“Grace and Peace” by Sovereign Grace Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtaqWblzERE>

“Sooner or Later” by Le’Andria Johnson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoFVLTcRqKM>

“Struggle Not” by Le’Andria Johnson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8s7wLLQbKg0>

Martin Luther King, Jr. Christmas Sermon, 1967

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jeyIAH3bUI>

“Light of the World” with Lauren Daigle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cLhaZIBSpo>

“Light of the World” with the African Child’s Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHSDrQihDjw>

“Oh Happy Day” with the South African Youth Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AheC9ul5w1A>

“Who Would Imagine a King” with Whitney Houston

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZuvIaqw3tg>

“Someday at Christmas” with Stevie Wonder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZ1-duv_zNk>

“Joy to the World” with Whitney Houston

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXvSfbT-t3g>

(movie version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bukaA1szoMQ>

(CD version)

**The Grace and Peace of This Christmas**

***Luke 1, Ephesians 2:13-1, Hebrews 13:21***

 Merry Christmas! May we thoroughly enjoy the Grace and Peace of God through the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

 If we had a lot of time, I would show you how the beginning of every New Testament Letter from Romans to Revelations sends some type of Grace and Peace to its readers. But part of the point is that we don’t have a lot of time.

 May we take advantage of the Grace in front of us right now. We may have worshipped God for a long time like the priest Zacharias. But when Gabriel gave Zacharias the prophecy that Zacharias would have a son who would bring Zacharias *joy and gladness,* and others great rejoicing, Zacharias would not believe Gabriel. *Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years, Luke 1:18.*

 I don’t care how disabled and disqualified we feel about the Grace that God has put in front of us. God’s Grace gives us strength to accomplish the impossible.

 In fact, I believe that our disabilities qualify us to exemplify God’s Grace. When the angel Gabriel took Zacharias’ speech away because Zacharias would not believe God, God used Zacharias’ inability to speak to give Zacharias another opportunity to believe in God’s Grace.

Gabriel told Zacharias to name his son “John”. John or Johanan means “God has shown grace and favor.” Zacharias was sitting on the side when people in Zacharias’ and Elizabeth’s family wanted to call their new baby by the names that their families had always used. But in the midst of Zacharias’ inability to speak, Zacharias latched onto the belief that God favored and graced him no matter what was going on. So I can imagine the joy of Zacharias and his friends as he insisted over and over again “John! John! John! God favors me! God favors me! God favors me!” when Zacharias was at his worst. For it was as Zacharias wrote the name of John for the baby that Zacharias mouth *was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God, Luke 1:64.*

Indeed, our disabilities and weaknesses may qualify us for awesome Grace this Christmas.

 There is also Peace for this Christmas season. Zacharias declared that Jesus came as the *dayspring* (or new day) *to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace, Luke 1:79.*

Because very few of us have experienced peace, very few of us seek the opportunities for peace in front of us. Peace means that the wars and struggles are over. It is a new day and everything that was horrible is left behind or dealt with anew.

And the peace that Jesus offers is the Peace that Jesus made with God when Jesus brought all of our wars and struggles to God on the cross. *13 [N]ow in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh, Ephesians 2:13-17.*

Jesus is preaching Peace to us this Christmas – to those of us who feel far from God and to those of us who think we are already close to God. There is Peace for how we have disappointed God, and there is Peace for how we feel that God has disappointed us. Real Peace. A new day comes and fulfillment of the promises that God will make us *perfect in every good work to do [God’s] will* also comes, *Hebrews 13:21.*

 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come…Revelations 1:4.* Have an awesome time celebrating. Have an awesome time healing. Have an awesome Christmas!

 Tobias Pinckney, PTWU, 2015

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