

There's a phrase I often hear people say:  
"Everything happens for a reason."

I know what they mean, and sometimes that can be comforting. But sometimes—if I'm honest—it feels far too tidy. Because grace... isn't always tidy. It's beautiful, yes. But it can also be deeply unsettling.

Have you ever had your plans upended? Maybe you were so sure of what you were doing... and then something happened that made you stop, re-evaluate, and rethink everything. It's not always comfortable—but sometimes that's how grace works.

The grace of God doesn't always arrive like a warm hug. Sometimes it arrives like a lightning bolt—like a blinding light on a road to Damascus or a stranger shouting from the shore after a long, fruitless night of fishing.

In our bible readings this morning there are two men, there are two stories of how Jesus impacted their lives. And there is one connecting theme – grace.

Let's start with Saul. He's a man with confidence, purpose, certainty. He knows what's right and what needs to be done. He's on a mission. He's confident. Zealous. Certain he is doing God's work. And in that certainty, he breathes threats, hunts down early Christians, and calls it holy work.

Then—grace interrupts.

A light. A voice. A question:

“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

Notice that Jesus doesn't say, “Why are you persecuting my followers?”

He says, “Why are you persecuting me?”

It's personal. It's relational. And it stops Saul in his tracks—literally.

He falls to the ground. And everything he thought he knew is suddenly thrown into question.

The world around him becomes disoriented. He can no longer see the way ahead—literally or figuratively. He's led by the hand into Damascus. Dependent. Vulnerable. Quiet.

Sometimes grace begins with unlearning. With being slowed down. With losing our grip on control. That's not punishment. That's God making space for something new.

Grace does that sometimes. It doesn't just heal. It undoes.

Now turn to Peter. He's had his own failure. Denied Jesus. Watched him die. Now, unsure of what to do, he goes back to what he knows: fishing- back to the familiar, the safe.

But grace isn't content to leave Peter in resignation. Jesus meets him there.

Jesus meets him there.

Not with rebuke.

Not with a lecture.

With breakfast - and gently disrupts him again.

“Do you love me?”

“Do you love me?”

“Do you love me?”

Three times. One for each denial.

Grace is restoring Peter—but it's not restoring him to comfort. It's restoring him to calling.

It's commission.

“Feed my sheep.”

“Follow me.”

Not “start over and try harder.”

Not “go and make up for what you did.”

Just: follow me. From here.

Grace restores Peter, but it doesn't restore him to comfort. It restores him to costly, courageous love.

We like to think of grace as the gentle voice, the kind word, the fresh start—and yes, it is all of those things. But it is also disruptive.

Grace is not always soft. Sometimes it unsettles. Sometimes it slows us down.

Sometimes it invites us to leave what we know behind—our certainties, our coping mechanisms, our pride—and start again.

It is the voice that challenges our assumptions.

The moment that upends our plans.

The encounter that demands we see things differently. The call to go where we'd rather not go, and love those we'd rather not love.

But grace is always rooted in love. Not shame.

Jesus doesn't come to Saul or Peter to condemn them. Jesus comes to change them. To offer them a different path.

I think of a woman I met a few years ago when I was a volunteer Street Pastor, she was certain she wanted to avoid people experiencing homelessness. “It’s too overwhelming,” she said. “I don’t have anything to offer.”

But then one day, she was sat on a bench and a homeless man came and sat on the same bench with her. He took out a sandwich someone had given him and offered her part half of it.

He didn't ask for anything.

He offered her something.

That moment unravelled her narrative.

It disrupted her assumptions.

And it began a journey that eventually led her to volunteer with a night shelter—and later, to advocate for housing justice.

Grace had met her not with comfort, but with disruption.

*How does this disruptive grace reveal itself in us?*

Maybe you're someone who likes to know where you're going. Maybe you like certainty. So did Saul. The world often values control, certainty, and staying in our lane. But grace invites us to be willing to be changed.

Or maybe you've been stuck in a cycle of regret.

Maybe you've messed up and feel like going back to what's familiar. So did Peter.

But the good news is—grace meets us there.

Not to scold us, but to reroute us.  
To call us again, saying: “Follow me.”

Grace disrupts our lives, calling us  
To be surprised.  
To admit we don’t have it all together.  
To follow Jesus even when it means letting go of  
what we thought our lives were supposed to look  
like.

*So what about us?*  
Are we open to God interrupting us?  
Are we willing to hear Jesus’ voice saying,  
“Why are you doing what you’re doing?”  
“Do you love me?”  
“Will you follow me—even there?”

And so today, as we gather around this table, we do  
so as people who are still being shaped.  
People who sometimes get it wrong.  
People who sometimes need a holy interruption.

And here, in bread and wine, Jesus meets us.  
Not to shame us, but to feed us.  
Not to condemn us, but to call us.  
Not to comfort us into staying the same—but to  
nourish us for the journey of becoming.

God's grace is astonishing.  
Not because it makes life easier—but because it  
changes us.  
And sometimes, that change begins not with  
certainty—but with a question.  
Not with comfort—but with a call.

So may we be open to the disruptive grace of God—  
Grace that unsettles and heals.  
Grace that calls and transforms.  
Grace that says again and again:  
“Do you love me? Then follow me.”  
So that we can be remade by the One who loves us  
enough to interrupt our lives for the sake of love,  
truth, and transformation.  
Amen.