

Having the mind of Christ in his amazing grace

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[0 : 00] Okay, today we're continuing in our series of the mindset of Jesus and how important it is for us to adopt that mindset because that's what God wants us to do so that we can be Jesus in our community, to be with Jesus, be like Jesus and do what Jesus did.

Okay, we're going to just read a few verses from Philippians 4, which is a culmination of this chapter. But also after that, we're going to put the slide straight up on and the last verse that you see on this slide is going to be in a different Bible from the Message Bible, just because I think it emphasizes what we're trying to look at here.

So Paul is writing to the Philippian church from Rome where he's under arrest, awaiting trial, his circumstances are not good. But he wants to encourage those from the Philippian church.

And he says this to them at the end of the chapter, greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. In other words, from Rome to Philippi.

And all God's people here, he says, send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. Isn't it incredible that the witness of the gospel had infiltrated in that sense the most unlikely place into Caesar's very household.

[1 : 41] And it could be that they were servants. They could have been people who had really important roles in that house. And could influence the very person, the central figure of the Roman Empire.

And the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul says to finish, be with your spirit. Amen. You know, sometimes when we pray, we say amen at the end, don't we?

But we should say amen. Because what it's in effect saying is, I agree with that. God do that. Bring that upon the circumstances that we're praying for.

So could you go next slide, please? And I love the way the Message Bible says this. By the way, the bike is biblical. I can't quite think of how, but I like the bike. And it's so important in the ministry that we're involved in.

And that we are to have the amazing grace mindset of Jesus. Deep, deep within us. That's what that verse says in the message.

[2 : 46] Receive and experience the amazing grace of the Master. Jesus Christ. Deep, deep within you. And you know, anything God wants to teach us, to develop us, to do in us, to call us to.

He will only ever do it in a deep way. There's no surface about what God does in our lives. And we are not to resist that. We are to revel in it and rejoice in it.

And to surrender to his purpose in our lives. I'm sure all of us at some point in our walk with God could say that at times we thought, No, I don't want to go down that road.

But ultimately, God has opened that door to us. We've gone down that road and we look back and think, Oh, I'm so pleased I did that. Even if it was the hardest part of our lives.

I'm so pleased I did that. And that God led me that way. So have the amazing grace mindset. I didn't want to just say have the mindset of grace.

[3 : 53] The amazing grace mindset of Jesus may be deep, deep within us. Before we go into the passage today, I just want to have a quick recheck, a quick rethink and review of what we've done before.

I'll just whittle through this so that at least it reminds us of what we've seen and done and been challenged about in this chapter. First of all, we are to be determined to stand firm, no matter what the circumstances are that we face.

And to be of the same mind in the Lord, a unified body of Christ. Not just in church, but in our families, in our relationships with others. Be of the same mind in the Lord, unified.

And to rejoice in the Lord continually. And again, he says, I say rejoice. And he doesn't just say rejoice in the good times or whatever, but just to rejoice.

When I was a police officer, I was once in a position where you really wouldn't want to rejoice because there was two conflicting, aggressive, violent groups. And I was the only policeman in the middle.

[5 : 01] And I'd read that verse that morning. And I decided, OK, God, I know you're real. So I'm going to check out what happens when I rejoice in the midst of the situation. And I said, God, I rejoice in this.

And I turned to this two groups of really tough guys who had weapons and everything. And I just said, stop. In my heart, I was saying, stop in the name of Jesus.

And you know what? They stopped. And they dropped their weapons and they walked away. And then all the backup I'd called for came. And they all said, with dogs and loads of guys and men and women and all this kind of thing.

And they said, where's the problem? I said, there is no problem now. Because God had taken care of that situation. Rejoice in the Lord always in whatever the circumstances you face.

And then let your gentleness be known. Avoid being overanxious over anything. And think on things that are true, noble, pure, just, lovely and good.

[6 : 02] Be content with what you have and the circumstances God has placed in your life. And you can do everything through Christ's strength in you. Even at your weakest time, you are strong in Christ.

Because there's no resistance to Christ's strength in you. And then God will supply all your needs, as John said. And then finally today, we are to receive and experience that amazing grace of Jesus deep within us.

To our very core, whatever that is. When I rode on my motorcycle to Scotland for a funeral a couple of weeks ago, I think it was. It was minus five all the way.

