

Month Of opportunity Week 4

Extending Grace. Sharing Grace

Remember the old Chinese whispers game. You start with a message that is then whispered to the next person and so on down the line. What happens when there is a deaf person in the line? What do they pass on? Wrong information usually.

Well I want to encourage you to develop a new game. **Grace whispers. Extending God's grace**, handing it out.

A few years ago, well now a lot of years ago, Marianne and I borrowed a video called Pay it forward, some of you may have seen it. It is about a little boy who takes his teacher literally when challenged to do something that changes society. He started to do good things for people before those people deserved it. It worked, he changed people's lives. It created a domino effect, and is actually based on a true story. People started to do good things for the sake of society.

Now we as Christians hear that and think, it has been tried before, it is called Christianity. But do we do it????

It is part of our belief structure but it is very hard to put into practice and keep in practice. Why? Because we can get taken advantage of. And we do.

Now

How do we pay Jesus forward?

How can we do random acts of kindness

How can we extend grace?

Let's look at some passages.

Believers be stewards of grace. Peter states:

(1Pe 4:10). ¹⁰ Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

I like that terminology – **administering God's grace**. We have that honour to be given a responsibility for sharing out God's grace. Paul uses the term too referring to his responsibility.

EPH 3:2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you,

But Peter and Paul never give us the thought process that ministry or extending God's grace is an option.

It is a universal responsibility for Christians.

Each of us has our portion grace to be used.

Paul talks about grace a lot.

EPH 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

But how do we use it? How do we work out what to do with it.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians gives us an understanding here also.

EPH 5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

To be administering God's grace we need to think like God.

Now I know that that is not possible, but we are to be imitators of God.

So, we take God's characteristics as a role model for us (After all we are made in God's image.)

Here's a quote I read.

God impresses His grace on His people, we imitate God and impress God's grace on people.

Interesting aside here: It says be imitators of God – The whole triunion aspects of God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Take each characteristic and imitate it. Now that is a life's work but a huge opportunity.

2 Timothy 1:3-7

2TI 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. ⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Notice what happened here - The grace being passed on. Grandmother, Mother and now lives in Timothy. Then Timothy is told to fan the flame, get the fire going so he can pass it on.

Now there is an opportunity – pass Jesus off to your kids! Our kids, Our grandkids!!

So how does that impact us right now? From what I can gather, the New Testament concept of Extending God's grace is a giving away concept. We can see it in all the New Testament writings.

But one that really emphasizes it is Matthew 28:19-20.

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Let me just point something out here.

Professor Nyland (UNE Ancient Languages professor and translator of the Source New Testament) translates this as "So then, off you go, makes disciples." (The Source)

RSV "Go therefore"

NIV "Therefore Go"

In Greek it comes out more like – "As you go, make disciples." Pastor John's translation

The feeling in the greek is that you take the message wherever you happen to go or be. The instruction is not to go but to make disciples. The reason for this is you are already where God wants you to be – so are the people who God wants grace extended to by further discipleship.

Now let me finish by saying a few things.

Extending God's grace is:

Witnessing - Telling the message.

Discipleship – Furthering someone's knowledge of God.

Encouraging – Strengthening someone's faith.

Serving – Helping someone to be who they are.

Each of these things are opportunities. Not only that, they are opportunities that are doable, achievable and practical right now!!!

The list could go on. Extending God's grace is being Christian, being obedient to the commands, expectations and example of Jesus. – Extending God's grace is an opportunity to imitate Jesus.