



Grace Brings Grace Home

Once upon a time there was a young girl who was abandoned right after she was born. This little baby girl was left out in the open, exposed to the elements, without any shelter. She was despised, vulnerable and very much alone.

She was left to die—she would never know what it was like to be loved and comforted and hugged and provided for—she would never grow up and enjoy wearing a new dress, having her hair done or going to a party.

But then a miracle happened.

A loving couple came by and rescued her—they loved her and gave her life, saving her from the certainty of death she would experience.

In the parable-like story told in the 16th chapter of Ezekiel, God rescues and saves a helpless, newborn girl who has been abandoned. I'm taking the liberty of naming her "Grace."

Grace grew into a beautiful young woman, and then one day a different kind of love came into her life.

Her Prince Charming didn't care that Grace had once been abandoned, he didn't care that Grace had no idea who her birth parents were.

This Prince Charming only saw Grace through the eyes of love. He promised Grace his love—he promised Grace all that he had by his own grace, and they entered into a covenant of marriage.

Her husband told Grace she was absolutely stunning—he treated her like a queen and her beauty became widely known.

But then it all went wrong.

Grace forgot where her love, wealth and beauty had come from. Grace, this beautiful bride, who owed all that she had and all that she was to her husband, betrayed him. Grace, whose life, blessings and beauty were a gift of God's grace, took advantage of God's love.

God's love is never earned or deserved...God's love and grace is stronger than anything you or I can do to either deserve it or to cause him to remove it.

It wasn't the first time nor the last when a deeply loved human being took advantage of God's love and grace.

Grace fell—she hit rock bottom. Ezekiel 16:15 says, "But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute. You lavished your favors on anyone who passed by and your beauty became his."

The story of Ezekiel 16 is about God's forever commitment—even in the face of betrayal and infidelity.

Our story—your story and my story—is that we are the ones who have been found in a horrible place of abandonment and in need of rescue—and God has favored us with his grace.

We have nothing to offer God, but he is not looking for anything he can do for us.

He is looking to lavish us with his love. He knows that his grace and love is risky—he knows that our fallen humanity makes us

incapable of being truly and forever faithful to him.

But then another miracle happened. This parable-story in Ezekiel 16 is the story of God's grace—in spite of infidelity God says to his wife, in verse 60, "I will establish an everlasting covenant with you."

Now, lest you misunderstand our message today and the clear message of Ezekiel 16, God's wife who prostituted herself suffered for her outlandish behavior.

She reaped the whirlwind of consequences, but God, her loving and forever forgiving husband, did not insist that she pay these penalties out of spite and vengeance.

God does not insist that we pay penalties because we offend and shame him or because he has conditions we must meet before he will take us back into his home.

His part in his commitment to us is to tell us up front—*I will always forgive you. I will never leave you nor will I abandon you—no matter what.*

God's love is never earned or deserved—and his love, regardless of how low we sink in life, never goes away.

God's love and grace is stronger than anything you or I can do to either deserve it or to cause him to remove it.

Thank God for his grace and love—*faith alone, grace alone and Christ alone!* □

—Greg Albrecht

Join us for the complete message of "Grace Brings Grace Home" at the audio teaching ministry of Christianity Without the Religion, the week of March 22, 2020.