And when I got there, I knew what the core of my body was. Because it was frozen. But right into the depth of our spirit. We're to have this grace of Jesus.

If we don't have the grace of Jesus moving through our lives, I wonder what presentation of the gospel we're going to make. I wonder if in the news this week, you heard of the shopkeeper on Orkney.

[7 : 07] The island of Orkney up in Scotland or off Scotland. Who recently got a lot more than he planned. See, he'd ordered some Easter eggs. He only needed 80, but when he made the order, he made a mistake.

And to this tiny little shop on the island of Orkney, 80 cases of Easter eggs arrived. And he realized he'd made a huge mistake.

It meant that he had 720 Easter eggs for a population of approximately 500 people. Now, bearing in mind, not all the 500 people on Orkney probably had the teeth to eat the chocolate or the desire.

But in an effort to overcome this problem he was faced with, he decided the best thing to do was to raffle off 100 eggs.

If somebody bought the winning ticket, they would get it and all the money would go to the R&L; I.

Now, we're to have the amazing grace mindset. And grace is the central foundation.

[8 : 09] I'm coming back to the eggs. We know that. That's something we repeat regularly in church.

And Ephesians 2 says, 8 and 9, And this not from ourselves.

It's the gift of God. Not by works, not by anything we've done so that no one can boast and say, look at me. And as God gives grace, he never gives grace sparingly, begrudgingly, meanly, tight-fisted.

Oh, how many people have we met like that? Or penny-pinching. In fact, Ephesians 7, chapter 1 and verse 7 and 8 says, Now, lavished means generous and extravagant.

And it just reminded me as I was preparing this that generous and extravagant is just like Mary, the sister of Martha, when she broke an alabaster jar of perfume over Jesus as an act of worship.

[9 : 44] That would have cost a year's wages for her to do that. And she wasn't in two minds. This is what she came to do. She'd thought it through and she broke that. Next slide, please.

One disciple called it a waste. But Jesus recognized Mary's sacrificial giving. And also be aware of this.

Unlike the shopkeeper and opening, it isn't a mistake of heaven to give more grace than we expect. But it is something that we should rejoice in.

Because the degree of grace given as an undeserved gift reveals the degree of love God has for you and I. And you know, sometimes we do think, where is God when we pray?

Because we don't hear as we hoped we would the answer we wanted. Sometimes we've let God down in a way that we're reluctant to come back to church maybe.

[10:44] And we're just unsure. We're not reading the word. We're not praying anymore. But the degree of grace for that moment, which is undeserved, is still poured out into our lives, regardless of what mess we've made.

Because that reveals the degree of love God has for you. And his love never falters. Never ebbs and flows like the sea. It doesn't come in with a tide and go out with a tide.

It's continuous. And in our case, there's no lucky raffle ticket required for us to receive that gift.

See, the ticket, if you like, of heaven is faith. Faith and trust in God that no matter what he says, he will faithfully do it. And as 1 Timothy 4.10 says, which was an incredible verse for me at the worst time in my life, we've put our trust and faith in the living God, the Savior of all men who believe.

And God hasn't gone back on his promise for those moments. God gives out of his storehouse of steadfast love and grace, which is new every morning.

[11:57] Did you wake this morning and see the dawn come? You know, some people have never seen the dawn, never seen the sunrise. It's something we love to do in our house because we never shut the curtains.

We look straight on the mower. And sometimes in the midst of summer, especially, we're woken up by the sun. As it makes, it comes up from the back of the house and makes the hillside golden. It's just incredible.

But it's that reminder that today is a new day. Therefore, his compassions, his love and mercy are new today. And his provision of grace to us outweighs anything of value on this earth.

Absolutely everything on this earth is of nothing compared to the love and grace of God. And I found this week that an author, Nancy Spielberg, wrote something which I think is incredible.

Because she said, Lord, I once crawled across the barrenness to you with my empty cup in the hope that you would fill it. Or at least put something in it that would bless me.

[13:02] But then she wrote, if only I'd known you better, I would have come running with a bucket full of expectation. Grace is God's unmerited favor toward us.

Grace is to be used by God's glory.

Grace is to be used by God's glory.

