

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: Forged
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The War for Your Soul

1 Peter 2: 11-12

“¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”

Harris Creek, how we doing? Man, if I am ever in a UFC match, that’s gonna be my intro music. That goes *hard*. Have you guys ever traveled somewhere as a foreigner, where you had to understand the rules of engagement? You knew you’re going to a place, and there are some cultural differences to where you go, and you have to learn about those? As we do mission trips, international trips, here at Harris Creek; we’re doing more and more. This year alone, we’ve been to the Dominican Republic, to India, to Thailand. We’re getting ready to go back to the Dominican Republic. As those trips increase, we always have a training to say, “Hey, this is what you need to know when you get there, so that you understand the different culture that you’re going to live in for that week, or two weeks, or however long you’re there.”

I can remember when this happened for me. I went on staff at a church, and then shortly after that, we were going to the country of Rwanda, to train the government and pastors on conflict and reconciliation. As we go to this training, we’re going to be teaching outside, and I’m thinking, “Hey, what do I need to wear?” and they said, “Well, it’s really casual, and it was super-hot there.” So, I was like, “Okay, cool, casual.” “Yeah, we can be casual as we’re teaching. But whatever you do, don’t wear shorts.” I’m thinking, “Oh, that’s, you know, why? I can dress them up, I can go khaki. I mean I understand not Umbros or basketball shorts, but I can break out the cargo shorts.” “Don’t wear shorts.” “Well, why is that?” “Because, in this culture, no men over the age of ten wear shorts. So, they won’t listen; they’ll be distracted. They won’t respect you as you’re teaching them.” “Okay, alright. What else?”

Well, then shortly after teaching, we go to lunch. And at lunch, I’m all ‘southern hospitality,’ and say, “Okay, ladies, you go first! We’ll wait on you. Ladies first!” And everybody is looking at me weird. I say, “Okay, ladies, we can’t eat until you do! And I’m hungry, so you guys go!” And they’re just standing there. I say, “Is there a language barrier? What’s happening?” Well, in Rwanda the elderly go first. So, it’s different. There’s a different cultural example there. Then we’re eating lunch, and there’s bread there, and I go with the old left hand to grab some bread.

And they're like, "Oh, man, this guy." I say, "What did I do? You want some bread?" "No, no!" I say, "What, what's wrong?" Well, your left hand is the hand that you, (some of you are nodding, you've been there) the hand that's used for sanitation; for cleaning yourself after you use the restroom. So, you don't touch any food with your left hand. "You ruined the bread for everyone!" "I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" Then we go to teach, and I was equipped and trained to teach through an interpreter. The way you do this is you say a statement, you stop, and you let them repeat it in the language. So, it's like, "**For God so loved the world**" (JP pauses) "**that he gave his only begotten Son**" (JP pauses) "**that whoever ...**" And there's an interpreter there. Well, I was ready for that, but I wasn't ready for this: the interpreter goes and grabs my hand and interlocks fingers like that. (JP demonstrates interlocking fingers). And he says, "This is how we're going to do this." We're going to hold hands the whole time. I mean, it's like we were dating in junior high or something ... fingers interwoven like that! It's totally normal to be on a walk with somebody and just holding their hand; that's a sign of affection. So, I've got to get used to this. And isn't that your sanitizing hand? That's what's going through my head. I'm like, "Hold up, wait a minute! I can't touch the bread, but we're gonna hold hands?"

So, you want to learn the culture. When you're a foreigner, you want to understand, "Hey, what's normal here, and what's not normal here?" Because you can stand out in your behavior for good and for bad. And that's what Peter's going to tell us today.

