



**April 25, 2024**

## **Social Time**

**Thanks to those who brought Treats!**

## **Bible Study Business**

### **Music – led by Lisa Scholterback**

- ELW 526 - *God is Here*
- ELW 598 - *For By Grace You Have Been Saved*
- ELW 767 - *Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me*

## **Prayer Requests and Update Prayer List**

### **Opening Prayer**

### **Bible Study – Matthew 13: 31-33**

<sup>31</sup>He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; <sup>32</sup>it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” <sup>33</sup>He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

1. Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven as being like small things – a mustard seed, yeast – that are hidden from view yet make a big difference. (p. 263) What examples can you think of that describe the kingdom of heaven in ways that would readily connect with people you know?
2. How do these examples relate to grace?

### **Matthew 5:13-16**

<sup>13</sup>“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. <sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup>No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

3. What does it mean to be salt and light?
4. How do you see people living into their roles as salt and light?
5. How do these verses relate to our discussion on grace?

## **Book Discussion – *What’s So Amazing about Grace?* by Philip Yancy, Chapter 19 & 20**

1. The elks shaped patches of vegetation on Mount St. Helens provide a vivid image of life springing from death. (p. 255) What images of new life springing from decaying society resonate with you?
2. The persistence of Christian faith despite Communist efforts to squelch it in Russia and in China are impressive. (p. 256-260). Yancy credits the deep hunger for grace as a reason for this resilience. How do you see it?
3. As Christian dissidents in Eastern Europe changed from meeting in secret to acting as if they were free, what were some of the prices they paid and what were some of the benefits? (pp. 263-265).
4. Leaders in Jesus’ day found him threatening because he and “his followers took orders from a higher power than Rome or Jerusalem.” (p. 265) Why are people in power threatened by grace?
5. How would you respond to Yancy’s question, “What would a subversive church look like in the modern United States?” (p. 265)
6. Yancy believes “Our best efforts at changing society will fall short unless the church can teach the world how to love.” (p. 266) What does that look like?
7. Yancy writes “Politics draws lines between people; in contrast, Jesus’ love bridges those lines and dispenses grace.” (p. 267) What role do we have to play in dispensing grace? How do we do that?
8. Martin Luther King Jr. is quoted as saying, “Power without love is reckless and abusive....Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice.” (p. 268) As students around the country are currently protesting the war in Gaza demanding justice for the Palestinians, in what ways are they living out this sentiment? In what ways are they falling short?
9. How does listening to the stories of “the other” embody grace, even when you don’t fully agree with some of their actions or beliefs? Can you listen to a person you disagree with just to understand without trying change their mind but simply to understand them? How does deep listening “lay the path for grace to do its work”? (p. 269)
10. Yancy writes, “The follower of Jesus knows to serve the weak not because we deserve it but because God extended love to us when we deserved the opposite.” (p. 270) As followers of Jesus what does this mean for us?
11. How does Yancy contrast the impacts of gravity and grace? (chapter 20)
12. “Having begun with questions – What’s so amazing about grace? and Why don’t Christians show more of it? Yancy now ends with the final question, What does a grace full Christian look like?” (p. 276) How would you answer that question?
13. Yancy writes, “Perfect, sinless, Jesus had every right to be repulsed by the behavior of those around him. Yet he treated notorious sinners with mercy and not judgment. One who has been touched by grace will no longer look on those who stray as ‘those evil people’ or ‘those poor people who need our help.’ ... Grace teaches us that God loves because of who God is, not because of who we are.” (p. 284). As sinners how do we understand the relationship God’s law and grace? For ourselves? In how we interact with others?
14. As we have focused on grace while reading this book, what has impacted you most greatly? What will take with you from having read this book?
15. Have you become more open to noticing grace around you?  
In what ways have you noticed grace at work in the world or in your life?
16. Where do you find hope in this study of “What’s So Amazing About Grace?”

### **Birthdays**

***Amazing Grace*** – sung *acapella*

**Lord’s Prayer**