

#### Thirst4: Grace

- Looking back over your life so far, where do you think you'd be without Jesus?
- What do you think you'd be like now if you never knew Jesus?
- What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think about Grace?

We sing about grace being amazing but do we fully understand what God's grace really is?

Often we can think of grace as a one time thing that we receive at salvation, but the word grace is used 131 times in the NT. 86 of those times it's used by the Apostle Paul.

- Consider Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:10 NLT
- Charles Spurgeon - "Between here and heaven, every minute that the Christian lives will be a minute of grace."
- Read 2 Timothy 2:1 NLT

Our goal tonight is to try to understand why Paul says that he lives by the grace of God, why he told Timothy to be strong through the grace of God.

- What is the difference between grace and mercy?

Mercy is not getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don't deserve.

But even more than that. Grace is not only getting what you don't deserve, but getting lavish gifts on top of it.

For example: The judge says to someone who's guilty you can go free, but grace is you don't just go free, it's come here you can live in my house, be adopted as my child and I want to bestow on you all the riches of my family name - that's God's grace.

Let's consider 4 Grace truths.

- **Grace that saves.**
- Ephesians 2:8-9 NLT
- Titus 3:4-7 NLT
- Why does Jesus save us?
- What is God's reason for saving us?

God's saves us so we can be reconciled to Him.

In the Bible, reconciliation is the process of restoring a broken relationship, between God and us, caused by sin, restored through faith in Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

True salvation is a heart-based relationship with Jesus. This is both amazing and dangerous!

Have you ever wondered why some believers seem stuck or defeated, even after receiving God's grace? The answer often lies in misunderstanding what grace truly is. Grace is forgiveness, the free gift of salvation, and much more. It's the grace of God that transforms us closer to Jesus, sustains us through difficult times, and empowers us to be agents of influence in His Kingdom.

- **Grace that transforms.**

To follow Jesus we are told we must carry our cross (Matt 16:24-25), we must die to ourselves. That means that we no longer carry on living the same lifestyle that we did, but we live for Jesus.

- Titus 2:11-12 NIV
- Romans 6:1-2 NLT

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." Romans 12:2 NLT

2 Peter 3:18 NKJV

Grace that transforms causes us to move away from our sinful nature.

We have talked about seeking God, pursuing Him, building our relationship with Him and allowing the HOLY SPIRIT to produce fruit in our lives. We did a session on it.

- "Jesus loves you as you are but too much to leave you where you are."

One of the most frightening verses...

"On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'" Matthew 7:22-23 NLT

At some point you have to ask yourself...

How serious are you for your love for Christ? What are the things in your life, you know you need to give up if you want to be closer to Jesus?

Do we actually realise the damage that sin does to our relationship with God?

- How have you seen God's Grace transform your life?

What areas of your life do you still find a struggle when it comes to sin? (Share with your group if you feel comfortable.)

James 5:16 says "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."

- **Grace that sustains.**

In the midst of hardships, we can rely on God's grace to sustain us and carry us through.

Why does God allow trials and suffering to come into our lives? Faith and our character is developed more through difficulties - when we have to depend on Him than in all the joyful times.

Trials put God's power on display, can prepare us for service, reveal inner sin, show others that God is dependable, can be spiritual warfare or may even be for our discipline.

Sometimes we pray... and do we think, I wish it would be MY will that was done...Instead of "Your will be done."

If we think of Paul's life - he suffered immensely

39 lashes, 5 different times, he was stoned 3 times, he was ship wrecked, at times he was hungry, he was imprisoned.

Paul – didn't say "after everything I'm doing for you...I deserve this, this and this."

There was also something Paul suffered from - a thorn in my flesh to keep him from being proud. 2 Corinthians 12:8-9 NLT

God's grace is enough. We will have moments when we are weak. We will have moments where life is hard. We will have moments when we are suffering.

It's in these moments that we need to lean into God's grace more and more. We must allow God's power to work through us, even in our weaknesses. God has not called us to be independent, but to be dependent on Him. We must resist the mindset of counting on our own abilities or what we can do for ourselves. Grace isn't just comfort, it's power. It's the supernatural strength to endure, overcome, and bring change.

What are You wanting to show me?

- Hebrews 4:16 NLT
- In what areas of your life do you need to lean more into God's grace?
- In what ways are you going to be more dependent on God?

If you're going through something, pray for one another.

- **Grace that empowers.**

When we are in Christ we now live in the spirit which empowers us through grace.

Our first verse...

- 1 Corinthians 15:10 NLT

Everything Paul accomplished in his life was all because of the grace of God, a grace that empowered him to do what he did for God. It's that same grace that is available to us, to empower us to make an impact for God.

When we looked at Walking in the Holy Spirit, we talked about the Holy Spirit empowering us to go beyond our own ability.

- Romans 12:6 NLT

He also equips us with gifts - we did another session on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

God is generous and He doesn't run out of gifts. We all have our own special, unique gifts. Don't compare your gift to someone else's gift. With God's creativity, your gifts are not going to look or feel like someone else's gifts. It's up to us to not only discover our gifts, but then to use those gifts to help and serve other people. To make an impact in this world.

- What gift(s) has God given you?
- How are you using your gift(s) for your work and God's glory?
- How can you use your gifts here at SVC?
- **How do we get more grace?**

We did a session on this back in July.

- James 4:6 NLT

God gives grace generously. Sometimes people think we have this certain amount of grace allotted to us and when we mess up, grace somehow gets "deducted" out of our account. God's grace does not run out. The enemy wants us to think we can go to God "too much". That is a lie. God always wants us to go to him. It doesn't matter how bad we messed up or how bad things are going for us or big a task we have ahead of us; God wants us to come to Him. When we go in humility, His grace is available.

### **Challenge:**

How is your relationship with God?

What areas of your life have you not surrendered to Him?

What steps can you take to walk in humility?

- **Pray:**

Father God, thank you that when we are saved we're adopted into Your family, into a eternal relationship with You, and that You continue to express Your grace by giving us grace that transforms us so that we can be more like Jesus. We don't have the power to change in ourselves.

Then you give us grace that sustains us when we go through trials and difficulties and then not only do You allow us into Your kingdom but You gives us gifts, You empower us to be agents of influence in Your Kingdom.

So tonight, I ask Lord, that we will receive your grace where we need it...