**5/6/2016**

**The Face of Grace**

Foundation Scriptures

John 1: 14 – 18

His Glory was beheld on the Mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:2)

Moses was the lawgiver

Elijah was the law restorer

This is my beloved son – hear Him

It’s Jesus and Jesus alone.

Grace means – Favour, benefit, gift, liberality – A divine influence upon the heart.

The law was **given** by Moses. (Exodus 20:1)

Grace and truth **came** by Jesus Christ. (John 3:16)

**Why was the law given?**

Let’s dispel a few myths:

* It was not given to make us righteous (No self-effort) Sin nature remained
* It was not given to make us Holy
* It was not given to draw us closer to God (it was a barrier / stumbling block – Romans 9: 31- 33)
* It was not given to create a religious system (John 14:6)

**It was given to reveal sin in man**

* Galatians 2:21
* Galatians 3:19 (Designed only to last until grace and truth came)
* Galatians 3:23 - 24
* Romans 3:20
* Romans 5:20 – 21
* Romans 6: 1-2 (Don’t keep sinning)
* Romans 7: 12 – 14

The problem wasn’t the law, the problem was with mankind.

The law can only condemn, imprison and hold in bondage – it cannot set free.

Romans 8: 3

The law was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature.

The good news is that we are no longer under the law of sin and death, but the law of Life - GRACE

Galatians 5:4

If we try to keep our selves right with God by keeping the law, we have fallen from grace.

**The woman at well**

John 4: 1 – 42

Here begins the longest recorded conversation between Jesus and any person.

It was the hottest part of the day.

Woman probably went there to avoid others due to social standing

God loves us in spite of our bankrupt lives.

The water being offered was GRACE.

Samaritans were a mixture of Judaism and idolatry.

2 Kings 17

* Kingdoms of Israel were divided. The capital was Samaria.
* They worshipped on Mt. Gerizim.
* Moving between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north meant passing through Samaria. Many Jews would avoid contact with the Samaritans.
* The area they lived in formerly belonged to the Tribe of Ephraim and half tribe of Manasseh.
* When the King of Assyria took control, the foreigners intermarried the Israelite population. ***This was a performance-based covenant***.
* They were considered half-breed and despised by the Jews. They were the worst of the human race (John 8:48, Matthew 10:5)
* Attitude of the disciple

Luke 9:51 – 56 (Compare old and new covenants)

* One demands judgment
* One supplies grace
* Sanballat (a leader of the Samaritans) tried to stop the building of the wall in the book of Nehemiah.
* Samaria was a place of refuge for all the outcast of Judea.
* In spite of the hatred between the Jews and Samaritans, Jesus broke down the barriers between them and the apostles later followed His example:

Acts 1:8

Acts 8: 25

She focused on the law – You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan

Jesus focused on grace and was willing to toss out the rules.

Physical desire V spiritual need (John 14:15)

Call your husband. This was not an odd request since women couldn’t converse with men alone in public. But Jesus request was more about uncovering truth than following social rules.

Symbolic truths

(The woman herself represented Samaria; the five husbands represented the five alien tribes. The man she was now living with represented the Samaritan religion).

Worship – Prostrate oneself in reverence or homage. Literal meaning - to kiss like a dog licking his masters hand.

Matthew 28:9 - Two Mary’s worshipped Jesus by holding His feet.

She left her water pot. What are you willing to leave behind in pursuit of Jesus

* Fishing nets,

The goodness of God

Leads to repentance

Romans 2:4

* Casting away your garment
* Tax collection table.

Many valuable truths

* Salvation only comes to those who recognize their desperate need for spiritual life.
* Salvation only comes to those who confess and repent
* Salvation only comes to those who take hold of Jesus as the Messiah (Acts 4:12)

**Progressive stages of faith in Jesus**

* She met Jesus
* She learned about Him
* She came to believe in Him
* She went and told others about Him

Romans 10: 11 - 15

**The woman caught in adultery**

John 8: 1 – 11

Festival of Shelters or Tabernacles (Deuteronomy 16: 16)

* Seven festivals a year. This was the last of the seven.
* It was observed for 7 days around late September/October
* Also one of three festivals requiring all Jewish males to attend at an appointed location and bring offerings and thanksgiving to God.
* John 7: 10-13 – The Jewish leaders for looking for Him
* How does he know so much when He hasn’t been trained?
* One the last day (7) He spoke those powerful words in John 7:38

Leviticus 20:10

Deuteronomy 22:22

Deuteronomy 17: 6 – 7 (two or three witnesses)

* Where are your accusers (plural)

Jesus did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill (Matthew 5: 17)

* The woman was bait. Jesus was the prize catch.
* This was an attempt by Satan to derail His Ministry.
* To tempt means to entice.
* They were relying on the mercy of Jesus to trap Him and nail Him with the Law of Moses (Daniel 6:4-6 – presidents and princes sought a way to find fault against Daniel through the law of His God).

