

Awed by Jesus' grace and love sermon

3/10/2019

This is our final week in the series "**Living in Awe of Jesus**". Next week I begin a follow up series on "**Living in Awe of the Holy Spirit**".

So far in the "**Living in Awe of Jesus**" series we've looked at:

- Living in awe of Jesus' **teaching**
- Living in awe of Jesus' **power**
- Living in awe of Jesus' **humility**
- And last week, J.J. led us in discovering Living in Awe of **Jesus' Identity**

This morning we're going to be discovering "**Living in Awe of Jesus' grace and love.**"

Now "**grace**" is used in the Bible in two distinct ways.

1. **First, grace is the divine empowering presence of God.** This usage is seen in **Luke 2:40** where it says: "*And the child (referring to Jesus) grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.*"
2. **Secondly, grace is an undeserving gift of God.** One example would be that we deserve condemnation from God because of our sins and yet He gives us just the opposite. He gives us a restored relationship with Himself and eternal life through Christ's death on the cross. There's nothing you can do to earn this grace – but you do need to accept it in order for it to become yours. Now, this undeserving gift from God can be and should be extended to others as well.
Romans 6:23 (NIV) *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Because of our sins, we all deserve eternal death and separation from an all holy God. However, instead God offers us an amazing gift. He offers us eternal life through Jesus Christ's death on the cross.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*

There's not a single follower of Jesus Christ who can boast about earning God's favor by anything they've done. Because of your sins, you could never do enough good deeds to earn a right standing before God. God realized that and so Jesus came to pay the penalty for your sins and mine so that we might be able to have a restored relationship with God.

Earlier in Ephesians, you get the sense that Paul is blown away by the extent of God's grace offered to him and you and me as sinners.

Ephesians 1:7-8 (NIV) *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us..."*, God didn't just give us a small amount of grace. He went above and beyond anything we could ever imagine Him doing when He gave us Jesus and Jesus willingly and lovingly gave up of his life so we might live eternally with Him.

Another powerful verse in relationship to God's grace and love is **Titus 3:4-7**

Titus 3:4-7 (NIV) *But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

Here you see a new concept introduced – mercy.

Mercy is someone not giving you what you deserve. We deserved eternal death and God doesn't give us that. Instead He gives us eternal life and a restored relationship with Himself – that's grace.

And what you see in this verse is that **God's grace is generated by God's kindness and love.**

Somewhat surprising to me is that “**grace**” is rarely talked about in the Gospels. Only 4 times is it ever mentioned. In the **Luke 2:40** passage I read earlier referring to God’s empowering grace. And the only other place “grace” is mentioned is in **John 1:16-17** where it’s mentioned 3 times.

However, you see grace displayed frequently throughout Jesus’ ministry.

You see it in how he treated people over and over again.

- You see it when Jesus called **Zacchaeus** down from the tree so that he can talk with him further over lunch – and the discussion over lunch transformed Zacchaeus’ life.
- You see it when he raised the **widow’s son from his casket**.
- You see it when he took the time to heal the **blind man** when everyone else was trying to keep him quiet.
- You see it when he spent one on one time with the **Samaritan woman** at the well.
- You see it when he not only healed individuals of **leprosy** but in the process he touched them.
- You see grace in how **Jesus treated people in general** who felt they were far away from God with very little hope of ever getting back into God’s favor.

Understanding that each of us has been offered God’s grace through Jesus Christ ought to cause us to live in awe of Jesus every single day. And our daily prayer is that this may never become merely a fact we store in our brain but that it might daily draw us deeper and deeper and our love and appreciation for God and what Jesus did for us on the cross and how He continues to give us His empowering grace, through the Holy Spirit to live every day for His honor and glory.

The second aspect of the sermon this morning that ought to cause us to live in awe daily is Jesus’ love. And while the word “grace” is rarely talked about in the Gospels but seen a lot, “love” is mentioned frequently and seen just as much.

