

# Matthew 9:35-10:8 “Express Grace”

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[ 0 : 00 ] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

I'm really excited to get to start a study of the Gospel of John with you next Sunday. That's going to last a few weeks, I think. But next Sunday, the greatest prologue to any book written in the history of the world.

I guarantee you, don't miss the prologue at the beginning of the Gospel of John. Looking forward to that. But today, we're going to finish exploring our mission here at Southwood that we started talking about last week.

Last week, we talked about our need to continue experiencing Jesus' grace every day. To keep breathing in that grace.

That there's nothing more valuable, more life-giving than living with Jesus. That relationship is so worthwhile.

[ 1 : 06 ] It's so vital. That relationship is why we are, for example, reading through the Bible together on a two-year reading plan.

So that we can know God more. That is why teenagers wake up early on the only day of the week that they have to sleep in.

To gather here in this place. To worship God. To have our hearts revived. Because He's worthy. And we need to remember that.

It's why, among other things, we prioritize gathering in grace groups. Talking and praying together. That we would learn from others' experiences what it means to trust God and to follow Jesus every day.

You see how important that relationship is? How much we need to experience His grace? I said experiencing grace is remembering how desperately I need Jesus to rescue me.

[ 2 : 09 ] And how completely Jesus rescues me. It's constant needs constantly met in Christ. Grace is the air we breathe in constantly.

In fact, y'all did so well last week with the breathing exercise. That I thought we'd try it again this morning. I know you're excited. Breathe in.

Breathe out. Now this time I want you to keep breathing in until I tell you to stop, okay? Breathe in. Keep breathing in. I'm the only one who can breathe out.

Hold it. Isn't that oxygen? All that oxygen, great. It is rushing to your blood, meaning they keep breathing in. What happens if you never breathe out?

You don't know. Oh, some of you are finding. You can breathe now. Eventually, if you just keep breathing in, you're going to explode. Right, kids? Eventually, you just have to let it out.

[ 3 : 12 ] It doesn't work. What happens if you never breathe out grace? If you just love soaking in the undeserved blessing of God?

If it's just the delight of your heart, how much God loves you and all the favor he shows to you even though you don't deserve it, but you never share it, it doesn't work.

That's not the way God designed us or the way God designed grace. So this week, we're going to talk about the second half of that eternity impacting mission statement.

To do that, I want us to look at part of a passage in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew, we'll read the end of chapter 9, beginning at verse 35, and then skip ahead to just a couple verses in chapter 8.

This is God's Word, Matthew 9 at verse 35. And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and affliction.

[ 4 : 26 ] When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

And then what happens immediately is that the Lord of the harvest, Jesus, starts sending out laborers. Jesus sends his disciples, apostles, out two by two.

He gives them power and authority and he sends them out. And then he says this, skipping down to verse 7 of chapter 10. He says this to them as he sends them. Proclaim as you go, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Heal the sick. Raise the dead. Cleanse lepers. Cast out demons. You received without paying. Give without pay. Usually translated, freely you have received.

[ 5 : 33 ] Freely give. This is God's word. Let's ask for his help. God, we thank you for your grace that you have poured out freely on us.

We acknowledge before you by the grace of God, I am what I am. Nothing else, Father. We're so dependent on you.

And we pray this morning that your grace to us would not be in vain. That it would not stop with us. That it would do its work in our hearts.

So by your spirit, do that now. For your glory and our good. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

I got a phone call a few weeks ago from a local Way FM Christian radio station calling to congratulate me that Southwood had won free lunch Fridays.

[ 6 : 35 ] lunch for 10 at our office this was really exciting for me I very rarely win these sorts of things and I've heard since I was in high school that there is no such thing as a free lunch and yet free lunch Fridays was ours the only issue with that is that the church office is closed on Fridays so when they showed up a couple days later on that Friday with 10 delicious boxed lunches there were only four of us around 10 big lunches for four people we had way more than we needed we were able to get a couple of our spouses to come and together we ate six of the 10 lunches and had four then left kids that was your math review over the weekend I knew they weren't going to keep until Monday these were easily 10 lunches right already packaged in a box I could have gone out front of that restaurant and made 40 dollars just like that with those left don't think it didn't cross my mind you know how cheap I am but we had received them for free that didn't seem right but neither did keeping extra good food that we weren't going to eat so I thought of who would appreciate them I remembered a homeless camp that I go by sometimes drove over there briefly and was able to share free lunch Friday with a couple of men who were really really excited I said hey someone gave these to me and it's more than I need I want to give them to you what a joy that was right listen y'all that is our story with God's grace isn't it he has dumped his grace on to us his blessings over and over freely he has given them to us way beyond what any of us can contain you can't eat it all and we get the joy not merely of soaking all that grace up although it's wonderful but really of sharing his grace as freely as we receive it it is free grace every day it never runs out one of the things I love about this passage is that Jesus tells us to pray to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the harvest and then immediately he seems to hear an answer I don't know the prayers aren't recorded but but all of a sudden Jesus Jesus starts sending right here are some of those very people Jesus has healed has forgiven has given his grace to and now they're going to get to pass it along themselves that is the design of grace y'all or as you might say that is how the kingdom of heaven works how do you know that the kingdom of heaven is at hand how do you know that you're touching the the king of grace the edges of his influence you get for free what you could never afford you get for free what you could never afford that's what Jesus has been doing for these people right proclaiming the good news of the kingdom that they didn't know and healing every disease and affliction that they couldn't handle as we continually breathe in

