

Why Grace Matters

5/21/2017

Why God's grace matters to us- Eph. 2:1-9

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins
in which you once walked,
- following the course of this world,
- following the prince of the power of the air,
the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh,
carrying out the desires of the body and the mind,
and were by nature children of wrath,
like the rest of mankind.

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy,
because of the great love with which he loved us,
⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses,
made us alive together with Christ—
—by grace you have been saved—

⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him
in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show
the immeasurable riches of his grace
in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith.
And this is not your own doing;
it is the gift of God, not a result of works,
so that no one may boast.

Grace matters.

Grace has gotten abused lately, which is a real shame,
because there are few things more precious than grace.

**Two things happen when you talk about grace.
Both are the result of abuses by the other extreme.**

**Either grace becomes an excuse for any and all misbehavior-
“It’s OK, I’m saved by grace,”
Or people, when they hear the word grace, say “Yes but.”**

**The Judaizing legalists of the 1st Century,
to Paul’s teaching about the incredible
power and beauty of God’s grace, said “Yes but.”
And the legalists of the 21st Century
who worry about people abusing grace say
“Yes but” today.**

**And we need to say... “Amazing grace.”
Period. Next paragraph.**

**And people who abuse grace...
don’t really understand grace,
(We talked about that in a previous sermon.)**

**Two Scriptures to help us
wrap our minds around the two sides of grace.**

The first is where we started, in Ephesians 2.

It’s all about the grace that God extended to us.

**We were dead, because that is what sin does to us;
It kills the person that we were created to be, fully alive,
walking in step with God, like we talked about last week,
reveling in the freedom that comes from
being the person we were created to be.**

We start living a lie, our options become limited,
we become numb, closed, defensive.

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⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show
the immeasurable riches of his grace
in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Grace- kindness that we didn't deserve,
mercy we could never earn.
God loved us and made us alive... just because.

Just because.

Have you ever done something... just because?
Something good, something kind, something sweet...

You didn't have to, the other person didn't expect you to,
You just did it... because it was the right thing to do.

Facebook is full of people who “paid it forward”-

1. Meals
2. College tuition
3. Someone's medical bills or mortgage... just because.

Well, Jesus is the ultimate “just because.”

And Paul uses 2 awesome phrases-
 “the incomparable riches of his grace,
expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

Nothing can compare to that kind of love... nothing.
 (That’s what incomparable means, right?)

And that grace wasn’t just talk-
 It expressed itself in action,
 in Jesus going to the cross for our sins.
 Oh, and by the way,
 the resurrection validated all of that,
 and gave us not just forgiveness, but new life,
 both now and in the age to come.
That’s kind of important, true?

It just doesn’t get any better than that...

But there’s our response to grace that very much matters...
 to God, the giver of that incomparable grace.

...which takes us to our next passage,
 and to the other side of any balanced conversation
 about grace.

Why we need to extend grace to each other-

Matt. 18:21-34

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him,
 “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me,
 and I forgive him? As many as seven times?”

²² Jesus said to him,
 “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

- 23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared
to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.**
- 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him
who owed him ten thousand talents.**
- 25 And since he could not pay,
his master ordered him to be sold,
with his wife and children and all that he had,
and payment to be made.**
- 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him,
‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’**
- 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant
released him and forgave him the debt.**
- 28 But when that same servant went out,
he found one of his fellow servants
who owed him a hundred denarii,
and seizing him, he began to choke him,
saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’**
- 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him,
‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’**
- 30 He refused and went and put him in prison
until he should pay the debt.**
- 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place,
they were greatly distressed,
and they went and reported to their master
all that had taken place.**
- 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him,
‘You wicked servant!
I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.**
- 33 And should not you have had mercy
on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’**
- 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers,
until he should pay all his debt.**

³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you,
if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Do you think Peter remembered this lesson
that Jesus was trying to drive home for him?
I think he did.

I Peter 1:22-23

Having purified your souls
by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love,
love one another earnestly from a pure heart,
²³ since you have been born again,
not of perishable seed but of imperishable,
through the living and abiding word of God...

I Peter 5:7-8

⁷ The end of all things is at hand;
therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded
for the sake of your prayers.
⁸ Above all, keep loving one another earnestly,
since love covers a multitude of sins.

Aren't these two passages from I Peter
talking about what our response should be
to the incomparable grace of God?

You've been born again. That was God's doing, not yours.
So- Love one another-
earnestly, sincerely, truthfully, deeply.

Why?

Because love covers a whole bunch of sins,

1. Of petty irritations.
2. Of stupid, thoughtless comments.
3. Of unintended slights.
4. Of differences of opinion.

5. Of actual wrongs committed-
that we are SURE were intentional.

6. "You owe me" ... but I let it go... WHY?

Because grace is bigger than all of those.

Grace says, "Don't sweat the small stuff,"

And 99% of the stuff we remember and hang on to
is really, in the grand scheme of things, small stuff.

Jesus paid the big debt for each one of us.

Can we cancel some of the smaller ones,
the ones other people "owe" us?

Whether we do or not

reflects whether we really understand
our own need for incomparable grace...or not.

What's the worst thing that anyone has ever done to you?

1. I'm NOT saying what they did was OK.
2. I'm NOT justifying AT ALL what they did,
what I did, what someone else did...to you.
3. It was wrong. They owe you.
4. Can you let it go, cancel the debt, set yourself free?

Jesus died on a cross to set you free from YOUR sin.

Great was OUR debt.....Great was God's grace.

Now it is OUR turn to show great grace.

Grace matters.

1. God's grace extended to us.
2. The grace we show towards one another. Let's pray.