

# **GRACE IN THE ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE**

**ST. MARK'S SERVANT'S PREP CLASS**

# WHAT IS GRACE?

- A gift from God based on His worthiness ***not our worthiness***
  - It is undeserved
- The best gift that God gave us is salvation
- “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” (James 1:17)
- “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” (1 Tim 4:14)



# THE GIFT THAT IS GRACE

- The gift of grace that is given to us by our Lord and Saviour should not be received in vain
  - “We then, *as* workers together *with Him* also plead with *you* not to receive the grace of God in vain.” (2 Cor 6:1)
  - “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me.” (1 Cor 15:10)
- **What comes first- grace or work (i.e., perseverance)?**
  - Grace is first!
  - Anything that happens to us is through Grace first, not our own works

# GRACE + WORK

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all.  
Amen.

(2 Cor 13:14)

- The love of God the Father, led God the Son to give us the grace of Salvation and the Holy Spirit provide us with all other gifts
- Grace alone does not save. You need to do the work and react to the grace of God in your life.
  - God wants you to participate with Him in managing your life and doing the work!
  - God's grace is necessary but my efforts are equally necessary!

**Proof the grace of God does not work alone:**

If the grace of God worked alone, then why are there righteous people and evil ones?

If the grace of God worked alone there will not be a single sinner on earth

# JOSHUA'S FIGHT OR MOSES' PRAYER?

“Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.” – St. Augustine

“And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.” Exodus 17:11

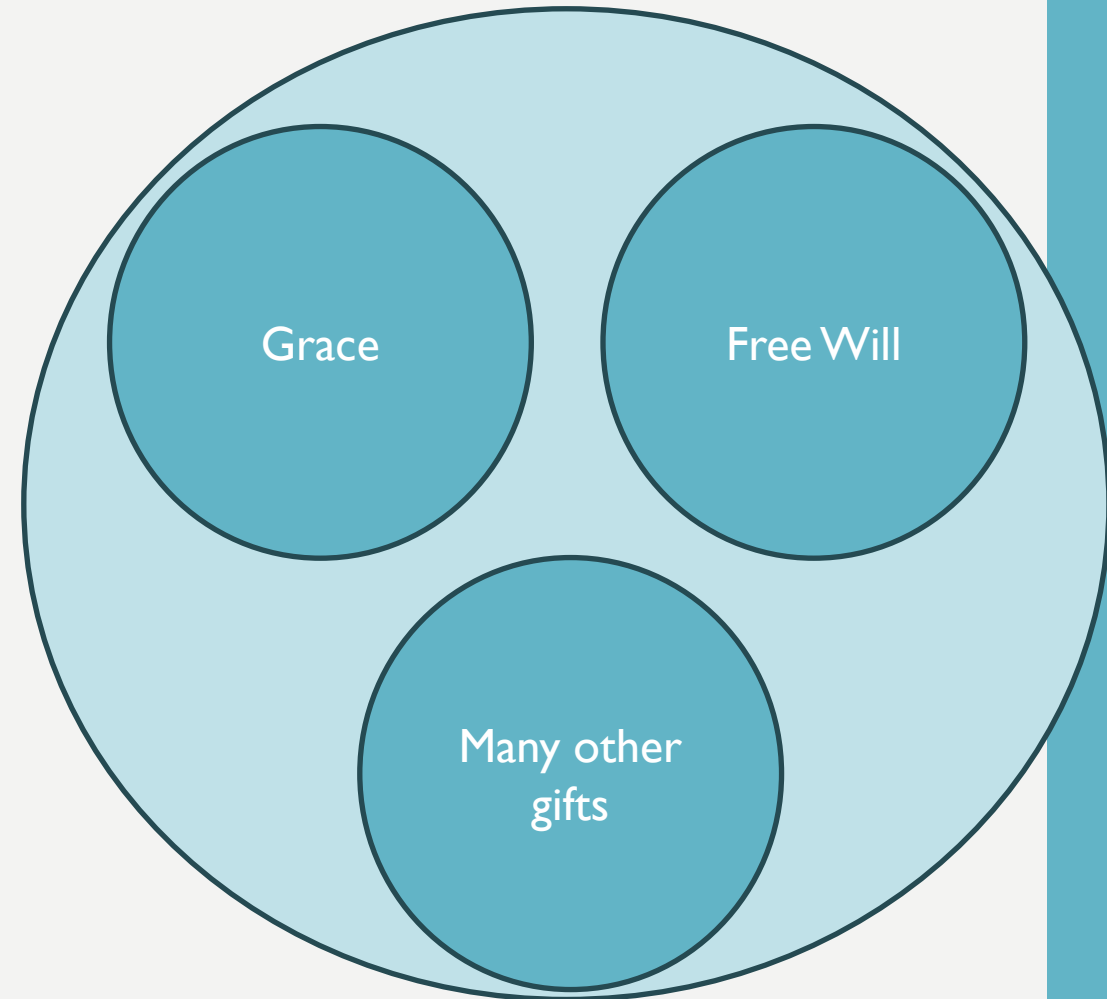
- While Joshua led the army in war, Moses stood on the hill and prayed
- Joshua could not have done it alone- no matter how much he fought
- Our work + God's grace = INSEPERABLE
- There must be striving and labor, but at the end, success is ascribed to God
  - The grace of God helps me understand that all my success stems from God- remember grace comes first!
  - “ for in Him we live and move and have our being.”Act 17:28

# GRACE & FREE WILL

- Grace is a gift from God, and free will is also a gift from God. **God's gifts do not contradict or cancel each other out.**
  - The work of the Holy Spirit within us does not abolish our free will.
  - We can stop and refuse the work of the Holy Spirit in us
  - Grace offers us help but we have the option to accept or refuse it

**“Grace and free will, although they seem opposed, in fact are complementary”**

**- St. John Cassian**



# GRACE & SPIRITUAL WARFARE



- The grace of God will help you to build up the armour of God- our weapon to fight the spiritual warfare
  - When you build your armour, you have acted on the grace of God
- All your spiritual practices are shielding you and supporting you to walk into the path of salvation
- In spiritual warfare, we must do two things- strive in resisting the devil (build up our armour) + have faith to depend on

# GRACE, OUR WEAKNESS AND GOD'S STRENGTH

***“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9)***

- The more we acknowledge our weakness, the more we are giving the chance for the God's grace to work in us
  - The servant's story
- The story of Gideon; all odds were stacked against him:
  - Israeli army was less than 1% of its original size
  - 400 Midianite soldiers to each Israeli soldier
  - Led by the least of the least of Israel





# WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME AS A SERVANT?

- **Reshaping** my relationship with Christ
  - Sometimes we feel we are not fit for service
    - This is normal and actually a good thing!
    - When you realize your weakness, do your best and put it in God's hands, you attribute your success in service to the grace of God
  - The grace of God protects you to stay moderate
- **Applying** this to service
  - Pray first and then talk with the kids
  - When God works in the heart of the kids, you realize it is not you but the grace of God
  - Grace of God + Work → Service in which all Glory is to God



# IN CONCLUSION...

*“Neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase”*

*(1 Cor 3:7)*

- Plant + water, yet attribute the increase to God
- Do not wait foolishly for God to give the increase without planting and watering
  - When you serve, you plant and water, but God increases through His grace

