

ULC Sermon Study Resource

Grace and Truth

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Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: Do you prefer to tell someone bad news directly or indirectly? Does good news change this?

Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Outline: We live in the tension between grace and truth because Jesus embodies both.

- I. Speak and live the truth ... (v. 13-14)
 - a. We are called to speak and live according to what God has revealed as good, righteous, and true in Scripture and in His Son Jesus.
 - b. But truth without grace leads to harshness and legalism.

Q: Why shouldn't we be afraid of facing persecution for the truth? (cf. Matt 10:28)
- II. with grace and in love ... (v. 15 -17)
 - a. The truth that convicts us causes us to rest in mercy and grace, and it is both scriptural and practical for our words and lives to reflect and overflow with grace, love, and mercy.
 - b. But grace without truth leads to sentimentalism and denying our brokenness and flaws.

Q: How are we to respond to those who ask us why we have hope?
- III. because Jesus embodies grace and truth. (v.18, Ephesians 4:11-16)
 - a. Jesus reveals our sinfulness, but pours out grace through His death and resurrection.
 - b. Embracing grace *and* truth reflects who Jesus is and embodies the Gospel.

Q: How do we grow and build each other up as a church?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) How have you experienced truth without grace? Experienced grace without truth?
- 2) How have you acted with truth, but lacking grace? Acted with grace, but lacking truth?
- 3) Is there someone you've hurt with a one-handed approach who you can ask to forgive you?
- 4) How can we practically embrace this tension when it's so easy for us to neglect truth or grace?
- 5) How can we commit to truth and grace even in environments like online forums?

Suggestions for further study:

- 1 Cor. 13 **Q: Where does truth and spirituality without grace and love fall short?**
- Rev. 2:18-29 **Q: How is the love-filled church of Thyatira called to turn to true teachings?**
- John 4:1-45 **Q: How does Jesus show both grace and truth to the Samaritan woman?**

Closing Prayer: *"Gracious God, You have revealed in Your Son Jesus both the truth of who we are and the grace that you have for us. Lord, we see on the cross the depth of our sin and the judgement that was meant for us. But we see that You willingly took our sin and shame upon Yourself by sending forth Your Son to bear our sin, to be our Savior and to make known not just the truth about who we are, but the love, kindness, mercy, and grace that You have for us. God, pour out Your Spirit on us, that by Your Spirit we would be empowered and strengthened to live in that tension between grace and truth, to go forth and speak truthfully what Your Word teaches us, yet speaking and living it with kindness, love, compassion, and genuine care and concern for our neighbors. Above all else may we live and speak the truth always pointing to the grace and forgiveness that have been poured out in Your Son, Jesus our Savior. Amen."*