



THE GOD WHO IS GRACIOUS

Exodus 34:6-7 |

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RELATED SCRIPTURES

Titus 2:11-13; 3:4-7 | Isaiah 59:2 | Matthew 26:69-75 | Hebrews 4:14-16

SUMMARY

Talk of grace is commonplace in churches. It is the lynchpin of Christian belief. If divine grace is a fiction, then we've been foolishly wasting our Sunday mornings. That, at least, seems to be what the Apostle Paul was getting at in 1 Corinthians 15:19, because this pardoning grace is at the heart of the promise of resurrection into the undying lands of the new creation. The sermon this week reminded us that grace is what has saved us, and then some! **Grace is where the ABCs of faith start.**

But words can lose their edge, if only in our own minds and hearts, and so *it is crucial that this word in particular is kept from becoming one to which we pay lip service without any real experience of it in our lives.*

In his keen-sighted theological lexicon entitled *Wishful Thinking*, Frederick Buechner describes grace this way,

*"Grace is something you can never get but only be given. **There's no way to earn it or deserve it or bring it about any more than you can deserve the taste of raspberries and cream or earn good looks or bring about your own birth...***

A crucial eccentricity of the Christian faith is the assertion that people are saved by grace. There's nothing you have to do. There's nothing you have to do. There's nothing you have to do.

The grace of God means something like: *Here is your life. You might never have been, but you are because the party wouldn't have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. Nothing can ever separate us. It's for you I created the universe. I love you.*

There's only one catch. Like any other gift, the gift of grace can be yours only if you'll reach out and take it.

Maybe being able to reach out and take it is a gift too."

In my observation, there is no concept in the Christian faith which seems more prone to being misinterpreted than grace. Give a man a fish and that's grace. Give a man a fishing pole and that too is grace, but he is by nature disposed to spend the remainder of his days proclaiming himself a self-made fisherman. The Christian faith counters our self (deluded) orientation by reminding us that in the economy of grace: We are beggars all. Spiritually impoverished, yes, but dearly loved by God in Christ who has given us all the grace we can handle.

GROUP QUESTIONS

- In Exodus 34:6-7 God reveals to Moses exactly who he is and what he is like. What do you think that would have been like for Moses after years of talking with God “as a man talks with his friend” (Exodus 33:11)? What do you think Moses discovered about God’s grace that day?
- From the sermon, or your direct reading of Titus 2:11-3:7 (read aloud if you haven’t already), share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you about God’s grace.
- What is it about the reality of grace that is so difficult for us to live within? **How does Titus 2:11-13; 3:4-7 help to reshape us around God’s grace?** Why do you suppose God included growing in grace (sanctification) as part of his redemption of us?
- If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of these portions of Scripture, what is that thing?