



What Are We Waiting For? – 1 Thessalonians Being A People Of Genuine Grace

Date: Sunday 23rd October

Speaker: Jo Ramdas-Harsia (City Centre Site), Becky Stamps (South Site)

Key Verses: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15; John 13:3-5; Matthew 18:15-17

Talk Summary:

The grace of God is something we don't earn and we don't deserve. He loves us because He is love and His love for us cannot be lessened by our unholiness. Grace is us receiving abundantly from God what we do not deserve.

Grace for Our Leaders:

Verse 12 defines the leaders by what they do. It says, 'Hold them in highest regard in love because of their work', not because of their title. Kingdom Leadership is not about titles and pedestals; it is all about servanthood. We follow the example of Jesus at the last supper. (John 13: 3-5)

Being a church leader is not an easy job. Most leaders love their job and definitely feel called into it and most leaders love people and genuinely delight to serve God in serving them, but also, most church leaders have to consciously make sure they take a Sabbath and time out to protect themselves from mental, physical and emotional burn-out.

Our leaders are only human and will at times fall short of our expectations, but we are called to have grace for them, to love, support and pray for them.

Grace for Each Other:

Paul fully expects there to be those who are idle and disruptive in the church (vs14); those who are disheartened and timid; those who are weak and exhausted; those who do wrong. He has no illusions about what church can be like and he still urges them (vs13) to live at peace with one another.

'Grace' does not mean blindly accepting bad behaviour. We should take steps to challenge it, but warnings over unacceptable behaviour should come from a place of relationship and trust.

Barriers to Grace:

- Not fully understanding or appreciating the grace that has been given to us from God.
- Having very specific ideas about how others should look and act.

We all need to understand that it is only because of Jesus that we are considered holy, because of Jesus that we are able to choose a better way, not because of our own goodness. We all need to be checked at times when we stray, to receive encouragement, help and patience at times when we are struggling in some way. We need to be open to both receiving grace and giving it.

We all accept that we should all be trying to lead Christ-like lives, but sometimes our human interpretation of what that looks like can become mixed up with cultural expectations rather than Biblical ones. When we have a range of different cultures, we need to be even more open to having grace for each other, because expectations of behaviour can be even more diverse. We need to demonstrate grace by assuming the best of each other in situations where we have been hurt.

Matthew 18:15-17 - We can all too easily get this advice in the wrong order and ignore and avoid someone who has caused us offense – or worse, complain to everyone else about them before we've given them a chance to answer to what we feel they have done. Let's talk to each other and help each other to understand our differences, that we might live in peace with each other, as Paul is encouraging the Thessalonians to do.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- Can you recall a time when you've needed to receive grace from, or give grace to, your leaders? What did you learn from this?
- Do you know of a situation where someone has left church because they have been hurt? In what ways could this situation have been resolved with grace, love and understanding?
- Have you come across a situation where a cultural difference in expectations has caused hurt to someone? How was this resolved?
- What do you find challenging about following Jesus' advice on relationships in Matthew 18?
- In what ways could we bring this teaching about grace outside the walls of the church and into workplaces/schools/the streets?

Witness - *How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?*

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
 - Upcoming Events (go to bvc.so/whats-on for details)
 - Family Light Party – 29.10.22
 - Encounter Night – 29.10.22