



Celebrating God's Faithfulness

Week 1	5 October – Cultivating a life of gratitude.
Week 2	12 October – Remember, rejoice, rededicate.
WEEK 3	19 OCTOBER – RECOGNIZING GRACE THROUGH THE YEARS.
Week 4	26 October - Removing barriers and building bridges for the renewal



Psalm 100:4-5, “Enter His gates with praise...His goodness endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations”.

Thessalonians 5:16-18, Always rejoice.... give thanks to God for all things”

Matthew 13:1-13, vv. “A farmer went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop...”

We begin this month of October in a celebration mood as we commemorate the 69th birthday of Bryanston Methodist Church. Generally, church birthdays hold a special place in the life of a congregation. They are opportunities to reflect on the faithfulness of God, celebrate milestones, and envision the future. With every passing year, we have a chance to share our stories of how God has worked in our lives.

Our church's birthday is a reminder of God's perfect guidance that leads us through the uncertain terrains of life. It points us to the power of God's Word, which illuminates our path, providing the direction and strength we need to continue our pilgrimage. We have seen God's faithfulness in our lives and in the life of the church. Our theme, therefore, for this month of October is: **“Celebrating God's faithfulness”**.

This theme honours our church's rich history, bringing to the fore the blessings and grace God has showered upon our community over the years. Over this month of October, we will be affirming the Lord's guidance over our church. He has led us through the pastures and along the waters, offering rest amidst turbulence and hope during the droughts. This month as a community we reflect on the works of God, reaffirming our commitment to faith and to the values that unite us as the church. This birthday is a celebration of God's enduring faithfulness and the loving community called BMC He has built. Life is a celebration. This birthdate is a reminder to celebrate the life as well as to update the life. Celebration is an active state, an act of expressing reverence or appreciation.

A church anniversary is much more than a celebration, it is a profound occasion to honour spiritual heritage, celebrate the unity of the present, and look with hope to the future. We celebrate BMC's witness, and recounting God's work. We celebrate BMC's missional calling through outward-focused worship that leads to action.

It is a privilege for the church to still be here after so many years. It is refreshing and speaks to the church's hospitality. BMC has weathered the seasons because its foundation is solid rock. On this anniversary, we stand on the foundation of God-self. We 've built our church upon Him in the past and we will continue to build upon Him in the future. We can know that He will sustain us and continue to build us. And so, whatsoever you do, don't do it as a duty, do it from your love, don't do it as a burden, do it as a celebration. Come let us celebrate together our victorious journey in Christ Jesus so far. Let us rejoice in the never-ending blessings He has poured out upon us. Let us make this anniversary a moment of spiritual reflection for our community.

An anniversary is vital signpost in the life of the church. Just as the Israelites would celebrate God's great faithfulness and deliverance, so should we commemorate and give thanks for the ways God has led us and blessed us. May this be a month filled with joy and celebration. May we be filled with gratitude and praise for all that God has done for us. May we rejoice in the faithfulness of God, knowing that He will continue to be faithful to us for many years to come. Be good; Be well, and my wish for you is joy! Rev Zamani.

Home Groups and classes guide:

1. Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.
2. Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.
3. Reflect on the Bible verses and the reflection written by a Minister or Lay Preacher.
4. Connect with each other and take the reflection deeper by answering the Questions.
5. Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).



Week 3: 19 October – Recognizing grace through the years

David Tripp remarks that “*grace means that beautiful things are being done for you and happening within you*”. Grace is transformative, constant, and beautiful. As we celebrate our church's anniversary, we acknowledge God's consistent grace and blessings throughout the church's history, leading to a celebration of His enduring faithfulness. Grace rescues us from eternal death and rescues us from ourselves daily by making us new creations. All around us there is evidence of God's grace. We just have to remind ourselves what to look for. Acts 14:17 affirms this, saying, “*He kept constantly doing good things and showing kindness, and giving you rains from heaven and productive seasons, filling your heart with food and happiness*”

