



April 18, 2024

Social Time

Thanks to those who brought Treats!

Bible Study Business

Music - by Pastor Lisa Engen

Prayer Requests and Update Prayer List

Opening Prayer

Bible Study – Matthew 13:24-30 & 36 – 43

1. What is Jesus' message about the weeds and the wheat?
2. Why is patience and tolerance of unbelievers difficult for the disciples? For us?
3. In what way can overzealous judgment of the world and its evils harm our mission as believers?
4. What ultimately happens to the weeds? To the wheat?
5. How can this parable encourage us?

Book Discussion – *What's So Amazing about Grace?* by Philip Yancy, Chapters 17 & 18

1. As Yancy described his meetings with President Clinton, what do you think it would be like to have the opportunity to talk with a president about issues of faith and morality?
What would you say if you had this kind of access to a president?
2. Yancy writes, "The church has allowed itself to get so swept up on political issues that it plays by the rules of power, which are rules of ungrace. In no other arena is the church at greater risk of losing its calling than in the public square." (p. 229) What do you see as the role of the church and its relationship to influence our common public life?
3. Do you think Christians find it helpful or even necessary to discuss current issues in church?
4. What do you think the role of Christians should be on seeking to influence legislation?
5. Nietzsche warned, "Be careful, lest in fighting the dragon you become the dragon." (p. 233) Your thoughts?
6. We sometimes face the challenge of conveying grace and love to people who have very different moral values. What makes this so difficult? When have you observed someone handle this challenge well?
7. What does God expect of faithful people living in an immoral, unjust society?
8. How did Jesus engage leaders of his day around moral and political issues?
What can we learn from that?

9. Do you agree that “dispensing God’s grace is the Christian’s main contribution to society”? (p. 242) If so, how might we do that?
10. How might our political climate be different if people involved in politics adhered to the practices of Martin Luther King’s followers, “meditate daily in the teachings and life of Jesus, walk and talk in the manner of love, and observe with both friend and foe the ordinary rules of courtesy.”? (p. 245) Does it work to do this when opponents act unscrupulously? Could we, as Christians, commit to these behaviors in our everyday lives?
11. Is Yancy right, “the chief danger to grace: the state, which runs by rules of ungrace, gradually drowns out the church’s sublime message of grace”? (p. 251)
12. Are there lessons from history – Nazi Germany’s appeal to Christian churches, or Vladimir Putin’s appeal to the Russian Orthodox Church – that we need to learn from today? (p. 251)
13. Can you imagine any government enacting laws based on the Sermon on the Mount? (p. 252) Or must the state always water down the quality of Jesus’ commands and turn them into a form of external morality, the opposite of grace?
14. Bottom line – to what extent should Christians seek to promote Christian values through political involvement? What are the costs/benefits to people of faith of political engagement?

For next time we finish the book! – Read Chapters 19 & 20

Birthdays

Closing Prayer

United in Christ let us pray to God:
For the Church, the Body of Christ,
that we might truly live the unity we receive
through the Holy Spirit. God of love:
Change us by your grace.

For the leaders of our churches
that they may be faithful to the unity
to which all Christians are called. God of love:
Change us by your grace.

For the nations of the world,
that they may live in peace with one another
and promote justice for all. God of love:
Change us by your grace.

For all people,
that we may be good stewards of the earth. God of love:
Change us by your grace.

For the people of our society,
that we may be transformed to live
as caring neighbors to each other. God of love:
Change us by your grace.

**Lord, stand in our midst and by your grace,
grant us unity and peace. Amen.**

Matthew 13:24-43

²⁴He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ ²⁸He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴²and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

Schedule

Date	Chapter(s)	Title(s)
April 18	17 & 18	Mixed Aroma Serpent Wisdom
April 25	19 & 20	Patches of Green Gravity and Grace Concludes <i>What's so Amazing about Grace</i>
May 1		We begin a series on <i>Singing our Faith</i> based on favorite hymns