And show them that there is an incredible Savior who wants to impact their lives in a way that they cannot imagine. And to express the mind of Christ is to allow the grace of Christ to permeate every aspect of our lives.

Every aspect. There is one aspect of me or you as a human being and everything that we do that God doesn't want to permeate. And that means to really soak up grace to such a degree.

[14:49] We are people of grace. And in our relationship within the church and within the community around us, in our families, amongst our colleagues at work.

We need them. God wants them to know grace. Next slide, please. Next slide, please. Next slide, please. Next slide, please. Next slide, please. Next slide, please.

Jesus showed his mindset of grace by the way he did many things. By no means is the ten that I've listed anything like everything of Jesus.

But everything of Jesus and about Jesus and how he lived and how he interacted and reached out. How he spoke. How he touched.

How he did. How he provided. How he challenged and everything else was purely and completely by grace. He set out to buy 80 chocolate eggs for a population of 500.

[15:56] And I was thinking, that's kind of stingy. I mean, you know, we don't particularly eat chocolate eggs now unless Sandy doesn't. I'm not aware of it. We've got a bed that lifts up for storage and maybe under there, there's a whole lot of Easter eggs.

with my name or not, Sandy's name, I don't know. But God isn't like that. And it occurred to me, if we could buy grace and we expected a box of grace every time we asked God for something, that's not biblical, but you know what I mean, that heaven would give 80 cases of grace if we'd only asked for one.

But then I think that as we get the 80 cases of grace, totally unexpected, it's almost like God would say, yeah, go on, open them now. And he would smile and see the joy in our lives and the unexpectation that we have.

Is that a word? Anyway. Lack of expectation. But then having done that, he would expect us to expect it next time. And not to limit our expectation of the way he's going to impact our lives. So Jesus showed this mindset of his of grace because he did everything that God wanted him, his father wanted him to do. He said and did whatever his father told him to do.

[17 : 21] But I love the fact that with Jesus so many times, as he looked upon a city or he looked upon a crowd, he saw them as broken people.

He called them sheep without a shepherd. And the Bible says we have gone astray and we've turned to our own way. And the Lord has laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all, our sin, that we could be saved and he will have paid the debt for us.

But Jesus had compassion as he looked upon the broken people. And then he healed them. And then he interacted. And then he fed them. Grace is a compassion mindset.

And we should have the same. And incidentally, when I say we should have the same, I'm not saying that we should set out to be grace, but that we should receive grace from God, that we should seek that grace that we may be filled with it.

Because God will give that more than lavishly. But Jesus also, when he came upon people that were considered the untouchables, the lepers, the people who were completely down and out, he would comfort them in the midst of their, what's the word, where they're, sorry?

[18 : 44] Isolation. That's the one. Thank you. In the midst of their isolation from society, he would go to them and embrace them and heal them and restore them. And can you imagine the joy, not only the man who was healed, but Jesus himself to see the man healed.

And to be able to say to him, go to the priest to tell him what's done and then go see your family and rejoice. You know, sometimes we may be a little bit hesitant to do something to somebody who's not like us.

And Philip Yancey said, it takes no grace to relate to someone who looks, thinks and acts just like we do. That's easy, isn't it? But he said, the more we love and the more unlikely people we love, the more we will resemble Jesus and the grace of God, who after all, loves people like us.

Isn't it funny that we'd be happy to relate to those who look like us when others may be looking at us thinking, I don't want to relate to him or her. I don't want to be like them.

But the more we love and the more unlikely people we love, the more we resemble Jesus. That to me is one of the most important things about what we do in the, and when we reach out with the love of God to the motorcycle world.

[20 : 12] Some people in all facets of society are very difficult people. Difficult to understand, not sure what to do, but underneath it all, because God looks on the heart of man, not the outward appearance, they are broken people who need to know that a Savior loves them.

And then Jesus showed his grace through emotion and sympathy. The shortest verse in the Bible we know is John 11, verse 35, Jesus wept.

And on the way to the grave of Lazarus, friends of the family were mourning with Lazarus' two sisters, Mary and Martha again, who were weeping, and Jesus joined them and he wept.

His tears were on his cheeks and his body would shake with the emotion that we have when we weep. He knew he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, but Jesus wept in sympathy for their loss.