Jesus preached about love in the Sermon on the Mount when he instructs us to not merely “put up” with those we dislike but rather to “**love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.**” (Mt 5:43-45) And don’t you love what Jesus adds onto the end of this bold statement: “**that you may be children of your Father in heaven.**” What Jesus is implying is that if you were really God’s children you’d behave a certain way and this is one of the ways behavior within God’s family looks like, because the children are a reflection of their Father.

When asked what the greatest commandment was Jesus replied with “**love God with all of your being and secondly to love your neighbor.**” (Mt. 22:37-40)

Talk about “love” explodes in Jesus’ instruction to his disciples in the Upper Room. This is a time when Jesus is trying to impress the most important truths one last time to his disciples before he dies on the cross. And his conversation with them is filled with talk about love.

John 13:34-35 (NIV) “**A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**”

What makes this a “new” command is how Jesus redefines love. Notice carefully the little word “as”.

That’s the intro to Jesus’ redefinition of love. He says love each other AS “I have loved you.” Now, at this point they may not realize the full extent of what this means or looks like, but in a few hours they will when Jesus willingly gives up his life for them in an act of self-sacrificing love.

The other fascinating thing about this passage is that Jesus says that it’s our love for each other that the world will be able to tell if we’re really a follower of Jesus. And that’s exactly what happened in the early church. Their love for one another wasn’t just hugs and pats on the back. They put their love into practical action. It says in Acts that in the early church there were no needy people because if a need arose, other people sold possessions and that money was used to help meet the needs of fellow believers. And nonbelievers sat up and took notice and more and more people became followers of Jesus because of this witness of love. We really need to reestablish this witness in today’s world. And it happens not just as you tell people that God loves them and has a wonderful plan for their life. It happens as they see the love of God working in and through you in very practical ways. It might be

shoveling some else's driveway, or baking a plate of cookies for them or meeting financial needs as they arise or reaching out to them in a time of great need. Many of you continue to do this on a regular basis. God's love flowing in and through you goes above and beyond what would normally be expected. And that's why Jesus' death on the cross is so extraordinary and it's the bar Jesus sets for our love for others. So, if someone has hurt you and you're struggling with forgiving them think about how Jesus showed His love for you when you'd hurt him through your sins. He didn't hold it over your head and refuse to forgive you. No, he willingly endured torture and an excruciating death as a demonstration of His love for you. It would be well worth memorizing this passage "As I have loved you, so you must love one another." And as you say this put the emphasis on "As". In fact let's do that right now.

Repeat with me 5 times this little phrase.

As I have loved you, so you must love one another

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Someone said that "Grace is God's love in action." And perhaps this is not seen anywhere better than in perhaps the most well known verse in the whole Bible – John 3:16

John 3:16 (NIV) *For God so loved the world* there's the love of God. But what follows next is how God's love shows up for us.

that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

We deserve to perish because of our sins. But God loves us too much to allow that to happen. And so, when we were all separated from God because of our sins, He sent Jesus to die on a cross. We all deserved to perish. And if God had done nothing we would have. But out of God's core nature, love, He gave us a gift we could never imagine being given. We were given eternal life instead of eternal death.

Invitation:

If you'd like to receive this amazing gift of eternal life then God asks you to accept this gift of grace and love and turn your whole life over to Jesus. If that's your desire I invite you to come forward this morning as we sing our hymn of invitation.

Living in Awe of Jesus' grace and love sermon 3/10/2019

Review of Living in Awe of Jesus:

- Living in awe of Jesus' _____
- Living in awe of Jesus' _____
- Living in awe of Jesus' _____
- Living in awe of Jesus _____
- Living in awe of Jesus' _____ and _____

1. Grace is the divine _____ of God.

How has God's grace helped you live your life?

2. Grace is an _____ of God.

What you deserved from God without Christ: _____

What God has offered you through Christ _____

Mercy is someone not giving you what you _____

God's grace is generated by God's _____ and _____.

In what ways did Jesus demonstrate grace during his ministry?

John 13:34-35 (NIV) *"A new command I give you: Love one another. _____ I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

God's grace is God's love in _____.

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