

Dear Crossroads Family,

We know that Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:13, **"**And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." I would never contradict God's word or the great Apostle, but I must at least put in a good word for another word that should at least receive honorable mention on Paul's list of spiritual dispositions that will continue to matter when we see Christ face to face. The word I would vote for as the next great disposition is "Grace."

I ran across this definition of grace by Bill Giovannetti. "Grace is that fearsome force flowing from God's heart to deliver unmerited favor to train wrecks like me." The definition rings loud and true because it emphasizes our absolute helplessness in the face of eternal separation from God and our total unworthiness on our own merit to approach Him for pardon. Every one of us is a "trainwreck," spiritually speaking. The definition also resonates because the favor of God toward us is totally unmerited. God shows His favor to us because of who He is; not because of who or what we are. In fact, who and what we are should provoke His rejection and judgment. But what really hits home about the definition is the main noun phrase that describes grace as "that fearsome force." That's a perfect expression because God's grace flows toward us as if nothing in all the world can stop it—not our sin, not our failed commitments to Him and to one another, not even our waffling faith. As one confession of the early church proclaimed: **"**if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself (2 Tim. 2:13)" That kind of grace is a fearsome force, ready to charge through and toss aside anything that might try to get in its way!

Maybe I was wrong earlier when I put my vote in for the inclusion of the word "grace" on Paul's list in 1 Cor. 13. Could it be that the reason Paul left grace off the list of when he wrote, "now these three remain," is that He was thinking of the end of time as we know it when we will no longer see only a reflection as in a mirror" but "we shall see face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12). Though I cannot pretend to know what being face-to-face with Christ will be like on that day, I can only assume that somehow faith, hope, and especially love, will somehow still be important aspects of our heavenly existence. But grace, the grace of God, will have completed its mission. Sins atoned for. Justification granted. Sanctification complete. Mission accomplished, grace.

For now, though, grace remains active as "that fearsome force that flows from God's heart to deliver unmerited favor to train wrecks like me." Let's talk about grace, celebrate it on Sunday, and see it in action in God's word through the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 43. (Sermon notes are provided below.) I have *faith* that you will come. I *hope* that you will set aside other things to join in worship with your church family. I would *love* for you to be present Sunday as we study God's word and worship together and celebrate the *grace* of our God.

Love,
Bro. Doug

Has God Grown Weary of Us?
Isaiah 43:1-7 & 21-25

When difficult times come, we often ask, "Has God grown weary of us and _____ His _____ on us, His people?" God's people in the 6th century BC were asking those questions, and God answered them and us **Isaiah 43:1-7 & 21-25** with these words: "Do not _____." They had reason to fear. They had been defeated by a powerful military. Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed, and many had died or been taken to Babylon as captives. Their troubles caused them to ask if God had _____ His _____ of protection from them and was done with them. We can feel like that at times too.

The answer to that question in Scripture is "No." The reasons God gives them are these: I have "created you." **Eph. 2:10** says to us, "we are God's handiwork, created in _____ _____ to do good works." To them He said, "I have redeemed you." **1 Peter 1:18-19** says to us, "____ were redeemed… with the precious blood of Christ." To them He said, "I have called you." **1 Cor. 1:9** tells us, "God is faithful, who has called _____ into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." To them He said, "I love you." **1 John 4:10** tells us, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he _____ ___ and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

God admits that being His people does not _____ us from much of the pain and brutality of a world marred by ____. The difficulties we face are not a sign of God's failure or lack of love but an opportunity to see that He will _____ ___ _____.

Finally, God says that we needn't fear that He is done with us because of our sin. He said, "I sweep away your transgressions for ___ ____ _____ and remember your sins no more." In other words, God's relationship with us is not _____. It isn't about what ___ ___. It's about who ___ ___.

Here's how God responds when you ask if He has, or will, remove His hand of protection and mercy from you because of your sins and failures. "No," he says, "I distinctly _____ _____ them."

_____

A Few Announcements:

Thank you to all who helped with the Harvest Fest! Many families came to this outreach event and were blessed with games, candy, and hospitality! There were over 600 adults and children who attended, several asked for prayer and some were looking for a church. The event was a success because of our loving congregation!

November Young at Heart is scheduled for Thursday, November 12, in the Fellowship Hall at 11:30 am. Bring your favorite Thanksgiving side dish/dessert. The turkey & ham will be provided. Our entertainment will be presented by our very own Barbara Hamons. All are welcome to join us!

Surviving the Holidays: a special Grief Share seminar, with hope and encouragement for a season that may not feel the same, will be presented at Crossroads on Saturday, November 14, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Please register at griefshare.org/events/296000 or using the QR code on the flyer.

Don't forget that Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes are due next Sunday, November 15!!!

A Call for Nominations for people interested in serving on a Church Committee or Work Team for 2027. A nomination page is included in the bulletin with information about each committee and work team. Please return the nomination page to the church office by November 18. Call the church office for more information.

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