WORSHIP SONG: Amazing Grace (Celtic women)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsCp5LG_zNE

READINGS: Deuteronomy 29:1-9; 2 Corinthians 12: 1-10 & John 1:15-17

REFLECTION WRITTEN BY: TONY MATTHEE

Have you ever done something that you know was wrong and consequently you were in big trouble. Then someone comes along and intervenes on your behalf and the punishment you thought was coming your way suddenly disappears? I experienced this first hand many years ago and I cannot in words adequately express how I felt to have that great burden lifted from my shoulders. My gratitude to that person knew no bounds and I will NEVER forget him or what he did for me. What he did for me was GRACE.

I love the definition given by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *“Grace is everything for nothing to those who don’t deserve anything.”* The standard definition that is widely accepted is, *“Grace is the free unmerited favour of God.”* Grace has also been described as *“a river that never runs dry”* and *“a spring that never ceases to flow.”* But Grace is always linked to God who dispenses this commodity to his people continually.

In our Deuteronomy reading Moses encourages the Israelites to remember the miraculous signs and great wonders they had witnessed in the desert, such as crossing the Red Sea, eating manna provided for them every day, getting water out of a rock to quench the thirst of the entire nation and their livestock. I find it interesting that he specifically mentions that their clothes and sandals never wore out in 40 years. They just took it for granted or didn’t even think about it. Isn’t there a lesson in that for us today. How grateful are we for blessings we take for granted like our health and protection on our busy and dangerous roads.

In the Corinthians reading Paul tells us about his experiences in the third heaven. Scholars think that this may have been a near death experience he had after he had been stoned and left for dead. He then speaks of a thorn in the flesh which God did not remove but gave him GRACE, which was far better. We may not receive what we want from God, but have we ever considered that receiving the grace of God is infinitely better? Like Paul we receive blessing after blessing (from John reading) – it never stops! Every time we pray, we should start with heartfelt thanks to God for his grace manifested in our lives.

Charles Spurgeon said, *“We are saved through faith, but salvation is by grace.”* The greatest manifestation of grace comes to us through Jesus Christ. But what does his grace look like?

A young boy stood in the principal’s office for fighting with another boy and pushing his head into a sandbox. This boy was a bully, rebellious, defiant and obnoxious. He had been in the principal’s office many times and been punished many times, but with no signs of remorse. He just stood there with hands outstretched (the method used for corporal punishment in those days) challenging the principal to get on with it, knowing that it would make no difference.

But the Principal leaned forward and said, *“Today, I am going to teach you about grace.”* The boy was confused. *“Isn’t that something older folk say before a meal? I don’t want anything to do with that.”* The principal went on, *“You are not going to be punished today,”* he said. The boy looked puzzled. *“You’re not going to hit me? You just going to let me walk?”* *“Oh no,”* said the principal, *“there has to be punishment. What you did was wrong and there must be consequences to your actions.”*

The principal nodded to the teacher who had brought the boy in, *“Bring me the belt.”* The teacher did what was asked of him and handed the belt to the principal who folded it into two and handed it back to the teacher. *“I want you to count the blows,”* he said to the boy and held out his own hands to the teacher, *“Begin.”* Crack, the belt came down on the principal’s outstretched hands. The young man jumped. Shock registered across his face. Crack – two, Crack – three. Crack – four. By this time tears were welling up in the rebel’s eyes. *“Stop,”* he said, *“I deserve the hiding.”* Still the blows came, one after the other.

Finally, when it was over the principal took the weeping boy's face into his swollen hands and said, "That is GRACE!" Could we ever express enough gratitude to Jesus for dying on a cross and taking the punishment we deserve, so that our sins could be forgiven?

God's Riches At Christ's Expense

GROUP/CLASS QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever experienced grace in any form that you can share with the group?
2. Try to compile a list of all the blessings we receive that we take for granted.
3. What do you understand by the expression, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12: 9)
4. Why do you think the death of Jesus on the cross for the sins of the world makes no impression on people today?
5. Have you had personal experience of God's grace in your life that you would like to share?

