



Full of Grace and Truth

John 1:9-14 *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (10) He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. (11) He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (12) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (14) And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

This Scripture is talking about Jesus. He was the true light that came into the world. For those who would receive Him, He gave them power to become a child of God. Notice that just “receiving” Him doesn’t make you a child of God, but rather it is the qualifying beginning.

We would call this repentance – understanding that you need Jesus, and not wanting to live like you have been living, but to change direction, and instead live a life pleasing to God. If you have done this, then you are not yet a son of God, but you are qualified to become one. The Bible says that to become part of the family of God, one of His children you have to be born again of the water and the Spirit.

This Scripture also tells us that Jesus was full of grace and truth. Thank God for His grace, for without it we were lost. None of us were good enough to be accepted by God. All of us had and have failings and weaknesses and flaws, yet God, in His great mercy, extended grace to us, and made a way that all that we have done wrong could be forgiven.

Not only that, He continues to accept us even when we fail after we are born again. His mercy endures forever, but we need to notice that Jesus was not only fully of grace, He was also full of truth.

Grace and truth seem almost to be two opposing things, and so they are. Truth says that the wages of sin is death, while mercy says that our sins have been cast into the depths of the sea, never to be remembered by God.

Our problem is, we usually err on one side or the other. We emphasise the grace of God, His willingness to forgive, how he will use flawed people, how He will never leave us nor forsake us, but we downplay or minimise the truth of God’s judgment.

Or, we emphasize the truth, how that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, how sin separates us from God, how sin cannot be in His presence because He hates it, but we downplay or minimise the grace of God.

What am I saying? Let’s look at a couple of examples.

Samson – Samson was a Judge. They were the people who were the civil and military leaders of Israel before there were Kings. You didn’t inherit being a judge from your father, and you couldn’t buy the position or be elected – God appointed the judges.

Judges 13:24-25 *So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. (25) And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.*

So Samson was a guy chosen by God to lead Israel, but he was hardly a good example. He was a womaniser. Most people know the story of Samson and Delilah. She was a woman from the Philistines, the enemies of Israel, and she eventually brought about his downfall, but there were plenty of women before her – such as the wife he took of the Philistines in Judges 14, and the harlot he slept with in Judges 16, and of course there was Delilah.

She tried to find the secret of his great strength, and every time he told her a lie about it she tried it and the Philistines came up to kill him, but he would throw off the 7 bowstrings, or the seven new ropes, or his hair locks being woven,

and win the fight against them. You would think he would start to wonder why every time he told her something that would destroy him, that exact thing would happen to him, but that is the way it is with things that will kill you. People seem blind to their effects.

Anyway, he eventually told her the truth – that to cut his hair would cause him to lose his strength. The strength wasn’t in his hair, it was in his consecration to God, that was shown by his Nazarite vow. She cut his hair, and he was easily captured by the Philistines. They threw him in gaol, put out his eyes, and made him work as a slave. They brought him out at a great gathering to rejoice that their enemy had been captured, and Samson prayed this prayer:

Judges 16:28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one *blow* take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"

That is what happened. God heard his prayer, his strength returned, and he killed more Philistines in that one event than he had done in his whole life.

Even though Samson was a womaniser and a liar, God still used him. Even though through his own sin and foolishness he was captured by the enemy, God didn’t cast him away, but heard his prayer when he cried out in repentance.

That is the mercy of God – that He would call, and continue to bless and use a man with weaknesses and flaws. That He didn’t wash his hands of Samson when his own actions lead to his downfall. What great mercy of God!

BUT – as well as mercy, there is Truth. There were consequences to Samson’s sin. His eyes were put out, and God didn’t restore them. He had to work as a slave while bound with bronze fetters. And God may have answered his prayer and helped him destroy the Philistines, but Samson died in that event.

Jesus is full of mercy and truth. There is always forgiveness for our sin if we repent. He will not cast us away because of our weaknesses or failures BUT there is also always a consequence to sin.

Let’s quickly think about King David. When he should have been going to war, he stayed at home, and saw a woman talking a bath next door, and he committed adultery with her. She became pregnant, and David tried to cover it up. When he was unable to do that, he had her husband sent to the worst part of the fighting so that he would be killed. Here is David, a man after God’s own heart, committing adultery and murder. Surely God would remove him from being King – but he didn’t.

David must have thought he had got away with his sin until he was confronted by Nathan the prophet. David immediately repented and cried out to God for forgiveness. We see his prayer of repentance recorded in Psalm 51.

There was mercy for David. He wasn’t removed from being King. He should have been put to death for his sin, but the mercy of God removed that penalty from him. He continued to rule and was a great King and a great man of God.

As well as mercy, David also received truth. The child that Bathsheba was carrying as a result of his adultery died. David prayed, and fasted, and wept, and the child still died.

Jesus is full of grace and truth – there was forgiveness and mercy for David, but there was still a consequence of his sin.

This is the message I have tonight – Jesus is full of mercy and truth. If you are doing something you shouldn’t, there is mercy and forgiveness for you. If you have weaknesses or failures, Jesus will not throw you away, but will continue to be with you, and love you. Don’t ever think that you have gone too far that He would not accept you.

BUT if you are doing something you shouldn’t, then there is a consequence to sin. The mercy of God isn’t a liberty to sin. Sin is not worth the cost in the end.

Grace and truth. Jesus was full of both. Don’t err too far on one side or the other. Don’t let the grace of God cause you to fall into sin, but also don’t let the truth that God hates sin stop you from seeking His forgiveness.

Proverbs 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.

By mercy and truth iniquity is purged. Jesus loves us as we are, with all our faults, but He doesn’t want us to stay in that condition:

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

He had compassion, but He didn't leave Lazarus dead

John 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

He did not condemn the woman taken in adultery, but told her to go and sin no more

Acts 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

He forgave Saul the persecution and murder of Christians, but did not let him to continue in that way

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