Jesus's grace we pray for his help to breathe it out where he sends us right now I will admit we are not the 12 disciples given unique power and a unique mission here but the scriptures are very clear in many places Jesus sends all of his followers into the world doesn't he John 17 for example they're very clear that we are to be ambassadors of the king 2nd Corinthians 5 that we are in fact to go make disciples where of all nations Matthew 28 and we do that as we see in verse 8 by giving freely what we receive what we receive freely because that's how Jesus graces us it's really easy isn't it just to live for ourselves anybody good at that doesn't take a lot of practice we're naturally

good at living life for ourselves my priorities my success my comfort and if by the way somebody else happens to fit in nicely and easily to that then fine great I'll be nice to them it requires grace to think of someone else first to love our neighbor as ourselves in the midst of our very busy lives we need God's help to express grace particularly to do it the way that he has called us to so we pray then we pray to the Lord of the harvest to send us out right the very people Jesus tells to pray that he would have laborers to send out he starts sending out and this passage helps guide just some of how we can pray if you're not sure where to start in that prayer I just want to give us three simple ways this morning three simple prayers that we can all pray toward the end of expressing God's grace in our lives first simple prayer is one we've already heard sung

Jesus give me your eyes and your heart for the people around me each day look at verse 36 when Jesus saw the crowds he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd we talked last week about having an awareness of our own desperate need but sometimes we overlook our own need don't we we think we're okay and sometimes we see people around us and we think man she's she's really got it all together I mean he's really successful they're what I want to be what I wish my family looked like and and we assume no need in them how crazy that we think that we know better don't we this room is full of need every person you meet is needy in some way so this city is is full of need Jesus give me your eyes that see people that then all of a sudden your heart is moved with compassion he looks out and sees them harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd it's not good is it it's not good to be a sheep without a shepherd but but what an apt description of so many in our day yes constantly being told to achieve more challenged to come up with your own identity it's up to you you need to figure it out bombarded along the way with images of others lives that you're supposed to keep up with if you really want to be good enough or successful harassed and helpless for sure many feeling isolated and alone an epidemic of anxiety in our society shame driving suicide rates to an all-time record high people crying out in many different ways where can I turn where's a shepherd to guide me they're not using those words but that's what we're asking for that's what we're longing for is that what you see when you see people around you are you more quickly moved with compassion or do you more quickly feel frustration exasperation oh there they go again are these people and their needs honestly a bother to you or are they a harvest field for grace to move it oh look at all the the grace that's needed don't you love the heart of god that Jesus embodies so beautifully here God is near he heals the brokenhearted the God who reigns on high dwells also where with the lowly God hears and delivers the needy I loved hearing many of our leaders Tuesday night talk about what what God might do if his kingdom came in a new and fresh way in our hearts if more and more we longed for what he longed for that that we talked about longing to be present with lonely people to provide healing for those who are abused and broken we talked about longing for the the church of Jesus Christ to be recognized as a place of refuge and restoration rather than of hurt and hate there's a hurting world that we long to minister God's grace to we long that that people would experience the kingdom of grace because they would get for free what they could never afford do you long for that for the people that are around you is that what you want them to taste or if you're honest do you just long for a calm week for for a college scholarship for for a better vacation for the schedule to go the way it's supposed to for your world to go the way you want it as the grace of Jesus grips your heart as as his spirit breathes life into you pray for his eyes for the people who are around you each day now which people I want to be very practical this morning Jesus sends us to people so as you ask for his eyes say Jesus show me the people that you've sent me into relationship with so that I can pray for them and point them to you who are those people isn't it interesting that Jesus himself heals only so many people while he's here on earth he forgives some people's sins he teaches to crowds in many places but many other places he never visits his grace spreads one relationship at a time doesn't it it's not always straight from him he sends disciples out on his behalf to announce the king is here there are many people who will hear that message not from the mouth of Jesus himself who will experience that healing not at the hands of Jesus himself but from those Jesus sends aren't there I want to encourage you this morning if you don't have something like this already to make a relationship inventory you do it according to your personality not mine it doesn't have to be a chart it doesn't have to be electronic it doesn't have to be a list that you mark stuff on but this is an important part of being on mission with King Jesus because he has most certainly sent you to express grace to people okay that starts with the people you're sitting with this morning family and church family see I start mine at home and with my grace groups we've got to start there we we need grace sometimes the people closest to us get skipped right over when

