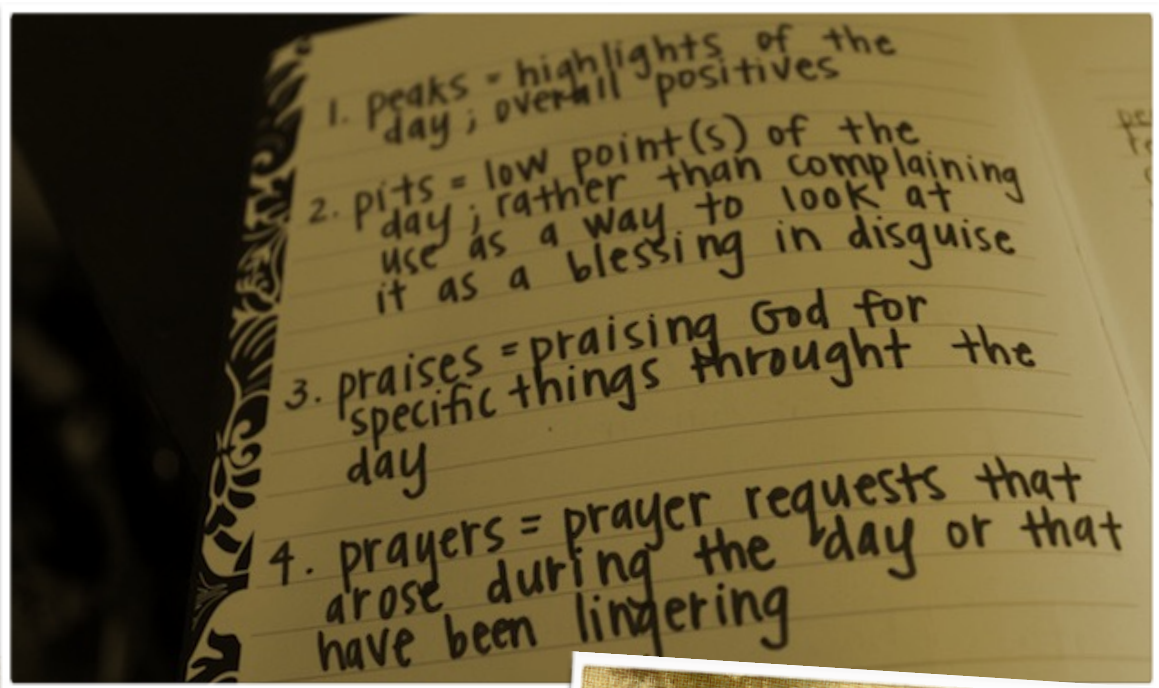


War Room

Week Three - Living The Gospel



Living The Gospel

Introduction

(Please read and complete this section prior to our first class together and our open discussion)

This week is all about the power of the gospel. The gospel or “good news” is just about saving us from a fiery hell, but also about transforming our lives daily into something beautiful that glorifies God and sets us apart from the world and draws us closer to Him. You are saved by the graciousness of God, but are kept in that salvation by continued transformation by that grace. Paul once wrote, “And God is able to make every grace overflow to you. So that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work (2 Cor. 9:8).

Read Ephesians 2:4-9

The word grace is used three times in this passage. Look at all the things the passage ties grace to - love, kindness, riches, etc. Let's take a moment then and, using the scripture, give a good working definition of grace. Let's see if we can come up with something that has a little more depth than “unmerited favor.”

As a group, define grace!

Why is it so important to understand God's grace as a gift, favor or kindness?

Why is the notion of a salvation built on our works inaccurate?

Why do you think we tend to think of salvation as a function of our works?

How do works come to play in the scheme of our salvation?

The grace of God is one of the major lines of demarcation between Christianity and other religions. Yet, we dare not believe that grace is limited to the atonement offered to us by Jesus Christ. It should extend to the changed and new life that we live because we are the recipients of His grace. Just as we rely on His grace to save us, we must rely on Him daily, as we live by faith, to provide us with everything we need to obey and perform the good works that He requires of all grace recipients.

Narrowing our focus a bit, how does this grace cause us to treat others differently? How might God's gifts of kindness to us make us into more giving and kind people? How does being forgiven by grace enable us to freely forgive?

Begin by asking yourself these honest questions:

- 1. How should we treat others different since we are the recipients of grace?**
- 2. How might God's gifts of kindness to us make us into more kind people?**
- 3. How does being forgiven by grace enable us to freely forgive?**

Open discussion

The clip - Elizabeth is now growing in a mentoring type of relationship with Mrs. Clara. In this clip from the movie War Room Mrs. Clara seizes one of life's teachable moments to guide Elizabeth in her understanding of grace. Miss Clara invites Elizabeth to better understand the grace given to her by God. She also alerts Elizabeth to the enemy who wants nothing more than to destroy Elizabeth's understanding and utilization of God's grace.

Discussion

1. Who has extended great grace to you in the past? Or who has taught you a great deal about how to walk in grace? What have you learned from them?
2. Do you think that churches often subscribe to a faulty view of grace? How so? In what way?
3. Have you ever struggled with the concept of grace or grace versus works? To what conclusion have you come?
4. Have you had difficulty in your life forgiving those who have wronged you? If yes, why do you think that is true? How do you know you have actually forgiven someone?
5. How does Mrs. Clara describe the gospel in this clip? Do you agree with that description?
6. According to Mrs. Clara, what do we deserve from God? How do you respond knowing He offers grace instead?
7. How aware are you of the real enemy's attacks in your life?

