

Journey CHURCH

Pastor James Greer

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Messy Grace Session 3: Grace Leader Guide

Icebreakers

In this session, we will be discussing the topic of extending grace to those to those who are different than us. Share a time when you were excluded from something. How did that experience make you feel?

Or

What is one thing from the previous two sessions that you have already started to implement in your life?

Discussion

1. In the last session, we studied how an improper understanding of the interplay between grace and truth can lead to a compromise of the truth. In what ways can this improper understanding lead to a lack of grace?

Reflection #1

2. Sam says, “The problem isn’t Christian extremism. The solution would be Christian extremism. If we were extreme about loving our neighbor...the world would be a far better place.” How can we live out “Christian extremism” in today’s culture?
3. Why do you think people tend to withhold grace from those who are different than them? Why do you think the Christian community has struggled with giving grace to the LGBT community?

Reflection #2

4. Caleb shared the story of his elders saying, “We don’t like those people.” Who are “those people” that we marginalize in our society?

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5. What is revealed about our view of God when we exclude people by not extending them grace? What is revealed about our own hearts?
6. In what ways do you have a hard time extending grace to the LGBT community? What other people do you have a hard time extending grace to?

Read Together John 4:1-26 (ESV)

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. And he had to pass through Samaria. So, he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so, Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

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The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.” The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

7. In the culture of Jesus’ day, Jews were not to associate with Samaritans. In fact, most Jews took extraordinary measure to avoid Samaritans. In what different ways would the Jews and Samaritans have reacted if they were aware of the interaction in these verses?
8. What particular words of Jesus in this passage emphasize his grace filled response?
9. How can you apply His words in your interactions with those who are different?

Read Together Luke 6:36

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

10. How does this verse challenge you?
11. Some people don't give grace because they're afraid others may think it's an approval of sin. How have you seen this play out when Christians withhold grace from the LGBT community?
12. How does trusting that God is just and in control help us give grace to those to whom we find it hard to give?
13. What main idea is Jesus trying to get across in these verses?

Reflective #3

14. Caleb says, "If we devalue another person, then we are really devaluing the grace that He offers to them." How is showing grace to those who are different then you reflective of Jesus?

Discussion Notes

Christians have experienced God's grace and truth. Because of our great experience, we want to share that with others. Often, we start by sharing the truth of God's word, forgetting about the grace. It's been said, "People don't care what you know, until they know that you care."

Take some time this week to write a letter to someone who is "far off" from God. The purpose of this letter is to share with them how much you care for them. In the letter you can share what the person means to you and how much you appreciate them.

Pray over your letter before you send it. Ask God to lay the foundation and open the door through this letter of grace?

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Closing Prayer

Giver of grace, we praise you for the endless grace you have shown in accepting us as your sons and daughters. Give us the ability to extend grace to those who we don't understand, who challenge our own measure of grace, and who fail to show grace to us. Holy Spirit, empower us to live well in the tension between grace and truth, all to the glory of your name.

Amen.