

**Great Grace (not Slick)**  
July 13, 2025 Abbey Church Abraham

Sometimes small words can add a lot to whatever is being said. Our scripture readings today (7/13) have talked about: obeying God so that our lives may be blessed (that's from Moses), and about patiently living lives of hope so that we bear good fruit (that's from Paul), and about the fact that strangers are really our neighbors who deserve our care (that's from Jesus.)

But maybe the most important word that holds the whole thing together is from Paul's introduction to his letter to Colossae that we just heard: "Grace" – "Grace to you and peace from God our Father." Everything is a gift, graciously given to us by God. God gives us the world and the people in it, and if we treat our world and our neighbors as wonderful gifts, then we will all have abundant lives. If we choose rather to exploit our world and the people around us as commodities we have earned and can therefore abuse, then we will all have horrible lives – ourselves, the people around us, and the entire world.

If we don't see everything as a gift from a gracious God, then we live in fear, because we mistakenly think that we need to push other people down so that we can steal their stuff in order to have what we need. But all the while, God is desperately trying to freely give us everything, including eternal life. We can't accept it if our hands are made into fists, instead of being stretched out with our palms up in order to receive everything from God.

"Grace" – "Grace to us and peace from God our Father." It is scary to open up and receive. It is scary because we have all been hurt by others, and we have all hurt ourselves and others. So, we shouldn't feel bad about ourselves when we are too afraid to open up and receive. At some point, we will. God can wait an eternity if needed. God's grace is eternal, and brings healing, joy, and peace to all. AMEN