

GIVING GRACE

I. [Luke 6:32-36](#) [Isaiah 64:6-7](#) [Romans 3:10-18 & 23-25a](#) [Romans 5:6-11](#)

A. [Luke 6:32-36](#) (ESV) Jesus' Sermon on the Plain: 32 *"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.*

B. Today's the second Sunday of Advent which means Christmas Sunday is just 2 weeks away. And because this is the first Sunday of December, we will also be sharing Communion. This Advent season I'm hoping to preach on different aspects of *Giving*. Right before Thanksgiving, I shared on *giving thanks*; last Sunday I shared on *giving words*; today I want to share about *giving grace*...

C. Grace is God's undeserved favor--His mercy and love, heaped upon us. Why is it undeserved? We are God's born enemies. The rebellion in the Garden by our first parents is a part of our spiritual DNA.

1) Last Sunday Mark read from [Isaiah 64](#); listen again to verses 6-7 (ESV):
6 *We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. 7 There is no one who calls upon Your name, who rouses himself to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.*

2) In [Romans 3:10-18; 23-25a](#) (NLT) Paul extracts from OT Scriptures to make God's grace (undeserved mercy & love) found in Christ crystal clear: 10 *As the Scriptures say, "No one is righteous--not even one. 11 No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. 12 All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one." 13 "Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are filled with lies." "Snake venom drips from their lips." 14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." 15 "They rush to commit murder. 16 Destruction and misery always follow them. 17 They don't know where to find peace." 18 "They have no fear of God at all." ...23* *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. 24 Yet God, in His grace, freely makes us right in His sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty for our sins. 25a* *For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed His life, shedding His blood. (cf 2 Cor. 5:21)*

D. Since the beginning of COVID, we've been watching old Gunsmoke reruns. (Some of those episodes are 60-some years old!) Earlier this week, Doc Adams was called to the farm of a man who hates doctors, especially him. A suspicious Marshal Dillon goes to protect Doc. They learn the man's cow is sick and the owner demands Doc make him better. A furious Doc Adams relents and goes to work on the cow. The man, ever so spiteful from a past incident, refuses to pay Doc for his services. A scuffle ensues and the man stabs Doc in the gut. Bleeding badly, Dillon hauls Doc into the house

and Doc informs Matt that he must suture the severed artery or he'll bleed to death. Dillon goes to work and succeeds. Days later back in Dodge, Doc's being nursed back to health by Miss Kitty, Chester, and Marshal Dillon. Suddenly the boy of the man who stabbed Doc busts into the office and says his pa is bad sick and needs the Doc. Still in poor shape, Doc Adams' friends can't stop him from going to help the dying man. So Doc goes and saves the life of the wretch who stabbed him! But instead of gratitude, the man once again tells Doc he won't pay him! Doc could care less but angrily asks the bitter man why? The man says, "*Because my cow you doctored died!*"

E. That Gunsmoke episode is liken to many hearts towards God. Some people who've been offered God's abundant favor still reject Him! Why? '*Because their cow died*' or for some equally worthless reason. Deserving nothing but death because of our blatant rebellion against God, what does our Father do? He sends His Son. He sends His Son, born in a manger but destined for a cross. He sends His Son to take on our sin, absorb God's wrath and punishment against it, dying in our place! Such grace--mercy, love, & forgiveness--is most definitely undeserved!

F. **Romans 5:6-11** (ESV) just in case you don't believe me: **6** *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.* **7** *For one will scarcely die for a righteous person--though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die--* **8** *but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* **9** *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God.* **10** *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.* **11** *More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. (Once enemies, we've now been made friends!)*

G. So what does receiving grace have to do with giving grace? Everything! Grace has an intended effect. Those who've not experienced the grace of God, who've not embraced His undeserved favor, remain bitter enemies. They murmur about their dead cows and all the other ways they feel slighted! Those who see God's grace, who receive that grace--that undeserved mercy, love, & forgiveness--cannot help but share it with others. When you're forgiven much, you forgive much. At least that's what should happen! You bury dead cows and hatchets and past offenses and you rejoice that your life has been spared from eternal damnation! The true effect of receiving grace is giving grace to others, that is, giving favor to those who don't deserve it.

