Reflecting Grace

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Date: 01 September 2020

Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0:00] Good morning. Welcome to our online service for Sunday, August the 30th, 2020. My name is Kent Dixon and I'm the lead pastor of Braemar Baptist Church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Welcome to everyone who's joining us this morning. If you're from our church, welcome. And if you're just tuning in, just happen to find us online, then welcome as well. And also welcome to people who are watching or listening to this Sunday morning service down the road.
In recorded format. So welcome to everyone who's tuning in and however you're doing that. Please check out the summary information. If you're watching this on Facebook, please check out the summary information below the video for ways to connect with us.
If you'd like to know more about our church, you can visit us online at braemarbaptist.com. That's B-R-A-E-M-A-R-Baptist.com. And we'd love to hear from you. You can contact us in there as well.
So I'm glad you're here this morning. However you're connecting with us in whatever way that looks like for you, welcome. And I'm really glad that you're here. Let's open in prayer this morning.
[1:11] Father God, as we continue to explore the idea of your grace, your love for us, your kindness, the salvation that you offer us through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Lord, there's so many aspects to your grace that we can't even begin to understand. And yet, the truth of your word in Scripture reveals to us what grace means.
And Lord, the opportunity that we have to grow in relationship with you and get a greater understanding of what your grace means for us in practical terms. That's just so great, Lord. Thank you so much for that opportunity.
Thank you that you love us, that you care for us, and that you're here with us and walking through us in these uncertain times. You are still with us and you are still a good, good Father.
And we love you for that. And Lord, we come before you this morning and we bring you our worship, our praise, and we look forward to recognizing you as our God this morning and celebrating that together in this way.
[2:13] And we pray all of these things in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen. Well, let's join in worship singing this morning. So we're going to sing two songs.

We're going to sing Be Thou My Vision, which you may know. And we're also going to sing another song that's a bit shorter called I Am Resolved. And you'll be able to follow the lyrics and listen to the music online, as always.
And so I Am Resolved is a song that really struck me. I found it really powerful. I love the music. And yet it wasn't one that was too familiar to me.
So it may be new to you as well. So we're actually going to go through that one twice. So don't be surprised if that plays again and you have an opportunity to get to know it.
Because I like it. And I think we may use that one on Sunday mornings again. So let's learn it together. But at this point, we're going to begin with Be Thou My Vision.
[3:16] And then I Am Resolved. So God bless you as we worship God together with our voices. Be Thou My Vision O Lord of my heart Not be all else to me Say that Thou art Thou my best thought By day or by night Waking or sleeping Thy presence my light Be Thou my great Father Be Thou my wisdom

Be Thou my wisdom Be Thou my true word I ever with Thee Thou with me Thou with me My Lord Thou my great Father And I Thy true son Thou in me dwelling And I with Thee And are with Thee And I with Thee And I with Thee Riches are heed On Your land Empty praise Thou mine Inheritance Now and always Thou and Thou only

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Be first in my heart High King of Heaven My treasure Thou art Hacking of Heaven After victory won May I reach Heaven's joys O Heaven's son Heart of my own heart Whatever before Still be my vision O Ruler of all Still be my vision
O Ruler of all I am resolved No longer to linger Traum by the world's delights Things that are higher Things that are nobler These have allured my sight And I will hasten to Him Hasten so glad and free Jesus, greatest, highest I will come to Thee I am resolved to go to the Savior
Leaving my sin and strife He is the true one He is the just one He hath the words of life And I will hasten to Him Hasten so glad and free Jesus, greatest, highest I will come to Thee I am resolved No longer to linger Traum by the world's delights Things that are higher Things that are nobler [8:28] These have allured my sight And I will hasten to Him Hasten so glad and free Jesus, greatest, highest I will come to Thee I am resolved to go to the Savior Leaving my sin and strife He is the true one He is the true one He is the just one He hath the words of life And I will hasten to Him Hasten so glad and free Jesus, greatest, highest I will come to Thee So I hope you enjoyed those songs

