

Jesus is Full of Grace

May 30&31, 2020

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Crossroads Christian Church

- Thanks for worshipping with us this weekend. It's hard to believe the month of May is ending
- Before we jump into our study of how Jesus lives and loves today, I want to take a moment to thank everyone who participated in the survey over the past week, sharing how you are doing and your perspective on our next steps in regathering as a church family.
- Over ___ completed the survey and we are grateful for the insights provided
- The vast majority of those who completed the survey (78%) have been worshipping with us weekly online and continue to do so as a family
- About 1/3 of you are ready to begin worshipping back together immediately, another 1/3 have some concerns and hesitations, and a little less than 1/3 desire to continue worshipping online for the time being
- Your affirmation and trust for how church leadership is guiding our congregation through this season is greatly appreciated.
- As you can imagine, there are many dynamics to consider in determining our next steps in regathering as a congregation
- First and foremost, we want to honor God and take our cues from Him above everything else
- We are motivated to love others well, especially our neighbors and those more vulnerable, and this has allowed us to continue being the church while we've not been meeting collectively
- We feel led to honor the recommendations of our government officials and health professionals as an act of obedience to God's Word according to Romans 13
- And because of the number of people God has entrusted to our care as shepherds, we must make significant preparations to our facilities to provide a safe place for all who wish to worship together
- I'm grateful we've had the opportunity to worship together from our homes individually or in families and I hope this has been a meaningful time for you as it has for me. Many have commented how much they've enjoyed worshipping as a family and growing together
- As we continue to make plans to regather in the new future, please keep praying and we ask for your patience.
- Please know that the current recommendations from the CDC and government officials will truly alter our gathers as we know them...
 - Social distancing will significantly reduce the number of people who can gather at the same time at both our Newburgh and West campus (from 1000 to less than 300 in WC)
 - We are asked to not offer children's programming until after a decision has been made about the upcoming school year, which will be made past July 4
 - We are asked to not offer gathering spaces, pass out food items, which means our atrium and other spaces to congregate will be closed off
 - Singing has been discouraged in group settings

-All of these and other recommendations will limit our gatherings but we continue to make a game plan for regathering. Please pray for elders as they meet this week to determine how we will move forward after June 14th. We will communicate the plans no later than next weekend.

-Also, please continue to fast and pray with us as we seek clarity and direction from God as He leads us into the next phase of living and loving like Jesus?" (for me, my family, and our church)

-You can find helpful resources and a place to share with us what God is saying to you at cccgo.com/church

PRAY

-This year, we are studying through the Gospel of John to learn how we can live and love like Jesus and today we are going to witness a moment in the life of Jesus that truly displays his character and His mission here on earth and see that **Jesus is Full of Grace**

-Turn with me to John 8.

-As you do, you might notice some brackets or a footnote next to the first 11 verses that indicate these verses are not found in the most reliable original manuscripts of the Gospel of John. Several translations omit these verses altogether for this reason. Scads of material is written as to the reasons these verses either belong or not in the sacred text of the Bible.

-Most of the debate surrounds the textual or linguistic inconsistencies with the rest of the book of John, the awkward timing or placement in the narrative, and even John as the true author

-But no one questions the authentic representation of the life of Jesus or doubts that the event occurred! "authentic Jesus material" "seems like exactly like the sort of thing Jesus would do"

-So with that said, let's check it out

-Last week, Andrew Bondurant took us through chapter 7 where the religious leaders grilled Jesus about the authority he claims and questioning his true identity. John records they are looking for a reason and a time to kill Jesus

-He has challenged their understanding of Scripture by his teaching, and rattled their positions of authority by exposing their hypocrisy and impure motives, as we will continue to see over the next several chapters of John, ultimately culminating in Jesus being crucified at their request

-Jesus has been travelling back and forth to Jerusalem attending religious festivals and teaching in the temple. Since he had no home, Luke 21:37 tells us Jesus spends the night on the Mount of Olives. We know Jesus also prayed here, was arrested, and ascended from here

JOHN 8:2-6a

-As Jesus is teaching in the temple courts, the religious leaders take another opportunity to challenge Jesus by setting a trap for him.

