

John 20:30-21:25 “Grace at the Breakfast Table”

Preached @ Harambee Church by Pastor
Michael Gunn on September 30th, 2007

"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me
□ I once was lost but now am found, □
Was blind, but now, I see. □
T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear.
□ And Grace, my fears relieved. □
How precious did that Grace appear
the hour I first believed.
John Newton (1725-1807)

Intro

We come to the end of this great book! We have taken a look at the heart of the gospel message; that God loves us enough, and has a passion for His glory enough to send His Son to die on the cross so that He would be justified to give us eternal life in His Son. In His death we are justified, and in His resurrection we are given life to live for Him and with Him forever. We saw that Paul uses the notion of Christ's death, burial and resurrection as a reminder to us that our old self was buried (And dead) with Him, so that we too could be raised to a newness of life in His resurrection (see **Romans 6:1-4**). That's such an incredible picture of the power of God working in the lives of His people to transform them for His glory.

John says in chapter 20 verses 30-31 that He has written this so that we'd believe, and that in that belief (Faith) we'd have life. This isn't just a physical existence, but a reason for existence. It is a life that is granted to us through grace. It's an "Alive" life, "Abundant" (**John 10:10**), and filled with a peace that is beyond our circumstances (**John 16:33**).

Today, we see an ethereal vignette reminding us that God is motivated by His love, and the grace He bestows on all men (see **Matthew 5:45** and **Acts 14:16-17**). He is a gracious, good God! Our story centers on Jesus making breakfast for His disciples. God's grace is found in the mundane, ordinary events in our human existence. How often do we see God's grace when we say grace at our dinner tables? Our last section of scripture highlights **3 aspects** of Grace that I pray will empower us to live as grace givers, motivated by God's love and called to sacrifice for His glory.

From the Head...

Grace Forgives (John 21:1-14)

This section appears as though it's just a story about catching fish, but I believe it is more than that. These are His guys, all of whom ditched Him at the greatest time of need. We just saw that Thomas wouldn't believe unless he had empirical evidence of Jesus' existence. These are the guys that Jesus asked to "Follow" Him way back in chapter one (Verse 43), and they did until it appeared that He couldn't do anything for them. Now they are fishing. This is something that they normally do very well. This is their expertise! They are pro's! Yet, their day is a failure. They are not catching anything. The memory of Jesus is fresh on their mind as they contemplate the day's failures, and maybe reflect with some guilt on the fact that they did not believe in Jesus at His hardest moment. But instead of reminding them of their shame, Jesus cooks them breakfast. He cooks them breakfast with the fish that they have just caught, because Jesus miraculously led them to their days catch. This is Jesus' reminder that when they trust Him, He'd make them "Fishers of men" (see **Matthew 4:18; Luke 5:3-6**). This is an act of forgiveness by Jesus. In spite of their faithfulness, He still desired to work with them, and fellowship with them. Here we have a piece of the kingdom. In spite of all of failures and sins, God still wants to commune with us. It is the garden restored! Forgiveness and true restoration and community is a result of the cross, Jesus is displaying it!

Grace Motivates (John 21:15-17)

From forgiveness Jesus takes the chief sinner of them all, Peter, and gently restores him to ministry motivated by love. 3 times Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him. 2 of those times Jesus uses the Greek terms "Agape" (Meaning an unconditional love), but Peter answers Him with another Greek term, "Phileo," which means a familial love. The third time Jesus asks Peter, He uses the same term "Phileo." The last time Peter was around a fire, He was denying his friend and His Lord. Where Jesus demonstrated forgiveness and restoration in the making of this meal, He punctuates it with the restoration of Peter to usefulness. Note that Jesus doesn't commission Peter to service, but He commends him to love. Service without love is pharisaic. God is the goal of our service, and He needs to be the center of our devotion, not the mission. The mission is an outworking of the love of God in our own hearts. Peter needed to be restored to this relationship before he could think about loving anyone else. Our motivation to do anything for God must be love. Even Peter's lack of ability to love like God is used by God for His purposes. We are paupers when it comes to the riches of

God in this world, but we are children of the wealthiest man in the world! We must have first things first, or else, we will become defeated and burned out trying to please God, who is eternally pleased in His Son!

Grace Calls (John 21:18-25)

After we are restored, God calls us to mission. In this passage, we see that sometimes Jesus calls some to die, and others to live. 2 Timothy 3:12 says that "*All who decide to live godly in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted!*" For some that means to literally be beaten for their faith, others are killed for being Christian, where many of us just face a verbal assault from a non-believing world. In a new anti-theist best seller, "**God is Not Great!**" Christopher Hitchens writes, "*Religion is "violent, irrational, intolerant, allied to racism and tribalism and bigotry, invested in ignorance and hostile to free inquiry, contemptuous of women and coercive toward children."* While much in his book may bring out the truth of the antics of man-made religion, the vitriolic rhetoric is an obvious attack on the beliefs and worldview of any believer, except of course those that "*believe*" there is no God (Hitchens has even written a polemic called "*The Missionary Position*," ripping Mother Theresa).

Either way, Jesus ends where He began; calling people to "Follow Him." There will continue to be many who hate God, and who will call us away from our first love, but God continues to call us to follow Him, and to love Him, and to love people. The only way we will truly silence our critics is to love them. We are called by God and sent like Him (**John 20:21**) to love Him, and to love like Him.

...To the Heart

I pray that this book has helped you know Jesus more intimately, and that His grace and love is permeating in your soul! It is this grace that we are called to believe that still affects humanity all over. In spite of evil, and death and destruction, and all of the arguments against the reality of a God in the universe, people still cry out for a world where grace, love and forgiveness, along with perfect justice rules. This is truly seen in the person and cross of Jesus Christ, and it is the message that we need to weave into the fabric of every culture we touch!

For Further Reading: "*The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John*" William Barclay; "*The Gospel of John*," F.F. Bruce; "*The New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of John*," William Hendriksen; "*Preaching the Word; John: That You May Believe*," R. Kent Hughes; "*The NIV Application Commentary: John*," Gary M. Burge; "*The Pillar NT Commentary: The Gospel According to John*," D.A. Carson; "*The Word Biblical Commentary on John*" George R. Beasley-Murray

Next Weeks Verses: We are starting our "Transformation Series" which is a topical evaluation of how the gospel transforms people's hearts and motives. We will be borrowing heavily from

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