

God Gives Common Grace

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Date: 14 June 2020

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[0 : 00] Well, as we prepare to hear God's word, let me lead us in prayer. Our God, we're glad that we have this opportunity to join with one another.

We're glad that your word is faithful and true, and that morning by morning we're seeing your mercies in new ways. Lord God, I pray as we prepare to hear your words, Lord, may you give us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand.

We know that apart from you, these things are going to fall on deaf ears, blind eyes, and hardened hearts. These words are not going to come home, and I'm humbled and aware of that.

I pray, beginning with me and then for everyone else who is listening in, that we may come away with a deeper and fuller sense of what it means that you are a God who is good, who is generous, who is gracious.

That we may learn to trust that even when we can't see it. That we may learn to know your heart, God, and to long to know you more. Amen. Well, why don't we start off with some reminiscence here.

[1 : 15] I'm going to start off with a story from my life. I'm going to go way back in time to when I was a much younger man. The year was 2016.

And at the time, I was not even a year into my first pastoral ministry at a church in the town of Squamish, British Columbia. I was getting to know the people of this church, realizing they're really a bunch of odd characters.

I felt at home fit right in. And it was a Saturday evening. I was coming back from a hike up the Chief. And a few of us had, we'd, you know, hiked up the Chief, had a formal dinner at the top on the first peak, and then come back down.

Just a very normal Squamish thing to do. And I was driving home after dark. And I'll be honest, my mind wasn't really on the road. I was thinking about the time we'd had that evening.

Maybe thinking about the church service the next morning. And so as I rounded the corner that came just before the turnoff to my house, I wasn't prepared to make a quick decision.

[2 : 25] And I want to say that as a very pathetic excuse for what happened next. Because I rounded that corner, and I saw in the middle of the road a couple of police cars, and with them one or two civilian vehicles.

And I had about three seconds to judge and assess the situation and decide how to respond. Well, I committed a bit of a lapse in judgment because my mind interpreted the scene as a car accident.

I thought, oh, it's been an accident in the middle of the road. The police are there. They're helping the situation. And so I decided, you know what I'm going to do? My road's right here. I'm going to go onto the shoulder and pass slowly in the side and then turn off onto my street.

Problem solved. Well, I passed all these cars, and as I did that, one of the officers stepped out from the cars, and he very emphatically motioned that I needed to stop and I needed to pull over right away.

And he walked up to my car. You know, I rolled down the window with a sense of uh-oh. And it became clear very, very fast what was actually happening. What was actually happening is that I had just tried to run a police roadblock.

[3 : 40] They were on the lookout for drunk drivers, and one of these drivers had apparently tried to get around the roadblock. Now, thankfully, all that took place, I mean, if you don't know the story, then that's probably a good sign, because all that took place was the officer made me submit to a breathalyzer.

I blew a zero. The officer let me pass. I went home. But those were a scary few minutes, right? You know, I could only envision the conversations in church the following morning.

Hey, you know, sorry I was late to church. Just had to have a few friends come and spring me out of jail, your new associate pastor. You can imagine that I wasn't really enjoying the events while they were unfolding that evening.

But looking back, there's really a lot in that story that now when I look back at, I realize there's so much to be grateful for. There were a lot of ways that God showed kindness to me.

And some of those are really very obvious. I mean, the officer, he didn't overreact to my attempt to run that roadblock. He stopped me.

[4 : 53] He listened to me. He tested me. He let me go. He gave me the benefit of the doubt. He was within his power to teach me a lesson, but he chose not to.

But there's more good in that story. There's more goodness that goes just beyond my own benefit, right? The fact that there was a roadblock in the first place, well, that's a good thing, too.

There are people who drive drunk, who put others in danger. And the police were out there making an effort to find them, to get them off the road. And so you and I were protected from harm in this way.

And we could go through that story and we could dig deeper and deeper and find there's a lot of good going on here, really behind the scenes in the background. The background of that story is I'd spent an evening with new friends who welcomed me, who made me feel at home in a new town. And we'd all had food to eat. We didn't have to make that food ourselves. It was provided by food producers and suppliers. It was paid for by money that we'd made at our places of employment, which we had.

[6 : 04] We had good health, good enough to make the hike all the way to the first peak of the Chief and all the way back down. We enjoyed a glorious sunset from the top.

We got to see the mountains, the sea, the sky. That's such a stunning part of life here in Squamish. And all you have to do is open up your front door and it's right there in front of you. I was able to make the drive home in a car that was good and reliable and safe.