The law puts us on display like condemned prisoners

God displays us as trophies of grace.

It began with a group of men wanting to stone the woman. It ended with them wanting to stone Jesus.

Are we willing to give grace to a sinner or will be just like the Pharisees.

Who is this woman? The answer may surprise you. She represents you and me.

It’s hypocritical for sinners to want to harm other sinners because of their sin.

We are to ‘judge not’.

Neither do I condemn you = neither does God condemn you

* Condemn means – to judge against, to pass sentence or to damn.
* Jesus didn’t come to destroy men’s lives but to save them (Luke 9:56)
* Jesus was trying to protect her. The religious leaders had been publically humiliated by this woman. They would want to exact revenge at some stage.

In this instance, Jesus didn’t overturn the law, he re-established righteousness on the basis of Grace.

The law demanded execution.

Grace supplied mercy

His obedience set us free, not ours.

Holiness is built on the experience of grace, not the fear of the law.

**Things that blind us to grace**

John 1: 6 - 10

They knew Him not and received Him not

* Born in a stable in Bethlehem (shepherds and wise men knew)
* Raised in Nazareth (upbringing was unremarkable)
* A carpenter
* His ministry challenged the traditions of men who relied on strict adherence to the law of Moses
* His own family members struggled to believe in him
* He associated with tax collectors, prostitutes, thieves, sinners and outcasts.
* He challenged religious leaders for their hardness of heart
* John the Baptist questioned if he was the one to come
* He rode into Jerusalem on a donkeys colt
* He died a sinners death on a cross (despised and rejected of men)

Luke 19: 41 (NLT)

They did not recognize the day of their visitation – ‘salvation’. **WHY**

**Self-righteousness**

Blinds you to the grace of God.

Matthew 6: 1 – 7

Hypocrite – An actor under an assumed character (Pretender).

John 5: 39 – 47 (approval of men)

John 9:33 -34 (exalting themselves)

Luke 18: 9 – 14 NLT (confident trust in self and despising others)

* Stand means to ‘present’
* Self-confident
* Judgmental / critical
* Performance based, self-righteous approval
* Jesus said, “I will have mercy not sacrifice”. He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance (Matthew 9:13)

Luke 18: 18 (Matthew 19: 16 - What good things shall I do)

* He was relying on performance to earn salvation
* He was blinded by self-righteousness
* He was very sorrowful (2 Corinthians 7: 8 – 11 NLT)
* Worldly sorrow lacks repentance.

**Offence**

John the Baptist

*“Are you he that should come, or do we look for another?”*

Jesus was the way

John prepared the way

Matthew 11: 2 – 14 (Luke 7:18)

* John was in prison and was hearing about the ministry of Jesus.
* It caused him to question grace Himself.

What do we know about John?

* His birth was divine intervention (Luke 1)
* Came from the line of the priesthood (Aaron)
* Luke 1: 15 – 17 – a prophet
* Great in the sight of the Lord
* Filled with the Holy Spirit even from His mothers womb
* Come in the spirit and power of Elijah
* Matthew 11:14 (John 1:21 – John said that he was not Elijah)

Isaiah 40:3

Malachi 3:1

Luke 1: 76 – 80 John’s purpose

* Word of the Lord came to John and he began preaching (Luke 3: 2-6)
* Jesus came to be baptized
* Behold the lamb of God (John 1: 29 - 34)
* Imprisoned because of Herod the ruler of the Jews
* Jesus moved away to Galilee when he heard he was in prison (Matt 4: 12)

Does your ‘prison’ prevent you from recognizing the face of grace?

* Fear
* Doubt
* Unforgiveness
* Sickness / pain
* Guilt, shame, condemnation
* Debt

Evidence of Grace

* The blind receive sight
* The lame walk
* The lepers are cleansed
* The deaf hear
* The dead are raised up
* The poor has the gospel preached to them (Luke 7: 21-22)

Do the ways of Jesus offend us?