We're back in 1 Peter; we're going to be in Chapter 2. We're in a series called Forged, and as a reminder, Peter is Jesus's friend. He ran with Jesus. He was one of the apostles. He betrayed Jesus, and just kind of in this tremendous act of rebellion or act of tremendous rebellion, but then Jesus, in His kindness post-resurrection, restored Peter and said, "Hey, I want you to feed my sheep. Feed my lambs." Peter writes this letter to the church, at this time made up of pagan converts, or Gentile converts, and Jewish converts, spread out throughout Asia Minor, that's modern-day Turkey. Peter writes this letter to them because they're undergoing tremendous persecution by the government. And he says, "Hold fast. Stay in the fight. Be forged. You're not home yet." And that's what he's going to tell us today. How to live on the earth as foreigners. That's the message. What does it look like to live as foreigners?

You've probably done this. If you're here, and you're a committed follower of Jesus, and you've been a committed follower of Jesus for a while, there has been a time in your life where you felt left out. Everybody's watching the new Netflix show. You come together and all of the conversation revolves around Season 2, or Episode 3, and you're thinking, "I'm a Jesus follower. I don't watch that and all of a sudden, I feel isolated and left out. Or they say, "Man did you hear that new song? It goes hard man. That track. Hey, did you listen? The chorus where he..." And you're like "No, that's not the kind of music that I listen to. It's not what I do." Or you're at the football game, and everybody around you is giving the ref or the team or the other team a piece of their mind, "How dare you! What are you?" And you're just sitting there thinking, "Oh, I'm not given to anger, like that's not who I am. The Holy Spirit inside of me won't let me do that."

Or they have moved toward addictive substances, become enslaved to nicotine, or vaping, dipping, smoking, whatever. Or they drink more than you're comfortable drinking, and they say, "Hey, everybody's going to the party!" And you say, "I'm not going because I follow Jesus, and Jesus wouldn't be going, and that's not the way to go." Or they cope with shopping, spending. When they get together, they say, "Hey, let's talk about so and so. You're not going to believe! I can't believe their marriage, their kids!" They want to talk about someone not there. You say, "Hey, that's not how I roll. I don't talk about people who aren't present. I talk *to* people, not *about* people. It's just not what I do. I'm a Jesus follower." At some point, in that journey, you feel lonely. You're like, "Man, it's like following Jesus, sometimes, is like a commitment to being left out. Everybody's going away and here I am. There's this longing, this loneliness in me." May I offer to you, possibly, you're just homesick? You're homesick. You're not home yet. You're in a place where you don't belong, and that feeling is not a bad feeling. It really serves as a reminder that you're not where you're going to be yet. You're not there yet.

But, here's my question for you, and you have to answer it. This is my question for you. Hear that personally, not for your spouse, not for your kids, not for your neighbor, but you. Where are you most tempted to be swept up in worldliness? And what's your ditch, if you will? What is it for you? You need to think about that right now, before we dive into this Scripture. I want you kind of having front of mind, "Oh, this is where I lose the battle. I'm given to control, or to gossip, or to cursing, or my anger just sometimes shows up in these ways. Or I cope by spending. Or I've got this addiction that was there before I became a Christian, and I just haven't been able to shake it. I look at these things. I do these things." What is it for you? Get that front of mind, and we'll dive into the text.

It's really just two verses. Nothing too profound here; it's not like we need to stop and drill really deep. I think these two verses deal with some of the biggest challenges among us. He says, I'll read them to you up front. **"¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."**

As I take these two verses and break them up this morning, we're going to look at three things, and that is: What is this place? What are we doing here? And how should we do it? That's kind of the breakdown of these two verses as we dive in. What is this place? What are we doing? How should we do it? The context of Verses 11 and 12 are Verses 5-10, which remind you: you are a holy priesthood, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession. You belong to God. He's chosen you out. You're His. You're the ministers of the gospel here. You are called, Nate told us last week, to make sacrifices. You sacrifice your body, a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship, the Scripture says. That's the context of what he's saying. And then he says this, **"Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles."** That's the salutation. He gives you three labels; do you see what they are? Friends,

foreigners, and exiles. Peter says, “Hey man, I get it. I’m in the world with you. I’m at war with you. I’m locked arms with you. I don’t belong here, either. I knew Jesus. I spent time with Him. So now as we effort to follow Him, I know that it’s hard.” He’s like, “Friends, we’re in it together friends, brothers and sisters in Christ. We’re in it together. And don’t forget that we are foreigners, and we are exiles. We are in a world that we don’t belong to, and we’ve been sent out in this world.” That’s what Peter is telling us. If I was to put a simple phrase to it, we are not home. That’s my first point.

