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Sermon Outline

Spring Cleaning: Uncluttering Your Soul

Escape the Performance Trap

Matthew 20:1-16

April 8-9, 2018 Titus O'Bryant

God's grace creates freedom to...

be me.

let others be.

give God His place.

Looking Back

Spring Cleaning: Uncluttering Your Soul

Escape the Performance Trap

Matthew 20:1-16

God doesn't pay wages. He gives gifts. His grace not only reverses our expectations but establishes a shocking equality that continually takes us by surprise. Jesus' story about a landowner who hired workers for his vineyard taught his original audience about the way God works in our world and what Jesus was accomplishing in the new covenant. How does this story expand our understanding and experience of God's grace?

Thinking It Through (agree/disagree/consider/contemplate)

The glory of God is a human being fully alive. ~ Irenaeus

God never asks us to annihilate the self. We are not to become "non-persons" when we become Christians. The very opposite is true. God intends our deeper, truer self, which he created, to blossom as we follow him. God has endowed each of us with certain essential qualities that reflect and express him in a unique way. ~ Pete Scazzero

It would seem...that grace is what happens between two persons. It is one giving himself to the other. It is responsibility to another. It is a distinctive kind of relating. In a world of men turning their backs on one another, exploiting one another, gossiping about one another, trying to possess one another, and controlling one another, grace is one person accepting and confronting another in freedom and responsibility.

~ R. Lofton Hudson

The root and origin of sin is the arrogance in which man wants to be his own and his neighbor's judge. ~ Karl Barth

Working It Out

1. Read through Matthew 20:1-16. What do you observe in this story and what surprises you?
2. Imagine that you were the first worker hired and worked all day in the vineyard. How do you feel and respond when payments are made...what if you were one hired at the end of the day? What does it look like when we try to earn God's blessing?
3. What does it look like for you to be completely you? What keeps you from that?
4. Do you add to other's guilt or do you lessen it? Do you encourage freedom for others or stifle it?
5. How might we restrict God's freedom to work in our lives...how could we create greater freedom for him to change and use us?

Looking Ahead

Spring Cleaning: Uncluttering Your Soul

The Secret Place

Mark 1:32-39

Crazy busy. That's how most of us live our lives – racing from one thing to the next, all the while constantly bombarded with media, advertising, and online activity. No doubt about it, we are STARVED for stillness, silence, and solitude. Upon studying Jesus in the New Testament, these practices seem very important to him. As Luke says, he would often withdraw to desolate places (Luke 5:15-16). What can learn from the Jesus-way of life that might bring rest and depth to our souls today?

1. What's been your experience of time alone with God? Have you ever engaged in that practice? What has that looked like for you?
2. What do you think are some of the main obstacles to time alone with God today?
3. What obstacles do you think Jesus faced as he made a practice of withdrawing to be alone with God?
4. What do you think might be some of the main benefits to spending extended time alone with God?