

## **A Great Day in the Kingdom – May 6, 2022**

We often speak of Grace in sermons, prayers, ministries, relationships and in defining a component of unconditional Love. However, there are times when we must make a concerted effort to extend a hand to those who need understanding. This particular milieu of understanding is not without will and effort, which can only be applied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

When we offer Grace and Love, we offer the Hand of Jesus Christ. When we worry less about our experience and realize that those who often lash out are in pain, God is working through us. Notice I did not say that the realization was always 100% immediate.

Many years ago I experienced a gentleman who never had anything but negative complaints about me, my Staff and the ministries the Church supported. His fellow Laity were also a target. Every effort was labeled a “waste of time.” Fortunately for every person in leadership, this gentleman would attend every meeting. At our Seniors’ gathering, he even managed to get into disagreements concerning the rules for Dominos. I remember wondering, “How could you get in a conflict with these folks?” Well, let’s just say this gentleman was talented.

One Sunday, following worship the ‘Champion of Challenge’ asked if I had a minute to talk. I remember thinking along the lines of, “Here we go again.” As we sat in my office, I realized that this man needed to tell me his story. His life has been laden with horrific tragedies. He explained that in almost every circumstance or environment in which he found himself, something or someone would evoke feelings of one or more of those events. As he continued to speak, I found myself understanding in a strange way. This guy even had a nickname! I had allowed the label to define him. At that moment, I was ashamed.

I would like to say that he was more pleasant to deal with after that Sunday. Well, he was not. I would like to say that Grace came easier from me. It did not come easier. What happened on that day was a change in my reaction. It reminds me of:

**Ephesians 2:8-9, For by Grace you have saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

If God gives us the gift of Grace, aren’t we called to discern and share it with the world? Where should you pray for an endless supply of Grace with folks who pose a challenge? The world is watching us, waiting to see if we are a people of Grace and Love.

*PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help us to seek the level of Grace that honors You. Help us to be living examples of the saving Grace we have received. Help us to Love and live into your will. In the name of the Risen Christ Jesus we pray. AMEN!*