

Weekly Grace — (compiled by your Chaplain)

Kept

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This is for the one who is feeling wobbly today.

Perhaps you have been flattened: cast aside by another, gossiped about, slandered while doing good.

Maybe your heart is tired and sore, and life feels like an uphill slog, all cold, dreary rain minus golden sunbeams.

Perchance you are the one who has caused much pain, and your cruelty or selfishness seem irreparable.

Our Heavenly Father, who spoke the universe into existence, making the sun to ascend in the east and dip low against the western skyline, creating the buttery moon to glow in the pitch of night, and setting the stars to twinkle – thereby gifting humanity a gentler light to sleep – summons every person ever born to revel in the beauty of his creation.

God has graciously gifted us with five senses, inviting us to inhale the scent of a wood-burning stove or freshly cut grass, to hear the crackle of snapping twigs and the chirp of the crickets, to observe the birds flit from branch to branch or watch the breathtaking sunset, to taste fresh berries of summer or the icy cold snowflakes falling upon our lips. We feel the comforting warmth of the fireplace and the goodness of soft beach sand beneath our feet.

Dear, simple pleasures.

Such remarkable gifts of common grace are meant for princes and paupers and peasants alike. A gift for all mankind.

Aren't you grateful?

I remember during my illness with Covid, feeling such sorrow over my loss of taste and smell. Especially smell. I missed the scent of the diffuser, the delicious odor of a burnt vanilla candle, and my daily spritz of perfume. Life felt less vibrant; dull. It made me realize how thankless I had been my entire life.

Now, with my senses long restored, I no longer take such things for granted. God is kind to grant us such daily pleasures, isn't he?

Yet there is a far greater, extravagant invitation from God to mankind, for those souls whom he chooses to draw to himself. (John 6:44)

The God of all creation desires a relationship with his little bleating sheep, those who know his voice. (John 10:27) Isn't it shocking? God loved us so much that he willed his Son to suffer humiliation, torture, and an agonizing crucifixion in order that we might be presented faultless before him, dwelling with him forever in heaven.

God whispers to his own until we turn to him and answer Yes! running in joy to our Master.

The Great Love story means that as devoted followers of Jesus Christ, we are now his beloved, called and kept. (Jude 1:1)

Kept.

I love this word.

Kept is language exploding with strength.

We are spoken for.

Held.

Preserved.

Never to be snatched from his hand.

Weary, discouraged one? Christ is our only hope and confidence in times of want and in times of plenty.

Return in repentance when you disobey him. Rest in him when you are wronged. Thank him when the sun is shining and life is breezy.

Pray when you are sad and when you are frustrated and when you are happy. For the believer in Christ, better days are coming, a perfect future without end. God keeps both his promises and his children, forever.

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. (John 6:37)