

GOD WITH US : GRACE & TRUTH

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[0 : 00] Father, we ask that you would gently but deeply pour out your Holy Spirit upon us as we read your word and think upon your word. Father, it's very easy for us to want to twist your word into the things that we want it to say, to twist your word into the things that we want to believe.

Father, you know as well, Father, how hard it is for us to actually attend to your word, how other thoughts will come into our mind that make it hard for us to actually dwell with your word and have your word dwell within us.

So we ask, Father, that you in your grace and mercy and kindness would help us, Father, to think upon your word, to hear your word, to have your word enter deep into our minds and hearts and wills, our very souls, so that your word will bear much fruit in our lives for your glory.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, I'm actually, we're actually looking at a passage of the Bible that, this morning, that for many years, in the early years of my Christian walk, I was afraid of.

There were certain ideas about the Christian faith that when I started to hear somebody trying to explain them to me, they made me sort of frightened. I don't know why it was. It's just maybe because it started to almost like make my mind hurt to try to get my mind around these ideas.

[1 : 32] And when I couldn't get my mind around these ideas, it sort of frightened me. And this is like a true confession, but it did. And this whole idea that I would hear that, you know, I would think to myself one moment, if Jesus is both God and man, one moment, like, how can he be God and man?

And how, like, how could that work? Does, like, how could he sort of exist before he was born and then be born? And then, and like if he was man, who was like keeping the planets in their course?

And it just, it, trying to hear people explain it to me just sort of frightened me. And, and so I almost wanted to keep turning away from it. And, and so I, I'm looking, we were going to have a guest preacher this morning.

And, but he, he gave me good notice. He wasn't able to come. And I was originally going to finish my sermon series with verse 14. So I thought, well, I'll just keep going 15 to 18, which is the, sort of the full prologue.

And, and then I looked at the text and it sort of brought back my memories of, of being afraid of these types of ideas. Like, how is it that Jesus could be in the womb and be God?

[2 : 41] And, and it was just, I, I, I was sort of frightened a little bit by it. And I thought, oh, I'm going to get to just talk about it today. And, you know, one of the things that helped me to understand this text, it was actually horror movies.

Which sounds very, very odd and bizarre. And I, I don't watch very many horror movies. I, I don't know, maybe my imagination's too active. And I, and I just, I, I have a hard time with it.

And I have other problems with it as well. But it was actually thinking about horror movies that actually started to give me a little bit of an idea about how to understand texts like this. And actually a doctrine about Jesus.

So if you have your Bibles, please open them to John chapter 1. We'll start reading at verse 14. But today we're looking at verses 15 to 18. And if by chance you've forgotten your Bibles, we always have a few Bibles up here at the front.

You're welcome to take them. You can keep them as a gift afterwards or you can return them afterwards. It's up to you. And, and we're going to look. We'll start verse 14. But it's, it's verse 15 where we start to enter into the, enter into the sermon.

[3 : 45] And here's how it goes. It's the great Christmas text. 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.

Here's our text. John, that's John the Baptist, bore witness about him and cried out, So in one level, this is teaching us a very, very simple truth.

It's teaching us that Jesus is both God and man. That Jesus of Nazareth, in fact, is God and man. And it's going to be, John is going to try to be burrowing home into us that this historical person that he knew, that he watched him eat, he watched him get tired, he heard him speak, he spent three years with him in close proximity, that this historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, that if we went back in time in a time machine, we'd be able to see Jesus.

And maybe after lunch, we'd see that he had a little bit of parsley in his beard from his tabbouleh, that he'd eaten at lunch, and we'd see that he maybe had to, after walking for an hour, that his feet were dirty and his hands maybe were dirty, and he looked a bit sweaty.

And we'd see him be thirsty, and we'd see this human being. But John wants us to understand that when we see Jesus of Nazareth, we're not just seeing a human being, we're seeing someone who is both God and man.

[5 : 21] But he's not, he's not, and I'll get to it because it's in the language and the text, he's not like, I can't remember, who was the heroine in the Shrek movies?