Works means – Toil, deed, doing, labour (Same word used in John 6:29)

Offence means – To entrap, trip up, entice to sin, to stumble.

Among those born of a woman, there is none greater than John the Baptist. But the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Jesus was exalting the disciples, but not minimizing John. John was being compared for his significance in God’s plan

Grace is going to be recognized through the word above everything else.

Mark 6: 1 – 6

* Carpenter of conqueror?
* They reasoned in their head, not followed their heart.
* Do we bring Jesus down to our earthly level?
* They saw Jesus the son of Mary, not Jesus the Son of God.
* They were offended at Him and this fueled their unbelief.
* Unbelief prevents us from coming to Him to receive
* Jesus can work with anyone who is willing to come to Him including unbelievers.

**Transforming power of Grace**

Luke 23: 32 – 43 (Mark 15: 32)

The cross was the will of the father.

* It was prophesied that he would be numbered with the transgressors

Isaiah 53: 12

Acts 4: 28

* He was executed with criminals (Rebellion, murder & stealing)

Galatians 2:20 (Paul said, I am crucified with Christ)

Romans 6: 6 – 7

Not a single word from God will fall to the ground

Isaiah 55:11

Psalm 119:89

* At his birth he was surrounded by animals
* At his death he was numbered with lowest – the refuse of humanity.
* They were hostages needing rescuing. Only one recognized his rescuer.
* He looked beyond the bloodied, bruised and swollen face of Jesus and saw grace him self
* It shows us the position Jesus took to be our substitute

2 Corinthians 5:21

Jesus will never stop reaching out to humanity, even till our dying breath.

* Forgive them father for they know not what they are doing
* This was done in ignorance – lack of knowledge (Acts 3:17)
* Let him SAVE himself (Sozo) – Deliver, heal, preserve, do well and to make whole. In other words, nothing broken and nothing needing fixing.
* Same meaning ‘saved’ in Romans 10: 13
* One criminal – Save your self and us (No cross, no redemption)
* Jesus couldn’t save himself. He died with the weight of the worlds sin

Romans 6: 4 – 5

Romans 8: 11

Just like Jesus, we can’t save ourselves. Salvation is a gift from God

The two thieves represent the two groups of humanity

* The saved and the lost
* The righteous and the wicked
* The sheet and the goats

 One said, **if** you be Christ (it neutralizes faith) John 8:24

 He wanted to be saved from the penalty of sin and not sin itself

The other said **Lord** (and King referring to His Kingdom)

* The were both guilty and could do nothing to save themselves
* They were utterly powerless to set themselves free
* They were both in the very presence of grace and truth but the free gift of salvation MUST be received by faith.
* There is no transfer by association (Osmosis)

Three political prisoners died that day at the place called the Skull

* One died to sin
* One died in sin
* One died for sin (Jesus)

**Resting in Grace**

Luke 10: 38 – 42

Cumbered means – to drag all around, to draw away, over occupied, too busy, to be distracted with cares, to be troubled, distressed.

*That’s what happened when the Word of God is not first place in your life.*

Phil 4:6 – Be careful for nothing

Matthew 6: 33 – seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness

2 Corinthians 12: 9 – My grace is sufficient for you

Martha wanted Jesus to care like her, but care and worry is faithless:

Mark 4: 38 – 39. Master don’t you care that we perish? Care and worry ***always*** brings fear.

Needful means – Necessity / requirement

What do we know about Mary and Martha?

* Sisters who had a brother Lazarus (raised from the dead)
* Lived in Bethany near Jerusalem (3 km)
* Close friends of Jesus who loved them (John 11: 5)
* Mary was a ***worshipper*** who rested
* Martha was a ***worrier*** who worked
* They represent law and grace (earn God’s favour or rest in His finished work)
* The raising of their brother Lazarus had a profound impact on them both
* It was Mary that would later anoint Jesus wipe His feet with her hair (John 11: 2)

John 12: 1 – 8

Matthew 26: 6

Mark 14: 3

Luke 7: 36

* Six days before Passover
* They went to a Pharisees house named Simon the leper
* Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with costly ointment (perfumed oil) and wiped his feet with her hair
* The perfume was worth a years wage (300 Denarii – days wage 1 Denarii)
* Jesus described it as an anointing for his burial
* To the disciples, it was a waist
* To Judas, it was a lost source of revenue – he was a thief
* Mary was described as a sinner who had committed many sins