

THE GOSPEL

GOD'S GREAT RESCUE



WEEK 5: THE GOOD NEWS

In wrapping up the gospel series, we look at the uniquely distinct Christian doctrine of grace. Grace saves us but it also continues to the process of transformation. It is not something that we get once and never have to rely on again. It is a gift we receive and then continue to rely on for the rest of our lives.

1. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE

- Read Titus 3:4-8

So many of us Christians believe in the law of karma (even though we claim that we don't). We functionally believe that what we do will bring about the rewards or punishments that we deserve. Though we have accepted our need for forgiveness of sin, we still assume God will treat us in the way we deserve. This marks 2 incorrect beliefs: firstly, that everyone who is going through something horrendous ultimately deserved it, and that those who are doing well in life with few problems, must be doing something 'right' by God. Secondly, it assumes that we can actually climb our way out of sin and avoid God's judgment, and that we can climb our way up to God and earn his favour. All of this thinking places us in control of our own "fate".

This passage of scripture, and many others, flatten the idea of Karma, and remind us that God reached out and saved us, because of his mercy and not because of anything we could offer. When this sinks in to our hearts, the only real response is for us to live our lives to honour and obey God.

- ❖ Q: Why do you think we so often live as though karma were true?
- ❖ Q: What is grace?
- ❖ Q: Why is the idea of grace so difficult for us to absorb at a heart-level and find rest in?
- ❖ Q: Why is our obedience to God a response to his grace?

2. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT CHANGE IS FUELLED BY GRACE

- Read Titus 2:11-12

We have wrongly taught and believed that grace was needed to save us but, from that point on, we had to obey our way out of our sinful tendencies. As a result, most of the church at large has become a group of people desperately trying to keep up with appearances, while knowing that in their daily lives they are no different from their unbelieving friends. It has caused us to hide the truth and to live lives of quiet desperation, while thinking that all the 'actors' around us have truly changed.

Scripture teaches us that the very grace that saved us, and called us out of darkness into the kingdom of the Son, is the very same grace that keeps us, changes and transforms us throughout our lives. We need the same grace every single day of our lives. We never graduate from needing God's grace. God's grace trains us to live differently. This impacts 2 areas of our lives significantly when we "get it".

1. Our identity – how we think about ourselves determines how we behave. Many of us still behave as though we were still slaves to sin, and have no power to overcome it. But scripture tells us that in Christ, we are new creations and dead to sin.

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2. Our hearts – what we say and what we do, is a direct result of what is going on in our hearts. Some of us tend to be more self-restrained than others and so appear godlier, but very often it is just better behaviour management. We have become experts at that in the church. And yet, behind closed doors, who we are with our closest family and who we are when we are alone, or in the traffic, reveals the true nature of what is going on in our hearts.

Hearts that are changed by grace worship God, and worshipping God continues to change our hearts.

- ❖ Q: Do you rely on God's grace to change your sin, unbelief or general heart issues or do you try and tackle them by yourself?
- ❖ Q: How sustainable is behaviour modification?
- ❖ Q: What is the difference between behaviour modification and heart-transformation?
- ❖ Q: Why is our identity deeply affected when we begin to understand God's grace at a heart-level?
- ❖ Q: Why do we continually need God's grace in our lives?

Personal Reflection Q's: Take a moment to think about:

- ❖ *An area of your life that God has transformed by his grace... that you know was not just an act of the will?*
- ❖ *An area in your life that you have tried to "fix" on your own but eventually failed (even if you had some measure of success along the way).*

3. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WE ARE OFFERED GOD'S SPIRIT BY GRACE

- Read John 14:26 & Ephesians 5:18

God has not just left us to figure it out on our own. He has given us the Holy Spirit to be a counsellor and to guide us into all truth. He has been gifted to each one of us, and he is the one that brings about the change in us. All we need to do is ask God to fill us again and again, and he has promised that he will do so.

4. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WE ARE GIVEN A PURPOSE BY GRACE

- Read Ephesians 2:10 & Matthew 28:18-20

God's grace not only changes us but it also propels us forward into the good works that he has already planned for us to do. God has commissioned and empowered us by his Spirit, to take his message to others.

- ❖ Q: Why is it so important for us to know that the Spirit has been gifted to us?
- ❖ Q: How much do you personally rely on the Holy Spirit to deal with sin, struggles and issues?
- ❖ Q: How often do you ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and why?
- ❖ Q: How does the Holy Spirit empower us to take the gospel to others? Have you experienced this in some way in your life? Explain.