H. As you take the Bread & Cup this morning, take it with deep abiding gratitude for the undeserved favor of God, His mercy, love, and forgiveness heaped upon you because of the atoning work of His Son on the cross. Afterwards when you go home, go before the Lord and ask Him who He'd have you share the same kind of undeserved love. And then do that and never ever stop...

* Pray & Officiate Communion...

* Benediction: May the the mercy, love, and forgiveness--that amazing grace that has flowed so generously into your life from God above, flow out of your life to others. "*Freely you have received, now freely give...*"

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[Luke 6:32-36 \(ESV\)](#)

32 “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. **33** And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. **34** And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. **35** But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. **36** Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

[Isaiah 64:6-7 \(ESV\)](#)

6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. **7** There is no one who calls upon Your name, who rouses himself to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.

[Romans 3:10-18; 23-25a \(NLT\)](#)

10 As the Scriptures say, “No one is righteous--not even one. **11** No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. **12** All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.” **13** “Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are filled with lies.” “Snake venom drips from their lips.” **14** “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” **15** “They rush to commit murder. **16** Destruction and misery always follow them. **17** They don’t know where to find peace.” **18** “They have no fear of God at all.” ...**23** For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. **24** Yet God, in His grace, freely makes us right in His sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty for our sins. **25a** For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed His life, shedding His blood.

[Romans 5:6-11 \(ESV\)](#) **6** For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For one will scarcely die for a righteous person--though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die-- **8** but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. **11** More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

[Video Clips & Important Articles](#)

"Freely, Freely" - TheNCrew

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=morHP2cJoZs>

Is Grace Really Irresistible? - John Piper

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IX83rmymH6M>

Be a Channel of Grace to Others - John Piper

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1WeCblOI4g>

Loving Others - Josh McDowell

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0u0PF_2uoFo

Extending God's Grace - Dr. Gene Getz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vEt148CDDM>

Bonus Stuff

Matthew 5:43-48 (ESV)

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ **44** But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. **46** For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? **47** And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? **48** You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Romans 12:9-21 (NLT)

9 Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. **10** Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. **11** Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. **12** Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. **13** When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute you. Don’t curse them; pray that God will bless them. **15** Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. **16** Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all! **17** Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. **18** Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. **19** Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “*I will take revenge; I will pay them back,*” says the Lord. **20** Instead, “*If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.*” **21** Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Matthew 18:21-35 (NLT)

21 Then Peter came to Him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?” **22** “No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy

times seven! **23** “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. **24** In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. **25** He couldn’t pay, so his master ordered that he be sold--along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned--to pay the debt. **26** “But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ **27** Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. **28** “But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. **29** “His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. **30** But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full. **31** “When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. **32** Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. **33** Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ **34** Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. **35** “That’s what My heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”

Psalm 14:1-3 (ESV)

1 The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good. **2** The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. **3** They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

Psalm 53:1-3 (ESV)

1 The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none who does good. **2** God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. **3** They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 (ESV)

20 Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

Psalm 5:9 (AMP)

9 For there is nothing trustworthy or reliable or truthful in what they say; their heart is destruction [just a treacherous chasm, a yawning gulf of lies]. Their throat is an open grave; they [glibly] flatter with their [silken] tongue.

Psalm 140:1-3 (NIV)

1 Rescue me, LORD, from evildoers; protect me from the violent, **2** who devise evil plans in their hearts and stir up war every day. **3** They make their tongues as sharp as a serpent’s; the poison of vipers is on their lips.