He had that compassion upon them. He empathized with them. But then he knew that they were rejoicing very soon. Death had impacted them, but he reached out to them with grace, in sympathy and emotion, and just was waiting for that joy when they saw Lazarus come out of the grave.

[21 : 34] And Jesus showed his mindset of grace by the way he challenged the Pharisees. You know, we hear such bad press, don't we, about the Pharisees. You get to the point, if you're not careful of thinking, God didn't love them at all.

Certainly God didn't agree with what they were doing as a lifestyle and the burdens they placed on others. But Christ would actually die for them shortly, even though they had decided to bring him to the place of going to the cross.

But he challenged their hypocrisy. He challenged that burden that they placed on others. He didn't ignore it or overlook it. He could quite happily, I suppose, if he hadn't been, God have said, well,

they've been so horrible to me, horrible to everybody else.

Let's just wipe them out. But grace mindset was that he was looking for them lost in religious practices. Most of what they had decided upon themselves.

But he would one day die on the cross for their sin. In fact, as Jesus was on the cross, he said, he looked down, he said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. Even if that was specifically to the Roman soldiers who put him where he was, I'm sure it included those who had organized deceit and lies to get him there.

[22 : 54] They and you are not beyond the boundaries of the saving grace of God. Jesus lavished grace on Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin.

And he may well, up to then, I don't think we even know, but he may well have been one of these Pharisees that Jesus said, you're a hypocrite. You're like a tomb that's white on the outside, but inside you've got dead man's bones.

That's how he actually compared them. But Nicodemus came to see Jesus in the middle of the night when nobody else was looking in the dark. And I think that's a great thing. And he came to him and be honest and sort of said, what is going on?

And Jesus was honest with him and said, truly I tell you, no one, not even you, a Pharisee, can see the kingdom of God unless you're born again. And in that passage, it said two wonderful things. For God so loved the world. Jesus said this to Nicodemus. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. In other words, me, he was saying. That whoever believes in me shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

[24 : 02] But then in the very next verse, and don't forget Jesus didn't speak in verses, but in the very next verse, which we're so inclined to miss, or verses, it says this.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. That's the grace of God. And whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already.

Now that is grace because he's actually letting somebody know that where you are is not saved. And we don't want to leave you in that place.

We want you to come to it. So whoever believes in him is not condemned, but anybody who does not believe stands condemned already because they've not believed in the name of God's one and only son.

But then he forgave. He forgave a woman caught in adultery when everybody else wanted just to smash her up with stones. And she would have felt unforgivable.

[25 : 08] She would have known that now she was caught in adultery and we always say, what happened to the guy? He doesn't seem to be dealt with at all. But whenever she was caught in adultery like this, she would know it was unforgivable in one sense and that she would be stoned to death.

But then Jesus steps in and said, has anyone condemned you? Because Jesus challenged their hypocrisy that they were saying that they had no sin because if the first person to throw the stone had no sin and of course they all dropped their stones at that point and Jesus said to the girl, has anyone condemned you?

No one, sir. Then Jesus said, neither do I condemn you. And go now and leave your life of sin. What an incredible statement of grace.

This poor woman who was petrified, absolutely certain that this was her last day on earth, having no idea where she was going to go. She couldn't turn to anybody.

No one was on her side until Jesus turned up. And then his grace mindset reinstated Peter who was the one who actually denied him three times and then the cop crows.

[26 : 28] Peter could never repay the grace Jesus showed him. But isn't that the point of grace? We cannot ever repay the grace that Jesus shows us, that God lavishes upon us.

It's beyond possibility. humanity. And John Newton made this wonderful comment. John Newton, of course, was the slave trader.

He said, that turned to Christ, he said, I'm not what I might be. I'm not what I ought to be. I'm not what I wish to be.

And I'm not what I hope to be. But I thank God I am not what I once was. And I can say with the great apostle Paul, by the grace of God, I am what I am.

This man who traded in lives, many of who would die on the process of going from one country to another to be sold in the most horrendous circumstances, suddenly awoke to the truth of what he was doing.

[27 : 43] And he rejected that and he asked God to forgive him, to change him. Nobody is beyond the grace of God. And then he said this incredible statement, I thank God I'm not what I was.

