Gracestoration Update

"Restoring People in God's Grace and Making Disciplers"

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Abundant Life and Peace Today - -?

Jesus said, *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly"* (Jn. 10:10). *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful"* (Jn. 14:27).

In spite of Jesus' promises, great unrest exists among people around the world. In the market-place, coffee shops, bars, clubs, schools, offices and homes, men and women are searching for peace. There is no individual peace, no peace in the home, community, nationally nor worldwide. Instead we find unrest, uncertainty, fear, terror, turbulence, revolution and chaos everywhere.

It seems that the majority of us find ourselves fretting about the future and what is going to happen next, or we are bemoaning things that have occurred in the past. Because of these practices there is little peace or comfort.

Historians remind us of the past glories and failures of nations, philosophies, leaders and those that they lead. They remind us to pay attention and not repeat the failures of the past.

Psychologists and counselors claim that understanding one's past, learning to deal the pain of hurts and developing relational skills is the pathway to finding peace and self-confidence.

Energetic motivational speakers challenge their hearers that there is a great future for the stout-hearted. Rarely do these bring true success and peace.

Educators are confident that with the proper education one will be prepared for whatever happens in the present and future. However, fewer and fewer people are living healthy lives and enjoying peace.

The media bombards us with all kinds of news: atrocities, violence, murders, including natural and manmade disasters.

Advertisers assure us that using their products one will enjoy life more fully now and in the future, but neither of these produce corporate nor individual peace.

The film industry focuses more and more upon violence with explicit sexual content. Television portrays very little reality and when it does, it is negative and depressing. Video games tend to be violent and sexually explicit. Modern art often displays disillusionment, surreality and emptiness. Again there is no abundance of true life nor peace.

> *Too often we fail to enjoy the* **today** *that God has provided for us. We live either in the past or in the future.*

The church does a great job presenting God's grace for salvation and God's grace for our future glorification with God in heaven. Most, however, fail in presenting God's **grace for today!**

Consequently, Christians often bemoan the past and hope for the future, but enjoy very little abundance or peace in their daily lives.

Is this promise of a life full of abundant life and peace just a cruel joke?

No! The answer is not about the past failures nor the glories of the future life – it is **today**! The writer of Hebrews encourages us by referring to the Israelites in the wilderness. He quotes God saying, *"But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "**Today**," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, while it is said, "**Today if you hear His voice**, Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me"* (Heb. 3:13-15).

The Israelites in the wilderness were unsure of God's faithfulness for their future deliverance. They yearned to return to the security of their Egyptian captivity. God kept reminding them that He was providing all of their needs **today.**

God provided fresh manna for them each day. If they tried to save it for another day, except for the Sabbath, it spoiled. When they complained, He gave them so much quail that they got so sick and never wanted to see another quail again!

Their clothes and shoes never wore out for forty years. He sheltered them daily from the sun's heat with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to warm them and give them light. He led them through Moses and protected them from their enemies. However, they neglected to enjoy the **today** that God graciously gave them.

Too often we fail to enjoy the **today** that God has provided for us. Our tendency is to live either in the past or in the future.

Before the Second World War a barber shop was built next to the wall of the old walled city of Manila, Philippines. On the window of the barber shop was a sign that read, FREE HAIR CUTS TOMORROW.

It was not uncommon for a customer to come and ask for his free hair cut. The barber would take the customer outside and show him the sign and would say, "Sir, as you see, the free hair cut is tomorrow, and not today. Sorry!" (Chuckle)

The past is gone forever and the future [tomorrow] never comes. We only have **today** in which to enjoy life and peace.

Our daily experience is always **today**! When we wake up, it is **today**. We eat, plan, labor and play **today**. We sleep and wake up, and again it is **today**. In this sense tomorrow never comes because it is always **today**. We only live in the present; it is always **today**.

The Apostle Paul states, *"And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—for He says, 'At the acceptable time* [**today**] *I listened to you, and on the day* [**today**] *of salvation I helped you. Behold, now is the acceptable time* [**today**], *behold, now* [**today**] *is the day of salvation'"* (2 Cor. 6:1-2).

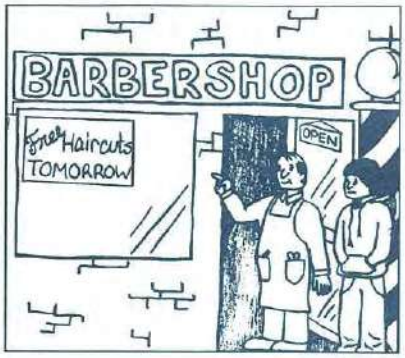


Illustration: Charissa Bogner

Paul continues, *"I can* [**today**] *do all things through Him who strengthens me."* And, *"My God will* [**today**] *supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 4: 13; 19).

Jesus' gracious promise of an **abundant life and peace** and the Apostle Paul's confidence of **God's continual supply for all of our needs** holds true for **today.** *"If you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts"* (Heb. 4:7). The writer of Hebrews encourages, *"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God..."* (Heb. 12:15).

In conclusion let us enjoy God's grace for **today**. *"For we are His workmanship* [by grace], *created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them* [**today**]*"* (Eph. 2:10).

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