1. *We are Not Home.*

My wife and I have two daughters. When the oldest came of age to go to camp, we sent her off to Pine Cove for a week, and she *loved* it! Her first time to experience that kind of freedom, to be able to run with people. She came back from camp and she says, “Okay, sit down, I’ve gotta tell you *everything* we did!” If she could do slideshows, she would’ve done a slideshow. She says, “We went here, and we ate this, and I slept here with these people, and there were bunks, and eight of us all in one cabin, and we played this game where we were all in the mud, and you had to steal somebody’s socks.” I said, “I’ll just take your word for it, that that was fun.” But she is *so* excited! Her younger siblings didn’t have a chance. I mean, they’re getting the hard sell on camp. “You just wait; it’s going to be amazing!”

So, when her younger sister came of age, time to go to camp, we all, family affair, all got in the car. We drove out there near Tyler. We had all her stuff packed up: the trunk, all the things. We went into the cabin, we met all the bunkmates, and we dropped her off. Before we got to the end of the road, she was homesick in a bad kind of way; stomachache, can’t eat, can’t sleep, really miss my family. She had never been away from us before like that. So, they say, “Hey, let’s go have fun and do this!” She says, “I don’t want to. I’m homesick. I just want to be with my family.” You can imagine, when that hits in Day One, and you’re thinking “Aww, I’ve still got Day Two, and Day Three, and Day Four, and Day Five.” And she says, “I just want to go home. I just want to go home. I just want to go home.” They assign someone to her, just to help her in this. What that person that’s trying to help her in this homesickness, what they’re *not* doing, is they’re not saying, “Okay, hey, let’s just build your house right here. What does it look like? Let’s give you all the comforts of home right here. You know what, here, let’s go on my Amazon, let’s just buy things. What do you want? What do you want? And you know what, I actually snuck my vape in here with me, maybe this will help you.” They’re not doing that. They’re not saying, “Hey, how can we help you cope with this homesickness?” You know what they’re doing? “Hey, you’re gonna be home soon. You’re gonna be home soon. You’re just not home yet. You’re gonna be home soon.” And I wonder, if our worst days here, days where we just are down. Life’s just hard! You get up, and a wave knocks you over. And you get up again, and another wave comes and knocks you over. And you get up again, and another wave comes and knocks you over. And it’s just all so overwhelming. What if you’re just homesick? What if

we did that jiu-jitsu on that? It's like, "Wait a minute. This is just serving as a reminder to me that I'm not home yet."

When I went to Africa, our two girls, Weston wasn't born yet, but our two girls were five and three, so really young. That was the longest I had ever been away from Monica, much less our daughters. So, I was there for 12 days, and I had just returned. Flew back into DFW airport, Terminal D International, go through customs, grab my suitcases. And I'm walking there with my suitcases, out of customs, and there's these double sliding doors. If you've ever seen them, they're these automatic doors there. And I know, on the other side of those doors, that that's where everybody's waiting to greet me. My wife was picking me up with our two daughters, and I'm hoping they're there! I wonder if they're there? I wonder if they made it in yet? I wonder if they're waiting on me? And those two doors opened as I walked in. They opened, and before I crossed that threshold, I looked across the way, and there are my five-year-old and my three-year-old. They're dressed the same, they have this yellow sundress; I remember it like it was yesterday. They're in the same dress, and Monica says, "There's Daddy!" and they look up, and they just run as fast as their little legs can carry them. And I get down, and they just form tackle me. I have one daughter in each hand, and their little tiny arms just flung around my neck, and it's just this sweet reunion. I'm just emotional, and it's just like Hallmark's there. They want to make a movie about it. And I'm just telling you that what's coming for you in the form of a reunion with Jesus. You have no idea. You don't know what it's like to be reconciled to the person who can make sense of every teardrop, every ounce of sadness, every struggle. All of it. And they know everything you've done. They saw it all. All of the anger, and the frustration, and the perversion, and all of the things you've done. They know it, and they took care of it, and they love you recklessly in the midst of it. When I say recklessly, I mean with no abandon. I mean just completely. "I am just free to choose you, and I know you, and I choose you," so it's different. And it's all in that moment. That reunion is going to be like nothing you've ever experienced. I know, and it's okay. There's grace, like God gives us tremendous grace. You think, "I can't wait to see my dad again, or the child I lost in miscarriage, or this person again." But I'm just telling you, the greatest desire of your heart that you don't even understand, is actually Jesus himself. And that reunion, it's gonna be something.

