

Advent 2023 “Grace upon Grace”

John 1:14-18

December 17, 2023

John 1:14-18 ESV

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) 16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

John 1:16 ESV

16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

2 Timothy 1:9 NIV

9 He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

Hebrews 9:12-14 NIV

12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Galatians 3:15-18 NIV

15 Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. 16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. 17 What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. 18 For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

“After God gave the promise to Abraham, He gave the law to Moses. Why? He had to make things worse before He could make them better. The law exposed sin, provoked sin, condemned sin. The purpose of the law was to lift the lid off man’s respectability and disclose what he is really underneath—sinful, rebellious, guilty, under the judgment of God and helpless to save himself. And the law must still be allowed to do its God-given duty today. One of the great faults of the contemporary church is the tendency to soft-pedal sin and judgment ... We

must never bypass the law and come straight to the gospel. To do so is to contradict the plan of God in biblical history ... No man has ever appreciated the gospel until the law has first revealed him to himself. It is only against the inky blackness of the night sky that the stars begin to appear, and it is only against the dark background of sin and judgment that the gospel shines forth."

-John Stott

Grow Group Discussion Questions

- 1.) What did God say to you through His Word during our Sunday gathering?
- 2.) Have you ever considered that Jesus not only laid down His life to pay our debt but also came and lived life on earth, facing the same trials, challenges, and temptations we face? How does Jesus's time on earth impact your understanding of God and His love for you and others?
- 3.) Josh talked about waves being a picture of grace in abundance: grace upon grace that never ends. Have you experienced a time where the abundance of God's grace was especially clear to you?
- 4.) When the law points out your sin, how do you know you are fully redeemed by abundant grace? How does grace bring us to true obedience in a way the law never could?
- 5.) How can this understanding of Christ's gift for us impact the way we interact with our loved ones and the world around us this Christmas?
- 6.) How does Jesus show unity between the Old and New Testaments?
- 7.) How was God's giving of the law in the Old Testament an act of grace? How is that grace made full in Jesus?

We can't wait to celebrate Christ's abundant grace with you this Saturday at the VBC for Christmas Eve Eve! Have a great week, Rivertree Family!