That I am resolved song is so great The words are so great And that melody, I just love it So I hope you enjoyed that As we sang praise to our God This morning So as we continue In our series on grace This morning Our sermon is titled Reflecting Grace And as we will be reflecting A bit more on how God's grace Changes our lives So that is what we are going to be Looking at this morning And we are also going to be looking At some of the practical ways That having received God's grace We can then reflect it Towards other people And we have recognized That God's grace Is most evident In the birth, death, resurrection And living example Of Jesus Christ God's grace towards us Is perhaps most powerfully evident In the forgiveness of our sin So let's dive right into
Scripture this morning In Ephesians 2 Verses 4 to 8 I'm reading from the NIV Paul begins this chapter Talking about the sinful nature Of humanity But then he ultimately returns To a message of hope Paul says But because of his great love for us God who is rich in mercy Made us alive with Christ Even when we were dead In transgressions It is by grace You have been saved And God raised us up With Christ And seated us with him In the heavenly realms In Christ Jesus In order that In the coming ages He might show The incomparable riches Of his grace Expressed in his kindness To us In Christ Jesus Paul goes back To this theme again For it is by grace You have been saved Through faith And it's not from yourselves
It's the gift of God Not by works So that no one could boast For we are God's workmanship Created in Christ Jesus To do good works Which God prepared In advance for us to do Do you think the Apostle Paul Believed in the grace of God?
It's certainly a prominent theme In his theology And in his writing And if you know his story You'll see grace And the grace of God At work Really deeply there And you'll see why Paul's focus on God's grace Throughout his writing Is such a foundational part Of his life So writing in Ephesians Paul is reminding us To be careful Not to become proud Of our salvation He suggests here instead That we need to humbly Thank God For what he has done For us And we need to Encourage others Who may be struggling In their own faith journey And then we also need To share with everyone That we meet We need to share The truth of God's grace Because the foundation Of God's grace towards us Lies in the forgiveness And salvation That can be found Through a relationship
[13:06] With Jesus There's a perspective On Christianity I believe And you can probably Relate to this That it's somehow All about following The rules Right?

And that somehow Those rules Are designed To tie us down To drain all the fun And spontaneity Of life Can you relate To that perspective On Christianity?
Have you even felt That way In your own life At times? There's a perspective That continues In making us Out to be a bunch Of rule following robots Christians are rule followers Who are governed By a God Who has Unachievable expectations And who is rarely If ever Pleased with us Have you heard That perspective Before?
And I have a question For you this morning If you've heard That perspective More than that Is it your perspective Somehow? That you have to Somehow follow All of God's Impossible rules And that you're Doomed to fail Somehow you're doomed To constantly Fall short Of what you perceive To be God's Standard for you Constantly disappointing God And failing To receive His approval Is that your perspective?

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Even if you've Heard the truth Of God's Immeasurable love For you And his desire To be with you No matter the cost Do you still feel Hopelessly inadequate To somehow Meet what you think God expects of you?
[14:49] I'm here to tell you This morning That if that's Your perspective That's fantastic News Am I crazy? No I'm not Because that Perspective That false Reflection Of God's grace Is one I want to Change for you This morning At the risk Of you thinking Again That I've Somehow lost My mind Let me clarify This for you A bit We've been Focusing on The Apostle Paul this Morning And some Of his Reflections On God's Grace Some of you May know This But some May not That in The Bible Paul refers To something He calls A thorn In my flesh So we use Expressions like That ourselves Don't we?

