Moms prayer

***The Wide Spectrum of Mothering*** *by amy young*

*To those who gave birth this year to their first child—we celebrate with you*

*To those who lost a child this year – we mourn with you*

*To those who are in the trenches with little ones every day and wear the badge of food stains – we appreciate you*

*To those who experienced loss through miscarriage, failed adoptions, or running away—we mourn with you*

*To those who walk the hard path of infertility – we walk with you.*

*To those who are foster moms, mentor moms, and spiritual moms – we need you*

*To those who have disappointment, heartache, and distance with your children – we sit with you*

*To those who lost their mothers this year – we grieve with you*

*To those who experienced abuse at the hands of your own mother – we acknowledge your experience*

*To those who are single and long to be married and mothering your own children – we mourn that life has not turned out the way you longed for it to be*

*To those who step-parent – we walk with you on these complex paths*

*To those who will have emptier nests in the upcoming year – we grieve and rejoice with you*

*And to those who are pregnant with new life, both expected and surprising –we anticipate with you This Mother’s Day, we walk with you.*

*Mothering is not for the faint of heart and we have real warriors in our midst. We remember you.*

We Hello My Name is Grace: Lost and Found

**Life changing introduction: Grace**

When I first started to work in what’s called vocational ministry…meaning ministry is my job…I was a youth pastor. One of my favorite things to do with kids was to take them out camping. In fact several of us are planning a trip this summer, if you would like to go, please let me know. Anyway, early in my working with the church, we took a bunch of kids to Annapolis Rock. Not sure if you have ever been there, or seen it from I70 outside Hagerstown. But it is a beautiful spot to go. This time when we went, it was in the fall, early. On the way up, a front came in and it was even snowing as the clouds fell in around us.

As we found the cliff, the clouds cleared and it was a magnificent sight. It’s amazing how seeing things from a different perspective gives us an appreciation for what has been around us all along.

We stayed marveling at God’s creation for quite a while. Then as it was getting time for dinner, we set out back to camp. It was about a 2 hour hike. Along the way there were trail markers that told us where we were. We hadn’t seen them on the way up as most of them were painted on only one side. It didn’t take long for the group to get stretched out. You know us old folks were going too slow for the kids. They felt the need to go ahead of us…we weren’t really worried about them, after all we were walking across the ridge of a mountain, so as long as they stay on top until we got to our tail you really couldn’t get lost.

Well, we forgot to consider the leader of this group…a young man about 16 years old…he along with 5 other girls took out. Now that should be all you need to know to realize that he was not paying attention to the trail markers…he was entertaining the ladies.

We went back to camp. Then realized they never arrived. So we set out to track them down. The problem was they had no idea they were lost…they were just strolling along the trail. We were the only ones who knew the gravity of the situation…they were just having a good old time hanging out, strolling along in the woods.

Now what does this story have to do with Grace? Today I want to talk about what is called prevenient grace.

Grace is defined as God’s unmerited love or favor. Theologians have long been trying to get a handle on God’s love and John Calvin, a famous one understood it this way. We humans are totally depraved, meaning we are completely lost and can’t choose good - without God. He went on to say that chooses to save people not because of anything we did, but completely because he wills to save. Calvin went on to explain that the grace which leads to salvation only extends to those who will be saved, the elect as he understood it; and that this grace was irresistible and unbreakable because it was God’s plan.

John Wesley and others way before him had a problem with this kind of thinking. They understood that Calvin’s thinking was well grounded in the Scriptures, but they found it didn’t line up with the God of scripture. You have experienced this…when something meets each and every checkpoint, but the big picture just doesn’t look right.

* **Prevenient Grace – predetermined problem solver**
	+ Only God can do good works and only humans can do evil works

They accepted that people were totally depraved, totally lost without God. They understood that God’s grace had to enable faith in us. What they didn’t think the Bible taught though was that God had predetermined who would believe. The accepted that Only God can do good works and humans do evil works just as Calvin taught, but they felt that the theme of scripture was that God enabled in humans to act on the free will they had been given to choose to follow him or not, that it wasn’t a matter of being predestined to faith or hell.

* **Grace that GOES BEFORE you: Prevenient Grace**

To take this back to my story of our hike on the Appalachian trail, prevenient grace says they don’t have to stay lost, that God is searching for us even when we don’t know we are lost. Prevenient Grace shows up in the trail markers that point out the path, and prevenient grace reveals itself when dads and youth pastors go out looking for kids who missed the turn. The thought that some kids just get lost never crossed our minds. And I believe scripture teaches that doesn’t cross God’s either.

* + **1 Timothy 2:3–4 “**wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.
	+ **2 Peter 3:9 “**wants everyone to repent.
	+ **Romans 5:6–8** Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.
	+ **1 John 4:19 (NLT) — 19** we love each other because he loved us first.

These are proofs in scripture that God is at work before we love him. He offers his grace that enables us to choose him…or to reject him. He shows us the right trail back to camp, and we can take it or ignore it and walk on by. But for the first time, we have a choice.

* **Grace that CHANGES you: Prevenient Grace**

That’s how prevenient grace changes you; changes me. It activates our freedom to choose. It presents us with a choice for the first time in our lives because he allows us to see our sin. He allows us to see that we are lost. We were all lost and didn’t know it at one time. We weren’t born a Christian, a Christ follower, no we became one because Jesus and prevenient grace makes the blind to see.

* + **The blind see**
		- **John 1:9 & 17** the one … who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.
		- **Romans 1:18–20 “**he has made it obvious to them.

But that’s not the end of how prevenient grace changes you. If you are a Christian today, if you hear my voice, prevenient grace works through you. That’s right, as you love your neighbor, as you love your unsaved spouse, as you allow the saving work of Christ flow through you, people actually see Jesus. And as people see Jesus in you, they experience prevenient grace.

* + **The found find**
		- **John 16:8** he will convict

Prevenient grace prayer

Pray for those who are hearing god’s invitation

Pray for those who are struggling against Gods invitation

Pray for those who have responded to his invitation that they would be empowered to be his grace

OFFERING

Can I ask the offering stewards to come forward now, and bring the Manna Basket with them to the front of the church. Let’s open God’s Word and allow the Holy Spirit to teach us on the topic of:

Jesus uses whatever we give him.

[Matthew 14:19-21](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Matthew-14.asp?passage=Matthew%2014%3A19-21&ScrptureHover=sermon-109601-)

19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.
20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.
21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus multiplied five loaves and two fish to feed over 5,000 people. What he was originally given seemed insufficient, but in his hands it became more than enough.

We often feel that our contribution to Jesus is meager, but he can use and multiply whatever we give him, whether it is talent, time, or treasure.

It is when we give them to Jesus that our resources are multiplied.

Let’s pray!