And so, if we're not home, where are we? Are we in a middle place? Are we in a waiting room? Are we in Purgatory? What is it that we're doing here if we're not home yet? He says, "**I urge you to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.**" He says there is a war being fought over your soul. Whether you know it or not, believe it or not, embrace it or not, there is absolutely, right now, demonic satanic forces fighting angels and God's forces against your soul. They're not happy you're here. They want your children, to destroy your marriage, to ruin your purity. They have strategies against this. There's a war being fought over your soul. So where are we? My second point ...

2. *We are at War.*

We're at war. So, I say, we're not home. It's not like we're Americans in Cancun, if you will. You know what I'm saying? It's not like, "Oh, yeah, we're on vacation!" "What are you gonna do there?" "I'm gonna go to the beach, see some cenotes. I'm just gonna read all day." That's not what it means when I say 'foreigner.' We're like Americans in Vietnam in 1960. Not one of them are, "Hey, is this home? Is this where we belong?" We're like Americans in Kuwait in 1991. "Wait, is this home? Is this where we belong?" We're like Americans storming Normandy, June 6, 1944. Nobody says, "Oh, man, look! Homecoming!" No. We're like Christians in America in 2023. We're thinking, "We don't belong here." That's a normal thought. That should be the steady nature of our thinking. "Oh, this is not my home! Not only is it not my home, I'm not on vacation. I'm at war! There's a war being waged over my soul right now." How do we get so confused? We lose the battle. We lose the battle.

I love a good war movie. There's just something about it that stirs me. People fighting for our freedom, giving their lives, and sacrificing their comforts. There are all kinds of allegory for the Gospel in there, and it just stirs me. And one, there are several, but one, I'll just put in front of you, like *Hacksaw Ridge*. Anybody seen *Hacksaw Ridge*? There are some faith components baked in there. It's been a minute since I've seen it. I don't know that I'm prepared to say, "You should go see it!" You read the Plugged in before you do. But in the movie, it's really bifurcated between two kinds of scenes. One, he's at home, he's pursuing this young woman, he's in love, he's a good guy, and it's like the sun is bright. There are lots of smiles. The birds are chirping. It's really sweet. Then the next moment, the next scene, it's dark and smoky, and there's death. He's a medic in the military, and his job is to go into the battlefield and see if any of his fellow soldiers still have life in them. So, he's walking over the dead to try to find, while dodging bullets and grenades and enemy gunfire, to see if there's life. And when he's at war, you never wonder if he's at home, and when he's at home, you never wonder if he's at war, because the two scenes couldn't be more different in kind. But I think what the enemy does when we're at war, is trick us to thinking we're at home, and it's a trap. That's how he takes you out. That's the bait. He dangles the worldliness in front of you. Paul says to Timothy, "**No one serving as a soldier (that's us) No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.**" **2 Timothy 2:4**