And honestly, even the fact that I took a breathalyzer test, that shows how thoroughly God's been kind to me. I could breathe. I could take the test. I have life in my body.

And so in that story, there is that thread of embarrassment that I could maybe complain about. But alongside of that thread, there is another much greater thread of grace.

What was good, what was gracious on that evening, it really far outweighs what was difficult or embarrassing. Now, last week, BK reminded us that we do worship.

[7 : 13] We do serve a God who is good. And BK showed us how his goodness, it's revealed in his created world. How his goodness is revealed in the lives of all people on earth.

How it's specially and uniquely revealed in the lives of those who believe in Jesus Christ. And as I've talked with BK about this, it really seems that just these observations he made from God's word, this dovetails really nicely with a doctrine that I've really been chewing over the last few months that I've been teaching on in foundations class, something I've been writing about online in my own personal writings.

And this is the doctrine of common grace. It's a doctrine that's called common grace. And if that's not something you've heard before, well, to be honest, it's a doctrine that is drawn from God's word, but it is severely neglected.

It's neglected among evangelical churches in North America. We don't talk about it very much. But I think the events of this year, the experiences of this year so far, they're calling us back to look again at our world.

To see that God is good. To understand how God has lavished us with common grace. So, first we want to know, what exactly is common grace?

[8 : 43] And to know that, we need to begin by asking, what does the word grace mean? What does that mean? And maybe that's one of these words that gets thrown around in churches a lot, but sometimes we talk about it and we never define it, never stop to think about what exactly is meant by this word grace.

Well, if you open any theology book on the subject, you'll almost always see grace defined just in this very simple way. Grace is unmerited favor from God.

Grace is unmerited favor from God. So, grace is when God shows goodness, shows kindness to us, and we didn't do anything to deserve it.

There is nothing about you and me, nothing that obligates God to act with this goodness to us. In fact, if anything, the opposite is true.

We deserve the opposite. Last year, BK preached through much of the book of Ephesians, and in chapter 2, we read these words about ourselves, about the people who are receiving grace.

[9 : 54] And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

And if you get nothing else from that passage, get this, there is nothing about me.

There is nothing about me that God looks at me, that he looks at Dave and he says, wow, you really deserve my goodness. I just owe it to you to be kind to you. Yet God has been kind to me, nonetheless.

Because here's what we read next in verses 4 through 9. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved.

And raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

[11 : 32] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Now when Paul is talking about this grace here, he's talking about grace coming in a particular form. This form of grace is what theologians call saving grace, or sometimes special grace. Now here's how Wayne Grudem defines it. He says, the grace of God that brings people to salvation is often called saving grace. Very easy to remember. And that's one way that God is good. That is one way that he shows his grace, how he shows goodness to the world he's created. We here in our church, we celebrate this each Sunday. We give thanks for it often when we worship here together.

But did you know that God's goodness extends beyond that? This is grace that is rich and deep. But there is also a broadness to God's grace.

[12 : 43] God is good in more ways than this. God not only showers his world with grace, he doesn't just deluge those who believe in him with saving grace, but he also showers his world with common grace.

Quite simply, common grace, it's really an umbrella term, a catch-all term for all of God's grace that doesn't on its own bring people to salvation. It's all the grace, all the goodness that God shows to you and to me and to our world that doesn't fall under the heading of saving grace.

And so another theologian, John Murray, he defines it in this way. He says that common grace is every favor of whatever kind or degree falling short of salvation, which this undeserving and sin-cursed world enjoys at the hand of God.

It's every favor, whatever kind, whatever degree you have it. It falls short of salvation, but yet we in this undeserving and sin-cursed world, we enjoy so much favor at the hand of God.

And once you know what to look for, once you know what common grace looks like, you realize you can barely turn anywhere in Scripture without finding some evidence of common grace on the pages of Scripture.

[14 : 00] And sometimes it's mentioned very explicitly. We see this goodness mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Acts chapter 14. And he and his companion Barnabas, they've just journeyed to a town called Lystra, and they're bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to this town.

And these townspeople, who are Gentiles, they aren't familiar with the God of Abraham, and they mistake Paul and Barnabas for their own gods, for Zeus and Hermes.

And Paul and Barnabas are horrified by this, and so they respond by telling these townspeople about the one true God who gives common grace. This is how they introduce the one true God to these people who've never heard of him.

Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men of like nature with you. And we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.

In past generations, he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.

[15 : 23] And so here, Paul talks about common grace in what we might call a positive sense. This is a common grace in which God bestows and he produces what is good for people.

