



# [MATH]

NUMBERS DONT LIE

## 3.30.2014 GROUP DISCUSSION

MESSAGE BY SHAWN JOHNSON

### START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

**If you could have lunch with any person in the world, who would it be and why?**

### SHARE

Welcome back to our series entitled, "Math." In this series we have been working with the old adage that "numbers don't lie," and examining it in light of scripture. Just like he has done with math, there are principles that God has imbedded into the fabric of life that are constant, no matter what. When it comes to the creator God, his numbers don't lie and his "math" is right every time, even when it seems like it can't add up.

God's promises are true and He can be trusted. Sometimes, God will ask us to add things to our lives and other times God will ask us to subtract things from our lives; things that are holding us back from what He has for us. But, regardless of what it may seem like and no matter how life might appear right now, we can trust God's math. We can trust that God is "greater than" our circumstances, problems or challenges. We can also trust that God has the answers, even when they seem impossible to find.

This week's message talked about the seemingly juxtaposed position of grace and truth in today's culture and examined that view through the lens of scripture, revealing how God actually intended the two to work together. In a world dominated by tolerance and relative truth it can be challenging, even for believers, to see that you can't have grace without truth or vice-versa.

Grace is the gift of God's favor, truth in the purest definition of the word is fidelity (faithfulness or loyalty) to the original. In order for us to understand what is true and what is false, we must understand what God originally intended for us.

From these two passages we get the foundation of both why Christ came, and what his coming means for us.

### Read the following passages:

John 10:10

John 1:14-17

Do these passages bring anything to mind?

We see that Christ isn't simply interested in preserving us, but also in imparting LIFE to us. What does that mean to you?

To better understand what is really being said by the marriage of grace and truth, read this excerpt from The Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible:

So it should read: "He dwelt among us full of grace and truth"; or, in Old Testament phrase, "Mercy and truth," denoting the whole fruit of God's purposes of love towards sinners of mankind, which until now existed only in promise, and the fulfillment at length of that promise in Christ; in one great word, "the SURE MERCIES of David" (Is 55:3; Ac 13:34; compare 2 Sa 23:5). In His Person all that Grace and Truth which had been floating so long in shadowy forms, and darting into the souls of the poor and needy its broken beams, took everlasting possession of human flesh and filled it full. By this Incarnation of Grace and Truth, **the teaching of thousands of years was at once transcended and exceeded, and the family of God sprang into Manhood.** (Feel free to re-read, there is a lot in this)

Think about Chad's sermon and this commentary. How do you see grace and truth interacting with the abundant life Christ is referring to in John 10?

## GROW

At its essence, grace is simply the undeserved and unmerited favor of God. It's often easy to hear this and then jump to the idea that what we do doesn't matter in light of us not deserving grace to begin with. This isn't a new concept and was actually a problem for a church in the New Testament.

Read Romans 5:12-6:4. Share any thoughts on this.

Through this passage we see that Paul strongly rejects the notion of grace as a license to do whatever we want. The New Bible Commentary has this to say:

Paul emphatically rejects any such inference - By no means! - explaining why he does so with the key idea of the chapter: **We died to sin.** What Paul means by this becomes clear as he unfolds the concept in the rest of the chapter: we are no longer slaves to sin, sin is no longer our master. To be 'dead to sin', thus, does not mean to be insensible to its enticements, for Paul makes clear that sin remains for the Christian an attraction to be battled with every day (v.13). **Rather it means to be delivered from the absolute tyranny of sin, from the state in which sin holds unchallenged sway, the state we all lived before conversion.**

Sometimes it can seem like grace and truth are opposed; but based on John 1:17 we know that can't be the case (Christ comes full of grace AND truth). How is truth being referred to and based on Paul's letter to the Romans what role does truth play in our lives?

Based on this commentary and the passage in Romans, what role does grace play in our lives?

How does grace interact with truth?

Read Galatians 2:15-21

## MOVE

In his message, Chad takes some time to help us understand this concept of grace and truth. The common misconception is that truth and the law are referring to the same thing. This isn't the case. The fact of the matter is that the law is 100% truth, but truth is so much more than simply a list of things we can and can't do.

Through God's truth, we do have a standard of living and ways in which God calls his children to live. But, truth as a whole is anything that brings us back to redemption in Christ.

**Grace is the power to live; Truth is the template.**

**Read Ephesians 2:1-10**

**Does anything in this passage stand out or speak to you in any way (maybe in light of our discussion thus far)?**

Toward the close of his message, Chad stated simply that we CANNOT live out the great things that God prepared in advance for us to do (v.10) without truth. Truth is what brings us back to God's original intent for humanity AND truth is what helps the human heart to know what's of the Spirit of God, and what's of the flesh.

**Grace works our salvation in; Truth works it out.**

**How does this idea fly in the face of popular culture?**

**How could we understand what God is asking of us, or have any bearing on what we are and are not to do unless we have a standard set before us?**

**This also provides deeper meaning for last week's message on obedience. Has anything changed for you since last week?**

Close with any thoughts or questions

## PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

## TO GO

**Philippians 2:12-13**

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, (Truth) for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (Grace)