

**March 22, 2009**

--I feel like the Lord is saying that it's His grace, it's God's grace that sustains us when we are apart from one another – when we as a body are apart from one another. And then, and then as we come together on Sunday of any time we come together to worship Him is our time of refreshment. It's a time of renewal. A friend of mine likes to say, "There's no hope for a better past." And I love to, I love to say that because that – that means we begin today. We begin right now. And this is our refreshment time. This is our strengthening. I had a particularly challenging week, and yet God's grace was upon me throughout it. And – and when I – when I sometimes think well, will God help me here? All I have to do is reflect on the past and when He has helped me. But then let of the things that have hurt or the pain and move on from there 'cause His grace is upon us and sustains us at all times. We just need to look for it; receive it; acknowledge it; see it. It's there. And then to come here and be refreshed and strengthened each and every time we gather together. It's the – It's the power of us together praising the Lord that refreshes us most.

--I feel like I need to just say thank you to God for His grace; especially this week. I had a challenging week as well, culminating yesterday in a big way – a lot of challenges. But I just want to say, "Thank you, Lord because of Your grace." It isn't about me or what I left out or what I left undone or what I did that I shouldn't of done. I can move forward now and, we make all these preparations for events we think we're supposed to do or things that He actually has told us to do, and things still fall through the cracks. But the thing is He doesn't look at our mistakes. He looks at us and just sees how much He loves us. And we just need to receive that love and go forward with it. Because He sent Jesus for all that. We didn't have to – to make ourselves perfect before He sent Jesus because we can't do it ourselves. Only God can do it through Jesus in us, and I just want to say, "Thank you, Lord. Thank you for Your grace. Thank you for Your love. Thank you for Your mercy. Thank you for Jesus."

--You know, Carol said that she had a friend who said, "There's no hope for a better past." Um, Anne Lamott, in one of her books has a quote that I wrote on a bookmark because ... "Forgiveness is giving up any hope of having had a different past." And I've always seen that in reference to forgiveness of other people, but as Amanda was speaking what struck me with God was that a lot of times we have to forgive God when things don't work out the way we thought they were supposed to work out or He didn't do what we thought He was supposed to do. It sounds kind of silly on one level, but I think, psychologically and emotionally, it's true that we have to lay down whatever offense we have against God for not having done it the way we wanted it done and move on. Because it's not going to change anyway, and that way we can look into the future.

--There's an old story about grace that's one of my favorite stories. I don't remember the whole beginning of it, but the basic gist is this old – older saintly woman comes to this priest and has this outrageous idea about what he should do in the church. And he said, "Well, I'm not sure this is from God, so I want to make sure you're actually hearing from God, so I'm going to give a confession to God. And then, I want you to come and tell me the next day – a private confession to God – and you come the next day and tell me what I confessed. And if you can tell me that then I'll believe that you're hearing from God." So he goes home and does that. And then the next day, he comes and meets with the woman. And he says, "Ok. So what sin did I confess?" And the woman says, "God says he forgets." And that's it. I mean, He – it's – it's - actually, that's how it works believe it or not. He really doesn't remember. If you try to drag up your old sins, He's going to be like, "What's that about again? What? You know, I don't remember that. I'm sorry; that's gone." We talked yesterday about the – briefly about Pluto and Voyager heading out past Pluto; and that's about as far as your sins are from you right at the moment. And they're still going. They're still traveling. Like Voyager, they're still going. They're not coming back any time soon. So let it go. Let your past go. God doesn't remember it. So try to forget it yourself and move on.

--It's not that God doesn't have a good memory. He does, but He chooses to forget every confessed sin.

--... hear those words this morning. Because we started in to "Only Grace" and ... thinking, "Man, this isn't a worshipful song. This is like an offertory song." But God is like, "Yeah, man, you need to hear this this morning." You see, worship is a two way street. A lot of times we speak, speak, speak but we don't hear, hear, hear. ... we think of Christ as ... you should follow me and get back up because when He fell He was carrying all of our sins. And He got back up, and we can because of Him.

--You know, it's kind of interesting, we were at the Grand Canyon on Tuesday. And they have various little markers about things and ... about how it looks as though it was designed. I wonder why? But if you get all the way out on the eastern end and you go up what's called the desert watch tower, which was built in about 1930, on the upper observation deck on the watch tower, the architect has put up a plaque that has Psalm 66 verse 4 on it which is, "All the earth bows down to You. They sing praise to You. They sing praise to Your name." - which seems like the only appropriate response when you see something like that. The same thing: when you drive down into Sedona through the Oak Creek Canyon and the Red Rocks, which are incredible, and somebody - you can see why - I guess it was my sister, who's not a believer - You can see why all the pagans and so on think it's a holy place because it doesn't look real. ... It doesn't look like it could have just happened. Well, it couldn't have just happened. You know, when you see some of the incredible things God has done in creation, you're like ... some of ... people who don't want to ... "Gee, it looks like it was designed. Gee, it looks like it couldn't of just happened." You know, and because it - because the mountains do bow down, and they do sing His praise. It's just - it's truly amazing what He's done, and it's truly amazing that we can walk around and not even notice most of the time.

--We know that we don't have yesterday anymore, and we know that we don't have tomorrow. The Scriptures tell us we don't ... tomorrow. All we have is today, and, actually, today is just one ... moment. ... 5 minutes from now will actually be, technically, not today but in the future. So the Lord is showing me: concern yourself with what you're actually doing at this very moment. Are you? We don't know what we'll be doing in 5 minutes. We don't know if we'll be sitting here in 5 minutes, but that is the future. So we need to concern ourselves with what we are doing in each individual moment and consider one hour from now as if it's tomorrow.