



Grace in a “Get What You Deserve World” | Shawn Johnson | 8.14.22

Weekly Study

SHARE

Welcome to week 2 of our series Right Side Up! This weekend Shawn Johnson spoke about the unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor and kindness from God. Grace is one of those concepts that we talk about a lot. It's a bit of a Christian buzz word that we refer to often but can be incredibly difficult to truly comprehend and apply to our lives. In this series we are looking at God's kingdom and as we mentioned last week you may have heard people say Jesus came to build the upside-down kingdom, but we disagree. What we read throughout Scripture is that we are upside down and Jesus came to set things right side up.

Before we jump into the study, take some time to check in with your group and ask the following questions:

What are you excited about in the near future?

What do you feel like God is showing you lately?

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

We read that the Apostle Paul is writing to the early church of Ephesus about grace found only in Jesus Christ. He attempts to explain just how radical this grace is which flips a narrative that had been taught for generations. For so long they had been living with the Old Testament Law and now Paul is teaching them that grace is not something earned or deserved. As Shawn shared this week, we have lived in a culture learning that behaving and doing well we then get rewarded. If you study hard, you'll get good grades. If you workout and practice, you'll get more playing time in the game. Essentially, if you do what you're "supposed" to do, you get your reward. The gospel is contrary to this "get what you deserve" world that we live in. It is scandalous and the most beautiful gift given.

Can you identify an area in your life that you strive to earn God's approval?

Can you recall what it felt like to receive the free gift of salvation for the first time? What did grace mean to you when you first gave your life to Christ?

As time goes on and you live more life following Jesus it can be more and more difficult to not fall into the culture cycle of the "get what you deserve" reward system. We can easily find ourselves feeling like we should be better and do better than we are or more cleaned up than our current situation.

Can you relate to that? If so, why do you think that is?

Has your perspective of grace changed over time? If so, how?

MOVE

We get grace not because we feel like we deserve it but because God's word says it's ours through his son Jesus. It belongs to all those who have put their faith in Jesus. Shawn spoke a lot this week about how our feelings can lead us astray. Regardless of where we are in our faith journey, we're all very aware of our shortcomings. We know how messy we are and that gut feeling of just not being good enough can either drive us to a performance-based relationship with Christ, or it can point us back to the fundamental need of a savior.

Read Romans 5:1-5

This section of scripture so clearly speaks to the ways in which Jesus came to make things right side up. It also points to the long-term fullness of life that comes with following Jesus. "Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame". We are justified by faith, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, yet it also says we rejoice in our sufferings.

How can we rejoice in our sufferings?

How do you see your feelings play a role in your day-to-day relationship with God?

It can be easy to view our relationship with God like we view our relationships with one another. He is our heavenly Father but unfortunately many of us have experienced troubled relationships with our earthly fathers. The temptation is to do enough good things so that God will be proud of us. The motivation to read the bible, to pray, etc. can be to avoid the guilt from not doing so. If we are followers of Jesus, the truth is that we are loved because we are his kids. His love and grace are not earned, they're given.

Do you ever feel worn out or exhausted from trying to get God to like you or approve of you?

Spending time in prayer, reading the bible, and worshipping are important disciplines of our faith but if we're not careful they can become boxes that we check to make ourselves feel better. How can we fight that temptation?

What past experiences have shaped the way you perceive God?

Take a few minutes and share with the person next to you how you see God's grace in your life.

P R A Y

Pray for each other. If you're in a co-ed group, it may be easier to break up into groups to more freely share.