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Session 5

When Gracie Met Truthy

We all think we know something about love-and all of us have experienced love to some extent.

But Jesus tells us to love one another the way he loved us. When we look at how Jesus loved, it's terrifying. We discover that it was messy, and sometimes it seemed inconsistent. At times he seems to be forgiving; at other times he seems to hold everyone accountable. Occasionally he's harsh; in many other moments he's kind. Sometimes he points out sin; on other occasions he seems to ignore it.

Whenever we open the Scripture and take seriously the teaching of Jesus, there's a tension. We dare not walk away from this tension, even though its messy and sometimes seem confusing. If we try to resolve it, however, we will give up something very important.

Discussion Starter

As you've read or heard about the way Jesus treated individuals, what has most surprised or puzzle you?

Video Overview

In his gospel, John wrote that Jesus, as the word, "made his dwelling among us," and that he "came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Full to the brim with grace and truth-there's the tension.

We think we know what grace is and what truth is. Truth says, "Hey, you're accountable." Grace says, "Oh, you're forgiven," Grace says "You're fine." Truth says "No, you're broken." Grace says "It's going to be okay." Truth says "Oh, you're going to have to work on it."

But John says that Jesus was absolutely full of both grace and truth, To further emphasize this, John adds "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Grace and truth showed up as a full package in the person of Jesus-not balance between the two, but the full measure of both and the embodiment of both.

This is what made the love of Jesus so messy, so confusing to us at times, and so unpredictable. Jesus was all of both grace truth, and he brought all of it to bear on everyone he talked to and into every situation he encountered. If we want to know what Jesus meant when he said to love one another, we can watch how Jesus loved. He loved us by calling sin "sin"- and then he paid for it. And having paid for it, he declared, I don't condemn you.

We can't let go of truth. God is constantly saying, "Here's what is true; here's how you've got to live; here's how you've got to treat people; here's what you have to do with your morality and your ethics; and here's why you have to be accountable. Sin is destructive, and I don't want it to get you."

Journey CHURCH

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We can't let go of grace either, because to some extent sin already has us, and grace is our only way back home. Grace is the only way we'll know that we've connected or reconnected with our heavenly Father.

We need truth, and we need grace.

If Jesus is the embodiment of grace and truth, and if the church is his body—then we are the best expressions of Jesus others will ever know. So we have to be comfortable with the mess and the unfairness and the inconsistency and all the stuff that goes along with managing and hanging on to the tension around grace and truth.

The church is at its best when it embraces grace and truth and refuses to let go of either. The church is to be the dispenser of both.