We suggest That something Is a thorn In our side Or a pain In the neck Or a pain Somewhere else But in Paul's case It seems To have Really been A thing It was A literal Thing And Paul Never really Elaborates On it He never Really goes Into detail Or spells It right Out for us But some Scholars have Suggested that Paul's thorn May have Been malaria May have Been epilepsy May have Been an eye Disease of Some kind And Paul Actually speaks Of the thorn As an illness When he writes About it in The book of Galatians Chapter 4 He talks About his Thorn As an Illness There And as He talks About it In 2nd Corinthians Paul says That he Pleaded With God To take It away From him He begged God To take It away But Paul Says But he Said to me Paul is Speaking of God My grace Is sufficient For you My power Is made Perfect In weakness And Paul Continues there Therefore I will boast All the more Gladly About my Weaknesses So that Christ's Power May rest On me That is why For Christ's Sake I delight In weakness In insults In hardships In persecutions In difficulties For when I am Weak Then I am Strong Yes God has Given us Rules And direction And the Example of Jesus Life To guide Us But friends He never Expected Us To do It on Our own He never Expected Us to Live the Christian Life In our Own Strength God's Grace Comes
Through For us Again Here Are you Feeling Discouraged Great Ask God For his Courage Are you Feeling Unlovable Perfect Ask God To remind You How he Feels About you If you If you're Feeling Unlovable Or like You can't Meet the Standard Confess Your sin To God Ask him To give You Strength If you're Feeling Incapable Hopelessly Incapable Of turning Away From the Sin In your Life Excellent Because you're Not meant To do it On your Own It's not Meant To be Easy If you Try to Do it Yourself And sometimes It's not Easy Even under God's Strength But confess Sin When you Struggle When you Face Challenges In your
Life Come to God With those Things Trust him With those Things Ask him To give You the Strength And the Perspective And the Power And the Courage To face Them Because you Don't Have to Face Them Alone And as We learn In our Sermon Series On the Lord's Prayer Testing Is an So an Opportunity To be Tested And an Opportunity To build Our Character And build Our Faith We pray That God Will not Allow Satan To turn A test Into a Temptation Do you Remember that Testing Is what God Will allow Us to Experience To grow Our Faith Grow Our Character But he Never Leaves us In that Process But Satan Will seek To turn A test Into a Temptation Which if we Try to face It on our Own strength We risk Falling If you're a
[19:42] Parent here This morning Or listening This morning I want you To consider These questions Has your Child ever Disappointed You Has your Child made Bad Decisions Have they Hurt you Have they Hurt others Have they Even hurt Themselves With selfish Choices or Actions That might Best be Described as Rash Or poorly Thought out And maybe You can even Recognize times When you Made bad Calls like That when You were Young So I Recognize That even Parents Aren't Perfect As much As some Of us Might like To think We are And many People Many Parents Have experienced Challenges in Their own Lives and Through their Own childhood Or even Past parenting Experiences That have Left scars But despite The bad Choices our Children make Do we Ever truly Stop loving

Them Despite the Choices that Our children Make we May not Agree with Them We may Not want Them to Make the Choices that We see Them making And yet Do we Ever stop Loving Them I hope Your answer This morning Is of Course not Because I Want you to Reflect on That and Project that Perspective Onto your Understanding of The grace of God towards You Our heavenly Father who Loves infinitely More completely More deeply More perfectly Than any Human parent Ever could He supports Us and He is there For us when We fail He forgives Us when we Mess up And he Always welcomes Us back with Open arms Friends God Doesn't expect Us to be Perfect He doesn't Expect us to

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Somehow earn His grace Earn his Love or Forgiveness That's not what The Christian Life is about Not at all Friends the Christian life Is not about Judgment But about Mercy It's not Condemnation It's not about Forgiveness And redemption It's not about What God has Done for You Although that's Part of it It's about what God has done And what God Will do And what God Is doing For humanity And our Choice to Follow the Guidelines Of God The rules And the Example of Jesus That Jesus Modelled For us In his Own life Following Those guidelines Should flow Naturally Out of Love They should Flow naturally Out of Gratitude For what God did For us First Do you see
The difference There We behave We follow God's Example We Do what We're Asked Out of A response Out of A heart Of love And gratitude For the Grace And the Love that God has Shown us First Do you think Our world Needs Jesus It's an Obvious Question Maybe Do you Think that Other people Would benefit From knowing The truth And receiving The grace And freedom That you Have received Through Jesus Or if you're Listening or Watching this Morning Maybe you Don't know What I'm Talking about Maybe you You would Long for Acceptance You long For someone To forgive You For You long For some Sign that God cares For you And so I'm Here to tell You this Morning that God deeply Loves you God created You And so if You've heard This a thousand Times in your
Life It's no Less true That I'm Saying it Now So here's A hard Question If you Have received The grace Of God If you Have received The love Of God And a Relationship With Jesus Has changed Your life Do you Tell other People about Jesus I want you To consider Something For a Moment Do you Remember When someone Told you About Jesus Do you Remember what Your life Was like Before that Moment And do you Remember what Changed for you Afterwards For most People There was a Change There was a Moment There was a Realization As they learned The truth Of God And this is Something that Only you And God Know for Sure Whether you Share it Or not But I Have a Question for
[24:44] You I'm not Trying to Make you Feel guilty But if You don't Tell people About Jesus Why don't You Maybe you're Afraid they'll Politely turn You down Or maybe You're afraid That someone Will mock Your beliefs Maybe you're Afraid of Damaging an Existing Relationship That's important To you And those Are valid Concerns And they're Real concerns But friends What's the Alternative If someone Never hears About Jesus Never hears They're lost Sure you can Argue Well someone Else will Tell them Eventually Or that's Not my Job It's not My skill It's not My strength And that's Fair But Why not You Seriously Why not You In 2nd Timothy 1 Verse 9 Paul speaks To Timothy Who's

