

There she was—excited, friendly, and just a little bit apprehensive. “That strange lady looks nice enough and seems interested in me, but I’m really not sure about this. Still, I love everybody. I’ll wag my tail, lick her face, and hope for the best. I look so much like my sister though, I hope she remembers me. I’m the attentive one with the single white toe on each of my left feet. Oh good, the man that’s with her noticed.”

“Wait! I’ve never left my pen before. First they took me from Mommy and now this. What’s this black can we’re getting into? It’s moving. Where am I going? Will I ever see my brother and sister again? Where will I find food and water? What will these people do with me? It’s all a bit frightening and very confusing for a ten-week old puppy.”

As we made that hour-long country drive home that fateful September day, Betsy consoled her sweet little doggie on a towel in her lap. What would we name her? Will we keep her or return her in a week? How can we possibly manage caring for a puppy while living on the third floor of an apartment?

During the ride, we considered names. We couldn’t call her Granddaddy because she’s a girl and just a puppy. She looked so pretty with her shiny black velvet coat. She deserved a pretty name. With an English last name, it would be nice to have something regal. Her dad was sleek and graceful and her mom so sweet and gentle. What about Grace? It even starts like *Granddaddy*. “Let’s name her Princess Grace,” we said.

We stopped at the store and bought some food, a leash, a collar, and a toy. We brought her home and set up a makeshift bed for her in a bathroom. The rest is history. At just five months old, Grace has turned out to be an exceptional pet. Despite the challenging living conditions, Grace house-trained almost instantly. She sleeps through the night and responds to about ten commands. Being a puppy and half Border Collie, Grace certainly is very energetic, which keeps us occupied for much of the day.

There’s something else about her name that we like. *Grace* means *unmerited favor*. We rescued her from a small open-air pen with over a dozen puppies—most much older and larger than she—chaotically running around. Grace had to fend for herself, brave the elements, and deal with an infestation of mosquitoes. While she seemed healthy and content enough, with summer ending, a cold, cruel world loomed just around the corner.

God saw man in his hopeless condition. As a great gift of love and mercy, He sent His Son, our Saviour, into the world to redeem him. That’s the joyous message of Christmas. What a sweet reminder of our God’s great Gift of Grace we experience each time we speak our new friend’s name.

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (Ephesians 2:7-8)

Merry Christmas!
Ron and Betsy