You know in the first Shrek movie, she's a troll by night, no, yeah, troll by night and a beautiful princess during the day, which I can't remember her name. There you go, Fiona. So Jesus isn't sort of like Fiona, sort of cursed by a witch, and at night he's one thing, and at day he's another thing.

He's not like Jacqueline Hyde, sort of two contrasting personalities, but they're both human personalities in the same person. And Jesus isn't like the Borg, which are bits and pieces of human beings, and bits and pieces of machine, and bits and pieces of a collective, and a whole mishmash, and ultimately sort of ravenous and devouring and evil.

And Jesus isn't like a little bit of God, and a little bit of human. The text is actually trying to tell us in a very, very simple but powerful way, and even grasping with the fact that if Jesus actually is both God and man, then there's sort of a, before and after are going to mean very, very radically different things for Jesus than they do for you and me.

I was born on a particular day, and before that, I mean, I would have been in my mother's womb, but before I was conceived, I didn't exist at all. And that's just what human beings are like.

[6 : 43] That's what every human being is like. And if Jesus is both God and man, then that's going to all be sort of very complicated. And this text captures it very, very beautifully. So that when you read creeds like the Athanasian Creed that try to articulate it in a different way, the creeds are just trying to articulate the witness of the apostles, the witnesses who actually knew Jesus.

And here we see, look in verse 15, it's this very, very odd phrase. John bore witness about him and cried out, this was he of whom I said, and here's the funny thing, he who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me.

And so what John is saying, he who comes after me, like if you read all of the gospels, and John, most scholars think that John was the last of the four gospels to be written.

And so, and I think, and many scholars think that John was aware of the other gospels. And so John wrote, decided that he would write his gospel in a very, very different manner to capture a different side of Jesus, in a sense, the more private side of Jesus and the way he could privately talk sometimes.

And, and, and, but it's, it's clear from the witnesses of the gospels that Jesus began his ministry after John the Baptist did. It's not clear from the records how long after, but John was a well-known public figure and Jesus was unknown.

[8 : 09] And it's well-known from the gospels, from the historical records, that Jesus was actually baptized by John, which could imply that John was greater than him. But it's very, very clear that John had disciples, he had a public ministry, he had a high public profile, he was attracting crowds long before Jesus.

And, and that sort of captures with this one, when John says, this was he of whom I said, he who comes after me. And then he says, ranks before me. And that's a perfectly good English translation. And the original language, it's saying that he's vastly superior to me.

He's incomparably greater than me. And in the context of all of John's gospel, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him, without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life. And in earlier sermons, we said that Jesus doesn't have life. He is life. Jesus doesn't have light.

He is light. That Jesus, John is saying, okay, Jesus came after me, but he's vastly superior to me. And then look how it finishes.

[9 : 13] This was he of whom I said, he who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me. And that's, once again, a good English translation, but in the original language, it's even stronger.

It makes it clear that he's talking about the pre-existence of God, the Son of God. And here we get this mystery, that God, the Son of God, who was at the beginning, was there before the beginning.

In a sense, if you read right from John 1 to the beginning, and it's saying that the Father and the Son were together, and they decided, let's light this fuse, which humanity will know is the Big Bang, and have bang, and have all of the galaxy sort of spring into existence.

And the God, the Son of God, was there, because he was there from all eternity. And the God, the Son of God, stands completely and utterly outside of time. But this same God, the Son of God, sets aside his glory and splendor and divine prerogatives and appearance as God, and his majesty.

And he sets all of these things aside, but God cannot stop being God, even though he set all of those things aside, even in a sense that he's made himself, excuse me, completely and utterly naked, so to speak.

[10 : 33] He sets all of these things aside. He can't stop being God. And then there is a turning point in the entire story of creation, where God takes into himself not only our human nature, but our human flesh.

And not in some type of abstract, ethereal, ideal, idea way, but the only way to be human is to live in space and time and history, and to be born of the Virgin Mary, and to walk amongst us.

And this second person of the Trinity, who was before all people existed, and caused all things to exist, takes into himself our human nature, and is born of the Virgin Mary, and walks amongst us.

