Ka Mōhai Aloha
The Gift of Grace or the Gracious Sacrifice

Key Bible Verses
Luka 23:34 – A laila ʻōlelo akula ʻo ʻesū, E ka Makua, e kala iho ʻoe i ko lákou nei hewa; no ka mea, ʻaʻole o lákou ʻike i kā lákou mea e hana nei. Puʻunaue aʻela lákou i kona mau kapa, hailona ihola.

Luke 23:34- Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Luka 23:42-42 – ʻŌlelo akula hoʻi ʻo ia iā lesū, E hoʻomanaʻo mai ʻoe iaʻu, e ka Haku, i ka wā e hiki ai ʻoe i kou aupuni. ʻĪ maila hoʻi ʻo lesū iā ia, He ʻoiʻiʻo kaʻu e ʻōlelo aku nei iā ʻoe, I kēia lā ʻo ʻoe pū kekahi me aʻu i loko o ka paradaiso.

Luke 23:42-43- Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Manaʻo / Thoughts
By Kaleo Pahukula, Interim Poʻo Kula, Kamehameha Schools Maui

Easter is all about unconditional love and particularly grace; that unmerited favor that is extended to us by God through His Son Jesus Christ. Though we are sinners, Jesus paid for our sins by his death on the cross. The Gospel of Luke describes how even in extreme pain and dire circumstances, Jesus extended grace to the Roman soldiers who were crucifying and mocking Him, when he pleads, “…Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing…”
Later, one of the criminals hanging next to Him comes to the realization that Jesus is the Messiah, and asks for forgiveness by saying, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” Jesus took the burden of our sins in his sacrificial death on the cross.

Horatio Spafford wrote of this act in the song, “It Is Well With My Soul.” Spafford, a highly successful lawyer in Chicago, must have felt like Job after the death of his son, loss of all of his real estate investments in the Great Chicago fire and later the tragic deaths of his three daughters when their ship sank on its way to Europe. Fortunately his wife survived that horrific accident. He penned these words as he made his way to her.

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought!  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

I trust that I am not alone when I say that my actions, at times, were and are less than perfect, sinful in nature, and perhaps comparable to those of the Roman soldiers or the other criminal on the third cross.

It is this chapter in Luke and these verses in particular that allow me to feel God’s unconditional love which grants me grace and mercy, and gives me salvation through my faith. These verses had a real impact on my life, especially on my work as an educator. My walk with God got stronger as a middle school assistant principal when I realized that I needed help from a higher power because the daily grind of discipline was wearing and lingered over me like a negative overcast cloud.

So after looking at our suspension and expulsion data after my first year, it became obvious that there were gaps in our discipline policies and practices, and that I and our school needed a new outlook on discipline. These two verses were the catalyst for my new outlook, including having a more intentional focus to build positive relationships with my worse-behaving students and learning to be their advocate.

I realized that in my imperfect ways as a child, many adults had extended grace to me while I was a student at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, and that I needed to extend that same grace to my students. For like me, many were still learning, developing their identities and testing their boundaries, so they may not have known what they were doing nor had they developed the complete self-control to make the best choices 100 percent of the time.
As I do my job of handing out consequences to undisciplined students, I try to serve as their advocate, because in some cases I am their last school advocate before expulsion. I really try to understand why the students behaved as such, and try to clearly identify their needs so we can help them through a tough situation or address a behavioral deficit.

This new perspective all started with understanding God’s amazing grace for us and how I can extend that grace to others as a parent, and especially as an educator to our keiki who need it the most.

Our Hawaiian cultural values also call us to keep our children close and not cast them aside because of who they are at this moment in their lives. Let us be encouraged by this ʻōlelo noʻeau:

Ka ʻike a ka makua, he hei na ke keiki. - The knowledge of the parent is (unconsciously) absorbed by the child.

Be Christ-like. If in the most dire of situations, He can extend grace, then we, as parents, educators and adults who have a love for our keiki can as well. Let’s find ways to guide and teach our children in the right ways so that they will learn and be able to pass that blessing along to others.

In this Lenten season, I hope you are able to feel God’s amazing grace, forgiveness, and unconditional love, and that you can pass that along to those you interact with on a daily basis.

**Teen Take**
*By Rachel Hillen, KSM ‘16*

Grace is an amazing thing that Christ has given to everyone. It’s a second chance times a million. In times of pushing myself and trying to add things to my schedule, I forget to add the most important thing, God. But His grace forgives me for my failings. Yet we take advantage of grace and the cry, for it is often used too leniently, expecting that second chance because you know God will give it to you.

I have a hard time with this though I don’t want to admit it. I struggle with even adding in a prayer in the morning. I have received grace from not only God but from teachers, parents, coaches, and even friends. True grace, the free and unmerited favor of God, is manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings. I thank God for that, as it means that I will be forgiven for my sins as I truly confess them.
I’d like to end with one of my favorite Bible verses:

2 Corinthians 12:8-9 – Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

2 Korineto 12:8-9 – No ia mea, ‘ekolu a’u noi ‘ana aku i ka Haku, i ha’alele mai ia mea ia’u. Ī maila kēlā ia’u, Ua lawa ku’u lokomaika’i nou: no ka mea, ma ka nāwaliwali ka ho‘omaopopo ‘ana o ko‘u mana. No ia ho‘i, e kaena aku au me ka ‘olu’olu i ku’u nāwaliwali, i kau mai ai ka mana o Kristo ma luna iho o’u.

God gives us grace to help us become more like Him and to show that his love for us is great.

Questions to Ponder

- When have you been extended grace by someone? How did it make you feel?
- When did you extend grace to someone else? How hard was it?
- What are those things that hinder you from being forgiving?

Pule / Prayer

O God of grace and mercy, we thank you that you are loving and forgiving. We know your mercy goes beyond what we deserve, yet you so willingly gave up your Son as a sign of the depth of your love. May we never take that for granted and strive to live as thankful people. Mahalo Ke Akua, Āmene.

Keiki Activity

Reflect on the question: “How can you forgive someone when they have done something really bad to you?” Our fourth graders were asked this question. Here are some of their responses:

“If somebody said or did something mean or bad to me I would pray for them”
– Haylee and Ronin

“Ask God to forgive them and ask God to help YOU forgive them also.”
– Ava

“You can do something good to them and maybe you'll work it out.”
– Kealoha
Hīmeni / Hymn

"Maika‘i Nō I loko O‘u / It is Well with My Soul"

A kau ma kuʻu ala ka lama laʻilaʻi, A kau hoʻi ka pouli pō,
Ua aʻo mai ka Haku e ʻae ʻolu aʻe, Maika‘i nō, maikaʻi nō i loko oʻu.

Hui:
Maikaʻi nō (Maikaʻi nō) Maikaʻi nō (Maikaʻi nō)
Maikaʻi nō, maikaʻi nō i loko oʻu.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:
It is well (It is well) with my soul, (with my soul)
It is well, it is well with my soul.