This week, Tuesday, I had the opportunity to speak at Auburn University. It was an event I didn't know who was going to be there. It kind of came together quickly, and around 6,000 students gathered in the arena there. If I can speak to 6,000 college students, my preference would be to go explicit gospel. Here's how you can be with God forever, or to rally a generation around revival. Here's what God wants to do. But they were very clear. "Hey, we want you to speak on sexual sin." And even specifically, this verse, this passage in 1 Thessalonians 4: 4-8. Man, that's a tough passage. It talks about God judging the sexually immoral. We're going to put that in

front of a bunch of college students. That's tough! "Hey, this is what I sense the Lord needs." And the person who's there always knows better. People will say, "Hey, I want you to come and preach whatever's on your heart." And I say, "Yeah, but I'm not where you're at, so let me preach what's on *your* heart, you know? What are *you* seeing?" And so, we go there, and I share this, and I ask them, "Why?" "Because they're drowning in this sin." They're drowning! They're losing the battle! What's true of that arena is that 90% of the men in that arena and 60% of the women in that arena are actively looking at pornography. Those are staggering statistics. Everything I've read, every expert out there, in talking about the church in America, would say that statistic is very similar in this room right now. So, if you ever wonder why do we talk about this so much? Well, it's like that's the thing, the sin that so easily entangles us. We can't even fight the battle. We can't fight the war, because we're drowning in our sin. We haven't even gone on offense. We're stuck on defense and we're losing. We're stuck on defense, and we're losing.

And so, I ended that message talking about the time my daughter was drowning. I looked out at the swimming pool, and she's flailing in the water. "Help!" She couldn't swim! I said, "How crazy would it be, how ridiculous would it be, if she said, "I'm drowning, but I don't want anyone to know! I don't want my dad to see me. I'm gonna do this quietly, just trying to save myself." And I said, "Listen, there are some of you here today, (and I'm saying this to *you* now), there are some of you here this morning, whether you're in here, or in the commons, or watching from afar, you're drowning in your sin and you don't want anyone to know. And that is a sure-fire way to lose the war that's being waged over your soul. You will die slowly in your sin. The way you get help is you say, "Help me! I need someone to help me!" And you look back, and you say, "I've been drowning in my sin since the 5th grade, and I've been utterly committed to not letting anyone know!" That's not going to help you. So, what do we do? We say, "Hey, gather in this small group, and on a regular basis, I want you to confess your sin to each other and pray for each other, so that you can experience healing. Which is exactly what the scripture says. And that's a step to getting on the side of the pool.""

So, I don't know if you're here and you're addicted to pornography, alcohol, nicotine, making money, shopping as a method of coping, your iPhone. I don't know. Gossip, control ... I don't know what it is, but you should know. You've got to know what it is, because the enemy wants to use it to take you out and to keep you from doing anything effective for the kingdom.

Let's dive back in, Verse 12. He says, "**Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.**" Live such good lives among the pagans, the nonbelievers, that though they may accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your good deeds and bring glory to God on the day he visits. 'That bring glory to God' is the biggest interpretive challenge in this text. All it means is on Judgement Day they will be seen as Christians. It just means they'll become believers. They'll see something in the way you live that would invite the Holy Spirit into their lives,

receive God's grace, trust in Jesus's death and resurrection for the forgiveness of their sins, and on Judgement Day, they'll go to Heaven. That's what he's saying. This verse is pretty well known because it correlates, or corresponds, with Matthew 5:16, a very well-known verse if you've been in church for a long time. This is the most famous sermon ever preached, the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5, Jesus says in Verse 16, **"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven."** A very well-known verse. **"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven."** And so, there's something different here in 1 Peter, though, I want to bring your attention to. I think we read that, and we say, "Oh, yeah, do good, do good, do good." That's not what it says. There's something in between two commas here that's really important. Do you see it in 1 Peter 2, he says **"Live such good lives."** What's different here than Matthew 5:16? **"That though they accuse you of doing wrong."** Do you see that? What's going to happen is, Nero is about to set Rome on fire. People are going to die and houses are going to be destroyed. And Nero, the emperor, is going to say, "The Christians did it! Those who follow Jesus, the Way." People are going to turn on the Christians and begin to torture them for sport. They feel the freedom to because the government doesn't frown on it. It actually kind of celebrates it. Pretty gnarly oppression, if you will. So, he writes this, **"Though they accuse you of doing wrong."** He's not saying, "Do good to people." He's saying, "Do good to people who do bad to you." That's different. That's different, and it's not fair. And that's my third point. It is not fair.

