

Incredible Grace
June 3, 2018
Lynn Haven UMC – Fusion Campus

Introduction

With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. (Acts 4:33 NRSV)

In our new sermon series based on the movie “The Incredibles 2” we are going to be looking closely at all of the incredible gifts God has placed in each of us and how we can make the most of them to bring Him the glory. This week we will talk about grace. This is a word commonly used by Christians to convey the message of what God has given us and what we should extend to others. But what does it really mean? One way to define it would be that grace is the unmerited favor of God, a.k.a., the good things we get from Him that we could never earn. But how can we determine what our role is in revealing this incredible grace in the most abundant way?

Digging Deeper

Incredible Grace is revealed when we....

Identify with JESUS

- How can we identify with Jesus? We must connect our lives to His in a couple of ways: be thankful for His grace bestowed upon us at our rebirth, and live our lives in a way that honors Him. Quite simply, identifying with Jesus is living that same lifestyle that He did and having the mind of Christ. Do you delight in the privilege of being uniquely set apart, to be a Christian? Do you boldly go where many do not in an attempt to make Christ-honoring decisions? Can you share an experience you’ve had where you were made to feel different or strange because you made a choice that was not popular or worldly, but you knew you needed to do it to be in line with God’s Word?

Make ourselves available to OTHERS

- Read Acts 4:32-37. Because God’s grace was upon these early believers, they gave of all that they had. This is how we are called to live today. We are to make ourselves available to our fellow man with our time, talents and resources. We may not all be in a position to do many large things, but we can all do one small thing for someone. There’s an old expression that goes something like this, “To the world you may just be another person, but to one person you can be the world.” How do you make yourself available to others? Would you say you help in all circumstances where you are able to do so? If not, what are some of the obstacles that have prevented you from doing so? We limit our ability to properly fulfill our roles as representatives of Christ if we resist living into His example of brotherly love.

Expect the UNEXPECTED

- Acts 4:32 says, “All the believers were one in heart and mind.” Can you imagine the wonder and awe of non-believers if we, as the body of Christ, truly lived grace-filled lives where we are a people of one heart and one soul?! So how can we accomplish this? First, we must become a people of God who seek to do things His way and live anticipating that He will do the

unexpected every day. The people of those early days of Christianity learned to expect the unexpected because they were surrounded by miracles from God. Today we just don't stop to marvel or recognize the miracles that surround us. For example, how can we look at the functions of the human body with all of its complex moving parts that so uniquely and perfectly work together to keep us alive and not consider that an incredible miracle? People can often surprise us too. It may be that person who pays for your drive through order, brings your favorite drink to work, or any other countless random acts of kindness that we hear about in this world. For every ounce of ugliness we might experience, there is surely a double measure of goodness that counteracts it because we know, "in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose!" (Romans 8:28 NIV) Do you approach each day with a sense of excitement at what you might encounter along the way? Do you see each problem you face as a chance to surprise others with incredible grace? God is always at work in our lives. The harder you lean into the will of God, the more confident you are in the unexpected work of God.

Conclusion

We all have our own unique stories to tell about how both good and bad experiences have shaped us into the people we are. No two of us will walk the exact same path on this earth. So what is our common denominator? The incredible grace of God! God never looks in our mirror and dislikes what He sees. He is always holding both arms open in love to receive us, broken parts and all. And He is urging us along, like a loving Father does, to live a life that extends the same love and grace to all of His people. Once we identify with Jesus we are more apt to make ourselves available to others and as a result, shine His light to help them experience the unexpected and incredible grace that is God's free gift to all who believe!