MEMORY VERSES FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: "With your own eyes you saw those great trials, those miraculous signs and great wonders." Deut. 29:3

Tuesday: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Cor. 12:9

Wednesday: "For the law was given through Moses; Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." John 1:17

Thursday: "No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." John 1:18

Friday: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." Eph. 2:8

Saturday: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 1 Pet. 5:5

FAMILY TIME: WRITTEN BY JENNY BLAKE (CHILDREN'S PASTOR)

Week 3 Theme: Recognizing Grace Through the Years

Scripture Readings:

- Deuteronomy 29:1–9
- 2 Corinthians 12:1–10
- John 1:15–17

Opening Prayer

Lord, thank You for Your amazing grace. Help us see Your hand at work in our lives and in our church through the years. Teach us to recognize the blessings You give daily and to live with thankful hearts. Amen.

Short Summary of the Readings

- **Deuteronomy 29:1–9:** Moses reminds the Israelites of all God has done for them. He calls them to remember God's faithfulness and to live in obedience, acknowledging His grace over the years.
- **2 Corinthians 12:1–10:** Paul speaks of his weaknesses and how God's grace is sufficient for him. God's power is made perfect in our weaknesses, showing that grace is transformative and sustaining.
- **John 1:15–17:** John the Baptist testifies to Jesus, highlighting that grace and truth come through Him. Grace is abundant, ongoing, and life-changing, bringing blessings that surpass the law.

Reflection

David Tripp says, "Grace means that beautiful things are being done for you and happening within you." Grace is more than just a word — it is God's constant, transformative, and beautiful presence in our lives.

As we celebrate our church's anniversary, we look back over the years and recognize God's faithfulness and grace. Grace rescues us from eternal separation from God and renews us daily, making us new creations.

All around us, there is evidence of God's grace - in friendships, family, the provision of food and shelter, answered prayers, and the growth of our church community. Acts 14:17 reminds us that God is *"constantly doing good things and showing kindness, giving you rains from heaven and productive seasons, filling your heart with food and happiness."*

Recognizing grace helps us cultivate gratitude, humility, and hope. It reminds us that every blessing, big or small, is evidence of God's love and faithfulness.

Discussion Questions

For Teenagers:

1. Can you think of a time you noticed God's grace in your life? How did it make you feel?
2. What does Paul mean when he says God's power is made perfect in weakness?
3. How can recognizing grace change the way you handle challenges or disappointments?
4. In what ways can you intentionally look for God's grace in your daily life?

For Younger Children:

1. What is one thing God has done for you that makes you happy?
2. Can you think of a way God has helped someone you love?
3. How does it feel to know God is always taking care of us?
4. How can you say "thank you" to God for His grace this week?

Family Activity Ideas

1. **Grace Journal** – Each family member writes or draws one example of God's grace they notice every day for a week. Share together.
2. **Blessings Walk** – Take a walk around your home or neighbourhood and name the ways God's grace shows in creation, people, or daily life.
3. **Grace Tree** – Draw a tree and hang leaves with examples of God's grace in your church, family, or personal life.
4. **Prayer Circle** – Share aloud ways you've experienced grace, then pray together, thanking God for His constant goodness.

Memory Verse

"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." John 1:17

Closing Prayer

Thank You, God, for Your amazing grace throughout the years. Thank You for blessing our church, our families, and our lives. Help us to recognize Your goodness every day, trust in Your faithfulness, and live as people transformed by Your grace. Amen.

Grace Prayer Poem for Children

Dear God, Your grace is everywhere, In every hug, in every prayer.
You make us new each single day, You guide our hearts, You show the way.
We thank You for the things we see, The sun, the rain, the growing tree.
For friends and family, love and care, For answered prayers and kindness shared.
Help us notice grace each day, In little things, along the way.
Thank You, Jesus, for all You do, We trust Your grace to guide us through.
Amen.