



January 25, 2024

Social Time

Thanks to those who brought Treats!

Bible Study Business

Music – Led by Lisa Scholterback

- 779 - Amazing Grace
- 631 - Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
- 781 - Children of the Heavenly Father

Prayer Requests and Update Prayer List

Opening Prayer

Discussion – Introduction to *What's So Amazing About Grace?* By Philip Yancey, (2023 revised edition)

1. When you hear the word “grace” what does it mean to you?
2. What does it mean to show grace to one another?
3. How do you think about God’s grace?
4. When have you experienced God’s grace?
5. Attached are some “Biblical Passages About Grace.” Read through them and find one that stands out for you. What interests you about this passage? What truth does it convey about grace?

God's grace can be defined as “undeserved favor.” Grace cannot be earned. It is a free gift. We count on God's grace to bring us into right relationship with him. We are “justified by grace through faith.”

6. Philip Yancey writes, “Grace is put to the test when we confront someone different, especially someone who is morally offensive to us.” (Preface, p. x)
What has been your experience about grace in dealing with someone different/morally offensive?
7. “I’ve noticed that no matter which side you are on, Left or Right, there’s no place for forgiveness or redemption. Once you’ve crossed a line sacred to, say Black Lives Matter or one of the white supremacist groups, you’re out, banned forever.” (p. xii)
Why do you think this might be?
8. “In such a climate we can choose to withdraw, hunkering down with like-minded people. Or we can choose the Jesus way, seeing schism and antagonism as a testing ground for grace.” (p. xii)
What would that look like to “choose the Jesus way... as a testing ground for grace?”

9. "At its most basic level, grace acts as a social lubricant, softening human interaction." (p. xii)
Can you think of an example of this?
10. Yancy quotes the apostle John saying, "'Perfect love casts out fear...' It occurs to me that the converse of John's statement is also true: *perfect fear casts out love*. The more Christians are characterized by fear, the less we can communicate good news." (p. xiii)
How do you see the relationship between love and fear, and what does that have to do with grace?
11. "Martin Luther King Jr. used to say that justice and moral issues are certainly worth fighting for. But he called on Jesus' followers to use different weapons, 'the weapon of love'." Yancy goes on to say, "Jesus' followers can lead the way in helping to restore civility to a deeply divided nation." (p. xiii)
How might we, as Christians, have a role to play in helping to restore civility?
12. As you think about it, many biblical heroes of the faith were very flawed people. Moses committed murder. David committed both murder and adultery. Peter betrayed Jesus. Paul persecuted Christians. Yancy writes, "These are giants of faith, proving that no one can conclude, 'I'm beyond the reach of God's grace. God could never love someone like me'." (p. xiv)
What do the stories of these biblical heroes say about God's grace for people like you and me?
13. Yancy observed, "Like a time-release capsule, grace works on several levels: restoring basic civility, transforming individuals, and ultimately affecting all of society." ... Some of results of grace show themselves in "hospitals, orphanages, schools, and ministries that fight poverty, liberate victims of sex trafficking, and respond to disasters, all in the name of Jesus. Such is the power of grace." (pp. xiv-xv).
What do you think of Yancy's "time-release capsule" idea grace on one level leading to more grace?
What experience do you have with ministries such as those listed that spring from Christian groups?
What is it like to see God's grace in action through God's people?
14. He writes, "I see the long-term results of the gospel that Jesus preached. According to Transparency International's index of corruption, nine of ten least corrupt countries have strong Christian heritage. The same ratio applies to indices that measure freedom, prosperity, gender equality, earth care, human rights, democracy, freedom of the press, and charity." (p. xv)
How have you seen Christian values at work in the world in these types of ways?
15. Scandinavian countries changed from being known for Vikings that raped and pillaged to a modern society characterized by civility and high quality of life. Given that modern-day Scandinavians are not very active church-goers, Yancy believe they are "living off the moral capital of Christian values." (p. xv)
How do you envision that impact of Christian values will change in coming generations in traditionally Christian nations if fewer people practice Christian faith?
What can we do about this in the United States?
16. Yancy quotes the singer, Bono, "When you boil it down, the universe runs by either Karma or Grace. I'd be in big trouble if Karma was going to finally be my judge. I'm holding out for Grace." (p. xvi)
Would you rather be judged by Karma or Grace? Why?

Birthdays

Closing Prayer – Lord's Prayer

Some Biblical Passages about Grace

John 1: 14-17

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of **grace** and truth. ... From his fullness we have all received, **grace** upon **grace**. The law indeed was given through Moses; **grace** and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Acts of the Apostles 4:33

With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great **grace** was upon them all.

Romans 3:22b-25a

For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his **grace** as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith.

2 Corinthians 12:8-9

Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, "My **grace** is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Ephesians 2:4-8

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by **grace** you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his **grace** in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by **grace** you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore approach the throne of **grace** with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find **grace** to help in time of need.

James 4:6

But he gives all the more **grace**; therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives **grace** to the humble."

1 Peter 4:10

Like good stewards of the manifold **grace** of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

What's So Amazing About Grace?
Reading and Discussion Plan – Spring 2024

Date	Chapter(s)	Title(s)
February 1	1	The Last Best Word
February 8	2 & 3	Babette's Feast: A Story A World without Grace
February 15	4 & 5	Lovesick Father The New Math of Grace
February 22	6 & 7	Unbroken Chain: A Story An Unnatural Act
February 28	8 & 9	Why Forgiven? Getting Even
March 7	10 & 11	The Arsenal of Grace A Home for Bastards: A Story
March 14	12 & 13	No Oddballs Allowed Grace-Healed Eyes
March 21	14	Loopholes
March 28		Holy Week Break
April 4	15 & 16	Grace Avoidance Big Harold: A Story
April 11	17 & 18	Mixed Aroma Serpent Wisdom
April 18	19 & 20	Patches of Green Gravity and Grace

This is our general plan, however, depending on how discussion goes, we may choose to adjust it.