



SUMMER-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

August 8, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

EXTRA GRACE REQUIRED

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . . . not by works.

Ephesians 2:8-9

READ Ephesians 2:1-10

While we decorated for a special event at church, the woman in charge griped about my inexperience. After she walked away, another woman approached me. “Don’t worry about her. She’s what we call an E.G.R.—Extra Grace Required.”

I laughed. Soon I started using that label every time I had a conflict with someone. Years later, I sat in that same church sanctuary listening to that E.G.R.’s obituary. The pastor shared how the woman had served God behind the scenes and given generously to others. I asked God to forgive me for judging and gossiping about her and anyone else I’d labeled as an E.G.R. in the past. After all, I needed extra grace as much as any other believer in Jesus.

In Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul states that all believers were “by nature deserving of wrath” (v. 3). But God gave us the gift of salvation, a gift which we did nothing to deserve, a gift we’d never be able to earn “so that no one can boast” (v. 9). No one.

As we submit to God moment by moment during this lifelong journey, the Holy Spirit will work to change our character so we can reflect the character of Christ. Every believer requires extra grace. But we can be grateful that God’s grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9).

By Xochitl Dixon

PRAY & REFLECT

Father God, please help me extend grace to others as freely and generously as You’ve lavished Your abounding grace on me. Amen

When have you judged others for requiring extra grace? In what area of your life do you require grace today?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Easily overlooked in this passage is the simple truth that we were spiritually “dead” before we put our faith in Jesus as God’s Son (Ephesians 2:1). Until God’s Holy Spirit drew us, we were naturally “gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts” (v. 3). Without a supernatural intervention, we were as helpless as a corpse. But “God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ” (vv. 4-5). Every aspect of this personal resurrection comes from God, including the “good works” we’re to accomplish, “which God prepared in advance for us to do” (v. 10). Truly we have nothing to boast about, except the great love of our great God expressed through His Son, Jesus. – By **Tim Gustafson**

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