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"The Means of Grace" Bible Study

January 8-March 12, 2019

Teaching based on the book, *The Means of Grace* by Andrew C. Thompson

1. Biblically, What is Grace? (*Multiple choice - please choose one.*)
 - A. What you say before you eat a meal
 - B. Popular girl name
 - C. Elegance of form
 - D. None of the above
2. "For by **grace** you have been saved through faith..." (Ephesians 2:8)
3. And the **Word** became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the **Father**, full of **grace** and truth. (John 1:14)
4. And of His fullness we have all received, and **grace** for **grace**. (John 1:16)
5. Our **salvation** depends on grace!
6. Grace is both the **pardon** and **power** of God.
7. Because of our human nature, we have a **sin-problem**. (Romans 3:23; Romans 7:15-20)
8. According to John Wesley, grace is the power of the **Holy Ghost** enabling us to **believe** and **love** and **serve** God.
9. Grace is **unconditional**, **transformational**, and **invitational**.
10. Unconditional grace means:
 - A. God **loves** us no matter what.
 - B. We **can't** do anything to **earn** God's love. (**Ephesians 2:8b-9** - *...it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.*)
 - C. **Anyone** can be saved. (**I John 2:2**)
11. Transformational grace means:

"Where lives are changed, hurts are healed, hope is restored, and Jesus is Lord!"

- A. Jesus Christ loves us **just the way** we are.
- B. Jesus Christ loves us so much that He **refuses to leave** us the way we are.
(2 Corinthians 3:18)

12. Invitational grace calls us to **share** the **Good News** with others. (Matthew 28:18-20)

13. God has given us certain **channels** (practices) through which we can receive **grace**, also known as the **means of grace**.

14. According to John Wesley, the means of grace are “**signs, words, actions** ordained by God” and “channels of conveying His **grace** to the **souls** of men.” (Acts 2:42-47)

15. Three main categories of the means of grace are:

- A. **Instituted** means of grace: what we learn from **Christ**.
- B. **Prudential** means of grace: what we learn from our **context**.
- C. **General** means of grace: what we learn by **contemplation**.

16. The **instituted** means of graces consists of:

A. **Baptism**

Luke 3:21-22; John 4:1-3)

- i. The **outward sign** of God’s **salvation** and His **love** for us.
- ii. Symbolizes our new **birth** in the **Holy Spirit**. (John 3:5-7; Matthew 3:11)
- iii. Unites us with **Christ**, and gives us a promise of the **resurrection** to come.
(Romans 6:3-4)
- iv. One of two **sacraments**, the A.M.E. Zion Church observes.

B. **Searching the Scriptures**

- i. God’s **Word** is meant to work **goodness** in your life. (Deuteronomy 8:3)
- ii. God speaks through the **revelation** of **His Word** in the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16)
- iii. By **reading** for personal **study**.
- iv. By **listening** to **sermons** and participating in group **Bible Study**.
- v. By **meditating** on the **Word**; spiritual **contemplation**.

C. **Prayer**

- i. Our personal **connection** with God, where we both **speak** and **listen**.
- ii. Prayer is the act of lifting up our **thoughts, words, and affections** to God.
- iii. ACTS stands for: **Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication**.
- iv. We should make prayer our practice **privately** and **corporately**.

D. The **Lord's Supper**

- i. Is a **holy** meal. (Exodus 12; Luke 22:19-20)
- ii. Is the second **sacrament**, the A.M.E. Zion Church observes.

E. **Fasting**

- i. The practice of **denying** one's **self** for a period of time for a **spiritual** purpose.
- ii. A **key** to fasting is to take it **seriously** and fast in **moderation**.
- iii. Examples of fasting:
 1. **Repentance** (*2 Samuel 12:13-16*)
 2. Seeking **divine assistance** (*Nehemiah 1:4-11*)
 3. **Deliverance** (*Esther 4:1-3*)
 4. **Spiritual empowerment** (*Luke 4:14; Matthew 17:21*)

F. **Fellowship**

- i. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings, **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and prayers." (*Acts 2:42*)
- ii. The word church means "**assembly**" (*Hebrews 10:24-25*)
- iii. According to John Wesley, the characteristics of true Christian fellowship are marked by answering the following:
 1. Which of those **true** Christians had any such **fellowship** with these [i.e. **false** Christians who make up the majority of the parish congregations]?
 2. Who watched over them in **love**?
 3. Who marked their **growth** in **grace**?
 4. Who **advised** and **exhorted** them from time to time?
 5. Who **prayed** with them and for them as they had need?

17. The **prudent** means of grace are **habits** or **practices** we embrace exactly for the spiritual benefit they offer.

A. Prudence means **practical wisdom**

B. **Context** makes a real difference in how the **Christian** life is lived.

C. The **prudential** means of grace include:

- i. Particular **rules** and arts of **holy living**
- ii. **Small group** fellowships, also known as **classes** and **bands**
- iii. The works of **mercy**:
 1. **Biblical** teaching and **common-sense** reasoning

2. Are **good works** (Ephesians 2:10)
3. Demonstrate how to **love** our **neighbor** in a practical way i.e. (Matthew 25:34-36):
 - a. Visiting the **sick**
 - b. Ministering to those **imprisoned**
 - c. Helping the **poor**
 - d. Being **hospitable**

18. The **general** means of grace affects our **whole being**.

- A. This means of grace is **contemplative** and more about our **inner** lives and the disposition of our **hearts**.
- B. If we have no inward sense of **intention** or right **attitude** of heart, we can nullify the **power** of the **instituted** and **prudential** means of grace. (**I Corinthians 13:1-3**)
- C. The **general** means of grace is the **foundation** for your whole **spiritual** life. This includes:
 - i. **Watching** (Ephesians 6:18; I Peter 4:7)
 - ii. **Denying** ourselves and taking up our **cross** (Matthew 16:24-25)
 - iii. _____ the _____ of God (**Luke 10:38-42**)
 1. When we don't try to numb our _____ for God with other _____, we'll have the inward _____ to know and love _____.
(**Matthew 5:6**)
 2. Our _____ for God can _____ when we are not actively _____ to remain _____ on God.
 3. A living _____ with Jesus Christ _____ and _____ us by His holy _____.
 4. To _____ the Presence of God:
 - a. We have to _____ away or _____ away from _____.
 - b. Remove any _____ from our hearts. (**Ezekiel 14:6**)
 - c. We need to _____ time _____ to seeking _____.
(**Psalm 63:1**)
 - d. We need to intentionally _____ on Him with our _____.
(**Jeremiah 29:12-13**)
 - e. _____ God into our _____, our _____, and our _____, and our _____.