So on one hand, there's only Jesus. He's only one person, but he has these two natures. How did horror movies help me with this? You know, it's a very, very standard thing with horror movies, of possession, demonic possession.

And those of you, not me, but those of you who like watching those types of movies, they have no problem. There's no type of a struggle intellectually with the idea that some hostile being will possess another being.

[11 : 57] And in some horror movies, you get an odd mixture, in the sense of the personality of the original person, and this new being. But we don't bat an eye at this idea that there can be a being that possesses another being.

And the Bible's not saying that this is how it worked with Jesus, but it's just, it's portraying the same type of idea, that there can be God, the Son of God, who takes into himself our human nature, and he's still God, and now he's human, and he's completely human, and he's completely God, but you don't see flickers of him going from God to man, or different, it's just, he's just Jesus.

And you can't read the Gospels without just being struck with the sheer consistency of Jesus, and his depth. He never, those of you who know mentally ill people, or people who struggle with different types of personalities, or hear voices, there's nothing of that in Jesus.

He seems sane, and self-contained, and purposeful, and always himself. And John wants to say that as you're going to read now, because what's going to happen after verse 18 is John starts to tell the actual story of Jesus.

He says, well here's what John the Baptist said to the Pharisees, and Sadducees, and here's what he said to his disciples, and then here's what his disciples did when they saw Jesus, and here's what Jesus said to the disciples, and here's what the disciples said to Jesus, and then here's what he did when he went to a wedding, and here's what he did when he saw a sick person, and here's, and it goes on and tells the story.

[13 : 31] And John wants us to understand that as you're reading the story, he's making this outrageous claim before you begin to read it. That the one that you're going to read about, even though he comes after John the Baptist, is vastly superior to John the Baptist, in fact he's God, because he actually, as God, existed before the birth, his birth.

Not in a reincarnation sense. In fact, this whole idea completely, you can see how sort of maybe through common grace the idea of reincarnation came to be, and it got sort of misunderstood that it was a type of a prophecy.

It wasn't a type of a curse of endless existence, but it was almost like a type of a glimmer or an idea that God would come amongst us in some way, but the whole enfleshedness aspect of it completely and utterly refutes, but actually clarifies this Eastern India, Chinese type of bit of an insight about reality.

They just don't understand that it's God coming and taking on flesh and walking amongst us. But here's the big thing. Andrew, if you could put up the next thing.

This is to lead us to a particular type of prayer. And, you know, one of the things I can do, you know, if you came here this morning hoping that I was going to give you a whole pile of practical applications that would mean that you can get out of debt, get the promotion, get the body you want, you know, get the kids you want, get the husband or wife you want, I mean, we're not going to do that today.

[15 : 12] In fact, we don't usually do it. But I can maybe help you to learn how to pray. And whether or not you say that prayer exactly or just are influenced by it, you know, the Gospel of John is teaching us to pray a prayer like this.

And for some of us, a prayer like this is how we begin to be the Christian life. And for others of us, it's just how we live the Christian life and grow the Christian life. And so the Bible here is encouraging us to say to God as we hear about Jesus to turn to the Father and to cry out and say, Dear God, please grow in me a humble, trusting, walking, knowing of the greatness, glory, and grace of Jesus Messiah.

You might notice I put that odd idea of walking in there. and that's because ultimately to know Jesus is to change the way we live. We don't change the way we live so that Jesus will pay attention to us and think that we have an exemplary life.

That doesn't work. We're going to see that. But when you come, the Bible wants us to walk with Jesus. It's an image of how we do our day. You know, you get out of bed, your feet go on the floor.

You know, if you're like me, you go to the bathroom, then you immediately go to the kettle, plug the kettle in because I'm going to make a cup of coffee, go to the toaster, put the toast bread in for toast, go to the fridge for my yogurt, and the day proceeds until at the very, very end of the day I take my weary feet off the floor as I lay down in bed and I sleep and the next morning I get up, I walk through my day and that's what we want to do.