-Some of the other traps or tests they had set for Jesus had been about if the Jews should pay taxes to Rome, if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath or for a man to divorce his wife, and which is the greatest commandment. Jesus provided a wise response in each of these previous times

-In this moment, the religious leaders pull out all the stops by arranging for a woman to enticed into a sinful moment committing adultery, so they could trap Jesus

-Several of the details reveal their motives

- They approach him in the temple courts and public embarrass the woman. If they truly were interested in determining her guilt and punishment, they would have accused her in a private court. She was only a pawn in their scheme against Jesus
- They misquote the OT Law. Deuteronomy 22 records the prohibition of a man having sex with anyone other than his wife and mandates both the man and woman committing adultery to be put to death. Stoning was only for when the woman was a betrothed virgin. The sinful act could not be committed alone, but the religious leaders only bring the woman to Jesus. This shows this was like a sting operation motivated only to trap Jesus, and again with little regard for those they used in the process
- They speak of her being “caught in the act” which was required in the OT Law for an offender to be executed. Deuteronomy 17 requires 2-3 eye witnesses and also mandates the eyewitnesses be the first ones to throw stones (which is significant in this moment as we will see). Their “eyewitness” account shows their cards and begs the question, “Where were these religious leaders hanging out when this happened?”
- Their demand for stoning was fueled by their blood lust. Stone was little more than mob lynching, community justice at it’s worst. Not something religious people should.

-They felt they placed Jesus in a trap because if He agreed she should be stoned, He would be violating Roman law which did not permit Jews to enact capital punishment and also contradict His previous treatment of sinners. Remember Jesus was accused of being a friend to sinners, tax collectors, and other irreputable people.

-If Jesus stopped her from being stoned, He would be negligent in upholding the OT law which He had stated, “I have not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it.”

-There was no question this woman was guilty of committing adultery. How did Jesus respond?

JOHN 8:6b-8

-Jesus had been sitting as He taught in the temple courts, which was common posture

-He now bends down, some say to shield His eyes from the half-dressed woman and to spare her any more public embarrassment.

-He begins writing in the dust. What He writes has more speculation about it than the source of this moment in the life of Jesus.

- Some thought He was writing out the OT Law since the religious leaders had misquoted it, or even writing out his verdict which was common for Roman magistrates
- Some thought He was listing the sins of the religious leaders who were accusing the woman. This would have been a fulfillment of a prophecy.

o Jeremiah 17:13 Lord, you are the hope of Israel; all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water.

-Most scholars feel He was refusing to play the game of the religious leaders, refusing debate. It’s not fun to fight with someone who doesn’t fight back. But they didn’t give up easy

-What He says is more important than what He might have been writing...

“Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” John 8:7

-Jesus was not dismissing the woman’s actions, He was reminding the religious leaders she wasn’t the only one guilty of sin! While she might be guilty, so were they.

- The qualifications for stoning preventing anyone from throwing! = "without any sin"
- The ones who came to shame Jesus now leave in shame, realizing they were just as guilty, and recognizing Jesus has escaped their trap again. The trap caught those who laid it.
- The left, the oldest existing first, either because they had more sins or were most willing to admit it. As we mature, we should be quicker to accept responsibility for our actions and not pretend to have it all together.
- The fact that all the accusers left was perhaps silent acknowledgement that in many ways they were not better than her.

JOHN 8:10-11

- Jesus spoke to her, not at her or about her. It's the first time anyone addresses her.
- Jesus is full of grace. He doesn't dismiss her sin, He offers her forgiveness. Imitable grace!
- It's true to Jesus' character.
 - He's "full of grace and truth" John 1:14, 17
 - He came "not to condemn the world but to save the world" John 3:17
 - It reflects His interactions with the woman in the well who had a sordid past in John 4
 - His challenge echoes what he said to the man who had been paralyzed and was healed, saying, "Stop sinning" in John 5:14
- He refused to condemn her but didn't condone her sin. She was guilty as charged but Jesus if full of grace. He's asking her to demonstrate a heart of repentance which goes hand in hand.
- His character and mission are on full display.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Share a time when you were "caught in the act" but received grace. How did you feel?

