

# AMAZING GRACE

CHAPTER SIX | *STARTING POINT*

# REVIEW

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- Starting Point the Series so far:
  - What would it look like to start anew in faith?
    - For most of us we found a gap between what we were given as children and the reality of things in our lives. So, what now?
    - Last week we dealt with guilt, shame, and those nagging memories, and we asked what can wash away my sins? The answer was forgiveness through, not a method, but a person! Amazing!

# ACT 1 – BARGAINING

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- Let's all be honest in church today. All of us have at some time bargained with God.
  - God, if you will... I will always... church, camp, give, go, do.
  - Or, God if you will... I will never... do xyz again.
- Every religion bargains with God; even atheists do this! “To whom it may concern if you are out there”
  - Here's another thing; we don't keep our end of the deal!

# ACT 1 – BARGAINING

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- 2 Main Assumptions
  1. You believe God knows you exist!
  2. You believe that YOU have something God wants from you. This is a negotiation!
- Here is the heart of the Good News: God does NOT want something from you! God wants something FOR you!

# ACT II – GRACE

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- Grace is unmerited favor! Grace is the epicenter of faith in Jesus Christ, it is the epicenter of following Jesus and becoming a follower of Jesus. Grace changes everything!
- Grace is unmerited— you did nothing to deserve it.
- Grace highlights the cost of the Giver.
- The person receiving grace is never the hero.
- 2 concepts at the heart of this: mercy and grace.

# ACT II - GRACE

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- Ephesians was a letter meant to be circulated. It was written about 30 years after Jesus when eyewitnesses were around. And it was intended for all people.
- Ephesians 2:1-9 starts out with some really bad news.
- **“Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.”**

# ACT II - GRACE

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- **BUT GOD...** (so here we are introduced to the Giver of Grace!)
- But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)
  1. This phrase explains so much! God, why do you even care about me? Why would you pay attention to me? Why would you listen to me? Not because of your merit, but based on what— His love for you!
  2. Grace is a summary statement! When we were dead and separated and the answer was not 'but us', but God!

# ACT II – GRACE

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- Skip down to verse 8— “God saved you by his grace when you *believed*.
  - We are back to FAITH- Abraham, Israel...

And you can't take credit for this; it is a *gift from God*. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.



# ACT III - STANDARD

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- What standard will you use to determine where you stand with God? Will you use your behavior or God's grace?
  - In our culture most people reach for behavior, but they list Christian ethics. Don't ever reach for your Bible to prove a list of behaviors to make one acceptable to God. Not the 10 Commandments, not Jesus's sermon. He raised the standard so high we all get F's!
  - 2 Problems with your behavioral standard: 1) You made it up! And 2) You don't even keep it!
- The response to GRACE is a life of gratitude!

# ACT III – STANDARD

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- How do we respond to this grace God has given us? To help us answer this, I am going to answer a few Frequently Asked Questions from our classes on Starting Point.
  1. What is it specifically that God wants FOR me?
  2. If our response to grace is not “rule following” why do Christians seem like they are doing so?
    - The response is to forgive, because we have been forgiven—to give, because we can’t out-give the gift of life—to love because we have been so loved already. Grace elicits a life of gratitude.