Psalm 19:2-7 (NIV)

2 In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. **3** He boasts about the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD. **4** In his pride the wicked man does not seek Him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. **5** His ways are always prosperous; Your laws are rejected by him; he sneers at all his enemies. **6** He says to himself, “Nothing will ever shake me.” He swears, “No one will ever do me harm.” **7** His mouth is full of lies and threats; trouble and evil are under his tongue.

Isaiah 59:2-8 (AMP)

2 But your wickedness has separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. **3** For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with wickedness [with sin, with injustice, with wrongdoing]; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters wickedness. **4** No one sues righteously [but for the sake of doing injury to others--to take some undue advantage], and no one pleads [his case] in truth; [but rather] they trust in empty arguments and speak lies; they conceive trouble and bring forth injustice. **5** They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's webs; he who eats of their eggs dies, and from an egg which is crushed a viper breaks out. **6** Their webs will not serve as clothing, nor will they cover themselves with what they make; their works are works of wickedness [of sin, of injustice, of wrongdoing], and the act of violence is in their hands. **7** Their feet run to evil, and they rush to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are thoughts of wickedness [of sin, of injustice, of wrongdoing]; devastation and destruction are in their highways. **8** They do not know the way of peace, and there is no justice in their tracks. They have made them into crooked paths; whoever walks on them does not know peace.

Psalm 36:1-4 (ESV)

1 Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes. **2** For he flatters himself in his own eyes that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated. **3** The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit; he has ceased to act wisely and do good. **4** He plots trouble while on his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he does not reject evil.

Quote by Benjamin B. Warfield

“Grace is free sovereign favor to the ill-deserving.”

Quote by Harry Ironside

“Grace is the very opposite of merit... Grace is not only undeserved favor, but it is favor, shown to the one who has deserved the very opposite.”

Quote by Frederick Buechner

“Grace is something you can never get but can only be given. There’s no way to earn it or deserve it or bring about anymore than you can deserve the taste of raspberries and cream or earn good looks.”

Quote by J.I. Packer

"I am graven on the palms of His hands. I am never out of His mind. All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me. I know Him, because He first knew me, and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, One who loves me; and there is no moment when His eye is off me, or His attention distracted for me, and no moment, therefore, when His care falters."

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"Grace puts its hand on the boasting mouth, and shuts it once for all."

Quote by Jonathan Edwards

"Grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected."

Quote by D.L. Moody

"A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him for the next 6 months, nor can he inhale sufficient air into his lungs with one breath to sustain life for a week to come. We are permitted to draw upon God's store of grace from day to day as we need it."

Quote by Jerry Bridges

"Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace."

Quote by Charles Swindoll

"Grace releases and affirms. It doesn't smother. Grace values the dignity of individuals. It doesn't destroy. Grace supports and encourages. It isn't jealous or suspicious."

Quote by Oswald C. Hoffmann

"Grace is the love that gives, that loves the unlovely and the unlovable."

Quote by John MacArthur

"If I'm not showing grace... have I forgotten the grace I've been shown?"

Quote by Lysa Terkeurst

"I give grace because I so desperately need it."

Quote by Dawn Klinge

"Showing grace to others is about showing kindness even when they don't deserve it."

Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon

"If He gives you the grace to make you believe, He will give you the grace to live a holy life afterward."

Quote by Jerry Bridges

"Grace expresses two complementary thoughts: God's unmerited favor to us through Christ, and God's divine assistance to us through the Holy Spirit."

Quote by John Newton

"I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I hope to be. But still, I am not what I used to be. And by the grace of God, I am what I am."

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us."

Quote by John Piper

Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. Grace is the enabling gift of God not to sin. Grace is power, not just pardon."

Quote by Alexander Maclaren

"The tears of Christ are the pity of God. The gentleness of Jesus is the long-suffering of God. The tenderness of Jesus is the love of God."

