

Maple Springs Baptist Church

Series: Unsettling Grace

Week 1: Unsettling

I don't know why everybody wouldn't want Christianity to be true. . . There's a big difference between . . . **I don't believe it's true. I don't want it to be true.**

Blaise Pascal quote . . . **"People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of proof, but on the basis of what they find attractive.**

What is most attractive about Christianity?

Grace: What we crave most when our guilt is exposed.

Grace: What we are hesitant to extend when confronted with the guilt of others.

The tension:

**Grace when we are on the receiving end is extraordinarily REFRESHING
BUT...**

Grace when required of us is extraordinarily DISTURBING (UNSETTLING).

Grace definition: **Grace is Undeserved, Unearned, Unearnable Favor**

Grace can only be experienced in the context of a relationship, where there is an imbalance, and you are on the negative side of the ledger.

This is why everybody should why everybody should want Christianity to be true.

This is why **God** had to **Show** up. **We would have never known the Grace of God without the Presence of God.**

For God's grace to be seen, for God's grace to be known, it had to be personal. **"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us . . ." (John 1:14a)**

God inhabited a body. The explanation for all things took up residence among us. **". . . We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son . . ." (John 1:14b)**

John is saying . . . Jesus came to earth to represent the presence of God and to explain to us what God is really like. **". . . who cam from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14c).**

Any time you try to balance Grace and Truth, you lose some Grace and some Truth. **Jesus never watered down the truth or turned down the grace.**

Jesus was All grace and All truth, All the time.

The calling of Matthew: Matthew 9:9-13.

“When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’” (Matthew 9:11)

Jesus makes an awkward situation even more awkward. Jesus says out loud for everyone to hear: **“On hearing this, Jesus said, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.’” (Matthew 9:12)**

Jesus told the Pharisees this . . . **“But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Matthew 9:13).** Jesus was saying, “I’m not afraid to call a sinner, a sinner, and I’m not afraid to go to their house for dinner.”

John 8:1-11. The woman who was caught in the act of adultery. –Truth: “You are Guilty.” Grace: “But I don’t condemn you.”

Over and over, Jesus leaned into people who had not acknowledged their sin and initiated relationships. He leaned in to people who had not acknowledged their sin and initiated relationships.

When Jesus was crucified, Luke noted the most unsettling expression of Grace. **“Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed.” (Luke 23:32)**

They had to get rid of Grace and Truth in a body. **Luke 23:33, 35, 39, 40-41**

In other words . . . His only hope was what he deserved the least. Something he had extended very little to people in life. So, in an act of desperation ... **“Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom”.** (Luke 23:42)

Jesus answered despite everything. Why? Because that’s what Grace does. Grace answers anyway. **“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me . . . in paradise.’” (Luke 23:43)**

God promised a man who had done nothing good and had nothing good to offer. . . “Where I am going, you are going.”

Why would Jesus do this? It must have been mind boggling to those in the crowd. Inviting Matthew to follow and the woman who was caught in adultery was one thing, but why this? Because, like life, **Grace is not fair.** It is better than fair.

He was All Grace and All Truth All the Time because that's what Love is and Jesus is Love Personified.

Now, your pushback is simple. This is why it's so unsettling. "Was Jesus not concerned about justice?" "Was Jesus not concerned about consequences?" No, that's not the issue.

Jesus knew that God's justice would crush us, because All have sinned and nobody can pay God back. He knew better than anybody that the consequences of sin were already crushing us. **Every sin has a gotcha. But Jesus came to getcha.**

This is why I don't know why everybody wouldn't want it to be true. When Grace is on display, people will want it to be true before they ever believe it's true.

Jesus said this in **Luke 16:16**. **"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it."**

When people caught a glimpse of what was actually being offered, they leaned in hoping, looking for evidence of the fact that this is in fact true.

The good news that Jesus referred to is embodied in a person . . . **Jesus**. And the good news is summarized in a word, it's our word . . . **Grace**.