3. *It is Not Fair.*

It's not, "Do good to others." It's, "Do good to those who wrong you." Why in the world would God want us to do that? I'm going to answer that, but before I do, I'm going to ask the question, "Does God want us to do that?" I know it says it here, but it's small statements. Let's just look in the Word and see if God wants us to do that. He says in Proverbs 24: **"Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice."** Matthew 5:39: **"But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also."** Matthew 5:40, 41: **"And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles."** Matthew 5:44: **"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."** Luke 6:27, 28: **"But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."** Romans 12:20: **"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink."** Romans 12:19: **"Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath."** It's not just, "Do good to others." It's, "Do good to those who do wrong to you." Does the Bible teach that? Okay, why? Why in the world? I give you one more, Luke 6:35: **"But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because (oh, he's about to tell us why) because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked."**

Here's what I think God's doing. You've been made in the imago Dei, that means the image of God. You've been created in God's image. You are an ambassador. The scripture calls you a minister of reconciliation, that you exist as a foreigner representing the Embassy. Representing the land that you came from, the land that you belong to. Then we have to know about this God. Who is He? What happened at Auburn is, at the end of it, it ended different. Hundreds of students wanted to get baptized that night. And that's why people are talking about it, because it was just like, "Whoa! What's going on?" And so, we got in the water to baptize them. On campus, there's a pond there, a lake there, and we began to baptize them. And some were like, "Hey, I've never been baptized, and I believe Jesus died for my sins, and God raised him from the dead." But for a lot of them, when I said, "Why do you want to be baptized?" And they said, "Because I just want to be clean. I just want to be clean." I said, "But here's what you need to know. This water, it won't clean you. This water, it has dirt and mud and fish in it. It was here yesterday and a week ago, and there's nothing supernatural about this water. This water can't clean you. You're gonna leave dirtier than you came in." At least I was! I washed my pants for hours! I literally just ran the shower trying to get all the mud out. "This is dirty water! It can't clean you. Only the blood of Jesus can do that." And so, what was happening in that water was a lot of gospel conversations. "Do you understand, there's only one way that you can be saved? It's Jesus."

I try to ask the question every day. "If you stood before God today, and He said, "Why should I let you in?" What would you say?" "If you stood before God today, and God said, "Why should I let you in?" What would you say?" The number one answer I get, in response to that question is, "Because I ... tried hard, did good, was a good person, went to church, was born into a Christian family." That's some of those that come after the, "Because I ...". "If you stood before God, and He said, "Why should I let you in?" What would you say?" "Because I was a good person, and I did good things, and I tried hard, and I went to church every Sunday, and I was born into a Christian family." And that answer sends people to Hell every single day. Nobody gets to Heaven because they were a good person, or because they tried hard, or because they were born into a Christian family, or because they helped the old lady across the street, or they saved people from a burning building. Nobody gets to Heaven that way! Not one person in the history of all the world has gotten to Heaven because they did good things!

There was One who was perfect, and the way we get to Heaven is by trusting solely on His works. **"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, it is not of yourself, it is the gift of God. Not by works so that no one can boast."** Meaning no one can stand before God and say, "Because I ...". It's a misunderstanding of the gospel. It's a false gospel. So, what did God give you? Because when you say, "Because I..." what you are saying, and this is the important part, you are saying, "I deserve to be in Heaven. I earned my way there." And you didn't. You can't. You haven't. So, what did God give you? Did He give you what you deserve?