[16 : 53] We want to learn. We want to learn by God's grace to walk with Jesus. That whether we are dealing with problems in our body, problems in our marriage, problems in our family, problems with our kids, problems with boss, problems with finances, any type of problems or opportunities and great adventures, round the world tours, spectacular promotions, whatever it is that we are to pray, dear God, please grow in me, please grow in me today and every day a humble, trusting, walking, knowing of the greatness, glory, and grace of Jesus Messiah.

As we deal with all of these things, the birth of a child, the death of a loved one, that we walk with Jesus, knowing Jesus and walking and knowing and humbly trusting his greatness, his glory and his grace and Jesus Messiah.

and so if you have an IQ through the roof and a disciplined mind, you can meditate and dwell and think upon to great heights the mystery of God, the son of God, setting the big bang in motion and yet taking on flesh and walking amongst us and maybe some of us, our IQ is south of a hundred and our attention span is like a hummingbird and meditation is probably never going to be our thing.

It's probably never going to be our thing but we can pray that we have a humble, trusting, walking, knowing of the greatness, glory, and grace of Jesus Messiah and that's what we can pray.

So some of you might say, okay, George, this sounds really great but you know, so he comes and he's great like this but George, the fact of the matter is that there are so many Christians that I meet that they just look like they wake up in the morning and they suck a lemon and all day long they suck lemons and they are just, they're like that Peanuts character that walks around with a cloud over their head and it's pouring rain.

[19 : 14] I'm reading a novel right now by a fellow from Mississippi and the novel is set in northern Mississippi to Pilo or something, I don't know, I can't probably pronounce with a Mississippi drawl that I can't master.

Anyway, and one of the characters, her father's an evangelical pastor and her comment about part of it is her dealing with her father and her father, you know, he just sucks the joy out of life.

He's a negative view of everybody that he meets. He's always looking down his noses at people and she comments that he just, all he wants to do is read the Bible and die so he can go to heaven and drink lemonade and drink lemonade and square dance.

And until he dies and can drink lemonade and square dance in heaven, it's just, everything is just, you know, you can't enjoy food, it's just a completely unenjoyable life. And so, you know, some of us at a very, very deep level have this fear that if we get close to Jesus, that what's going to have to happen is that we, you know, if I get close to Jesus, I can't watch football all Sunday afternoon because I should be reading the Bible and praying and I should be going to prayer meetings and I can't just, I don't know, put my feet up and grab a bowl of macaroni and cheese and jalapeno potato chips and something to drink and just watch the football game and enjoy it.

Like, if I get too close to Jesus, it's just going to suck the joy out of life. And at a deep level, many of us fear that. And many in our culture fear it.

[20 : 58] And some of us give them cause to fear it. That that's what's going to happen if you give your life to Jesus. That, you know, you don't have to be a missionary. You can just have a job.

Like, that's fine. Like, God can call you to that. In fact, he calls most Christians to that. So, is that what Jesus is going to do? What John sort of deals with this, he in a sense deals with our religious and spiritual fears.

That what's going to happen is that when we read the Gospels and read about Jesus, that what's going to happen is it's just going to be Jesus imposing religion upon us. So, let's go back and look again.

We'll read verse 15 again and then we'll read verse 16 where John sort of addresses this fear in advance so that when we read about Jesus, every verse that we read in the rest of the Gospel of John, we're to read it mindful of these verses.

So, verse 15 it says, John bore witness about him, Jesus, crying out and cried out, this was he of whom I said, he who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me.

[22 : 04] And here's the verse, and from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. That's a verse worth memorizing.

It's a verse worth memorizing. And from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. There's two senses to this and the first part I'm going to talk about and then the second part sort of leads into verse 17, the second sense.

And this is what the text is saying. Excuse me. Jesus, out of his fullness, gives never-ending, ever-deepening, pure grace. grace. Jesus, out of his fullness, gives never-ending, ever-deepening, pure grace.

That's an image that those of you who are a little bit familiar with the writings of C.S. Lewis, you can see that this is where C.S. Lewis, he sort of starts at it from a literary way, but it's actually a deeply embedded idea in the scriptures.

That it's as if when you actually start to taste a little bit of God's grace, the grace that comes from Jesus. And grace means God's unmerited favor. It means his kindly affection.