they need god's grace the most don't forget how many lonely anxious ashamed confused overwhelmed overwhelmed people are right here in this family this morning we just said last week we are a family desperately in need of god's grace it's part of why you jump into a grace group it's part of why you're needed to be there you need it and the other people there need you you need god's grace from them they need god's grace from you that's why we live that way in relationship it's all sorts of relationships you're in co-workers friends but i especially want you to think about your neighbors over here on the left side of this i didn't use names on this one people beyond the walls of your church family who who may well not trust jesus yet you may know them from any number of places if you've been here we've been encouraging you to pray for three people right just three people that we want to point to jesus we've been talking about this since january i hope you've gotten to three okay the relationships that impact eternity are not only with one another but also with our neighbors people you live near people you eat with people you study with people you work with you play with exercise with think of names i promise that if you pray for jesus to show you the relationships that he is sending you into some of them will be people who don't know him yet that's the way he is he wants them to he may well be sending you into relationship for that purpose so you can introduce him to your mutual friend what a privilege then if he's sending you to actually be able to pray to him to ask for his help in showing his heart of compassion to them to be depending on him for the love that you know you're called to show to your neighbor but many days you just don't feel like you have pray pray that he would show you them and give you that heart i encourage you even right now maybe this afternoon take some time take stock of your relationships i don't know how you'll use it maybe as a prayer list maybe you'll consider some people you want to invest in getting to know better maybe you're never going to write anything like this down but just thinking of people by name will grow your compassion for them great maybe as you think through it you'll think of areas where you realize

[ 23 : 09 ] God is calling you into relationships and you need to add some names expressing grace happens in relationships and as you ponder those names as you're praying through your own pray Jesus help me express your grace in specific words and deeds that point to the one who truly meets our needs it's not ultimately you right it's him it's really interesting in this passage that Jesus sends his followers to do for others what he has already done for them we mentioned that's the design of grace freely received freely give it happens once again with what they're told to do Jesus verse 35 is proclaiming and healing word and deed the good news of the kingdom of grace is always both of those things together by the way and in verse 8 when they bring the kingdom they are told to guess what proclaim and heal the exact same two words that Jesus was doing the kingdom is at hand is the message right hear it and feel it you're gonna know what this kingdom is see the followers of Jesus were not sent out to attract people to themselves to their own styles their own powers their own abilities they were and are to point people to the king of grace doing it his way if you're an ambassador of king Jesus he sends you to declare his king and to demonstrate what it's like to be touched by his kingdom where you freely receive what you could never afford that's what you're sent to do and I want to think about that specifically with some of the needs that you'll come across often both in this church and in this community as you're in those relationships you think of specific names on your relationship list and what words or deeds might express

God's grace to them okay that's what I want you doing for the next couple minutes it is both of those by the way we are sent to speak and act not necessarily both in every interaction but certainly both in every relationship right proclaim the good news of Jesus meet tangible needs like Jesus so many needs how could you express grace to someone who is lonely you know someone lonely I bet you do isn't a piece of helping them receive what they can't afford being present with them that's not complicated right that's part of it giving time to listen to them entering into their world but when you do leave when you aren't there don't they need to hear the good news of a God who will never leave them or forsake them don't don't they need that too don't they need to know of a savior who is always listening and hears their cries even when no one else is around don't they need to know of a community of people who will be together with this father and a family forever they need to hear that from you too how could you express grace to someone who's guilty that's all of us before God who need to hear the good news of forgiveness that we could never earn but it is given as a gift that is grace we need that but perhaps someone on your list is tormented by something they have done or said to you maybe they know that you're not ready to forgive them and and maybe you can extend forgiveness yourself when they least expect it and know they don't deserve it and they get for free

