting for this kind of church as the last days are here (Hab. 2.14, Is. 2.1-3).

We see these patterns in our world today in those who have spouses or parents they never appreciate or reciprocate. Those given asylum in prosperous and peaceful nations who abuse their privileges by wanting their host nations to become the conflict-prone nations they came from. Let's determine to seek God's greater grace in this new month. We should also speak up to the Lord and to our communities and nations on behalf of the unborn being aborted and for hostages around the world - e.g. the Chibok girls after a decade of captivity in Nigeria and those in Israel who have been held captive since October 7, 2023 (Acts 18.9-10, Ps. 122.6). Let us appreciate and reciprocate God's grace.

Welcome to the month of Great Grace...

**D. Olowu/April 30, 2024**