[Brian Comstock, caught red handed by Coke, win a prize]

- I think for most of us, we can identify with the woman who was "caught red handed"
- We recognize like the Apostle Paul who said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners- of whom I am the worst." 1 Timothy 1:15
- That's the Good News of the Bible, the Gospel...Jesus is full of grace!

1 JOHN 1:5-2:2

- I hope that if you feel like the woman today, guilty as charged, embarrassed, expecting to be condemned, you'd come to know Jesus is full of grace.
- He offers your forgiveness, not condemnation.
- The only one there that day who was sinless and was qualified to throw a stone, offered grace!
- And He will do the same for you.
 - Simply cry out to Him admitting your need to be saved "Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

"A great many people think they are lost because they have committed a certain sin. One is not lost because he is a murderer, or a liar, or a thief, or an adulterer, or because he has borne false witness or committed others sins. A person does these things because they are lost and have not yet believed in Jesus. Jesus forgives sins. He is the Savior. He died for the sins of the world." J Vernon McGee

- While I fear many who need God's grace will not take Jesus up on his offer today, I also fear many of us who have received God's grace, find it difficult to remember and offer it to others

- I fear many of us might relate more with the religious leaders than the woman caught in adultery
 - We've forgotten we are all in the same boat, in desperate need of the grace of God every day
 - We make people feel judged, unworthy, lesser than by snubbing our spiritual noses up at those who are sinning, missing the character and mission of our Savior and Lord
 - We make ourselves the judge and jury, instead of remembering we are part of the rescue team. Remember the qualifications for being the judge, right? Sinlessness. That takes me out of the stone throwing business, how about you?
 - To truly live and love like Jesus, we never forget He is full of grace and we, as recipients of that grace, must allow those streams of living water to flow from us that Jesus mentioned in John 7:38
 - We reflect the life and love of Jesus when we don't forget to show mercy to others because we have received mercy. Jesus is very clear that receiving mercy and showing mercy are connected, forgiving and being forgiven the same.
 - Paul describes the wickedness in each of us in Romans 1 by saying, "all have sinned"
 - Then in Chapter 2, he reminds us not to think it's "them" he's talking to. Listen to how The Message paraphrases **Romans 2:1-4 (The Message)**
- Those people are on a dark spiral downward. But if you think that leaves you on the high ground where you can point your finger at others, think again. Every time you criticize someone, you condemn yourself. It takes one to know one. Judgmental criticism of others is a well-known way of escaping detection in your own crimes and misdemeanors. But God isn't so easily diverted. He sees right through all such smoke screens and holds you to what you've done. You didn't think, did you, that just by pointing your finger at others you would distract God from seeing all your misdoings and from coming down on you hard? Or did you think that because he's such a nice God, he'd let you off the hook? Better think this one through from the beginning. God is kind, but he's not soft. In kindness he takes us firmly by the hand and leads us into a radical life-change.
- It's God's kindness that should lead us to repentance AND should be descriptive of how we live and how we love
 - We should never forget that Jesus is full of grace and seek to reflect and offer that grace to others. Christians are not perfect, just forgiven, should be the least judgmental in the world.
 - I believe this moment truly happened in the life of Jesus because it is consistent with Scripture and the way Jesus lived and loved, and taught us to do the same.
 - Listen to a parable Jesus spoke recorded by Luke
- LUKE 18:9-14**
- You've probably heard the statement, "The ground is level at the foot of the cross."
 - Romans 3:23-24, All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, AND all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
 - If you need that mercy today, receive it. If you've received it, shower it on others.
 - Don't be like the religious leaders who devalued others, used them for their games and dismissed their own guilt by deflecting it on others
 - Be full of grace and truth just like Jesus and live and love like Him.

PRAY