[23 : 18] It means an ability and power for you to thrive. And when you start to taste a bit of the goodness and beauty and holiness and love and mercy and intimacy that's completely offered to us by God, that's unmerited, that as we start to taste a tiny bit of that, two different things happen.

One is, it's profoundly satisfying. And at the same time within us, there's a type of dissatisfaction and hunger for more.

And even the hunger of more, for more, is a pleasure. And then, as you drink more of the grace of Jesus and of our loving Heavenly Father, it's both satisfying and creates a desire for more, which in and of itself is a pleasurable desire and there's more.

That the grace that is offered by Jesus is a grace that is never-ending. It's a never-ending grace. And it's an ever-deepening grace.

And it's always pure grace. And it's going to talk to us in the Gospels as John is going to tell us later on that the story of Jesus and the whole story of Jesus is to move forward to his death upon the cross.

[24 : 44] Eventually, or those of you who were here on Christmas morning and I talked about the word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth. And we have seen his glory. Glory is the only Son of the Father.

And if you follow the idea through the Gospel, the time that Jesus says that you're now going to see the glory of God, in chapter 13 and John 17, Jesus says you're now going to see God's glory in its fullness.

And he's talking about his death upon the cross. That in Jesus' death upon the cross, the full glory of God is revealed.

And it's a glory that is revealed that the perfect, holy, just, loving, true God bears in himself and the person of his Son in himself that which we cannot fix and deal with, our darkness, our rebellion, our sin, our shame, our separation from God, every single thing within us that is in rebellion against God and keeps us from him.

God, who sees that we cannot deal with that, he crosses the infinite distance from himself and his holiness to us in the person of his Son. And Jesus bears in himself and upon himself all of the darkness and sin of every human being without exception.

[26 : 08] It's done for us. We have to receive it. And it's an act of grace. It's an act of unmerited love by Jesus for you and me.

And he bears it for us. He tastes it for us. He takes its punishment and all the consequences for it and he dies upon the cross so that we come to Jesus for asking that the God would grow within us a humble, trusting, walking knowledge of the greatness, glory, and grace of Jesus Messiah.

And if you're at all like me, when I gave my life to Jesus, it was just a sense that I needed more. That there was a hollowness and a hole within me and I didn't understand anything about, I didn't really understand about the cross and I didn't really understand all about what Jesus had done for me.

All I had was a sense that if I was to come to Jesus, I was coming to light and life and grace and that's all I understood. And then you come to Jesus and the knowledge of his greatness and glory and what he accomplishes for you on the cross, there's this opportunity for it to grow and the more it grows, the more we can be gripped by the gospel and what Jesus has done for us.

Followers of Jesus gripped by the gospel and so able to start to live for his glory. And John says that as you're going to hear Jesus, you're going to hear Jesus have conflicts with religious people, he's going to have conflicts with spiritual people, there's going to be this terrible thing that takes several chapters at the end where he's accused of terrible things and people come up and say lies about him and all of his friends leave him alone and he dies upon the cross and he dies and you're going to hear all about this but what you have to understand is it's all grace that it's grace upon grace upon grace that out of his fullness he's going to offer this and he offers on the cross and when we come to Jesus not only is it grace that makes us the child of God by adoption when we put our faith and trust in him but becoming more like Jesus learning to obey him and walk with him that we are dependent upon God's grace and when finally

[28 : 33] Jesus returns or we die and we see Jesus face to face and then the new heaven and the new earth comes and we have glorified bodies that's grace as well and what will we taste in all of eternity in the new heaven and the new earth grace upon grace and then we will know in fullness here on this side of the grave we taste God's grace but there's idols in our heart and there's rebellion in our heart and we're afraid of God and we want to try to cover ourselves with fig trees and we don't always taste that go from grace to a hunger for grace and it's you know even when we're redeemed and even when we're adopted and God's child there's still that struggle within us and whatever type of victory we have still is due to the grace that comes from Jesus but one day we will know face to face and for all eternity we will drink of the grace and favor of almighty God the living God and his son Jesus and the Holy Spirit and every drink of that grace and unmerited favor and love and intimacy and power and goodness that comes from God will both satisfy our souls and create within us a longing and a yearning for more which in and of itself is a great pleasure and as we yearn for more of God's grace in the new heaven and the new earth so we will receive and so we will be satisfied and so we will be thirsty and there is a grace upon grace that is promised to us that if we were to even know it in the tiniest bit now would unmake us and John says this is who you're going to meet in the pages of the gospel of John out of his fullness his never ending eternal outside of time abundance one who will give grace upon grace and you becoming