And it's nothing because of me, but it's all about the grace of God. By the grace of God, I am what I am now. We need to all remember that whatever we are now, we should strive by grace to become entirely Christ-like as God wants us to be.

And John Bunyan, who wrote Pilgrim's Progress, it's very poignant in our lives because a great friend of ours, their son, or a couple that we know really well, great friends, their son was abducted, tortured, and then died when he was thrown into the river and was washed up at the very location John Bunyan was baptized near Oxford in the river.

But in the book that John Bunyan wrote, he said, I've not lived today, sorry, you have not lived today until you've done something for someone who can never repay you.

Because that costs you. And sometimes it will cost you a great deal but you've not lived. We've not lived out our Christian life today if we've not done something like that.

[29 : 08] And it's not just giving somebody a thousand pounds, but giving something of yourself. Something that is beyond repayment.

And not to feel begrudging about it. I'm going to do it because God's told me nothing like that. But we do it because God's prompt our hearts and our mindset of grace to do it.

And Jesus understands our temptations. And in his mindset he approached it in a way that he understood our temptations but he never sinned. But yet invites us to come to him in our time of need.

Especially when our shame says, I can't. And lets us then approach. Listen to this. then lets us approach the throne of grace at a time when we least feel like we should be there at all.

Let's approach God's throne of grace with confidence, not arrogance. And yes, we may feel guilty and shameful and just dirty because of our sin.

[30 : 22] But then the Bible says if we approach the throne of grace with confidence, trust in God, we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Clive Hughes was chatting and I was chatting with him on the phone yesterday and many of you know he used to be part of the church. But we were just thinking back to when we used to have a tape of people's experiences in the Hebridean revival and how wonderful it was and Clive reminded us of a man who was an old man.

They had the biggest smile on his face you've ever seen and what he said as a result of his experience of the Hebridean revival, isn't grace wonderful?

Because he and all those people at that time will have experienced grace in a greater depth than we have but we can still experience it today. but then Jesus with his mindset of grace sacrificed his life in obedience to his father.

Sandy and I were in Israel recently and we went to the garden of Gethsemane and we sat there and we just reflected back with all the people we were with that how Jesus went into the garden of Gethsemane and he knelt down knowing he was going to go and be crucified and he actually said to his father if it's possible may this could be taken from me but the grace that was in his mindset yet not as I will but as you will.

[31 : 57] I don't want to have my way I want to have your way. Then Jesus' mindset sets us free from sin having paid that debt on the cross a debt he didn't owe but it was a debt we couldn't pay.

Romans 6 14 in the message says you must not give sin a vote in the way you conduct your lives. I hope you understand what it means by that. You mustn't give a sin a vote in the way you conduct your lives.

Don't give it the time of day. Don't even run little errands that are connected with that old way of life because we're often tempted to aren't we?

But to throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full time into God's way of doing things. Sin cannot tell you how to live because you've been set free. After all we're not living under that old tyranny any longer.

You're living in the freedom of God's grace. And then finally God gives us hope. The mindset of Jesus' love and grace gives us hope for the end of tough times.

[33 : 08] You may be in a horrendous time in your life at the moment. But 1 Peter 5.10 says, The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ after you've suffered a little while will restore him, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

What we go through is not just something to go through but something that God can make us restored and increase our strength to stand firm and to be steadfast in our faith knowing that what he's done he'll do again and again and again.

And to finish I just want to quote a wonderful hymn that John introduced me to. Certainly I'd never heard of it before a few years ago and it's just become another favorite of mine. Annie John's Flint, the wonderful hymn He Giveth More Grace.

Wonderful place. And she wrote this, when we have exhausted our store of endurance, when our strength has failed ere that day is half done, when we reach the end of our hoarded resources, our Father's forgiving has only begun.

His love has no limit, his grace has no measure, his power has no boundary known unto men, for out of his infinite riches of grace in Jesus, he giveth and giveth and giveth again.

[34 : 44] And just to finish, let me go back to Nancy Spielberg's way of expressing this. Lord, I crawled across the barrenness to you with my empty cup. If only I'd known you better.

I'd have come running with a bucket. Now we are to express the mind of Christ. And the Bible verse that we started with says this again.

Receive and experience the amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, but deep, deep within yourselves. Because only that way can we affect this world by grace.

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