One of His One of His Students And he Talks To him About Not Being Ashamed Of The Gospel Of Jesus And Paul Says to Timothy But join Me in Suffering For the Gospel By the Power Of God Who Has Saved Us And Called Us To a Holy Life Not Because Of Anything That We Have Done But Because Of His Own Purpose And Grace This Grace Was Given To Us In Christ Jesus Before The Beginning Of Time But It Has Now Been Revealed Through The Appearance Of Our Savior Christ Jesus Who Has Destroyed Death And Has Brought Life And Immortality To Life Through The Gospel We Do Not Deserve To Be Saved My Friends We Don't Deserve It But God Offers Us Salvation Anyway Why Because He
Loves Us And As Followers Of Jesus Who Have Received God's Grace We Are Called To Share The Gospel Share The Truth Of That Grace Share The Source Of That Grace With Others We're Called To Reflect That Grace In And Through Our Lives And I Think We Recognize That Paul And Timothy Faced Real Persecution And They Had Real A Real Reason To Be Afraid Of Sharing The Gospel But In Our Day And Age Where We Live We Still Have An Opportunity We Still Have A Chance To Share The Gospel With People And Maybe You're Really Not Feeling Like God Has Given You Skills In That Area Skills In You Know We Use The Big Word Evangelism But It's Really Having A Conversation With People About The Things That Ideally Matter To You Most And If You Care About Someone Deeply Enough To Have A Relationship With Them Then Share What Matters Most To You With Them Are You Afraid Of Sharing The Gospel Are You Afraid Of Sharing The Truth Of What You Believe With The People Who Matter Most In Your Life To You That Don't Know Jesus We We All Have Different Stories We Recognize That But If We Believe In Christ Do You Know What We Share All Of Us At The Very Center Of Our Stories Grace This Morning We Reflected On What God's Grace Means In Our Lives And I'm Hoping That You Gained A More True Perspective Of As I Met As I Talked About It Last Week The Attitude Of Gratitude We Should Seek To

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Reflect In Response To Being People Who Have Received That Gift Of Grace So As People Who Are Living Under God's Grace I Want To Suggest Some Practical Ways That We Can Reflect That Grace In Our Lives And Through Our Actions As Theologian Karl Barth Once Said Grace Must Find Expression In Life Otherwise It's Not Grace Grace I'll say That Again Grace Must Find Expression In Life Otherwise It is Not Grace In Other Words As People Who Have Received God's Grace Our Lives Should Be Lived As A Reflection Of That Grace
[30:01] Human Human Understanding Human Understanding Of Morality Or Ethics Friends As People Who Are Forgiven We Are Called To Forgive And So When Someone Hurts You Seek To Make Forgiveness Your First Response Seek Not To Hold On To But To Let Go And Forgive People Seek To Forgive People Without Conditions Because Your Own Forgiveness From God Has None And On The Flip Side Of That Forgiveness Coin We Need To Be Willing To Ask Other People To Forgive Us When We've Done Something That May Have Hurt Them And So We All Make Mistakes We All Mess Up And We All Hurt People But