God's child that's grace you becoming more like Jesus that will be grace your final glorification that will be grace it's always grace Andrew if you could put up the prayer game you see this is why John is encouraging us the Bible is moving us to pray dear God please grow in me a humble trusting walking knowing of the greatness glory and grace of Jesus Messiah that's what the Bible is leading us to talk about there's a fellow that I talk to regularly in Starbucks he's sort of an odd mixture I can never tell if he's an atheist I actually think he's an atheist who's also spiritual not religious and I think that's a great contradiction and I occasionally try to talk to him about how I think that's a great contradiction but he both sort of believes that no God exists but on the other hand that we have to be spiritual not religious and you know he makes all these claims about Jesus but a week or two ago

I come into a Starbucks and he beckons me over I take my cord he beckons me over he has a loud voice it's a small Starbucks and he said George I just had somebody read me a part of the Bible and it's a story about people getting these things called minas and at the end of it people don't want to receive the king and so he tells him to kill Jesus says in this story to kill the people who don't want me to be king how could Jesus say stuff like that how could you follow somebody like that and he goes on what can you say about it and I start to say a few things he said what and then he goes on and on and on with a loud voice and I'm trying not to be read you know because you don't really want to have a discussion about judgment and hell and a loud voice in a Starbucks in Ottawa in 2014 with who knows what people are thinking and so partly and he finally says you can say nothing you're speechless and I say to him no I can say something you just won't stop talking and then it was so funny he burst out laughing and said put up his hand like that to give me a high five he just was trying to embarrass me which you know and he said go get your coffee you know and then we talked a little bit about the text and you know all of that type of stuff at least

I don't know where he's going to end up in all this but at least there's you know when you meet him there's energy right like he's he's he's motivated by this by this type of stuff so you know here's the thing he is right on one hand some of you might say George I know you just within the last year or so you've preached a sermon on hell and I know you talk about judgment and Jesus talks about those things so how does grace upon grace fit with all that is it or sort of George is it sort of one of those things that you know maybe you're going to repent of what you've preached and like hell and all is that like Old Testament type of stuff and Jesus is going to tell us just about great like what's going on George well let's go back and see because John actually sets the stage to help us to understand that let's go back well read verse 15 16 it's in verse 17 that he talks about it read verse 15 again John bore witness about him that's Jesus and cried out this was he of whom I said he who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me and from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace for the law was given through Moses grace and truth came through

Jesus Christ and at first glance it looks like in fact sort of what my friend was saying was sort of there okay oh yeah oh yeah yeah there's the Moses and all that ten commandment you know yucky stuff and then there's grace and in fact my friend says that he actually thinks that I'm not religious he thinks I'm spiritual not religious but promise I still believe in God and the Bible but and so is that what is that what the Bible is saying here that there's this Moses stuff that's not grace well remember I said that there's two senses of grace upon grace and the other sense in Greek is grace following grace and and you can't sort of translate upon I mean nowadays maybe we put upon slash following and it would sort of work but it's very ungrammatical if you want to read it but there's the double sense there that of grace following grace and you might notice in the text that for the first time in the gospel of John I've been just telling you it's

[35 : 14] Jesus but if you go back to read from verse one in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God he was in the beginning with God all things were made through him and without him nothing was made that was made and the word became flesh and all of that for the first time we're told that who John the Baptist is talking who John the Evangelist is talking about is Jesus and he calls him Jesus Messiah Messiah in a few moments during the we're going to get a thank you note from our ministry in Uganda and those Ugandans they say Messiah in a wonderful way I wish I could copy it and say it the way they do but he's that's the first clue that so the first thing is he can't John here isn't saying that Jesus is contradicting the Old Testament because he uses when he introduces Jesus he uses Messiah in a sense the long that the Old Testament is predicting a Messiah and Jesus is introduced as the Messiah and grace follows grace here's in fact Andrew if you could put it up here's in fact what John is saying

