

Have We Taken Grace Too Far

Connect Group Guide - 1.11.26

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker

Share a time when someone showed you unexpected grace or mercy. How did it make you feel, and did it change your behavior?

Message Overview

This message challenges us to examine whether we've misunderstood grace as a license to continue in sin rather than as the power to be transformed. Pastor Mike asks the difficult question: "Have we preached grace in a way that saves people from hell, but not from sin?"

Key Scripture

- Romans 6:1-2, Titus 2:11-12

Key Takeaways

- **Grace was never meant to be an excuse** - Grace doesn't excuse sin; it executes our old nature
- **Grace that doesn't change you isn't biblical grace** - True grace teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness
- **When grace is detached from truth, it becomes dangerous** - We've rebranded sin rather than confronting it
- **Grace sets you free, but freedom has a purpose** - Freedom in Christ is for transformation, not indulgence
- **Jesus never minimized sin; He maximized mercy** - Grace removes shame but never removes responsibility

Discussion Questions

Understanding Grace

1. How would you define grace in your own words? How does this compare with the definition given in the sermon: "God's free, undeserved favor, kindness, and love given to humanity"?

2. Read Romans 6:1-2. Why do you think Paul anticipated the question "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" What does his emphatic "By no means!" tell us about grace?

Examining Our Hearts

3. Pastor Mike mentioned we've "rebranded sin" to make it more palatable (struggle instead of sin, free will instead of disobedience, etc.). Can you think of other examples where we soften language around sin? Why do we do this?
4. The message used the belt analogy—we don't notice gradual weight gain one hole at a time. What are some areas where the church (or you personally) might have "loosened truth" gradually over time?
5. Have you ever caught yourself thinking, "God will forgive me, so it's okay if I do this"? What's wrong with that mindset?

Grace and Transformation

6. Read Titus 2:11-12. The passage says grace "teaches us to say no." What does it mean that grace is a teacher, not just a covering?
7. Pastor Mike said, "If grace never tells you no, you're not being disciplined, you're being enabled." How can we tell the difference between healthy grace and unhealthy enabling—both in our own lives and in how we treat others?
8. Discuss the statement: "Grace that never corrects you isn't grace—it's tolerance." How does this apply to how we love others in the church?

Living in True Grace

9. Read John 8:10-11 (the woman caught in adultery). Jesus did two things: removed condemnation AND demanded change ("Go and sin no more"). How do we balance these two aspects of grace in our own walk with God?
10. The message stated, "We don't repent to earn grace. We repent because of grace." What's the difference? Why does this matter?
11. Pastor Mike mentioned that sometimes good intentions aren't God's intentions. Can you share an example of when good intentions led you (or the church) in the wrong direction?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to implement this week:

12. **Daily Grace Audit:** Each evening this week, ask yourself: "Did I live today in a way that honors the grace I've been given, or did I use grace as an excuse?"
13. **Reclaim Holy Language:** When you're tempted to say "I'm struggling with..." challenge yourself to be more direct: "I'm choosing to sin by..." Notice how that changes your perspective.
14. **The "No" Exercise:** Identify one "good" thing God is asking you to say no to this season so you can say yes to His better plan.

Leader Notes

- Be Vulnerable: As the leader, be willing to share your own struggles with grace and sin. This isn't about judgment but honest transformation.
- Create Safety: This topic can bring up guilt and shame. Emphasize that conviction from the Holy Spirit is different from condemnation—God convicts to restore, not to destroy.
- Avoid Legalism: While challenging abuse of grace, be careful not to swing to legalism. The goal is heart transformation through love of Jesus, not rule-keeping.
- Follow Up: This is a heavy topic. Check in with group members during the week, especially those who seemed particularly convicted or troubled.

Prayer Requests & Closing