

Hello My Name is Grace: Welcome Home

Announcements for Sunday

- May 31<sup>st</sup> combined service
  - Grillers
  - Clean up crew
  - Set up crew
- Celebrate Recovery
  - Training in July
- Pastor's Purse
  - Volunteer Advocate

I have been amazed at the news lately.  
ISIS killing people in the name of Allah  
People looting in the name of justice

I've been watching the news like you probably have over the last several weeks.  
People who do wrong...are obviously guilty. I thought to myself what if people got what they deserved.  
Looters would go to jail.  
Bad cops would be arrested.  
Terrorists would get terrorized.  
I mean think about it.

How great a world would it be.  
People who work hardest would get paid the most.  
People who slack at work would be paid the least.  
People who drive safe would get free insurance, people who speed and drive wreckless would pay it all. I wouldn't have to pay insurance for accidents that I'm not at fault.

If people got what they deserved, the people who feel guilty for the abuse that was done to them would no longer feel guilty. They would be freed from seeing themselves as damaged or broken.

If people got what they deserved, people dealing with illnesses from cancer to depression would see hope.

IF people got what they deserved, people who went through express lanes with carts full of groceries would get...man don't even get me started.

Then I thought about it a bit more. I thought about how I had lied...making me a liar. I thought about how I had cheated on my taxes in the past...making me a thief. But I didn't really cheat, I had only over expensed things

That's the problem with people getting what they deserve...I get caught up in the wash.

That's where our Life changing introduction comes in. Hello my name is Grace. This week justifying grace

- **Correction**
- **Romans 3:21-26:** But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (or through the faith of Jesus Christ) for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Last week we talked about God's grace working in our lives before we knew him. Putting us in places where he could reveal himself, putting us around people who would love us with his kind of love, all pointing us toward Him.

But once we are awoken to God, once our will is freed so that we can choose something besides sin. We encounter the fact that we have messed up. Our attempts to justify our sin, or even if we haven't sinned much we certainly wanted to. We need God's justifying grace, so this justification is something we can all relate to.

Justification – Something we can all **RELATE TO**.

- Zacchaeus – small man, big change
  - **Luke 19:1–10 (NRSV) — 1** He (Jesus) entered Jericho and was passing through it.  
**2** A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a **chief tax collector** and was rich.
    - Tax Collectors made money
    - Supported romans oppression of the Jews
    - He was the chief
    - Every reason for people to want the worst for him, he deserved it.
  - **3** He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was **short** in stature.
    - A wee little man

- Scholars point out that he was probably not just short, but he probably had a condition like dwarfism.
  - He was an outcast, not just because of how he took advantage of people
  - But he was ridiculed because of his stature
- **4** So he **ran** ahead and **climbed** a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.
  - No self-respecting Jewish man would run ahead...nor would he climb a tree. It was a no-no.
- **5** When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." **6** So he hurried down and **was happy to welcome him**.
  - This is not what Zacchaeus deserved.
  - But that is what Jesus did. He treated people better than they deserved. He loved and accepted people who didn't deserve it...That's what he did for me. That's what he did for you. He went to the cross to take what I deserved, so I could get what I didn't deserve...just like Zacchaeus.
- **7** All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." **8** Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much."
  - What was Zacchaeus's response?
  - He was changed.
  - He knew he was changed.
- **9** Then Jesus said to him, "**Today salvation has come to this house**, because he too is a son of Abraham. **10** For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

Justifying Grace: **JUST AS IF I'D NEVER...**

- "In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them." (2 Corinthians 5:19)
  - Reconciliation
    - If you have ever tried to reconcile a relationship, you know it takes a long time.
    - My brother and I.
    - But with God it is instantaneous
    - Since Adam and Eve we have been separated...no longer
  - Pardon – a public declaration of innocence
    - Death is what is due to us, but by faith, we don't have to experience it.

- Pardon comes as we accept our guilt. When we recognize our sin...in the moment we turn to God all is forgiven.
- “But God proves His love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)
  - Restoration
    - Just like with Zacchaeus, we are restored to God.
    - We are enabled to dine with God.
    - But not only that, we are also being restored to our created purpose...in Zacchaeus’ case - generosity.

But Justification is **different**.

- Justifying Grace is what God does. He gives us restoration, pardon, and reconciliation. That is grace. But what we often confuse is that grace and our justification.
- It’s like the difference between grilling burgers and a grilled burger.
  - One is the work and the other is the benefit.
  - We receive the benefit, the justification through faith
- Saved by grace **Through faith**
  - **Ephesians 2:8–9 (NRSV) — 8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— **9** not the result of works, so that no one may boast.
- Our understanding of justification and God’s justifying grace are different from others. Contrary to what you may have heard or been taught, the scriptures are clear that as justification pardons, reconciles, and restores, it is the beginning of a relationship with God. It isn’t the end.
- There was a time when all we wanted people to do was pray a sinners prayer and get saved.
- Don’t get me wrong, I want people, I would love it if you, today prayed that God would save you. I would love it if just like Zacchaeus, today was the day of your salvation. But I’d more like to see a Zacchaeus response from us.
- When we read the story of Zacchaeus, we see him repent and believe...
  - The word repent isn’t in there. When you hear it, you think I’m asking you to confess all your sins...no repentance is turning to follow him whom you believe in.
  - That’s what Zacchaeus did. That’s what I pray each one of will do.
  - I love watching those videos of moms and dads coming home from war, surprising their kids. My favorite is when mom or dad is in the house hiding and the kids come home from school like it’s just a regular day...but they get this

amazing welcome home. One that changes their lives. Creates a memory that will never be forgotten. That's what I want for us today.

- Follow your faith through the door of salvation.
- Next week we will look at where this faith leads us. But for the moment...imagine if you will step through the threshold of faith.
- Welcome home...or I'm home...
  - The house of the Lord,
  - Porch of prevenient Grace
  - Door of justifying grace
    - Opened only by faith

Dear God, I believe that Jesus died on the Cross, that He shed His precious blood and paid for my sins. I receive Your forgiveness for all my sins. I believe that Jesus rose from the dead, victorious over death, sin, and the devil. I turn my back on my old ways, and I receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I'm not going to live to please myself any longer. I'm going to live for Him every day. Jesus, I am Yours, now and forever! Heavenly Father, thank You for hearing my prayer. My past is gone, my sins are forgiven, I am Your child, and part of your eternal kingdom – in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer in faith today...Welcome Home