Jesus does not contradict the Old Testament Jesus completes the Old Testament Jesus does not contradict the Old Testament Jesus completes the Old Testament you see even the Old Testament is grace one grace is that even those laws even those rules you know you shouldn't commit adultery you shouldn't steal you shouldn't bear false witness you shouldn't have idols you shouldn't abuse the name of God etc. etc.

on one hand it's the grace if God in fact if we have been created and God creates us it's a grace to have the owner clarify the owner's manual for us to live on Christmas morning after I came back from the service we were going to have for a Christmas meal we were going to have turkey and ham and so it was one of those spiral sort of pre-cooked hams that you were hooking up and so you know I said to Louise I said how do you cook this and we sort of said why don't we do it this way so I said sure let's put it in so I put it in that way and then after about ten minutes I thought you know maybe I think there's instructions like maybe I should read the instructions about how to cook this ham like they probably know how to do it right and I looked it up and sure enough I would have led to a completely dry unedible ham if I had just followed my own inklings and I looked and said oh that's what you're supposed to do so you know I put the thing a different way and did a few different things and even changed the temperature and it was delicious it was delicious and on one hand if the Old Testament law is just God giving us how to live then that's a grace actually just like it was actually good that the makers the producers of the ham told me how to actually cook the ham so that it would be delicious and on one hand it's a grace if it's just even proper instruction manual but if you go actually if you have time let's just do it look go to the Ten Commandments turn with me to Exodus chapter 20 verse 1

Exodus chapter 20 verse 1 it's towards the beginning of your Bible and this is how we have to like the Ten Commandments are very central to the law to the Torah to the Old Testament and here's how it begins and God spoke all these words saying I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of slavery you shall have no other gods before me now do you notice this how does it begin with grace it begins with God identifying himself I am the Lord your God and then it talks about what he's graciously done he is God he is your God I am your God I brought you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of slavery I by grace delivered you how shall you then live and the encouragement is to understand that it begins with grace

God identifying himself in such a way that he can be our God and we can be his people and that can only happen after he delivers us and then after we have received his deliverance the question is asked how shall I then live how shall we then live and it's not just the Exodus version look at the Deuteronomy version Exodus is the beginning of the Exodus Deuteronomy is sort of summary of the whole thing at the end it's Deuteronomy chapter 5 Deuteronomy chapter 5 verse 6 and you'll see that the exact same structure is kept there that all of those do's and don'ts are to be understand from the perspective that God desires to be our God he delivers us so we can be his God and how shall we then live Deuteronomy chapter 5 verse 6 I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of slavery you shall have no other gods before me the Old

[40 : 32] Testament is not teaching us certain ways of living so that we can become eligible for grace it's not obey and then grace but receive God's grace and then obedience receive God's grace and then obedience Jesus does not contradict the Old Testament Jesus completes the Old Testament there's a grace in all of the Old Testament law and as we bring it into ourselves as the Jewish people brought it into ourselves it was to prepare us to meet Jesus who is grace himself and truth himself God himself light himself love himself who comes to deliver us it's deeper grace the Bible's teaching that's why it's all leading us if you could put up the prayer again Andrew dear God please grow in me a humble trusting walking knowing of the greatness glory and grace of Jesus

Messiah very very final thing very briefly sort of running out of time I don't know how many of you have watched the television series Broadchurch it was a huge sensation in England it's now on Netflix it's eight episodes and on one hand it centers around the story of a murder of an 11 year old boy in a small tightly knit coastal community in England a community where the majority of the people have lived there for a long time and they know each other and they're related to each other and the question really which runs throughout the entire movie is can you ever really know another person because when they ask the family and all and others well who could have done this murder they all say well nobody could have done this murder and so one of the things that they play with throughout things as the investigation goes on over the eight episodes is can you ever really know another person and it's very very hard and so the question is can we ever really know

