

By Deb Burma

In [Christ] we have ... the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us (Ephesians 1: 7-8).

Expecting guests, I planned to create a special dessert of unparalleled quality: a rich, extravagant chocolate three-layer cake. The homemade batter rose beautifully in my round layer cake pans as it baked, filling the house with a warm chocolaty aroma.

Eager to complete my sumptuous layered dessert, I began to frost and stack the rounded cakes as soon as they were cool. What this novice baker didn't realize was the need to shave the mounded center of each baked layer before stacking them.

My work was almost complete when the top two layers — balanced carefully over the mound beneath them — split entirely in half, oozing frosting-filled crumbs and large chunks of cake down the sides of the cake plate and onto the table. What a mess!

After disassembling each gooey layer and shaving the rounded tops off (they were delicious, by the way), I pieced my catastrophe back together, not wanting to waste the cake and having no extra time to start over. Making extra loads of frosting, I slathered it on heavily, layer upon layer, over my messed-up, broken cake. And somehow all the flaws appeared to vanish under the grace-filled cover of rich, fudgy frosting.

God's rich, extravagant grace covers all my mess-ups, failures, and flaws — just like that thick, fudgy frosting, which so perfectly concealed and healed my messed-up flop-of-a-cake. When we fail, when we make mistakes, when we crumble under the weight of our sin, our heavenly Father



Chocolate-

lavishes
His thick,
indulgent grace upon
us — covering our sins and forgiving us
through Christ's atonement on the cross.

Maybe your failures, your mistakes, and your mess-ups seem so much worse than this. Do you wonder how God can forgive the crumbling mess you've made? Remember this: no sin ... no mess ... is too much for our Lord to clean up.

Although I was able to create a chocolate covering that filled and healed and covered



Crosted Grace

broken; we are healed. The prophet Isaiah foretold: *But [Christ] was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed* (Isaiah 53:5).

Your selfish desires, your pride, your hurtful words, your lack of forgiveness, your sour disposition, your critical spirit, your laziness, your failure to serve or to reach out to others with His love — He covers your messes with His perfection, making you brand new and mess-free!

Looking back, if I had had the time to start over, I might have thrown out the mess of a cake I had made, especially after it had split in two and slid down the sides of the plate.

In our world, when things are messed up, we often dispose of them, don't we? His Word reveals to us that God thinks and behaves differently. He found us to be worth salvaging, "fixing," reworking; He kept His promise to send us a Savior. (Genesis 3:15)

What broken mess do you find yourself in today? Lay it at the foot of the cross, knowing God lavishes His rich grace upon you in Christ, who heals your brokenness.

That is the grace we savor.

Prayer: God of all mercy and grace, thank You for Your extravagant gift of grace You have lavished on us, forgiving our sins in Christ and healing our broken mess. In Jesus' name. Amen.

my chocolate mess, none of us can "fix" our sins. Only by the Holy Spirit's leading can we, with repentant hearts, acknowledge and confess sins before the Lord, laying them at the foot of the cross. Christ's blood shed for you covers those sins; our heavenly Father declares our sins forgiven!

More than a thick slathering of fudge that effectively conceals the mess we have made, His blood makes us whole where we were once

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