Even An Intentional Hurt May Need To An Unintentional Hurt Sorry May Need To Be Forgiven So If You Recognize Even Though You Didn't Intent To Hurt Someone If You Have Hurt Them And You Recognize That Ask Them To Forgive You Ask Them To Forgive You And It Will Help Deepen A Relationship An Already Existing One And Make It Richer And More Meaningful Friends We Also Need To Be People Who Watch Our Mouths And I'm Not Just Talking About Swearing Here That's A Big Part Of It But I'm Talking About Things Like Being Negative Being Critical Of Others Talking Behind People's Back Being Judgmental These Are All Things That Don't Reflect Well On People Who Claim To Follow Jesus They're Not Examples Of What Being Christ Like Should Mean Scripture Talks
A Lot About The Power Of Our Words And The Way That Our Words Can Cause Significant Pain And Damage And Our Words Scripture Also Tells Us Have The Power To Both Hurt And Heal So I Encourage You To Choose Your Words Wisely So That They Can Speak Grace And Healing To Other People Another Aspect Of Reflecting Grace Is Be Grateful We Talked About In In A Past Sermon About How Grace Is The Root Concept It's The Root Of Gratitude Gratitude Let's Other People Know That You Value Them And That You Appreciate Having Them In Your Life Even If Someone's Doing Something For You That Is Expected Of Them Be Grateful For It Show Appreciation It Costs You Very Little And It Can Mean The World To Someone Else In
All Of That Being Grateful And Recognizing People Don't Take The People Who You Love The People Who Are The Most Meaningful To You Don't Take Them For Granted Because One Day It's Reality They Will Be Gone Use Every Opportunity To Let People That You Care About Know About It When You Can It's Not Easy For All Of Us When You Can Be Humble Seek To Put The Needs Of Other People First And Let God Provide For Your Needs Don't Seek To Have The First And Then Take Care Of Someone Else Trust That God Will Care For You And Care For Others First As He Has Asked Us To Do So Those Are Just Some Of The Practical Ways That We Can Be Grace People People Of Grace That Reflect God's Grace In And
Through The Way We Act In Our Lives And I Hope That Over The Course Of This Brief Series On God's Grace Over The Past Few Weeks I Hope That You've Come To Better Understand What God's Grace Means Particularly As It Relates To Your Own Salvation But That You've Also Come To See It As A Gift That God Gives You Freely And It's A Gift That We Must Consciously Receive With An Attitude Of Gratitude And My Hope Is That You've Also Come To Understand What It Means To Live Our Lives As A Demonstration Of And As A Witness To The Amazing Grace Of God The Gospel Of The Grace Of God Is A Message That Everyone Needs It's A Message That's Proclaimed From Every Page Of The Bible And Is Ultimately Revealed In Jesus Christ
[35:05] The Bible Reminds Us In John Chapter 1 Verse 16 That Is It Is From The Fullness Of His Grace God's Grace That We Have Received One Blessing After Another We've All Received One Blessing After Another And As We've Explored These Past Few Weeks And As We're Also Recognizing Recognized During Our Recent Series On Stewardship Everything That We Have All That We Are Comes From God And At The Risk Of Being Repetitive I Don't Think That's A Message That We Hear Enough Or We Focus On Enough Or We Reflect On Enough Everything That We Are Everything That We Have Comes From God And Is A Function Of Is Reflection Of His Grace His Love His Kindness Towards Us As

Your Pastor At Times It's Part Of My Part Of My Responsibility Is To Challenge You At Other Times It May Be To Help You Recognize Areas Of Your Life Where You May Be Missing Something Or

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Choosing To Ignore A Sense Of Conviction About Some Disobedient Choices You Might Be Making In Your Life Not To Make You Feel Guilty But To Help You Recognize Conviction From God But I See A Large Part Of My Responsibility As Being Your Encourager Your Cheerleader As You Seek To Follow God's Way In Your Life As You Seek To Understand The Truth That He Has For You In The Bible Let Me Leave You This Morning With Some Powerful Words Of Encouragement From Max Lucado You May Know His Writing And You May Not If You Haven't Checked Him Out And You Know The Name Start Reading His Stuff It's Fantastic Lucado

Says To Live As God's Child Is To Know At This Very Instant That You Are Loved By Your Maker Not Because You Try To Please Him And Succeed Or Because You Fail To Please Him And Apologize But Because He Wants To Be Your Father Nothing More All Of Your Efforts To Win His Affection Are Unnecessary You You Need To Hear That Again All Of Your Efforts To Win God's Affection For You Are Unnecessary And All Of Your Fears Of Losing God's Affection For You Are Needless Lucado Continues You Can No More Make Him Want You Than You Can Convince Him To Abandon You

The Adoption Is Irreversible Lucado Says You Have A Place At His Table Do You Strive To Make God Love You More Do You Stress And Worry And Get Anxious About Will I Lose My Faith In God Will God Stop Loving Me I Revelation Chapter 22 Verse 21 John Summarizes That Message That Weaves Through

From Genesis To Revelation And That's My Desire For Each Of Us This Morning That The Grace Of God Here's What John Says The Grace Of The Lord Jesus Be With God's People Amen And That's My Desire As I Say For Each Of Us This Morning That The Grace Of God Would Be With His People So This Morning Friends Go Knowing That You Are A Beloved Child Of God Who Is At The Center Of His Eternal Love And His Amazing Grace Be People Of Grace In The World God Bless You Will They Know Who

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