What Is Grace?

by R.C. Sproul

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-grace/>

A number of decades ago at the Ligonier Valley Study Center, we sent out a Thanksgiving card with this simple statement: *"The essence of theology is grace; the essence of Christian ethics is gratitude."* In all the debates about our role versus God's role in sanctification--our growth in holiness--we'd stay on the right track if we'd remember this grace-gratitude dynamic. The more we understand how kind God has been to us and the more we are overcome by His mercy, the more we are inclined to love Him and to serve Him.

Yet we can't get the grace-gratitude dynamic right if we aren't clear on what grace means. What is grace? The catechisms many of us learned as children give us the answer: "Grace is the unmerited favor of God." The first thing that we understand about grace is what it's not--it's not something we merit. In fact, if that is all we ever understand about grace, I'm sure God will rejoice that we know His grace is unmerited. So, here's our working definition of grace--it is *unmerit*.

Paul's epistle to the Romans sheds light on what we mean when we say that grace is unmerit. In 1:18–3:20, the Apostle explains that on the final day, for the first time in our lives, we will be judged in total perfection, in total fairness, in absolute righteousness. Thus, every mouth will be stopped when we stand before the tribunal of God. This should provoke fear in the hearts of fallen people, as condemnation is the only possible sentence for sinful men and women: *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (3:23).

But those who trust in Christ Jesus have hope, for if we are in Him by faith, we have been *"justified freely by His grace."* Note that justification is accomplished not by

obligation, but freely through grace on account of the redemption purchased by Jesus alone. There's no room for boasting, for we are justified not by our works but by grace alone through faith alone. Paul goes on to cite Abraham as the preeminent example of one who was justified by faith alone and therefore free from God's sentence of condemnation. If the basis for Abraham's salvation, his justification, was something that Abraham did—some good deed, some meritorious service that he performed, some obligation that he performed--if it were on the basis of works, Paul says, he would have had something about which to boast. But Abraham had no such merit. All he had was faith, and that faith itself was a gift: "*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness*" (4:3; see [Eph. 2:8–10](#)).

[Romans 4:4–8](#) is a key passage here:

Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: "*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.*"

That's grace. Paul couldn't say it any other way. To him who works, it's debt; if you merit something, it means that someone is obligated to pay you. If I hire you as an employee and promise to pay you one hundred dollars if you work eight hours, I must pay you for working the eight hours. I'm not doing you a favor or giving you grace. You've earned your pay. You've fulfilled the contract, and I'm morally obliged to give you your wages.

With respect to the Lord, we are debtors who cannot pay. That's why the Bible speaks of redemption in economic language--we were bought with a price ([1 Cor. 6:20](#)). Only someone else--Christ--can pay our debt. That's grace. It's not our good works that secure our rescue but only the works of Christ. It's His merit, not ours. We don't merit anything. He grants us His merit by grace, and we receive it only by faith. The essence of grace is its voluntary free bestowal. As soon as it's a requirement, it's no longer grace.

Grace should never cease to amaze us. God has an absolute, pure, holy standard of justice. That's why we cling with all our might to the merit of Jesus Christ. He alone has the merit to satisfy the demands of God's justice, and He gives it freely to us. We haven't merited it. There's nothing in us that elicits the Lord's favor that leads to our justification. It's pure grace.

And the more we understand what God has done for us as sinners, the more willing we are to do whatever He requires. The great teachers of the church say the first point of genuine sanctification is an increasing awareness of our own sinfulness. With that comes, at the same time, an increasing awareness of God's grace. And with that, again, increasing love and increasing willingness to obey Him.

When we truly understand grace--when we see that God only owes us wrath but has provided Christ's merit to cover our demerit--then everything changes. The Christian motivation for ethics is not merely to obey some abstract law or a list of rules; rather, our response is provoked by gratitude. Jesus understood that when He said, "*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*" If I may have the liberty to paraphrase: "*Keep My commandments not because you want to be just, but because you love Me.*" A true understanding of grace--of God's unmerited favor--always provokes a life of gratitude and obedience.

- R.C. Sproul, Ligonier Ministries, First published in *Tabletalk Magazine*, March 1, 2015.