

Introduction

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3. Paul makes two statements:
  - "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."
  - "God has not given us a spirit of timidity..."
4. In this lesson try to show the depth of the valley *and* the magnitude of God's grace.

A. How Dark the Valley Can Be

*Matthew 27:46 –  
And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying,.. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”*



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*2 Timothy 4:10 – For Demas, having loved this present world, has **deserted** me and gone to Thessalonica...*  
*2 Timothy 4:16 – At my first defense no one supported me, but all **deserted** me; may it not be counted against them.*

A. How Dark the Valley Can Be

1. Words that the Bible uses convey tremendous ideas.  
2. “Forsake” needs to be illustrated in far direr terms.  
3. God gives the promise, no matter how bad it looks, He will **never forsake**.

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*Acts 2:27 – “Because Thou wilt not **abandon** My soul to Hades, nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.”*

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1. Words that the Bible uses convey tremendous ideas.
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3. God gives the promise, no matter how bad it looks, He will never forsake.
4. Paul's own life demonstrates the effectiveness of God's "not forsaking" for his fellow Christians.

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*2 Corinthians 4:9-11 – ...persecuted, **but not forsaken**; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh...*

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*2 Corinthians 1:8-10 – For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of **our affliction** which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, **we had the sentence of death** within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us....*

A. How Dark the Valley Can Be

*2 Corinthians 11:23-30 – ...often in **danger of death**: five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three time I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep... in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers..., dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, ... if I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness.*

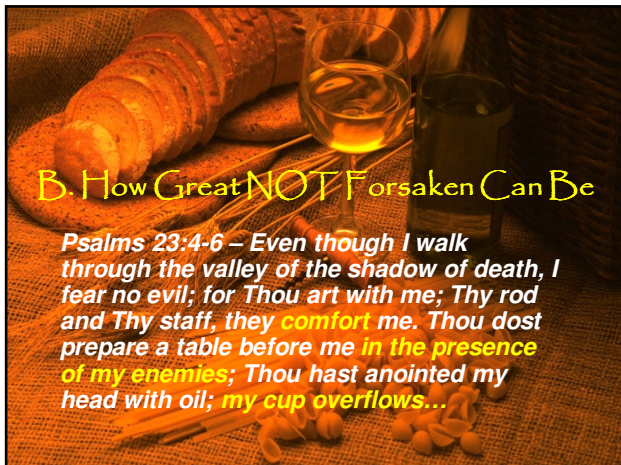
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2. "Forsake" needs to be illustrated in far direr terms.
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4. Paul's own life demonstrates the effectiveness of God's "not forsaking" for his fellow Christians.
5. There is a basic principle that prevails as the extremity of faith itself.

A. How Dark the Valley Can Be

*1 Kings 17:11-13 – He [Elijah] called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand." But she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, **that we may eat it and die.**" Then Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and make me a little bread cake from it first..."*





**B. How Great NOT Forsaken Can Be**

*Psalms 23:4-6 – Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they **comfort** me. Thou dost prepare a table before me **in the presence of my enemies**; Thou hast anointed my head with oil; **my cup overflows...***

**B. How Great NOT Forsaken Can Be**

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*2 Corinthians 1:3-5 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and **God of all comfort**; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the **sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance**, so also our **comfort is abundant** through Christ.*

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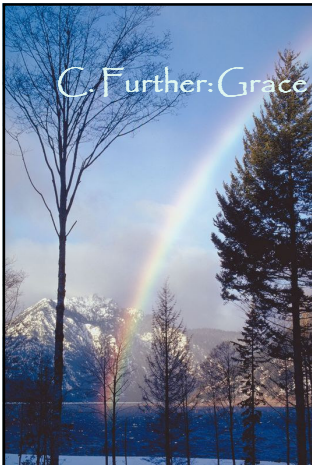
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4. The Israelites are a classic example of God's taking care of His people.
5. This is promised even more abundantly when after they betray Him.

**C. Further: Grace Upon Grace**

*John 1:14,16 – And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth... For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.*




**C. Further: Grace Upon Grace**

1. People define "grace" as "Unmerited favor."



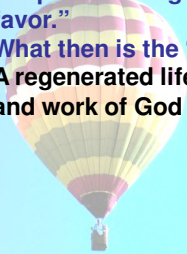
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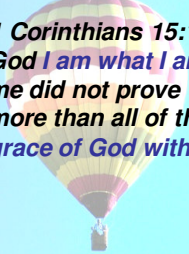
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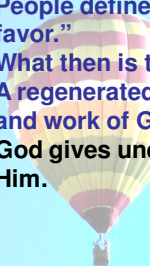
*1 Corinthians 15:10 – But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.*





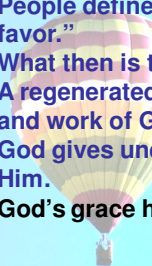
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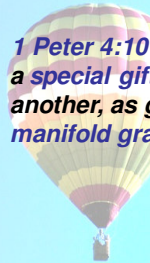
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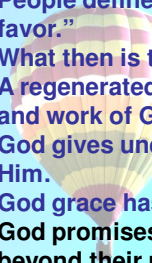
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*1 Peter 4:10 – As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*



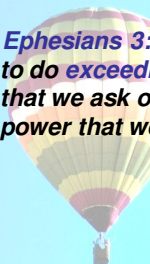
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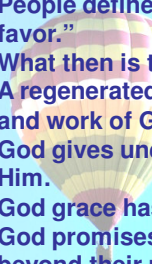
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*Ephesians 3:20 – Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.*



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7. There are special endowments by the Spirit in life. The true Christian must plunge.



C. Further: Grace Upon Grace

*Romans 12:6-8 – And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

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8. The unloaded conscience is thankful.

C. Further: Grace Upon Grace

*Colossians 4:6 – Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.*

*Colossians 3:16 – Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

*Romans 1:17 – For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”*

Invitation

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*2 Corinthians 8:3 – For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints.*

*Hebrews 10:25 – Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as your see the day drawing near.*

*Ephesians 5:25-26 – Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word...*

*1 Peter 1:22 – Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.*

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