

The Marvels of Divine Acceptance

God's ways are higher than man's (Isaiah 55:9). And this is no greater manifested than in the way He chooses, accepts and uses people. Often the world's rejects are God's elects. **"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world.... And the things that are despised.... That no flesh should glory in His presence"** (I Corinthians 1:27-29). This is repeatedly played out in scriptures and in contemporary times through divine choice of people like Joseph, David, the disciples of Christ, Kathryn Kuhlman, Gladys Aylward, etc through the marvels of His grace. Grace is God's unmerited favours on mankind. It is also God's Riches At Christ's Expense. It produces hope, encouragement and challenge to steadfastly cling to God irrespective of circumstances and past experiences.

This message explores the paradoxical wonders of God's grace on mankind that often defy human expectations. Man is fond of developing theoretical models that reflect their perception of how God would respond in certain situations. Such models often fall short of the actual dealings of God, because:

1. Human models are based on perceptions about personality, background, prospects etc and therefore prone to errors similar to the one Samuel nearly made had he not been sensitive to the Holy Spirit - **"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man**

- looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). Just as Jesse left David in the field as he did not consider him a potential candidate for kingship, so do ministers "bury alive" in their churches people they don't think fit for service.
2. Their models are derived from letters, rather than the spirit of the law. As we know, **"... the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life"** (2 Corinthians 3:6).
3. Human models draw from the past and present, whereas God's dealings include the future. **"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done...."** (Isaiah 46:10).

Human models often result in forms of godliness that deny the power of God (2 Timothy 3:5). If their operators are leaders of churches with members like David, Samuel, Ruth, Rahab, etc, they may never have been given the roles God gave them because in the eyes of such leaders:

1. David's past sins of adultery and murder disqualifies him from a prominent position as **"a man after God's heart"** (Acts 13:22). Rather they could have disciplined David and put him in a perpetual "cooler" so he can learn lessons on the gravity of his sins.
2. Ruth should have been excommunicated because God commanded that **"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation...."** (Deuteronomy 23:3). They could have strenuously proved that only 139 years has elapsed between events in Deuteronomy 23 (1451 BC) and that in Ruth 3 (1312 BC) - therefore insufficient time-span for ten generations. However, God went

beyond the letter and appearances by not only accepting Ruth into the congregation but also honouring her in the lineage of Jesus Christ. **"And ... Booz begat Obed of Ruth..."** (Matthew 1:5).

3. Rahab may perhaps have been tolerated, if she conformed to standards; but no prominent role would have been considered appropriate because her past life as a public prostitute could damage the reputation and dignity of the church. God, however accepted Rahab and honoured her among the ancestors of Jesus Christ **"And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab...."** (Matthew 1:5).
4. Peter who denied Christ thrice and went back to fishing should have been dismissed because **"...No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"** (Luke 9:62).
5. Samuel, whose grown up children became ungodly, prompting Israel to ask for a king should have been punished as Eli was for parental failure.
6. Similar judgments could be passed on:
 - a) Mary Magdalene out of whom seven demons were cast out, because of the impact of her past life.
 - b) Paul, who described himself as chiefest of sinners because of the havoc he did to early Christians.

You may be wondering whether these illustrations are aimed at lowering God's standards. No, not at all! Paul asked in Romans 6:1 **"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"** Certainly not! The point is that when God forgives and accepts a person, human rejection is of no consequence. You can therefore forget the past and move on in God's love. The Bible makes it clear **"And if**

any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins..." (I John 2:1-2). Let every sinner quickly turn to this advocate. And once the sins are washed, then bury the past and pour out your soul to love and serve God.

Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Revelations 12:10), and his human agents, will do their worst to dig up the past so as to pin a person down. Do not allow them. Remember **"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"** (John 8:36). **"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"** (Galatians 5:1). Keep flying for God. Remember that the bumble bees fly because they do not know that it has been scientifically proved that their wings should not be able to carry their body mass in flight. Irrespective of what the devil or humans prove, keep flying for God as long as your heart is right with God. Human beings and the society is not your God. So, keep looking unto Jesus, and be not deterred by human rejections or your past.

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