Engage

Use Ephesians 2:4-9, which we read earlier, to answer the following questions

What do these verses say about the character and heart of God?

According to these passages, why has God granted us grace and forgiveness?

What danger do we read about in 2:9?

Read the following passages about grace and answer the questions.

Colossians 3:12-17

Titus 2:11-14

Ephesians 4:22-32

Based on these passages, in light of the salvation we have been given, how are believers to live? How are they not to live?

According to Colossians 3:13, we are to forgive as we have been forgiven. Why is that such an important part of grace?

Taking off the old self and putting on the new is a vivid description of what happens in the life of the believer when they receive the grace of God. This means we are to take action. We are to Walk like Christ.

Take a moment right now to think about how grace is made manifest in your life. How are you living out the graciousness of God? Are you gracious to all? Where could you improve? What are the areas and who are the people in your life that might demand more grace? Will you extend it?

Day One - Homework

"He gives us grace and He helps us to give it to others even when they don't deserve it. We all deserve judgment. And that is what a Holy God gives when we don't repent and believe in His son." - **Miss Clara, War Room**

In our studies this week we will first be evaluating the power of the gospel in our lives. Grace is a gift of God. You didn't earn it. It is one of the great aspects of grace that makes His message "good news." Grace also sustains us and requires from us a devotion to him in the form of righteous works.

Read the following and list what each says about grace

Romans 5:8

Romans 6:23

Romans 8:1

2 Corinthians 5:21

1 Timothy 1:15

Read Romans 3:23-26

Take a moment to underline all that God has done for you in this passage.

What is the appropriate response to this passage and to God's grace and love for us?

Why has God extended His grace to us, according to this passage?

How was that grace extended to us?

What does it mean to “fall short”?

How does this idea of falling short play into the idea of grace and salvation?

Closing the day's study

Read Ephesians 2:1-8 and reflect prayerfully on all that God has done for us and the appropriate response that should be manifest in our lives.

Open yourself to praying that God will take these things you have learned about His word and yourself and give you opportunity to overcome them and improve.

Day Two - Homework

"Elizabeth, there's not room for you and God on the throne of your heart. It's either Him or its you. You need to step down. If you want victory, you have to first surrender." - **Miss Clara, War Room**

Start today's homework by reading 1 Samuel 5:1-6

Two things from this story are amazingly clear.

1. God does not share space with idols!
2. God has no intention of sharing the space of your heart with them either.

At the core, salvation is a priceless gift from God. It is also beautifully leads to the most unnatural action from those who have received it - surrender. it is unnatural because it feels like we have given up. Shouldn't we be working harder? Shouldn't keep fighting and fighting?

Of course fighting is far easier. To seek full control in our foolish pride is far easier than let ing go and surrendering to God. It is also far more damaging to fight than it is to surrender to His will.

What do you crave most? List anything and everything you tend to place first in your life ahead of God.

Would you be willing to lay aside these or anything else, even good things, in order to keep Christ first in your heart?

Perhaps Elizabeth was reluctant to offer Tony grace because she didn't understand the fullness of God's grace in her own life. The gospel of Jesus is cheap if those who have received it can't be distributors of it. Only when we come down off the throne of our lives can we truly see how much God has given us. Then, and only then, will we desire Him more than anything else the world offers.

Read Matthew 13:44-46

Summarize the two simple illustration found in these parables.

What was required of the man and there merchant to gain their treasures? How does that illustrate the kingdom of heaven?

If we want victory it starts with surrender. It is only unnatural until you understand that what you gain by surrendering to Christ is better than anything you could ever want in His place.

List the ways you need to surrender to God in the following areas:

In your family

In your marriage

At your church

In the way you use your time and resources

Close todays lesson by writing out a prayer of surrender. Pray about the things you have listed above. Be sure you tell God how grateful you are and give him the throne of your life.

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it." (Mark 8:35)

Day Three - Homework

"You need to do your fighting in prayer." - Miss Clara, War Room

There is perhaps nothing more worshipful than vulnerability. Why? Two reasons. First, being vulnerable indicates that we trust in God and have a humble heart. Second, being vulnerable before God indicates a truer understanding of who He is - that he is trustworthy. A high view of God in a time of need draws the believer ever closer to the only One who can meet every need.

Start today by memorizing Hebrews 4:16

To approach God boldly does not mean that we are disrespectful or prideful, but as God's children we enjoy the "freedom of speech" before our father. Because of what Jesus has done for us we are no longer enemies inhibited by sin, guilt and shame or doubt. We are beloved children who, in faith, can pray openly and freely with confidence in our Father.

Describe a time in your life when you needed God's help the most.

God is in the business of using the weak for His purposes. He uses it as the key ingredient to unlocking His power in us. Consider the following example.

Peter's weakness (John 18:25-27)...how God used Peter (Acts 2:37-42)

Moses' weakness (Exodus 3:1-10; 4:10-13)...how God used Moses (Ex. 13:1-16)

Gideon's weakness (Judges 6:11-16)...How God used weakness (Judges 8:22-35)

Gideon's legacy wasn't what you might expect. Why?

How has God used weakness in your life to show you His Power?

How likely are you to seek God's help first when a problem arises (before you use other resources or exhaust them)? _____ (1-10, where 10 is very likely and 1 not at all)

Take some time as we close our study this week to read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Try reading the passage again, but make it persona. What does God chose in you to shame the _____ and the _____...

Meditate on some of key ideas of this lesson and pray that God gives you the strength to see and embrace your weaknesses so that His power can be fully used in you.

Close this lesson by taking one specific weakness before Him and seek his guidance in it.