from you what they could never afford themselves and it begins in that moment to point them to Jesus to someone who gives like that over and over and over that he's real and he gives grace to them like that how could you express grace to someone who is confused perhaps searching for identity feeling lost in the process not really sure where they fit in in the world at school in relationships maybe God has put you in relationship with them to see the image of God in them that they really can't find anymore to value them as they are more than they can value themselves and perhaps even then to tell them of the God who made them fearfully and wonderfully and for himself forever to embrace them and never reject them giving them significance and purpose just because they're his because the king of grace came for them last one how could you express grace to someone who is hopeless you know hopeless people more and more and more every day nowhere to turn don't know why to keep living you can share the reason for the hope that you have because it's not you a hope outside yourself a hope in the savior who redeems brokenness of all sorts a hope in a king who will set all things right one day no matter what it is they're going through and along the way if that's going to be more than just words to them if they're going to entertain the prospect of hope again they'll probably need you to show them to show confidence in them when they don't have it to give them a job beyond their resume to stand with them against injustice to show them there's someone who fights for them you won't be able to fight every time but king Jesus will and you can give him a taste of what he's like word and deed deed and word what specific things can you do for someone you're in relationship with to give them for free what they could never afford what they don't have access to outside of you what they will never know if they don't know the king so they taste the kingdom of grace so they will recognize the king of grace grace I hope some ideas are coming to mind I want to be honest with you about one thing as we prepare to come to this table together when you do that in word and deed moving to give people something they can't afford themselves you should know that it's not merely grace shared for free although isn't that wonderful often expressing grace means grace that you share at great cost yes freely receive freely give sounds easy right I'll just pass it along no big deal you keep giving me grace God I'm going to keep sharing it but then in John chapter 20 the risen Jesus appears to his disciples it's one of those amazing encounters where the God who saves is the God who sins the God who saves us and brings us into relationship is sending us out into relationships and once again Jesus says to them as the father sent me so I am sending you just like that I had never noticed the context of that comment Jesus makes until this week he says you go out like me after reminding them of what verse 20 he showed them his hands and his side what happened to Jesus when he was sent he says let me remind you of who I am these are emblems of my death these are reminders of the cost that the father sent me to pay to give you grace upon grace for free friends you and I have received that kind of grace from him gifts for free that we could never afford but they were at great cost to the one who gives them to us weren't they that is the kind of gracious savior that we want to point people to in all of our relationships so we should expect that it will cost us to share grace like his freely and even at great cost to ourselves as we consider that pray that we would not selfishly or distractedly even fearfully hold our collective breath but that we would breathe out the grace that is giving us life

[ 33 : 32 ] I don't know what it will cost you to breathe out but let's together decide right now that there is no price too high there's no price that could keep us from sharing in word and in deed with anyone we're in relationship with as our hearts fill with compassion for them the glory and grace of Jesus nothing could keep me from that right may God make us willing and eager to express that costly free grace Jesus fully aware of what it would cost him to give that grace to his followers to bring forgiveness and hope and life to them on the night that one of them betrayed him took bread and he broke it and he gave it to his disciples as I ministering in his name give this bread to you he said take eat this is my body given for you do this in remembrance of me in the same way after supper he took the cup and said this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins it's the only way to have sins forgiven so I'm going to give my blood drink from it all of you as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death it's what he's called you to it's what he sent you for until he comes you need to hear it so it's being proclaimed to us this morning isn't it we need it and we need to remember it because we're sent to proclaim the same hope this is the

Lord's table and he invites all of you who by faith are his have trusted in Jesus for your salvation through baptism have been united not only to Jesus but to a church a body of Christ that preaches

the good news of salvation through faith in Christ alone he invites you to come to come again and feast on his saving and sustaining grace if you don't yet place your hope in Jesus if that's not where you are then first of all thanks for being here we're so glad that you're here to consider Jesus with us we would ask you not to come take these elements and do outwardly something that is not true for you inwardly right but we would invite you to come even to come to these tables to observe to pray with us we'd love to pray with you but especially to come and consider the free offer of Jesus a gift of grace that will give you something you could never afford for yourself any other way he offers it to you this morning would you no matter how else you participate in these next few minutes would you consider the grace of Jesus offered to you in his word let's pray and we'll come together Jesus thank you that you've given us this reminder this sign this meal to share with you to strengthen us would you take common elements and would you use them because by your spirit you're with us to strengthen our hearts to give us hope to remind us we're loved would you do that even in this time we ask in Jesus name amen for more information visit us online at southwood.org produculous heart subscribe to live