

Thursday, May 30

Pastor Jack mentioned our United Methodist Church understanding of God's grace in three ways: prevenient, justifying and sanctifying. Prevenient Grace is God's grace that "goes before." It is God's love for us before we even can comprehend God's existence! Justifying Grace is our moment of accepting God's grace and aligning ourselves with God's purpose and meaning for our lives. Sanctifying Grace is our continually living into that decision to follow God's leading in our lives, the example of Jesus the Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What do you think about this distinctive teaching about God's grace? Does it make sense to you? How might this understanding of God's grace help you make changes in your life? Pray for this grace and write your ideas here.

Friday, May 31

Read Titus 2:11-14. The greatest blessing of God's grace is that it is a gift freely given to us and it is literally the gift that keeps on giving as long as we are receptive to God's guidance through the work of the Holy Spirit. Think of how you want to bless God in return for this incredible give of grace. Certainly God's grace is freely given but how does that generous, unconditional and deep love of God inspire your daily living? Do you want to benefit from the training to live lives of self-control, upright and godly? How can this tremendous gift from God manifest itself in your life so that God will be glorified? Contemplate your response (justifying grace) to God's unmerited and unearned love for you and how you want to respond. Write your reflections here.

Message Notes – May 26, 2024

*Ever Wonder Why? Why Can't I Stop?**

- I. _____ are difficult and that's why we use words about breaking them.
 - A. Perhaps you've _____ out to God.
 1. You might even _____ with God.
 2. Maybe you made a _____
 - B. The issue with whatever we're trying to change, is we are trying to change in the _____ way.
- II. There are many reasons why we can't change but at the core or anyone's inability to change is a _____ challenge.
 - A. There are _____ reasons.
 - B. There are _____ reasons.
 - C. There are _____ reasons.
 - D. Fourth, there are _____ reasons for change being difficult.
- III. At the _____ of the issue of change, almost every time I would argue is a spiritual challenge.
 - A. What happens is many people are trying to meet a spiritual need with something besides _____.
 - B. Pastor Craig Groeschel writes, "For so many people, the reason you can't change is because you're focusing on the poison of _____ and forgetting the power of grace."
 1. Religion is actually the _____ actions and rituals of our faith and spirituality.
 2. In other words religion becomes the going through the motions of our _____.
 3. In his book, *Contagious Christianity*, disgraced Pastor Bill Hybels wrote, Religion is spelled _____, but faith is spelled _____.
 - C. Religion is our actions through which we try to _____ God's grace.

*Titus 2:11-14 and James 2:1-17

- IV. _____ is central to our being able to change.
 _____ is the unmerited, goodwill and favor of God, it's unmerited. It's unearned.
- A. Grace is God's _____, it's God's _____. It's God's strength. And the good news is it's always a _____.
 - B. Remember, we are made _____ with God by the grace of God.
 - C. So how is it that we can _____ by God's grace?
 - D. We United Methodists have three we have three _____ of grace.
 1. First, there is _____ Grace.
 2. Second there is _____ Grace.
 3. Third and finally, there is _____ Grace.

- V. God's grace enables change in us because it's not just a saving grace of God, but it's the _____ grace of God.
- A. We don't change by trying harder. We change by _____ more.
 - B. We let the grace of God do something only the grace of God can do and change you from the _____ _____.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, May 27

We know habits are difficult to changes. Pastor Jack mentioned that perhaps we've prayed, negotiated with God, and made promises to others and ourselves that we will make a change in our lives. Habits are difficult to break. Take some time today and think through your life and, being honest with yourself, write down a habit that you would like to address. This may be something that has long plagued you or perhaps something new. How have you addressed this issue in the past and why didn't those efforts enable you to change? Write your reflections here.

Tuesday, May 28

Read James 2:1-17. Habits are more complex that we may at first realize. There were four reasons why change is difficult that were shared during the message: practical, emotional, relational and physical. Think of the habit you contemplated yesterday when you read Monday's devotion. What have you done in the past to address this issue? Were the reasons that hindered your desired change practical, emotional relational or physical? How have you made changes in your life in the past and what were the issues you had to address in doing so? Contemplate these questions and write your reflections here.

Wednesday, May 29

Although there are various reasons for change being difficult, Pastor Jack shared his belief that the core issue with change being difficult is spiritual. We focus on religion rather than our faith and spirituality. Pastor Craig Groeschel even calls religion a poison. Religion is about the outward living of our faith as opposed to beginning with our spiritual conditions and health as critical to making meaningful changes in our lives? What do you think of this discussion of religion verses faint and spirituality? Write your ideas here.