

MARCH 30, 2025

SERIES 2: GRACE FOR OUTSIDERS

KINDNESS FOR THE FATHER'S SAKE

LESSON 2.1

FOCUS VERSE

II Samuel 9:7

And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

LESSON TEXT

I Samuel 20:41–42; II Samuel 7:8–9; 9:1–5, 7–8, 11–13

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God's grace is extended even to those we think are undeserving.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will receive God's grace and extend it to those in need.

Series Overview:

Portraits of grace hang in gilded frames in the galleries of the Old and New Testament. The grace that saved Rahab, gave Mephibosheth a second chance, led Jesus to the cross, and caused Paul to fight for the Gentiles is still available to everyone who needs it.

TEACHING OUTLINE

Icebreaker: Have you ever cared for someone who had a disability? How did you demonstrate God's love to them?

Lesson Connection: Share the Lesson Connection. (I)

I. GOD'S GRACE TO DAVID

A. David, an Unlikely King

» *Why do you think Jesse excluded David when Samuel told him to assemble his sons?*

B. Grace, God's Unmerited Favor

C. I Will Recognize That God's Grace in My Life Is Undeserved

» *Have you ever felt like God treated you unfairly by not giving you what you thought you deserved? What was that experience like?*

II. DAVID'S GRACE TO MEPHIBOSHETH

A. Jonathan, David's Unlikely Ally

B. Mephibosheth, the Fulfillment of a Promise (V)

» *How can you further incorporate those experiencing disability into your faith community?*

C. I Will Extend Grace to Those Who Appear Undeserving

» *Are there people you believe are "undeserving" of God's grace?*

» *How can you extend the grace God has given you to others?*

Internalizing the Message (I)

Prayer Focus

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- For God to help us to develop further awareness of the grace He has given us
- For God to guide us to share with others the same measure of grace He has given us

LESSON CONNECTION

A supplemental image is available in the Resource Kit. (I)

Just before Christmas 1982 in Melbourne, Australia, the Vujicic (pronounced voo-yi-chich) family was ready to welcome their son into the world. Long before 4D sonograms, the family saw their baby through three sonograms, and they did not reveal any complications. As soon as he was born, they were stunned. He was born with a rare syndrome called tetra-amelia syndrome, a disorder marked by the absence of arms and legs.

According to Nick Vujicic's autobiography, his mother refused to see him or hold him shortly after his birth. She and her husband left the hospital to process what life was about to look like for the rest of Nick's future and theirs as they committed to caring for him. As Nick grew and enrolled in elementary school, his classmates bullied him. At one point, he tried to drown himself, but someone jumped in and saved his life. He wondered why he struggled while other children did not; he even questioned if his life had any purpose.

His parents recognized his depression and loneliness, and they helped him see the positives in life. Somewhere in those adolescent years, Nick looked to God and started a relationship with Him. To this day, he points to his faith in God as the strength that helps him day by day. At nineteen years old, Nick gave his first inspirational talk and realized his life could inspire others to overcome whatever challenges they were facing.

Although he does not have fully formed legs, he was born with one foot just a few inches below his left hip. The toes on that foot were fused, and he underwent an operation to separate the toes so he could use them as fingers. He refers to them as his "chicken drumstick." He can type up to forty-three words per minute, just above the average of a non-professional typist. Since his first inspirational talk, he has shared his story to millions of people—sometimes to stadiums full of people, sometimes to a church youth group.

When he turned thirty-two, he founded NickV Ministries (formerly Life without Limbs) where he still serves as president and CEO. Seven years later, on February 12, 2012, he married Kanae Miyahara, and he and his wife have two daughters. Nick is an author, speaker, musician, actor, and his hobbies include fishing, painting, and swimming—all without arms and legs. His story continues to amaze those who hear it and is a living example of someone who overcame major physical challenges to make an impact.

BIBLE LESSON

I. GOD'S GRACE TO DAVID

Before the time of kings in Israel, God had wanted to be their King. However, Israel rejected God so they might have a king like surrounding nations (1 Samuel 8:6–7). God accommodated their request despite being rejected, and Samuel anointed Saul as king. While externally Saul seemed to be the ideal candidate for king, internally Saul had different plans. Instead of executing the will of God, Saul chose to execute his own will. God ultimately rejected Saul because Saul believed his ways were better than God's, leading us to young David.

A. David, an Unlikely King

David was the youngest of Jesse's several sons, and he shepherded some of his father's sheep. Samuel, Israel's last judge, was called to anoint a new king over Israel since God had rejected Saul as king. Samuel arrived at Jesse's house. Jesse must have been surprised to see the judge and prophet, Samuel, visit his home unannounced. The prophet asked Jesse to assemble his sons because God had promised to speak to Samuel when Israel's new king stood before him.

Jesse called his sons, and they assembled before Samuel. Perhaps Samuel walked before them, like a drill sergeant inspecting new cadets. Likely, everyone was nervous, but Samuel may have been the most nervous. If Saul found out Samuel was seeking out a new king while Saul still sat on the throne, it may be the end of Samuel.

After examining all of Jesse's sons standing before him, God spoke to Samuel that none of these were the right candidate. Confused, Samuel asked Jesse if he had any more sons. Jesse looked at the ground for a moment, and then he answered that he had one more, David, who was out tending the sheep.

We cannot know with certainty why Jesse did not call David, but we can deduce Jesse believed David was not even a candidate for king. Suddenly David heard voices calling for him in the distance, and he took off running toward home. When he arrived, he saw the puzzled expressions on the faces of his father and brothers, and then David's face turned toward Samuel. Samuel's eyes opened wide with surprise as if he found something (someone) he had been searching for. Samuel approached David and poured anointing oil upon his head. David would be Israel's next king. As quickly as Samuel came, Samuel left, leaving Jesse and all his sons awestruck with surprise. Perhaps they did not know it then, but they had just experienced God's grace.

Why do you think Jesse excluded David when Samuel told him to assemble his sons?

B. Grace, God's Unmerited Favor

The word *grace* may describe how a ballet dancer moves graciously. It may also be utilized to express gratitude following a gracious donation. However, the Bible usually uses the word *grace* to refer to the way God continues to view and respond to humanity favorably. In short, God's grace is God's decision to respond to us favorably when we do not deserve it. It is "unmerited favor." When Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree and realized they were naked, God responded with mercy and undeserved favor by fashioning their clothes. When Israel cried out to the Lord during years of bondage, God was favorable to them and sent a deliver, such as Moses and various judges. Then when Israel's request for a king violated God's commandments, God responded with undeserved favor by anointing a new king, one who would grow to be a man after God's own heart.

C. I Will Recognize That God's Grace in My Life Is Undeserved

The idea that human beings have somehow gotten a raw deal from God is, unfortunately, quite common. We believe we have worked hard and are entitled to rewards, virtues, privileges, and blessings. When we understand all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23), we realize none of us deserve God's grace. Nevertheless God has treated us unfairly. Instead of responding with justice, He responds to us with grace. Despite our flaws, He looks at us favorably. Where only sinfulness exists, God sees the potential for holiness.

God uses grace for transformation through His favor, so we may become the people He calls us to be. He gives so graciously, our cup runs over (Psalm 23:5). Likewise, God also gives grace to us so we may lead others along on the process of transformation, healing, and reconciliation. Our cup does not run over for us to be secure in God's abundant grace, but so we may be vessels who spread God's abundant grace to all those around us.

Have you ever felt like God treated you unfairly by not giving you what you thought you deserved? What was that experience like?

II. DAVID'S GRACE TO MEPHIBOSHETH

God's tremendous grace kept David and carried him from a shepherd's field to the battlefield and from exile in the wilderness, to the throne in the palace. Indeed, David knew by faith and experience that God was with him always, even when he walked through "the valley of the shadow of death" (Psalm 23:4). Once David was in the palace, he felt compelled to spread God's grace to others, specifically those in Saul's household.

A. Jonathan, David's Unlikely Ally

Jonathan, Saul's son, was David's greatest friend and ally. Jonathan could have treated David as an enemy. David's existence and anointing stood in the way of Jonathan's succession to the throne following Saul's death. Likewise, David should have viewed Jonathan as competition for the throne. Nevertheless, Jonathan did not once oppose the will of God like his father Saul had repeatedly done. David wept when he learned of the deaths of Saul and his best friend Jonathan (II Samuel 1). Some were happy for David because he was finally free from Saul's maniacal manhunts, but David mourned his friend and his friend's father. Several years later, King David wanted to honor them both by being gracious to what remained of their family. In other kingdoms, a new ruler was expected to fell the previous ruler's family tree to prevent pretentious usurpers who might challenge the new ruler. David had no such plan. He wanted to spread God's grace to Saul's family.

B. Mephibosheth, the Fulfillment of a Promise

Mephibosheth was Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson. When news came that the Philistines had defeated Israel at Mount Gilboa, Mephibosheth's nurse feared for their safety and fled the palace. While making their hasty escape, the nurse somehow dropped Mephibosheth, and the injuries he sustained left him lame in both his feet. At only five years old, he could no longer walk. Mephibosheth, his nurse, and his family went into exile in the north. Initially they feared being killed as the Philistines continued their conquest of Israel. However, when Mephibosheth and his family learned of David's coronation, perhaps they feared that David would put them to death to secure his claim to the throne. This assumption may explain why they stayed in exile and did not return to Jerusalem.

Mephibosheth's disability also changed how Israelite society viewed him. Israelites considered disability to be the result of sin. The prevailing theories were that the parents, another family member, or the person experiencing the disability sinned. When a person was born with a disability, religious experts even advocated that the person had somehow sinned in the womb before birth. Sadly they even suggested the resulting disability was a consequence of even prenatal sin. This view continued into the time of Jesus. (See John 9.) Mephibosheth was eking out a living on the margins of society, not only because he was of Saul's family but also because he had a disability, which would have marked him as a grievous sinner.

Some years later, David sought out Saul's family because he wished to show them "the kindness of God" (II Samuel 9:3). David learned of Mephibosheth and invited him to the palace where he restored Saul's lands to him and invited him to live with him in the royal palace. Mephibosheth would dine with the king every night.

We shake our head and smile at David's lavish grace. Not only did he give Mephibosheth access to a life of luxury and comfort, but David also lifted him out of the margins of society and replanted him into a position of prominence. Mephibosheth was able to manage the lands that were rightfully his and use them to make a profit, which he and others used to support the family for generations to come. David's gracious act gave Mephibosheth power over his future and access to meaningful purpose for his life.

How can you further incorporate those experiencing disability into your faith community?

Teacher Option: *A supplemental video is available in the Resource Kit. (V)*

C. I Will Extend Grace to Those Who Appear Undeserving

Some may have seen Mephibosheth as an enemy or threat to David's rule. Others would have seen Mephibosheth as a sinner due to

his disability. However, David saw someone to whom he could show God's abundant grace. David was a recipient of much of God's grace. He had come far since his time shepherding his father's sheep. Nevertheless, David lived the lesson he had learned; David knew his cup ran over so he might extend God's grace to others. As Christians, our cup is also running over. God calls us to extend God's grace to others, especially those we might think are undeserving. When we rate someone as "undeserving" of God's grace, it speaks little of the speck in the person's eye and largely of the plank in our own (Matthew 7:3–5). God still maintains a favorable attitude of grace toward humankind; we as Christians must do the same.

Are there people you believe are "undeserving" of God's grace?

First Peter 4:10 reads: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." God has called us to be good stewards, or managers, of the grace He has given us. We must use the gifts He has given us to minister to others. In the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30), Jesus demonstrated what happens to those who receive gifts from the Master based on how they use those gifts. Those who productively use their gifts receive more, while those who are unproductive have what was given to them taken away. We must use what God gives us to build His kingdom and extend His grace to others, especially to help the marginalized and disenfranchised.

How can you extend the grace God has given you to others?

INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

A supplemental image is available in the Resource Kit. (I)

On May 9, 1969, the children's program Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood aired a controversial episode. In the episode, Fred Rogers (Mr. Rogers) had his feet in a small plastic children's swimming pool, cooling his feet on a hot summer day. He invited Francois Clemmons an African-American police officer, to join him in the pool to cool his feet as well. For anyone too young to remember the Civil Rights movement, this scene may not seem too controversial. However, in 1969 it was rather controversial.

While the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, many swimming pools remained segregated. Not only did Mr. Rogers and Officer Clemmons share a pool, but they also used the same towel to dry their feet. Mr. Rogers understood the circumstances of the time and chose to use his platform to further deconstruct the barriers and obstacles of racism that kept races segregated. He understood that racism is a sin, and the faith community must oppose it at all costs so all humanity may experience community. As we have witnessed in history, disability is not the only separation humanity has devised. Racism and prejudice also divide. Any barrier or obstacle that prevents a person from being integrated as a member of the community or from accessing the community must be removed.

While segregation is no longer legal, sadly the separation between races continues, with Sunday being one of the most segregated days of the week. How one may casually refer to a church as a "black church" or "white church" is evidence of this. Christians must remove barriers that keep us apart. Churches must build bridges. As the mission statement of the United Pentecostal Church International's suggests, it is time for the whole gospel to be taken to the whole world by the whole church. No divisions, barriers, or obstacles may keep us apart.

Although many in Mephibosheth's day looked down on him, David extended the grace of God to him. David sharing God's grace increased Mephibosheth's access to the world and restored a meaningful purpose in his life. Likewise, we must extend God's grace by removing boundaries, increasing others' access to Jesus Christ and the body of Christ, and developing a meaningful purpose for their lives within the body of Christ.

Prayer Focus

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- For God to help us to develop further awareness of the grace He has given us
- For God to guide us to share with others the same measure of grace He has given us