

God is Gracious

Exodus 34:6-7 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and **gracious**, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.” (emphasis added)

The Unfairness of Grace

Getting our paychecks

We have a sense of what we’re owed (vs. 8 the drama, vs. 11 the response)

Our lack of perspective

Exposing our pride

Vs. 12 ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’

C.S. Lewis “Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man... It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition is gone, pride is gone.”

Exposing our small view of God

Romans 11:34-35 “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”
“Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

Exposing selfishness

The early day workers are completely out of touch with the situation of the late day workers.

What if we changed our thinking: dear employer, THANK YOU for providing what these people need to live?

The Beauty of Grace

God’s grace provides what we need

Why are they standing looking for work at the 11th hour (5 pm?)

Exodus 22:26-27 “If ever you take your neighbor’s cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down, for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.”

God’s grace is free

“Am I not allowed to choose to do what I choose with what belongs to me?” vs. 15

God’s grace is unmerited

“Or do you begrudge my generosity?” vs. 16

Two Ways to Come Before God

The way of works

Isaiah 64:6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

The way of grace

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

A diagnostic question: How do you God feel about you right now?

Psalm 149:4 For the LORD takes **pleasure** in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation.

Proverbs 3:11-12 My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he **loves**, as a father the son in whom he **delights**.

Questions for Study and Reflection

1. How do you react to the generous landowner’s choice to pay everyone the same?
2. What are the reasons that a person (or maybe you) don’t like grace?
3. How is God’s grace glorious and beautiful? What does it tell you about who he is?
4. Do you approach God by grace or works? Have you ever