

Simply One Page-Holding Our Breath

This piece was created from my own reflections and vision. I used ChatGPT as a tool to help shape the text from my original concepts and structure. The final form is the result of thoughtful revision motivated by my one page intent. Mike Haddorff 2629

Oxygen is everywhere around us.

It fills the room as you read these words. It moves quietly through forests, cities, hospitals, kitchens, mountains, and alleyways. We rarely think about it because it is constant. Present. Available.

And yet, despite being surrounded by oxygen, a person can still refuse to breathe.

Our bodies normally participate automatically, but we can resist it for a time. We can hold our breath. Oxygen remains objectively present, but we are no longer participating in what is already there.

I sometimes wonder if grace is more like oxygen than we realize.

We often speak about grace as though it comes and goes. We imagine moments where God finally decides to give grace, release grace, or activate grace. But what if grace is not occasional at all? What if grace is continuous? What if grace is woven into reality itself through Christ?

Not absent one moment and present the next. Present all along.

The deeper question may not be whether grace exists, but whether we are participating in it.

And participation is complicated because we cling tightly to the stories and constructs that seem to keep life working for us. Control. Image. Achievement. Fear. Self-protection. Certainty. We trust these things because, for a while, they appear to work.

Until they don't.

Sometimes love loosens our grip. Sometimes joy does. Sometimes peace, kindness, or unexpected compassion breaks through our defenses. Sometimes loss opens the door. Sometimes pain exposes the limits of the stories we have trusted.

But none of those automatically awaken us. Love can soften us, but it can also be resisted. Pain can open us, but it can also harden us. Two people can walk through the same experience and respond in completely different ways.

Something inside us must begin to see that our way of holding life together is no longer giving us life.

And when that begins to happen, grace is discovered not as something newly created, but as something that was already there waiting for us.

Like oxygen.

Perhaps Jesus spoke so often about letting go because something new can only be received by open hands.

Maybe grace is not rare at all. Maybe, all along, we've been simply holding our breath.