He bestows and produces what's good. The Bible also talks about common grace in a negative sense in that God restrains sin and its consequences.

God also restrains sin and its consequences. So he bestows and produces good. He restrains sin and its consequences. And so if that is what common grace is all about, where do we see God giving common grace?

Where do we see God giving common grace? Well, oh man, where do we even begin? You know, the story that I told at the beginning of the sermon, that's a story in which we saw common grace showing up in so many different ways.

In foundations class, we systematically worked through all the ways scripture talks about it. But the truth is that we can find common grace everywhere we look if we have eyes to see it.

[16 : 28] We could spend hours recounting all the ways God has been good to us. But if we did that, I'm afraid the live stream viewers would drop down into the single digits. So maybe it's best to pick a particular lens, a particular way of looking at this.

And I think, you know, if we're looking at the situations that we're facing in our lives and our world today, one really helpful lens is by looking through the lens of the pandemic that we're experiencing, COVID-19.

And that might be a strange way to look at common grace, you think, because this sounds like something that is terrible. That's been awful. Many people all over the world have died. It's a once-in-a-century disaster.

So how do we see in this, though, a thread of common grace running alongside of that thread of suffering and disaster? Well, we could begin with this, the last worldwide pandemic of this magnitude.

Now, we all remember this now, you know, something that maybe we've had to brush up on our history. But now we look back, we think, oh, yeah, this happened with the Spanish flu pandemic that took place back in 1918 and 1919.

[17 : 42] Now, given how quickly, how easily people travel all over the world, how many diseases there are in the world, it really is remarkable that something of this magnitude hasn't happened in over 100 years.

Now, God has shown incredible common grace in restraining a worldwide pandemic like this for an entire century. He's protected mankind from disease in this way and in many other ways besides. He is a God who is a protector and healer. You know, I'm reminded of the Apostle Paul's comment in the book of Philippians about his friend Epaphroditus.

And this friend had recovered from a life-threatening illness. And Paul says, indeed, he was ill, near to death, but God had mercy on him.

And not only on him, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. So God has shown his common grace.

[18 : 46] He has restrained one of the consequences of sin, the presence of disease in our world. There's another good thing this pandemic has revealed, something else that we perhaps have taken for granted up until now.

We've taken for granted just the physical presence of other human beings. We used to be able to invade one another's personal bubbles.

Now, some of you may not have enjoyed that so much, but maybe you're missing it a little bit more now. We could come close. We could shake hands. We could give each other a hug. And now that we're restricted from doing that, now we see, oh, how good that was.

How delightful it is for our bodies to be near each other, to see each other in person, to be in contact with one another, without fear, without care, without prudence and caution.

We feel the longing to have this grace again. I'm reminded of that same longing the Apostle Paul wrote about in 1 Thessalonians 2, where he wrote, since we were torn away from you brothers for a short time, in person, not in heart.

[20 : 08] We endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face because we wanted to come to you, I, Paul, again and again, but Satan hindered us.

Paul not only saw how good it is to be with his family in Christ, but Paul asks God to grant him that same grace of being with them.

In chapter 3, he writes, now may God, now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. God has bestowed this good thing on us, these embodied relationships, and we're looking forward to enjoying those once again and we're praying that God may restore that to us again and shower grace on us once again.

And then when we think about why we are hindered from being with one another, we remember that we're observing guidelines that have been laid out by our provincial government.

We've been blessed to have not only national leadership that takes this crisis seriously, but we have very good provincial leadership, unusually good.

[21 : 30] You know, I've seen many people on social media rightly praising the wisdom, the empathy of Dr. Bonnie Henry and our health minister and our premier ought to be honored as well.

You know, it's, there are many factors that go into why BC is one of the areas of North America that is the most safe and free from the virus. And one of those factors is the governing authorities.

And so, I'm reminded of Paul's teaching in Romans chapter 13 where he says, let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God.

And those that exist have been instituted by God. Each government leader, he says a few verses later, is God's servant for your good. For your good.

Now, it's easy, it's so easy to focus on how human governments can be corrupted into a force for evil and God's word speaks very honestly about that too.

[22 : 33] But in this pandemic, we get to see that what the Bible says, it really is true. There is, deep down, a fundamental goodness, a fundamental rightness to having government authority.

This too is God's common grace to us. God not only uses the government to restrain sin and its consequences, but God uses the government to bestow and produce good for us.

And we've been benefiting from that here. And of course, the directives given by our government, they would be of no help at all if our fellow human beings weren't following these directives.