God and John wants to make it clear to us that we can know God because God desires to make himself known and he makes himself known in the person of his son and there's no separation between God making himself known and offering us grace look at verse 18 oops I have to turn back to it John 1 18 no one has ever seen God all mysticism is undercut right there all human attempts to attain to the divine John completely rejects he's saying it's not going to be about the brilliance of your ideas the brilliance of your poetry the brilliance of your spirituality the brilliance of your ethical attainments the brilliance of your it's not going to be about anything about your ability to see no one has ever seen God but God the only God who is at the Father's side he has made him known God makes himself known

God the Son of God who is at the Father's side he makes God known and in the original language him known is emphatic so that if we were to in a sense be trying to write this in a way that brings out the original language it would be bolded and maybe underlined him known and so now we're going to go into the history of Jesus and the story of Jesus and everything about Jesus is all about him making God known and in the original language it's even more dramatic because the word which is here is basically the word for exegesis Andrew if you could put the point up it's in basically it's saying that Jesus of Nazareth is the exegesis of God now that's a big word and many of you don't know what it means and it's a very old fashioned word I have a feeling that it would be frowned upon in the English faculty of the University of Ottawa but maybe I'm wrong about that and exegesis is this idea that all you want to do it's an attempt to be a disciplined understanding of a text it's in a sense an invitation to on one hand set aside your cultural presupposition set aside what you think the text says set aside what you want it to say set aside your preferences for what it should say and simply try to hear and understand truly what the text says and it's saying that

Jesus is the one who simply truly makes God known and who he is and God himself does this because only God can make himself known because otherwise how could the finite know the infinite there is more in common between me and the wood in this cross there is more on one level in common between me and the wood in this cross we're both created we're both finite we both have an environment we have a beginning we have an end we have edges and there is more in common between me and the wood that makes up this cross and there is between the infinite God uncreated no environment no needs outside of time seeing and knowing all things and having all power above and beyond and intellectually it makes no sense that the finite by our sight and our effort can ever make the infinite known we are completely and utterly dependent upon the infinite speaking itself himself and John is saying that when we read the gospel we see and hear the infinite having taken on flesh to speak to us who are finite and it's the infinite that speaks to us and we are to learn to humbly trusting walkingly knowingly listen to the text and listen to Jesus and watch

[47 : 07] Jesus and be willing to set aside our cultural assumptions and what we wish it says and what we don't say and read it and listen to know that this is the one that makes the infinite God known and he is good we can trust him I invite you to stand what is it that John wants us to know he exegetes the infinite and it's all grace it's all grace and so John writes this hoping if you go back and you read the end all the gospel of John you come to the end and you see that it's very clear that John's hope is that by the time you finish reading his gospel that you will come to a humble trusting knowledge of the greatness and glory of Jesus that you will know him as your savior and that by knowing him as your savior you will begin to follow him as Lord and it's the cry of John's heart and we as Christians believe that ultimately

God is the one who caused the gospel of John to be written and so it is the cry of God's heart that our eyes would be turned to Jesus and that as we look at Jesus we would cry out to God and say dear God please grow in me a humble trusting walking knowing of the greatness glory and grace of Jesus Messiah those that God has put it on your heart will have just a moment of silence and then why don't you pray this prayer with me I think it's up at the front and then I'll just have a closing prayer just stand those whom the Holy Spirit leads join with me in praying dear God please grow in me a humble trusting walking knowing of the greatness glory and grace of Jesus Messiah Father pour out your Holy Spirit upon us bring if there are any here who have not come to a saving faith in Jesus

Father as they pray that prayer may it be a moment of saving faith for them in Jesus and Father both for them and for us may you teach us to pray whether in these words or not Father but may that be increasingly the cry of our hearts that we would cry out to you whether in good times or bad when we're depressed or lonely or feeling very excited and with a lot of people that the cry of our heart would be that you would grow within us a humble trusting walking knowing of the greatness and the glory and the grace of Jesus Messiah Father this we ask we ask that your Holy Spirit would bring this home to us and grow that within us and all this we ask in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen