

Lavís Grace

Week 6: The Power of Grace
by Stephanie Shott

Experience a fresh awareness of the overflowing, ever-present lavish grace of God

We've discovered that grace is so much more than what we think it is. Beyond our comprehension just like the God who extends it. But the vastness of grace only causes this Bible study girl to dig deeper, discover more, and scrape the sides of Scripture and get every little bit I can get.

God's grace isn't just sprinkled throughout Holy Writ, it's lavishly poured out on each page of God's Word, just as it is lavishly poured out in our lives.

Every life listed, every story we read about, every person and every circumstance oozes with the grace of God in some form or fashion. Just read each word through the lens of grace and you'll see what you may have never seen before.

Grace... smeared on, poured out, lavished freely on every page.

Pull up a chair, grab your Bible, a pen and some coffee, and let me show you a good example of how abundantly God has graced the pages of Scripture with His grace.

Read through Mark 6:45-52 and then we're going to go back and discover treasures of grace together. I've provided the NKJV below, so let's stick with that version through the majority of this lesson. BUT, we will be digging in some other versions a bit later.

***“45** Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. **46** And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. **47** Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. **48** Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. **49** And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; **50** for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good*

cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” 51 Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. 52 For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.”

Ready to pull your Scripture sleeves up and start digging in?

Let’s start by looking at Jesus’ active involvement in this narrative. Write out everything Jesus specifically did or was a description of His location or activity in the verses below:

Verse 45: He _____ disciples _____.
He _____ the multitude away.

Verse 46: When He _____ them away,
He _____ to the mountain to _____.

Verse 47: He was _____ on the land.

Verse 48: Then He _____ straining at rowing.
He _____ to them, _____ on the sea, and would have
_____ them by.

Verse 49: When they saw Him _____ on the sea...

Verse 50: But immediately He _____ with them and _____ to
them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

Verse 51: Then He _____ into the boat to them and the wind ceased.

Verse 52: Jesus isn’t doing anything or mentioned, but what He had just done before the whole walking on sea and calming the waves thing was profound. He fed 5,000 with five fish and two loaves, yet the disciples’ hearts were hard and they remained baffled by the breathtaking power of Christ.

Now take a look back at each verse. Do you see that Jesus is not silent in any of those verses? Even in verse 52, where we don't see Him actively doing anything, we see the obvious reality of the effects of what He had already done at work in their lives.

God's obvious work of grace in our lives is a powerful testimony of not only His Divine favor but also His Divine power. At every turn, whether we see Him working or not, be assured that He is.

God never ceases to actively work behind the scenes of our lives even when we can't see Him doing so.

What reaction does your heart have to the never-ceasing, ever-present grace of God at work in your life? _____

Are you with me so far? Okay...so let's dig deeper. Ready?

So, let's see how God's grace brings us to places where we need to see Him show up and He reveals Himself in ways we didn't even know we needed.

Read John 6:45-46 and answer the following questions:

- Who made the disciples get in the boat? _____
- Did He go with them? _____
- Do you think the soon coming storm was going to be a surprise to Jesus? _____

- Could it be that Jesus sent them into a preordained storm they would have to face without, to demonstrate their need for Him, and the power of His presence and grace? _____

NEVER are the storms we face some random cosmic events that comes along and surprise God. Every storm we walk through is either ordained or allowed by God and filtered through His loving fingers.

Sometimes He places us in the boat of a preordained storm designed to test our faith, our character, and to demonstrate His grace is a powerful and personal way.

Let's keep moving through the text and see what else we can learn.

Read through Mark 6:46-48 and answer the following questions:

- What does the Bible say that Jesus was doing when He was alone? _____

- In what way does that serve as an example for us of our need for time alone with the Father? _____

- How does time alone with God help us experience grace (God's Divine favor and God's Divine power) in our lives? _____

- If you were in the boat, how would it be helpful to know that Jesus sees you every second of the storm? ____

- It was the fourth watch when Jesus showed up on the waves of their storm. Four a.m. in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, feeling very alone in hopeless, dark, and scary place. Have you ever felt like it was the last hour and you were desperate for Jesus to show up? How did you feel when He did? _____

- Notice the last part of verse 49, "walking on the sea, and *would have passed them by.*" The Amplified says, He intended to pass them by. While there are no right answers for this because we can't supposed upon the Word of God, why do you think Jesus intended to pass them by at that point? _____

My own thoughts on this is that perhaps Jesus wanted them to look for Him with expectation in their storm. After all, He had just fed over 5,000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish. Why wouldn't He care for His disciples as much as He care for the crowd? Maybe He not only wanted them to look for Him, to trust that He would be there for them, but also to call out for Him to help... Just like He did in the parallel passage of this storm-story of survival found in **Matthew 14:22-33 when Peter jumped out of the boat, walked to Him, and began to sink. We don't know for sure but what if Jesus is just long for us to long for Him, waiting with expectation*

for us to look for His with expectation, silently in the midst of our storms knowing all we have to do is call upon His name. Oh what if? It might just be. But rest assured, His intention to walk by was wrapped in grace and sealed with love.

- How does Jesus showing up when they need Him most demonstrate His grace? _____

God often demonstrates His grace best when we need it most. At least those are often seem to be the most obvious revelations of His grace in our lives. The kind of last-hour grace, when we feel like we're about to go over the edge and Jesus shows up, scoops us up in His arms, and sets us back on firm ground.

Describe a time when Jesus showed up with that last-hour kind of grace in your life. _____

Okay... so now I have what might just be a surprise for you. Well, I don't. But Jesus does in His Word!

Read Mark 6:49-51. As you read, look carefully at their response to Jesus and His response to them.

- How do you think you would you have responded if you saw someone you know walking on the sea? _____

- If they knew what Jesus looked like, why do you think they thought it was a ghost? _____

- Does the impossible sometimes make you doubt that Jesus will come through or that He is right there with you in the midst of a scary, hard or unimaginable situation? _____

- How did Jesus respond when they cried out in fear? _____

- Note the word *immediately*. How important is that 5 syllable word to way God demonstrates grace in our lives? _____

- What does the way Jesus showed up and the way Jesus immediately eased their fears say about how the Lord longs to interact with His people? _____

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- How is grace evident in the words, “It is I, do not be afraid.”? _____
 - What happened when He got in the boat with them? _____
 - What was their response? _____
 - Have you ever been surprised, even WOWed speechless by the grace of God to show up and change your circumstances and calm your fears? Describe a time when that happened in your life and how it strengthened your faith. _____
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One more verse and this is a verse we can't miss is Mark 6:52.

When studying Scripture, context is key. So let's look at what he disciples experienced prior to the storm.

They had just witnessed Jesus feed the five thousand ([Mark 6:30-44](#)). They experienced the power Jesus gave them when He sent them out to preach repentance ([Mark 6:7-12](#)). But they also had seen Jesus rejected by people from His own home town ([Mark 6:1-6](#)), and the beloved John the Baptist beheaded for his faith in Christ. They even held his headless body in their own hands as they took him to the tomb ([Mark 6:14-29](#)). They were familiar with Jesus and with His miracles. But they may also have been fearful of what might happen to them if they fully followed Him.

There were remarkable miracles they were recipients of but there were also threats they were sure to receive as well.

Following Jesus might cost them rejection by their friends and family, just like what happened to Jesus. It might even cost them their lives, like it did John the Baptist.

Considering the context of Mark 6:52, answer the following questions:

- There are no right answers because we aren't told, but what are some reasons the disciples hearts might have been hardened? _____

The definitions of *hardened* are as follows:

- to cover with a thick skin
- to harden by covering with a callus
- to make the heart dull
- to grow hard
- to lose power of understanding
- Which of the definitions above describes the last time your heart got hard because of fear or maybe even familiarity? _____

- Do you think Jesus was surprised by their hard hearts? _____

- Knowing how they were going to respond, Jesus still showed up, spoke peace to their hearts, calmed the storm, and allayed their fears. How does Jesus demonstrate grace by showing up even when our hearts are hard and our response is wrong? _____

My goal in walking through the experience with the disciples on the Sea of Galilee together was to help you see God's grace lavishly and purposely placed on the pages of Scripture. God's grace - His Divine favor and His Divine power is at work when we don't even see it and available in every season.

God's grace was evident in Abraham's life when He called him, equipped Him, gave him and Sarah a child in their old age, provided a ram in the thicket, and was faithful to fulfill His promises, even when Abraham was unfaithful to God.

God's grace was evident in Moses' life when He saw to it that Moses had a wildly courageous and faithful mom, a sister that wouldn't give up, an adopted mom that would allow him privilege, position, and knowledge, a place to run when he ran from himself, a calling that was unmistakable, a brother who would stand by his side even when his life was wobbly, power to demonstrate God's hand on his life, and the fulfillment of his calling and God's promise when the children of Israel were finally set free, the Red Sea was divided, the people of God walked across one dry ground while the Egyptian army were swallowed up when the last of God's people stepped over to the other side.

God's grace was evident in Esther's life in the face of the fact that she had lost her parents, was orphaned at a young age. Yet, by God's grace, Esther was given her uncle Mordecai to care for her. She was given the opportunity to become queen, effect change, save her people for certain death, and rule with wisdom, honor, and a heart to please God.

Grace. It's bubbling over in Scripture and it's overflowing in your own life as well.

Put your grace lenses on the next time you read God's Word and start making note of every place you discover God's grace lavishly poured out in the lives and circumstances in Holy Writ.

Place a **G** with a circle around it next to the verses where God's grace shows up and see how fast your page fills up with circled G's! They'll be EVERYWHERE!

Because God's grace is everywhere, all the time, in every circumstance, and in all seasons. Lavishly poured out as His Divine favor and His Divine power for you and for me!