**Grace**

1. Choose one of the following questions to answer for yourself:
* Write about a time where someone gave you a gift that you didn’t deserve
* Write about a time when someone was patient with you when they didn’t have to be

As humans made in the image of God, we all probably have some sort of inner sense of right and wrong. You might especially know this when a person does something that hurts you or wrongs you in some way. In those moments we have an acute sense of being wronged. You might say we have a sense of what is just – including the idea that there should be consequences for wronging someone.

 But sometimes we humans can get a little too caught up in the consequences. Perhaps we get so focused on punishing someone for the wrong they did that we actually forget their humanity. We might forget that we are human as well and sometimes lose our way. Maybe we need to show a little more Grace towards one another.

Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuOHFXQ5wIE>

1. Share one thing from that video that stood out to you.

Grace includes a few kinds of actions: forgiveness, patience, mutual respect. Spend a moment considering forgiveness. Forgiveness is a significant word in the Christian faith. Our whole story is based on the idea that despite the ways in which we have failed to love our neighbor as ourselves, and despite not living up to what God has dreamed for the world, God is still with us. God has forgiven us for the ways in which we fail or fall short – in other words, our sins are forgiven.

1. But why would God be so gracious to us? Watch the video and see if you can answer that question for yourself ☺

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/character-of-god-grace/>

Sometimes Christians mistakenly make God out to be monstrous and angry in the Old Testament and loving and gracious in the New Testament. However, the idea that God is gracious is actually found throughout much of the OT writings!

*“The Lord, The Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness…”*

*-Exodus 34:6*

 Jesus is the human embodiment of the Divine, showing us what the grace of God looks like. Jesus’s life and death show us how far God is willing to go to forgive humanity for our failure to live out the love that has been shown to us by God. Through his death on a cross, Jesus shows us that God is willing to go through suffering and death in order to forgive us. Instead of judging us harshly and punishing us for all the ways we sin against each other, God goes through the pain and suffering we inflict on one another. And instead of seeking out revenge, God forgives us. Even while on the cross, Jesus is gracious enough to say, “God, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

That is grace. It’s not about turning a blind eye to sin and evil – Jesus never calls us to turn a blind eye to injustice in the world. It’s about seeing how people fail and fall short of the greatest commandment, and choosing to love them anyway. BTW, this also includes grace towards ourselves. Remember, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ☺

Read John 15:12-17

1. What do you think Jesus means when he says his disciples are to “go and bear fruit, fruit that will last”?
2. If more people were gracious toward one another, how do you think the world today might look different?

This week, keep your eyes and heart open for opportunities to show grace to others. It’s going to require patience and sometimes it may require people being patient with us. But if we could be just a little bit more graceful with one another – especially if we do it freely with no strings attached – we might find that our lives and world are changed just a little bit for the better.

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