

Week 4 - Sola Gratia

By Grace Alone

Exodus 34:4-7 (NIV)

⁴So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the Lord had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. ⁵Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. ⁶And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

This is the second time God had Moses cut these tablets. The first pair was thrown on the ground and broken in outrage at Israel’s idolatry of the golden calf (Exodus 32).

? What attributes of God’s character do you see revealed here?

? How is God interacting with “the guilty”? What kind of reaction do you have to that?

Jonah 4:1-4,11 (NIV)

¹ But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the Lord, “Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. ³ Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

⁴ But the Lord replied, “Is it right for you to be angry?” ... ¹¹ “And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”

Previously in Jonah: Jonah was told by God to go to Nineveh and call the city to repent, but instead intentionally went in the opposite direction. After a three-day stopover in the belly of a great fish, he went to Nineveh; after the city responded with repentance, God relented of the punishment for their evil.

? What is Jonah's conflict with God?

? How do you experience opposition or resistance to God's grace, either your own or that of others?

John 1:9-14 (NIV)

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

? How does it encourage you that Jesus "came from the Father, full of grace and truth"?

? What does it look like to refuse to receive Jesus?

? What does becoming children of God imply for us?

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV)

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

? What does this passage teach us about grace and the human condition?

? How can we practically live in grace in our daily lives?

? What does not living in grace offer? What does God's grace, in Jesus, offer to us?

? What should be our response to God's grace?

You know you don't understand God's grace when you:

- Live with a vague sense of God's disapproval
- Feel sheepish bringing your needs before Him when you've just failed Him
- Think of His grace as something that makes up the difference between the best you can do and what He expects from you
- Feel you deserve an answer to prayer because of your hard work and sacrifice
- Assume that you've sinned so many times that you've used up all your credit of forgiveness
- Feel more confident before God if you've been "faithful" with your quiet times, prayer, witnessing, etc. *Can't honestly say that you see yourself as "blameless" in His eyes
- Fear that the day may not go as well as expected because you missed your quiet time
- Assume you can do something to make Him love you more or less."

Jerry Bridges, Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Love

For Discussion and Accountability

? From Jerry Bridges' quote, what are some of the ways you are resisting grace?

? What are the good works (Ephesians 2:10) that God has called you to that you are currently putting off or ignoring?