No! Justice is getting what you deserve. Mercy is *not* getting what you deserved. *Not* getting the punishment you deserve, that's mercy. Grace, **“for you have been saved by grace.”** Grace is getting something really good when you deserve something really bad. That's what God gave you. So why does God want you to do good to those who do wrong to you? It's in His character to do so, that's what He does. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

So, if you represent God in a world that you don't belong to, you give them grace, and you don't want to. And the enemy doesn't want you to. What does he want you to do? “Nuh uh! Don't you cut me off! I will get out of this car so fast you don't even know!” “Nuh uh! No, you're not gonna treat me like that! Let me tell you something!” “Oh, whoa, whoa, whoa! Are you gonna do that to my kid? ‘Bout to go back to grade school!” “Do you know who I am? Do you know who I know? Do you know what I can do to you?” It's the spirit of Satan. That's what it is. Call it is what it is. It's the spirit of the Evil One. It's not love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. If you're hearing this for the first time, you've bought into a false gospel. I mean, you've been in church your whole entire life.

So, what's the application today? One, if you haven't yet, respond to the true gospel. That God did not give you what you deserve. He gave you more than you could ever deserve in your wildest dreams. And, if you have believed upon that, then as you go into this world representing Him, the application is all of those verses. We don't do unto others as they deserve. We show them something different; that they may glorify God on the day He visits us. “Oh, I learned grace through ...” People will trust a Christian before they'll ever trust Christ. “Oh, I learned grace ... from my neighbor, from my mom, from my dad, from my pastor, from my friend, from my life group leader, from this person who hangs out at this place called Harris Creek. They showed me grace, and now I follow their God.

You're at war, so we don't fight like the world does. This is what Paul says to the church in Corinth: **“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.”** I told you. **“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”** 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 You're in a supernatural fight, so fight in supernatural ways. Not as the world does. Not as the world does. Be kind to those who aren't kind to you. Give freely to those who try to take from you. And understand the grace that God has shown you. Standing out in this world in the right way, that people are like, “Oh, they're not from here. They learned a different way. They're not from here.”

In summary: You are not home. You are at war. And it is not fair. We don't fight fair. Fight with grace.

What I needed in Africa, go back to that story at the beginning. I needed a guide. I needed someone who understood where I came from, and had been there, and understood how to tell me what was different. “Hey, this is how you live here. This is what you do if you’re going to be immersed here. These are the things that you want to do so that you don’t stand out in the wrong ways. You stand out in the right ways.” And so, here in the world, we need a guide. We need someone who understands the Kingdom that we’re going to be in forever and ever and ever and ever, but they came here, and they lived here, and they did it in the perfect way. We need a guide. Well, if you paid attention to that description, it really just leaves One that we can choose. Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross. So, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and the perfecter of our faith, and only then can we run the race marked out for us. He’s our guide. And in fact, Peter’s going to say about Him in just a few verses, I’ll give you a preview. He says this about Jesus, the One who left His throne and entered this world and showed us how to live in this world: **“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”** Okay, this is really clear, no confusion there. What are His steps? What did He do? **“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live righteousness, by his wounds you have been healed. I Peter 2: 21-24**

So, as you live in this world, you give the world something different than what they’re used to. You’re at a crossroads. What I really want you to do in this song is ask, “Do I believe that? Man, do I really believe that?” And if you don’t, just say, “No! I don’t!” Then it’s clear. I think what happens here in our context is, it’s so confusing it’s like people say, “I do! But I don’t really. But I do! But I don’t.” And just bring to clarity and think about where the enemy is waging war against *your* soul. Have that clear in your head. Let me pray that we would.

Father we’re going to need your help. We’re going to need your help on that one. It’s a lot. The world is strong. I know you say, “Do not love the world or the things of the world.” Even to say it as clearly like if any of us love the world, your love is not in us. Those are just really strong words. I wish your Holy Spirit would have softened those words for me. Just made them a little softer. Something like, “*Maybe* the love of the Father is not in them, or *some* of the love of the Father is not in them.” But it just is so strong. And we just pray that right now, you would overwhelm us with your love. That we would understand how we’re to live, and even as we sing, that you would bring to mind someone that we’re to extend grace to as we represent you. Thank you that you did not give us what we deserve, but that you gave us more than we could ever deserve. It’s going to be amazing! That reunion is just something to really long for. Help us to long for it. We love you God. In Jesus’s name, amen.