Once again, it's easy to look and to see people who are showing little regard for one another's health, who refuse to quarantine themselves when they're required to, who scoff at social distancing.

But let's be honest, these are vastly outnumbered here by the many people who I encounter who are respecting these instructions and doing their best to follow them. And the results, they speak for themselves.

[23 : 38] That's one of the ways that God has been showing common grace. Yes, his common grace, it produces good. Even in human beings who we read earlier are dead in trespasses and sins.

God still produces good. Jesus assumes that God has worked in every human being a basic sense of love and good when he says in Luke chapter 6, if you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you?

For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And so Jesus, you know, he's making clear this common grace, it isn't going to save anyone from their sins.

He speaks of it as something, this goodness, that is not going to ultimately benefit us on the day of judgment. There's something that's missing and lacking in it, and yet, they're still good.

God is still restraining sin in our society. He's still producing good in and through every human being you meet. And on top of all this, you're experiencing common grace right now as you watch me on Facebook Live.

[24 : 54] Assuming the live stream is still working, still up and running, that's a gift. This wouldn't have been possible even a few years ago. How blessed we are that we're going through this at a time when we can compensate for our lack of ability to meet.

We can compensate for that with this technology. In a limited way, we can see and hear one another. I get the amazing opportunity to preach God's word to you. Those of us who've been meeting in growth groups, we've been able to see one another on Zoom and talk together.

I've been able to talk to many of you on the phone to send text messages back and forth. And all of this, if you think about all that has to go into making all of that possible, it staggers the mind. It's built on this vast physical infrastructure of our country. It's built on the corporations and employees whose products and services make it possible. It's built on, literally on millennia of scientific, technological research that underlies all of it.

All this science and technology, all this wisdom and expertise, that too is a gift from God. We're told in Proverbs 2, for the Lord gives wisdom, from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

[26 : 16] Here's what Wayne Grudem says about these blessings that we are enjoying, many of them coming through people who aren't Christians. All science and technology carried out by non-Christians is a result of common grace, allowing them to make incredible discoveries and inventions, to develop the earth's resources into many material goods, to produce and distribute those resources, and to have skill in their productive work.

In a practical sense, this means that every time we walk into a grocery store or ride in an automobile or enter a house, we should remember that we are experiencing the results of the abundant common grace of God poured out so richly on all mankind.

So here, too, we see that God has bestowed on us good things. All of this is the work of his common grace.

These are what we sang about earlier, the blessings all mine with 10,000 beside. So what do we do with this doctrine of a God who is good?

How do we respond to God's common grace? How do we respond to God's common grace? Well, God warns us sharply against a response of ingratitude, against being the kind of people who presume on his grace, who think it's normal, ordinary, and to be expected.

[27 : 49] Paul writes in Romans chapter 2 about how wrong that is, how messed up that is. He says, do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

But because of your hard and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. How do we become the kind of people whose hearts are no longer hard and impenitent?

But people have soft hearts, humble hearts, willing to confess sin, willing to turn away from sin and embrace righteous, holy living, full of gratitude for the common grace God has given.

Well, how do we respond to God's common grace? Well, first, God calls us to look. First, God calls us to look. We need to look and look again. Look to the created world around us.

In Psalm 19, we're reminded, the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech and night to night reveals knowledge.

[29 : 13] Let's stop and think this through. What are the things in this world that you take for granted? Think about it.

What are the things that have sort of become the background to your life? You see or you use them every day but you've just kind of assumed them or ignored them. You know, I'll give it a personal example.

I've realized just very personally, I pay almost no attention to the plants and the trees and the flowers around me. All that is just a blur of greenery to me and you know, I'm reminded of a line from another hymn where you know, it says, there's not a plant or flower below but makes thy glory known.

And I haven't been looking for that glory. I've been ignoring it. And so starting a couple weeks ago I just said, hey, I'm going to start walking around the empty lot across the street from me and I started learning how to recognize and identify and learn about what's growing there and quickly realized that, oh, those things I just called trees and didn't even pay attention to, oh, that's a red alder, that's a balsam poplar, oh, that's what these things are, here's how they grow, here's what's special about them, look at the way their leaves form, learn about them.

Are there things that you see and you use every day that you never stop to wonder about? You don't have to go anywhere to do this exercise, you could literally do it right now. I can look right here, I can see and I can feel this pulpit here, I can think about how it was shaped.

