



Old Spice Swagger | Chad Bruegman | 3.26.17

LG Weekly

## START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer these two questions:

**If you could only keep two apps on your smart phone, which ones would they be and why?**

*(ex. Instagram, Facebook, YouVersion Bible, ESPN, Pinterest, Red Rocks App, etc.)*

## SHARE

This week we talk about the tension between the ideas of holiness and grace. It seems, at times, that the church is caught in a mid-life crisis when it comes to how to view holiness and grace.

As hilarious as Chad's story about his own mid-life crisis was, we all battle with what seem like two opposing concepts in our faith journey. Sometimes we focus on God's holiness, for he is perfect, separate, an all-consuming fire before whom each one of us will stand. Other times we focus on God's grace, for he is full of grace and mercy. At times it is hard to see how the two co-exist. Yet in God, they not only co-exist, but are in complete harmony and simultaneously give weight to each other's definition. Without holiness, what then is the value of grace and mercy? What are we receiving mercy from? And without grace, who can stand before God or approach him? In God's perfect foreknowledge, he has provided a way for us to receive grace and at the same time, be made holy through his son Jesus Christ. It is at the feet of Jesus we find both. Holiness and grace are not in opposition, but realities of who God is; we need both. Grace is God's invitation to us to be in right relationship with him, a perfect and holy God.

Let's read Hebrews 4:14-16 and Isaiah 6:1-3

**We need to view God rightly and therefore see his throne as a place of grace and mercy. If you forget this – which is easy to do – how do you think that affects your relationship with God?**

**To really know God is to understand that he is perfectly holy. Similarly, when you lose sight of God's holiness, how does that affect your relationship with him?**

## G R O W

Holiness and grace perfectly co-exist at the throne of Jesus. Throughout the Bible, whenever one approaches Jesus, they are truly approaching the throne of the one true King.

Let's read Luke 7:36-39

This is one of those incredibly dramatic stories that makes the Bible spring to life. We can picture the characters interacting, hear their pointed words, and practically taste the tension in the room when the sobbing prostitute with a jar of perfume kneels before Jesus. Though we imagine her demeanor as she washes her Lord's dirty feet with nothing but her tears and her hair, the interaction has difficulty translating into our contemporary context.

For us, foot washing itself is not a regular custom. It's a rarity that we'd ever even go barefoot in another person's house, let alone ask the host to give us a pedicure. But for Jesus and his disciples in first century Israel, having the opportunity to have "washed feet" upon entering a person's home was an expectation. It was an implicit staple of hospitality for the host to offer three things: 1) the means for foot washing (a little water, a basin, a towel), 2) a kiss of greeting, and 3) oil with which to wash and anoint himself.

Yet, Jesus receives none of these three common courtesies from his host, Simon.

The woman, who witnesses Jesus' public humiliation, came to the dinner because she had heard Jesus' message of grace for sinners like her. She came to express thanks for the forgiveness she had received! She probably planned to anoint Jesus' hands and head with the perfume she brought with her.

Kenneth Bailey, in *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, elaborates on the situation saying,

Had Jesus not been publicly humiliated, she might have affirmed an ascription of praise to Jesus or simply fallen on her knees before him vocalizing thanks and joy at her newfound freedom as a forgiven woman. But she begins to weep; it is clear that her tears are not for her sins but for Jesus' public humiliation. She is in anguish because, before her eyes, this beautiful person who set her free with his message of the love of God for sinners, is being publicly humiliated.

And so this courageous woman steps forward, reaches out to Jesus' feet, and honors him with these three courtesies herself. She washed his feet with her tears, the only water available to her, dries them with her uncovered hair, kisses his feet, and anoints them with costly perfume. Rather than be embarrassed or shocked at the woman's behavior, Jesus graciously accepts her offering and challenges the Pharisees with an often overlooked parable of grace.

Read Luke 7:40-50

Jesus uses the parable to illustrate that both lawbreakers (the woman) and law-keepers (the holier-than-thou Pharisees) are sinners in need of grace. Bailey writes, "There is both a gentleness and a boldness involved in Jesus' construction of the parable. Simon is being reminded that he has just acted in a rude and unjustifiable manner and that Jesus is not going to ignore the insult. Simon is also a sinner. At the same time, Simon's faults are affirmed, in some sense, to be less than those of the woman. Indeed, she owes 500 and Simon only 50. Yet they are parallel in the sense that neither can pay, and the creditor (Jesus? God?) is willing to forgive both of them." By the end of the dialogue, the master-teacher Jesus shifts the parable's focus away from the sins themselves to the sinner's response to grace.

**The woman's response to the forgiveness and mercy she received was to anoint Jesus' feet. How have you responded to Jesus in regard to the mercy and forgiveness you have received?**

**Many people reacted differently to the anointing of Jesus' feet in the story, what is your reaction when you read it?** (Are you...challenged to feel the weight of being forgiven much? Maybe not feeling like you need forgiveness? Annoyed, like the disciples (Matt. 26:8-9), that she poured out a whole bottle of costly perfume?)

**Are there situations in your life now in which you might, like the woman, risk identifying yourself with Jesus and the injustice being done to him?**

## MOVE

When Chad opened up the message this week, he opened with this key verse for us to consider as we look at the story of the woman at Jesus' feet.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

Romans 12:1,2a

The sacrifice of the prostitute was not just what she poured out to Jesus, but because of the mercy she received; it was the offering of her life to live in a way that is pleasing to God. She was not the best-behaved in the room, but she was the one receiving mercy and grace and the one who was most holy before God.

She poured out all of her resources. That which was most valuable to her was only an offering to the one who saved her. She poured out her tears, a mixture of her own burdens and defense for Jesus who deserves to be honored. Last, she laid down her pride in front of everyone, as she wiped Jesus' feet with her hair. Her sacrifice was all encompassing, where her outside actions matched what was happening on the inside of her.

The Pharisee's were looking for information from Jesus in their time of skepticism and she was looking for mercy in her time of need. Both were looking for Jesus for different reasons.

**When thinking about laying down our burdens, resources and pride at the feet of Jesus, which (to you) is most difficult and why?**

**Resources:** *If you are looking for a book that would personally challenge you to trust God more, then consider reading "Ruthless Trust" by Brennan Manning. It is a great book about how God can use our darkest points of despair as a place where we can trust God and receive his love for in times where we don't feel worthy.*

## P R A Y

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

## T O G O

### **Psalm 59:16**

"But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble.