



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Lent Sermon Series – What is God Like? Gracious

Speaker: Sherin Swift – Pastor of Connections & Equipping

Scriptures: Exodus 34:5-7, John 1:14-18

Exodus 34:5-7

⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. ⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

John 1:14-18

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and ^[a] is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Pastor Sherin will continue our Lenten series, What is God Like? We will take a fresh look at God's grace. What does it mean for our daily lives that God is gracious to us?

Sermon Questions:

1. Pastor Sherin shared that grace is “unmerited goodness that is shown to us who are undeserving” and that if we deserved it, it would not be grace. Grace also has an element of favor and delight both for the receiver and the giver. How have you experienced grace in your life?
2. Where in your life is it hard for you to receive grace?
3. With whom do you struggle to extend grace? (ex. People who vote or think differently, challenging neighbors, family members or coworkers, etc.)
4. Please refer to our Lenten Study Guide for further questions and reflection.



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CHURCHWIDE LENTEN 2024 BIBLE STUDY

what is
GOD
like?

WEEKLY STUDY GUIDE



Session 3: Gracious | “ḤANNŪN” | חַנּוּן

IMMERSE

After reading the introduction for this session, read Luke 8:40-48 before the group time. If you have time, you may want to sit with the stories that come before and after this passage from Luke 8:22-56. What stands out to you? What do you notice about Jesus?

INTRODUCTION

The word “gracious” has multiple facets. The word “grace” (*khen*) is connected to “gracious” (*khannun*) and our general knowledge of it being a *free gift* can help us better understand this character attribute of God. Grace is a gift - unmerited goodness shown to us who are undeserving, without being earned. Demonstrated in Scripture, we see grace active in how God creates a covenant with His people, which He ultimately keeps despite their constant betrayal. In Exodus 34, God renews his covenant with Israel though they have broken it so quickly. He shows them goodness despite their disobedience.

There is a sense of *favor* in the unmerited receipt of grace - as when one of lower position is noticed and elevated beyond what is expected or required by a superior. For instance, we see this when Joseph finds favor (*khen*) with Potiphar (Genesis 39:4) and Ruth gratefully voices having found favor or grace (*khen*) in Boaz’s eyes (Ruth 2:10). The one with lower status is treated differently than expected.

INTRODUCTION (cont.)

Graciousness is connected to *generosity* as well. We see over and over again throughout Scripture that God’s grace is shown lavishly, not in strictly portion-controlled amounts. In fact, we hear Jonah lament (Jonah 4:2) that he knew the Ninevites he hated would end up well when God sent him to them because God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in love.

“Grace” and its connected word “gracious” point to freely given, generous actions and behavior of favor that are ultimately motivated and driven by love. God’s gracious actions toward his people are always connected to his heart and motivated by how deeply he cares for them. In the gospel passage for this session, we see God’s graciousness embodied in Jesus as he moves in love towards one who is unclean by Jewish standards and could have easily been ignored in the crowd, especially in light of the impending death of an important leader’s daughter.

Key References for this section taken from: “Who Are You Anyway?” by Russell Bloodworth Jr., Thomas B. Dozeman, “Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Yahweh’s Gracious and Compassionate Character,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989): 207-23



Scripture Passage

LUKE 8:40-48 (NIV)

Read together

40 Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. 41 Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house 42 because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. 43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you."

46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

47 Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."



Session 3: Gracious (cont.)

OPENING QUESTION

What thoughts and emotions come up when you experience a crowd or perhaps a pressing crowd in rush hour?

INVESTIGATE

1. What emotions do you imagine are running through the crowd as they witness a leader from their synagogue desperately asking for help from Jesus?
2. V. 42 shares that the crowds nearly crushed Jesus. Describe what the scenario must have looked like, sounded like, and felt like.
3. A woman who was bleeding for twelve years is in the crowd. Read Mark 5:25-26 to learn more context about this woman. Due to her bleeding, she would have been considered unclean and needed to stay away from others according to Levitical laws to prevent them from being unclean through contact with her. Describe how you imagine she is showing up in this crowd.
4. Note the context in which Jesus senses the woman's touch of desperation. What aspects of God's graciousness do you see in his attentiveness and response?
5. In what ways does Jesus' graciousness embody generosity and favor?

INTEGRATE

1. Where have you seen God show up with his generous, unmerited, unconditional graciousness in your life?
2. Where do you struggle to experience or believe that God will respond to you with the kind of lavish graciousness he shows to this woman?

INVITE

Take a couple of minutes as a group to pause and reflect on God's invitation to you with either of the questions below. Afterwards, share as a group.

1. What is one practical way you can hold onto remembering God's graciousness this week?
2. Practicing the graciousness of God may provide a poignant way to remember what our God is like. God's graciousness shows up amid the recipient failing to reciprocate or stay in the relationship. What is one small way you could practice graciousness?

Take turns sharing in a sentence or two, starting with the prompt

"I'm beginning to realize _____."

continued on next page



Session 3: Gracious (cont.)

CLOSING PRAYER

Consider closing in a “popcorn” style prayer where anyone who likes can voice a response to the graciousness of God that they see in Jesus. Voice your gratitude for specific ways you have seen God’s graciousness—whether it is in ordinary or extraordinary circumstances— and pray for help in places you long to see and believe more of His graciousness to you.