[30 : 49] I know that Cam put it together, maybe I can ask him, hey, Cam, tell me about the wood that this is made from, tell me about the stain that you used, why'd you use that stain? Where'd you get it from?

Tell me about the craftsmanship that went into making this. Tell me about the metal frame, how you formed that.

Let me stop and think about how these things came from so many different places, all over, who knows, all over the country, perhaps all over the world. and I benefit from all of this and have done so little to earn it.

Look again at the people around you. Each one of them is a world of experience and thought and feeling. Ask them questions, get to know them, enter their world.

God has given us far more than our eyes can see and our minds can imagine. And we need to slow down and we need to look. More than that, we need to look again at God's word, at the Bible.

[32 : 02] In Psalm 19, you know, we talked about that glory of the heavens, but then David moves from that glory, the lesser glory of the heavens, to the greater glory of Scripture, where God is revealed even more clearly.

He tells us, the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

These words give us life when we start looking at them again. They make us wise when we are foolish. So many of us are malnourished because we have not been feasting on God's word.

God uses his word to give us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand. If it's been a long time since you opened your Bible and read it, now is the time to look again and to see grace.

Second, God calls us not only to look, but to listen. Listen. In chapter one of his letter, James writes about how God is the one who faithfully gives common grace.

[33 : 14] James calls that every good gift and every perfect gift. And then James tells us that in response, we ought to do some listening. Here's what he says. Every good and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

Know this, my beloved brothers. Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Therefore, put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls.

So James tells us that we ought to listen to the word of truth that is able to save your souls. The scriptures, they're a means of God's saving grace to us.

[34 : 27] We ought to listen to them. We ought to listen when they are taught and preached. But more than that, James tells us that because God gives common grace beyond even the pages of scriptures, we ought to listen beyond the pages of scriptures.

We ought to listen to one another's experiences and what one another has to say. That's why he tells us, hey, be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.

James tells us, we are much too quick to speak and to give advice and to express our opinions. It's almost like James wrote this after scrolling through his Facebook or his Twitter feed.

When we are slow to hear and quick to speak, James says, we are guilty of filthiness and rampant wickedness. James is telling us, listen, listen, listen first.

Hear what other people are going through. Hear what they've learned. Listen before correcting.

Listen before judging. Listen before lashing out. In my counseling, I've had to humble myself to do a lot more listening and understanding before I speak.

[35 : 46] I have to do a lot more knowing the person before I dispense advice and that's been so helpful for me, just that practice of how God has moved my heart to do more listening and knowing.

I've had to do that well as recently with a lot of the upheaval happening in the states, trying to understand the Black Lives Matter protests. I found it really helpful to listen and understand, you know, what is it like to be black in America?

That's an experience I've never had. Hey, to listen and see many African Americans, they've been arrested or killed for making the same mistake that I made at that police roadblock. I've been grateful for fellow brothers in Christ like the hip-hop artist Shai Lin who just did a wonderful job this week of not only sharing his grief but going even farther and writing about and interpreting his experiences with just wise, godly wisdom.

And I've been doing some listening, hearing stories from men and women in law enforcement to the impossible array of circumstances we asked them to handle. Police forces are often not structured well to help them, you know, puts them in situations that are very difficult or makes it extremely difficult for good cops to call attention to the misdeeds of bad cops.

As hard as it is, I'm trying to listen to people I disagree with. To listen to people who I know, hey, this person is carrying some really false or really messed up ideas about God and about what human beings even are and how what they ought to be doing, that these things corrupt the way they think about these issues.

[37 : 31] But if I really believe in the doctrine of common grace, then what I'm going to do is I'm going to listen and I'm going to listen for that kernel of good even among all the things that are messed up.

I'm going to listen and look for that spark of common grace. This is the hard work of discernment. We don't want to do it. We would rather just say this person is bad, all bad, this person is good, all good, and I don't have to do the hard work of sorting the good from the bad.

I don't have to do the hard work of knowing God's truth, of knowing right doctrine, of being able to do this discernment. But James encourages us, you have to do this.

Stay grounded to the God who is faithful and good and true. But if you really are a recipient of God's common grace, then you look for common grace in others as well.

And so I want to open this up to you. If you're finding it really hard in this time to do this listening and understanding, you're finding it, man, how do I sort the right from wrong, the truth from error?

[38 : 43] How do I keep from throwing the baby out with the bathwater when I recognize that someone is somewhat off in the things they're saying? That's one of the main reasons that God has given you the elders here at SBC.

We're here for you. We're glad to help you. We want to help you sort through these things. So as you look, as you listen, third of all, meditate.

Meditate. And now that's a word that's common in our culture, but when the Bible talks about meditating, it's not talking about, you know, emptying your mind. It's talking, in fact, about filling your mind. Fill your mind.

Ruminates on. Marinate yourselves in truth, in these words of wisdom, in what you're reading and seeing about God's common grace. Think through, mull over all the implications of it.

All the ways that his common grace affects you and affects the people around you. If you're thinking, where do I start? I would say a good place to start is open the Bible.

[39 : 46] Read Psalm 104 in its entirety. It's just a psalm that really focuses a lot on common grace. The author concludes his reflections in common grace by writing, may my meditation be pleasing to him for I rejoice in the Lord.

As we look, as we listen, and then take to heart what we find, we learn how to find joy in the God who is good to us.

And so, fourth and finally, it comes time to speak. It comes time to speak. We are not meant to remain silent about common grace.

In Psalm 145, we read, The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him.

He also hears their cry and saves them. The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

[40 : 58] So who do we speak to? Well, first of all, we ought to speak to the Lord. We need to get this relationship right and we need to get it right first and fast.

If we don't get this relationship with God right, all of our other relationships are going to become warped or dysfunctional in some way, often in ways that we don't even notice and don't even realize are wrong, don't even know are messed up.

Speak first, and this is really, really important, speak first to God. Take it to the Lord in prayer. Again, the Psalms offer a wonderful model of this.

And when you read the Psalms, you see that the authors, they show us how to take all of our sadness, all of our grief, our anger, our fear, our joy, our gratitude, and you don't just stuff them in a box and ignore them.

You don't just vomit them out on everybody around you. The first thing you do is you take it to God and you talk with him about it. You pour out your heart before him. And the Psalms model how we can speak to him first.

[42 : 07] So if you're starting to see God's common grace more clearly, man, first thing you do, you tell him about that. You tell him, here's what I'm learning, Lord.

Here's how it's making me feel. Here's what I think maybe I need to do in response to this. Is that what, Lord, you're calling me to? Lord, I long for more grace.

Open my eyes, let me see what you've given and give me still more. Lord, we're encouraged in Psalm 145 to call on him, to cry to him.

Then, after we have spoken to God, we start speaking to others. We speak to others about God. We tell other people what good we're seeing in the world that God has made.

We're telling people who believe. We're telling people who don't believe. You know, you and I, we have got to get out of this habit of just keeping these thoughts and these feelings, these observations all locked up inside of us.

[43 : 15] We need to get in the habit of expressing what we're thinking and feeling about this goodness of God, this common grace that is all around us. Invite others to praise him with you.

That's how the psalm ends. my mouth will speak the praise of the Lord and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever. On top of that, we're called to speak to those who are ungrateful for common grace because you and I, we are.

We are ungrateful. We presume uncommon grace. And we need to challenge one another. Hey, learn how to deepen your gratitude. Hey, start looking.

Start listening. We need to start meditating on this. We need to be liberated from this spirit of ingratitude that takes things for granted, that assumes all the goodness around us is, oh, that's just normal.

That's just what everyone experiences. That's just life. That's just the way things are always going to be. Oh, man, we are missing out on the goodness of God.

[44 : 22] Encourage one another. Comfort one another. Pray for one another. Look for ways. Hey, how can I become a channel of God's common grace to you?

So may God give you eyes to see, ears to hear, a heart to understand how good he is, how much grace he has showered on you, and that you can find in him bright hope for tomorrow.

May you be able to say to him with joy, great is thy faithfulness. Our God, we're grateful just for this experience of wisdom.

I'm grateful that there's so much grace just surrounding me at all times. This world is bursting with grace. We live in a deeply relational world where everywhere where man can be, thou God art present there.

You are personally involved in your world. You are personally showing goodness and grace to us, and we don't see 99% of it. Oh, God, deliver us from our blindness, our deafness, our hard hearts.

[45 : 38] Let us see your goodness. And Lord, I pray as you've just sort of pulled back a little corner of the curtain and let me see some of the goodness.

Lord, may you do the same for all of us. May today be a day where even if it's just for five minutes, each person who's listening may stop and consider the goodness of the Lord and look and see how kind he has been and respond to it not with nonchalance, not with ingratitude, not with a yawn, but with thanksgiving to you, with repentance rather than presumption, and with a longing for more grace and asking you, Lord, let me see still more so that I can see how good you are and that my mouth can praise you and sing of your righteousness.

Amen.